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The role of brand authenticity in the development of brand trust in South Africa

Sivan-Rachel Portal

A research report submitted to the Faculty of Commerce, Law and Management, University of the Witwatersrand, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Management in Strategic Marketing.

Johannesburg, March 2017

ABSTRACT

Brand trust has been in decline for a number of years (Eggers, O'Dwyer, Kraus, Vallaster, & Güldenberg, 2013; Gerzema, 2009; Gilmore & Pine, 2007; Schallehn, Burmann, & Riley, 2014). According to Eggers et al., (2013), this has been attributed to many possible causes; the most prevalent being a breakdown between the promises made by brands and what they actually deliver. As a result, consumers are growing increasingly sceptical and they find themselves unable to believe brand claims (Eggers et al.,, 2013). Brand authenticity has been referred to as the perfect antidote to this problem (Gerzema, 2009). It is synonymous with honesty (Morhart, Malär, Guèvremont, Girardin, & Grohmann, 2015), sincerity (Beverland, 2005a; Fine, 2003; Napoli, Dickinson, Beverland, & Farrelly, 2014; Pace, 2015), and trust (Eggers et al.,, 2013); and is a key success factor for brands today (Brown, Kozinets, & Sherry, 2003; Gilmore & Pine, 2007).

Authentic brands are deeply committed to their values and to delivering on their promises (Eggers et al.,, 2013; Morhart et al.,, 2015). Morhart et al., (2015) state that to enhance the perception of authenticity, brands should come across as more "human", as doing so makes it easier for consumers to recognise the inherent values of the brand. Due to a rebirth in traditional, wholesome values, consumers are growing increasingly fond of humanised brands and they now even relate to brands in the same way they relate to people (Brown, 2010; Fournier, 1998; Kervyn, Fiske, & Malone, 2012; Malone & Fiske, 2013). It has been said that brands that are succeeding in a time when brand trust is at an all-time low, are those that are fostering meaningful relationships with their customers by coming across as "human" (Kervyn et al.,, 2012; Malone & Fiske, 2013; Marshall & Ritchie, 2013).

This research set out to examine the humanisation of brands, particularly in a world where authenticity is becoming increasingly popular and brand trust, increasingly rare. It was hoped that an empirical investigation would help to define the implications of this growing trend in brand management. The study was conducted in South Africa, where historically there has been a major breakdown of trust between its citizens and the institutions that have been entrusted to lead them (Lekalake, 2015; Marais, 2011; Moeng, 2015; Steenkamp, 2009). The study was grounded in theory that has roots in the field of social psychology. In interpersonal relationships, Cuddy, Fiske, and Glick (2007) found that people make judgements about others based on the evaluation of two dimensions: warmth and competence. The Brands as Intentional Agents Framework (BIAF) (Kervyn et al.,, 2012) theorises that this is consistent with people and brands. Consumers evaluate brands on the same basis of warmth and competence: where warmth is the belief that the brand has good intentions, and competence, the belief that the brand has the ability to carry out those intentions. (Kervyn et al.,, 2012). Expressions of warmth and competence enhance the perception that a brand is humanlike (J. Aaker, Vohs, & Mogilner, 2010; Kervyn et al.,, 2012; Malone & Fiske, 2013).

An extensive literature review was conducted on brand authenticity, perceived warmth, perceived competence and brand trust - revealing strong connections between these four constructs. The research problem was three-fold. First, the intention was to establish and evaluate the dimensions of brand authenticity in South Africa, postulated as originality, continuity, credibility and integrity (according to recent studies in the literature). Second, the intention was to then determine whether brand authenticity has a positive impact on brand trust. Brand trust was postulated as having two dimensions, brand intentions and brand reliability, as per Delgado-Ballester (2004). Third, the intention was to resolve whether perceptions of warmth and competence then mediate the relationship between brand authenticity and brand trust.

This study adopted a quantitative methodology whereby a self-completion questionnaire was distributed using face-to-face data collection procedures. The sampling frame consisted of frequent flyers of one of seven domestic airlines that fly within South Africa's borders, namely: South African Airways (SAA), Mango, British Airways (BA), Kulula, Safair, Blue Crane and Cemair. The study used a convenience sample of passengers at Bidvest airport lounges in four major cities, and at Lanseria, a smaller airport in Johannesburg. The questionnaire design included a construct measurement section where respondents were asked to rate their perception of the selected brand's authenticity, warmth, competence and trust. The data collection returned an impressive 355 usable responses, made up predominantly of business travellers.

Partial least squares (PLS) was used to examine the data and factor analysis revealed four important findings. First, the analysis showed three new factors, different to the four postulated dimensions of brand authenticity. They were Original, Ethical and Genuine. Second, brand trust was found to be one-dimensional, and not two-dimensional as postulated. Third, although a revised model of six constructs (original, ethical, genuine, warmth, competence and brand trust) displayed both internal reliability and convergent validity, discriminant validity could not be proven due to critically high correlations between the constructs. The high levels of similarity rendered the constructs indistinguishable in a causal model and as a result, the hypotheses could not be tested using the data that was collected. Finally, an additional analysis showed significant differences between the results of South African Airways (SAA) and some or all of the other airlines on all the constructs. As SAA was not viewed in a positive light, this study identified SAA as an outlier brand. The findings of this research proved to be very interesting, and have major theoretical and managerial implications.

As brand authenticity was measured as a second-order construct, it could not be said with certainty that original, ethical and genuine are dimensions thereof. However, the literature certainly suggested that they might be. Authenticity has been linked to any semblance of originality (Vann, 2006); an honourable set of values (Beverland, Lindgreen, & Vink, 2008); and that which is genuine, real and true (Arnould & Price, 2000; Beverland & Farrelly, 2010; Grayson & Martinec, 2004; Molleda & Jain, 2013). Moreover, a recent

study by Akbar and Wymer (2016) proved originality and genuineness to be dimensions of brand authenticity and their findings strongly support those of this study. The unexpected results of this research also confirm that brand authenticity is highly contextual and subjective – its meaning is dependent on the consumer's personal experiences and their unique understanding of what is authentic (Beverland & Farrelly, 2010; Bruhn, Schoenmüller, Schäfer, & Heinrich, 2012; Fritz, Schoenmueller, & Bruhn, 2017; Leigh, Peters, & Shelton, 2006; Molleda & Jain, 2013). This study reiterates that brand managers wishing to enhance perceptions of authenticity, must adapt their approach for their specific brand in specific contexts and be very cognisant of their customers unique interpretation of authenticity.

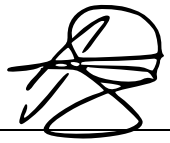
The lack of discriminant validity between the six constructs in the revised path model (original, ethical, genuine, warmth, competence and brand trust) was the most noteworthy finding of this research, as it has serious theoretical and managerial implications. This finding indicates that consumers view these constructs as one and the same, and they are deeply interconnected. This could be attributed to the strong literary overlaps between them, as many of these constructs have almost identical definitions and key traits (for example: honesty, sincerity, benevolence, capability, and reliability). As a result, this research makes an important contribution to advancing the Brands as Intentional Agents Framework (BIAF) (Kervyn et al.,, 2012). It suggests that the BIAF should be expanded to include constructs beyond warmth and competence, as expressions of all six constructs contribute equally to the perception that a brand is human.

This research concludes with the Human Brand Model (HBM); a model that provides practical guidelines as to how managers can use the insights from this study to build human brands. To enhance the perception that a brand is more human, managers must use expressions not only of warmth and competence, but of originality, ethicality, genuineness and trust as well. The six dimensions work along a continuum: if one is elevated, so too are the others; but if one is tarnished, the others are negatively impacted too. The result is that no single dimension can be ignored in this process. Brand managers must understand that efforts to build a human brand far surpass the marketing team. This process requires the mobilisation of every department in the organisation and the commitment of the highest levels of leadership.

This research set out to establish whether the *human brand* is simply a buzzword in marketing, or an idea that has both academic and managerial value. The idea that brands have evolved into animate entities is not yet widely accepted in academic literature. However, this research makes an important contribution to advancing the existing theory on brand perception and current views on brand anthropomorphism. It also provides some guidance as to the exact mechanisms that can be used to build human brands. The findings demonstrated that the *human brand* is an idea that is real, and one with value for both academics and practitioners, leaving room for much further research.

DECLARATION

I, Sivan-Rachel Portal, declare that this research report is my own work except as indicated in the references and acknowledgements. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Management in Strategic Marketing in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in this or any other university.



SIVAN-RACHEL PORTAL

Signed at Wits Business School, Parktown, Johannesburg

On the 3rd day of March 2017

DEDICATION

My Masters journey reminds me of the time I climbed regal Mount Fuji in Japan. At its start, I don't think I quite understood the magnitude of the task ahead. At its midpoint, I counted the seconds until it was over. And at its culmination, I am deeply moved, humbled and grateful for the experience.

This work is dedicated to my parents, Adam and Leigh Creswick, who have supported me wholeheartedly in every single endeavour in my life. Your unwavering belief in me is astounding and because of it, I am deeply motivated to live up to my potential and be the best version of myself. To say I am blessed to have parents like you is a gross understatement.

From the bottom of my heart, I thank you.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Purpose of the Study

For many reasons, consumer trust in brands is in decline (Eggers et al.,, 2013; Gerzema, 2009; Gilmore & Pine, 2007; Schallehn et al.,, 2014). Eggers et al., (2013) attribute this to corporate dissonance – where breakdowns in trust occur when the actions of brands differ from the promises and values communicated by them. Consumers find themselves unable to trust what is presented to them and as a result, there is growing demand for honest and trustworthy brands (Burnett & Hutton, 2007).

To build brand trust, a brand should have both good intentions and sound abilities (Delgado-Ballester, 2004; Delgado-Ballester & Luis Munuera-Alemán, 2001; Morgan & Hunt, 1994). This description of brand trust echoes that of authentic brands; authentic brands demonstrate their intentions through wholesome organisational values and their ability to deliver on their brand promise (Morhart et al.,, 2015; Schallehn et al.,, 2014). Brand authenticity is considered to have a positive effect on brand trust, particularly in times of economic distress (Beverland, 2005a; Beverland & Farrelly, 2010; Brown et al.,, 2003; Eggers et al.,, 2013; Gilmore & Pine, 2007; Molleda & Jain, 2013; Schallehn et al.,, 2014).

Authentic brands put their organisational values at the core of their practices and actions (Eggers et al.,, 2013). Ascribing humanlike attributes to brands (brand anthropomorphism) has been found to enhance the perception of authenticity and the consumers ability to recognise the brands inherent values (Morhart et al.,, 2015). Due to a rebirth in preindustrial values, consumers are growing increasingly fond of anthropomorphised brands (Brown, 2010; Malone & Fiske, 2013). It has been said that brands that are succeeding are those that portray themselves as humanlike; bringing the *era of the human brand* (Malone & Fiske, 2013; Marshall & Ritchie, 2013).

A need for more authentic, humanlike brands can also be attributed to the fact that consumers today relate to brands in the same way they relate to people (Fournier, 1998). The same socials standards that govern the relationships between people, now appear in the relationships between people and brands (Aggarwal, 2004; Aggarwal & Law, 2005). Social psychology theory states that people make judgements about others based on an evaluation of two dimensions: warmth and competence (Cuddy, Fiske, & Glick, 2008; Fiske, Cuddy, & Glick, 2007; Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002). Perceived warmth is felt if one believes another to have good intentions and perceived competence if one believes another to have the ability to carry out those intentions (Cuddy et al.,, 2007). In the last few years, this theory has been applied to brand consumption; where humans are said to evaluate brands on the basis of those same two dimensions (J. Aaker et al.,, 2010; Fiske, Malone, & Kervyn, 2012; Kervyn et al.,, 2012; Malone & Fiske, 2013).

In branding, warmth is felt if the brand is believed to have virtuous intentions, and competence if the brand is believed to have the ability to deliver on their intentions (Kervyn et al.,, 2012). Expressions of warmth and competence reappeared throughout the literature on brand authenticity and brand trust. In authentic brands, warmth is demonstrated through key attributes such as "sincerity" (Beverland, 2005a; Fine, 2003; Napoli et al.,, 2014; Pace, 2015), "integrity" (Morhart et al.,, 2015) and "transparency" (Molleda & Jain, 2013; Shen & Kim, 2012). Whilst competence is conveyed through "credibility" (Morhart et al.,, 2015), "reliability" (Bruhn et al.,, 2012), and "continuity" or "consistency" (Bruhn et al.,, 2012; Eggers et al.,, 2013; Morhart et al.,, 2015; Schallehn et al.,, 2014; Shen & Kim, 2012). Brand trust is postulated as two-dimensional, made up of brand intentions and brand reliability, and intentions echo the description of warmth and reliability that of competence (Delgado-Ballester, 2004).

At its core, this research was intended to establish whether the *human brand* is simply a marketing trend or an idea that has real academic and practitioner value. To do so, it was necessary to quantify the humanisation of brands into a research model. The literature demonstrated that brand authenticity and brand trust were strongly connected to warmth and competence and so the purpose of this study was to investigate the role of brand authenticity in the development of brand trust in South Africa. First, the researcher aimed to gain a strong understanding of the dimensions of brand authenticity. Second, to evaluate the nature of the relationship between brand authenticity and brand trust, and finally, to establish whether expressions of warmth and competence mediate that relationship. It was hoped that this research would make an important contribution to academic and practitioner knowledge on this current topic in the field of branding.

1.2. Context of the Study

1.2.1. Theoretical Background

This study is grounded in theories on warmth and competence as they relate to brand perception and fit within the larger context of brand anthropomorphism. Anthropomorphism refers to the attribution of humanlike characteristics, motivations, intentions and emotions to non-human entities (Epley, Waytz, & Cacioppo, 2007). Belk (1988) investigated the way in which consumers accumulate possessions to express their own identity and found that brands serve as such. Academic research on the anthropomorphism of brands first became prevalent with the brand personality framework; theory that deals with the inference of human personality traits onto brands (J. Aaker, 1997). There has been ongoing work on brand anthropomorphism including further studies on brand personality (J. Aaker, Fournier, & Brasel, 2004; J. L. Aaker, Benet-Martinez, & Garolera, 2001; Keller & Richey, 2006), and interrelated concepts, such as consumer-brand relationships (J. Aaker et al.,, 2004; Fournier, 1998, 2009; Fournier, Breazeale, &

Fetscherin, 2012; Patterson & O Malley, 2006) and brand love (Batra, Ahuvia, & Bagozzi, 2012; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Rauschnabel & Ahuvia, 2014).

More recently, brand anthropomorphism has been studied in relation to brand perception (J. Aaker et al.,, 2010; Kervyn et al.,, 2012; Malone & Fiske, 2013). The Stereotype Content Model (SCM) (Cuddy et al.,, 2007), a well-established model from social psychology, provides a theoretical framework to better understand the humanisation of brands. Kervyn et al., (2012) utilised this model as the basis for their study of the way in which consumers perceive, feel about and relate to brands. The SCM (Cuddy et al.,, 2007) posits that humans evaluate others on the basis of perceived warmth and competence (Cuddy et al.,, 2007, 2008; Fiske et al.,, 2007; Fiske et al.,, 2002). Humans now evaluate brands in the same way, making brands more humanlike than ever before (Kervyn et al.,, 2012; Malone & Fiske, 2013).

According to Fiske et al., (2002), warmth is based on how well-intentioned one person perceives another to be. One who is perceived as warm will possess qualities such as good-natured, trustworthy, tolerant, friendly and sincere (Cuddy et al.,, 2007, 2008). On the other hand, competence is based on the perceived ability of one to act out their intentions towards another (Fiske et al.,, 2002). One who is perceived as competent will generally possess qualities such as capable, skillful, intelligent and confident (Cuddy et al.,, 2007, 2008).

Cuddy et al., (2007) created a complimentary model for the SCM, the Behavior from Intergroup Affect and Stereotypes (BIAS) map. The BIAS map illustrates four possible combinations of warmth and competence perceptions on two-by-two matrix; and the emotional and behavioural consequences of each combination. The four emotional responses are contempt (lack of perceived warmth and competence), pity (perceived warmth without competence), envy (perceived competence without warmth) and admiration (perceived warmth and competence). The most favourable would be to be perceived as both warm and competent, where one would receive admiration from others. The BIAS map also indicates the behavioural responses of each combination. Perceived warmth incites active facilitation (i.e. help), whilst a lack of warmth incites active harm (i.e. attack). Perceived competence incites passive facilitation (i.e. co-operation), whilst a lack of competence incites passive harm (i.e. neglect) (Cuddy et al.,, 2007, 2008).

J. Aaker et al., (2010) was one of the first to apply this theory to brands by investigating the perceived warmth and competence of non-profit versus for-profit brands. Kervyn et al., (2012) adapted the primary tenets of the SCM and the BIAS map (Cuddy et al.,, 2007), and created a revised model that can be applied to brand perception. This is the Brands as Intentional Agents Framework (BIAF) and it provides a theoretical framework for understanding how consumers perceive brands based on the same two dimensions of warmth and competence. When applied to brands, warmth and competence are referred to as intentions (warmth) and ability (competence) (Kervyn et al.,, 2012; Malone & Fiske, 2013). However, to avoid confusion with the

dimensions of brand trust (brand intentions and brand reliability), these dimensions remained warmth and competence throughout this study. The BIAF (Kervyn et al.,, 2012) makes further contributions to academic knowledge on brand anthropomorphism and the study was grounded in this theoretical context.

To better understand the practical implications of warmth and competence in brand management, it is valuable to investigate their predictors and outcomes. Little work has been conducted on the predictors of warmth and competence in brands and this study addresses this gap by looking at brand authenticity as a predictor variable. Several studies have investigated the outcomes of warmth and competence, and include: willingness to buy (J. Aaker et al.,, 2010); purchase intent, brand loyalty and likelihood to recommend (Kervyn et al.,, 2012); strengthened consumer-brand relationships (Keller, 2012); brand advocacy and online sales (Andrei & ZAIÞ, 2014); positive brand attitudes (Ivens, Leischnig, Muller, & Valta, 2015); and brand trust (Li, Zhou, Kashyap, & Yang, 2008). Although some research has been conducted on warmth and competence in relation to brand trust, authors have called for further research in this area (J. Aaker, Garbinsky, & Vohs, 2012; Fournier & Alvarez, 2012; MacInnis, 2012).

1.2.2. South African Context

Marais (2011) states that after a turbulent past, some may find South Africa today unrecognisable, for the better – a liberal constitution, abundant local business and entrepreneurship opportunities, ongoing infrastructure and social development, and an economy with a fair amount of resilience – this developing country has progressed immensely in its years of democracy. In spite of this, efforts to improve the lives of South Africans are still coming up against massive obstructions, such as poor legislation and policy choices, inefficient and corrupt governance, and malfunctioning systems that all contribute to increasing feelings of pessimism and the general erosion of trust (Marais, 2011). This environment makes South Africa an interesting context within which to conduct research on authenticity and trust.

Decrease in General Trust

Generalised trust refers to trust in others, whilst institutional trust refers to trust in regulatory systems (Hobbs & Goddard, 2015). Steenkamp (2009) states that both are fundamental to any society and are key to the positive growth of South Africa. South Africa is a country long characterised by low levels of trust between its citizens, particularly amongst groups of differing racial backgrounds, as was typified by the Apartheid government that institutionalised racism. Decades after the installment of a democracy, low levels of trust between citizens ensue. For example, this is evident in the ongoing xenophobic attacks against foreign nationals from South Africa's neighbouring countries (Steenkamp, 2009).

In addition, major breakdowns of trust are occurring between the citizens of South Africa and the institutions

that are entrusted to lead them (Moeng, 2015; Steenkamp, 2009). Diminishing trust in the South African government can be attributed to a continuous lack of national service delivery (Mayosi, Lawn, van Niekerk, Bradshaw, Karim, & Coovadia, 2012; Steenkamp, 2009). For example, the electricity crisis where lengthy power outages were experienced across the country for a number of years (Fell, 2009). These power outages impacted businesses, restaurants, banks, factories and residences (Krupa & Burch, 2011). More recently, drought has ravaged the country and although the primary cause is climate change, the consequences have been hard felt due to poor resource management and planning (Nevin, 2015).

According to an Afrobarometer study by Lekalake (2015), even trust in the country's own president is at its lowest level since 2000. Only a third (34%) of South Africans trust current President Jacob Zuma, and even out of his own African National Congress (ANC) supporters, half say they trust him "just a little" (Lekalake, 2015). President Zuma has been involved in a number of negative incidents, bringing corrupt governance to the fore. Weeks before the national elections of 2009, 783 charges of corruption against him were dropped. In 2014, former Public Protector, Adv. Thuli Madonsela, published a report in which it was alleged that the President had spent an unauthorised R246-million on "security improvements" to his Nkandla residence, including a swimming pool, animal enclosures, a social area, air-conditioning, landscaping and new roads for the sole use of the Zuma family (de Wet, 2015). The latest in this case is that the Constitutional Court of South Africa has ordered President Zuma to pay back the R7.8-million used for non-security upgrades to his home (Segodi, 2016). In April 2016, the 783 charges were reinstated as the National Prosecuting Authority found no reason for them to have been dropped in the first place (BBC, 2016).

Very recently, the office of the Public Protector published the controversial state capture report. The report detailed corruption at the highest level, particularly the relationship between President Zuma and the Guptas, a wealthy local family. The report showed the Guptas wielding undue political influence over ministerial appointments and having played a part in the December 2015 fiasco, when the former Minister of Finance, Nhlanhla Nene was fired quite suddenly, and replaced by David Van Rooyen. The rand plummeted and within a week, Van Rooyen was replaced by (former) Minister of Finance, Pravin Gordhan (Gaffey, 2016).

Justifiably then, there is intense scepticism towards the South African government (Steenkamp, 2009). According to McKenzie (2016), the country is in a volatile state with violent public protests, a drought and weak commodity prices. In 2016, the South African people were eagerly awaiting the decisions of ratings agencies with regards to the economic status of the country (McKenzie, 2016). The bonds between the government and its citizens have broken down (Mayosi et al.,, 2012). Kaldor (2003) states that this is a major paradox of countries that have adopted democratic leadership in an attempt to mend a fragmented history – they are now experiencing a greater decay in trust than ever before.

Decrease in Brand Trust

On a global scale, studies conducted in the United States found that consumer trust in brands is at an all-time low (Eggers et al.,, 2013; Malone & Fiske, 2013). As far back as 2003, a study indicated that 44% of the public trusted businesses less than they had the previous year (Lantieri & Chiagouris, 2009). Lantieri and Chiagouris (2009) have attributed this to a number of reasons including the rapid growth of the Internet and corporate profit maximisation, which is responsible for increased consumer cynicism. Companies that are focused on meaningless transactions that drive short-term profitability are generally being received with feelings of suspicion and mistrust (Malone & Fiske, 2013). Eggers et al., (2013) attribute this decay in brand trust to corporate dissonance – where the actions of brands differ to the promises and values communicated by them. Others place blame on the global economic recession that began in 2008 and continues to this day (Gerzema, 2009; Lantieri & Chiagouris, 2009; Marshall & Ritchie, 2013; Rosica, Amos, & Yenne, 2007).

Porter and Kramer (2011) state that opportunities for building trust between companies and consumers are even greater in developing countries, where the needs of large percentages of the population remain underserved. According to Marais (2011), company profits in South Africa rose from 26% in 1993, to 31% in 2004, while workers' wages fell from 57% to 52%. This in a country where half its population are living in poverty, and income inequality continues to soar (Marais, 2011). There have been several high profile incidents in which brands have come under the spotlight for unethical behaviour, resulting in decreased brand trust in South Africa.

Packaged goods company, Tiger Brands, and a handful of other local manufacturers, were caught fixing the price of bread, flour and maize for over 12 years until an investigation finally came to the fore in 2007. The manager of the Competition Commission at the time, Thulani Kunene, pointed out that there is no worse cartelling than that of products that meet the basic needs of the poor (Flanagan, Smillie, & Tromp, 2007). When a consumer feels betrayed, their brand trust decreases (Arnott, Wilson, Elliott, & Yannopoulou, 2007). It can be assumed that this incident negatively impacted trust in Tiger Brands, and even the local government for allowing this unethical behaviour to remain uncovered for so long (Arnott et al.,, 2007).

In 2013, retail giant Woolworths, was involved in a dispute with a local designer after she accused the company of stealing a design that she had presented to them. According to Carin (2013), the designer had recorded conversations that demonstrated that Woolworths did not wish to pay her proposed fee. However, some months later, the designer spotted an almost identical design on a cushion in a local Woolworths store (Carin, 2013). This was a particularly important case as Woolworths is generally well-respected for their ethical brand values, including a commitment to sustainability and the well-being of local businesses (Dos

Santos, Svensson, & Padin, 2013). The case went public and was featured on international news, leaving many loyal customers disturbed and with a sense of diminished trust in the brand.

KFC recently came under fire after employees at the Braamfontein branch in Johannesburg were filmed washing raw chicken on a filthy street floor behind the restaurant (Bates, 2015). The video footage went viral, resulting in a public relations disaster for the brand and a significant decrease in brand credibility. In response, managing director of KFC Africa, Doug Smart, closed the branch to allow for a proper investigation and subsequently released a public apology (Bates, 2015).

Hobbs and Goddard (2015) state that trust, in any form, can be restored. Mayosi et al., (2012) believe that strategies involving a clampdown on unethical governance will renew the trust of the people of South Africa in their government. Porter and Kramer (2011) suggest that collaboration between the private sector, trade associations, government and non-profit organisations will yield the most impactful results in rebuilding institutional trust. Communication, transparency and honesty have been identified as possible ways to restore brand trust (Lindgreen, 2003). These are some of the key attributes of authentic brands and authenticity itself has been proven to positively impact brand trust (Beverland, 2005a; Beverland & Farrelly, 2010; Morhart et al.,, 2015; Schallehn et al.,, 2014).

1.3. Problem Statement

Brand authenticity is an important issue in branding, yet its definitions and dimensions are not consistent across academic literature (Beverland, 2005a; Beverland, 2005b; Bruhn et al.,, 2012; Gilmore & Pine, 2007). A key research area was to investigate brand authenticity by gaining clarity on its dimensions in South Africa. In doing so, it would be easier to evaluate the relationship between authentic brands and humanised brands, and establish whether brand trust is an outcome of such brands.

1.2.3. Research Problem

Establish and evaluate the most pertinent dimensions of brand authenticity, and demonstrate the impact of brand authenticity on brand trust. Ascertain whether perceived warmth and competence can be deemed mediator variables in the relationship between brand authenticity and brand trust.

1.2.4. Sub-problems

1. Establish and evaluate the most pertinent dimensions of brand authenticity.
2. Demonstrate the impact of brand authenticity on brand trust.
3. Ascertain whether perceived warmth and competence can be deemed mediator variables in the relationship between brand authenticity and brand trust.

1.4. Research Objectives

Theoretical Objectives

1. To review the literature on brand authenticity, warmth and competence, and brand trust.
2. To develop a deep understanding of brand authenticity.
3. To evolve theories on perceived warmth and competence in brands.
4. To develop a framework that will aid practitioners in the development of human brands.

Empirical Objectives

1. To investigate the relationships between brand authenticity, perceived warmth and competence, and brand trust.
2. To determine the dimensions of brand authenticity.
3. To determine whether brand trust is a two-dimensional construct, as postulated in the literature.
4. To establish whether perceived warmth and competence can be deemed mediator variables in the relationship between brand authenticity and brand trust.

1.5. Significance of the Study

Ultimately, it was hoped that this research would provide value for academics and practitioners alike. The outcome was intended to add value by contributing to academic knowledge on brand authenticity, perceived warmth and competence, and brand trust, and evolving theories on warmth and competence in brand perception. In addition, it was hoped that the research findings would provide clarity as to the dimensions and attributes of brands that foster trust in times of high consumer scepticism. This research addressed a number of contextual, methodological and theoretical gaps.

Contextual Significance

There was no evidence of research that tests the theories of the Brands as Intentional Agents Framework (BIAF) (Kervyn et al.,, 2012) outside of the United States or Europe, and particularly in South Africa. There was clearly a need for research of this kind as authors have called for more integrative research on these theories (Fiske et al.,, 2012). Due to the subjective nature of brand authenticity, the context in which the research is conducted is of great importance to the meaning of brand authenticity (Grayson, 2002; Grayson & Martinec, 2004); particularly as consumers co-create brand authenticity (Pace, 2015). Research on brand authenticity conducted in alternate social and cultural contexts is of real academic value as authenticity is a malleable and constantly evolving construct (Beverland, 2005a; Eggers et al.,, 2013).

Methodological Significance

In this field of study, there is a large body of research that adopts a qualitative methodology (Alexander, 2009; Beverland & Farrelly, 2010; Hopper, Costley, & Friend, 2015). This might be attributed to the subjective and latent nature of these constructs. However, Schallehn et al., (2014) believe that at this stage, research that adopts a quantitative methodology will be of great value, specifically in furthering the academic understanding brand authenticity by offering a more objective view. To contribute methodological significance, this study adopted a quantitative methodology.

Theoretical Significance

The study addressed a number of theoretical gaps identified in previous research:

- Questions about the nature of brand authenticity and its role in strategic marketing remain unanswered (Morhart et al.,, 2015). In addition, there is a need for research that provides practitioners with the strategic tools that will help boost brand authenticity (Schallehn et al.,, 2014).
- Fournier and Alvarez (2012) state that advancing the Brands as Intentional Agents Framework (Kervyn et al.,, 2012) would require some enlightenment on the mechanisms and processes that can be used to enhance warmth and competence in brands.
- In general, there is a need to further investigate the predictors of brand trust (Dowell, Heffernan, & Morrison, 2013; Lassoued & Hobbs, 2015). Fournier and Alvarez (2012) state that the Brands as Intentional Agents Framework (Kervyn et al.,, 2012) is a trust model and that for real-world application, it should be investigated in relation to brand trust. MacInnis (2012) also calls for more research on the relationship between warmth, competence and brand trust.
- There is a limited body of work on anthropomorphism as it is applied to the field of branding (Freling & Forbes, 2005). According to Brown (2010), the appeal of using anthropomorphism in marketing is poorly understood. Morhart et al., (2015) call for research to shed light on the relationship between brand authenticity and brand anthropomorphism.

1.6. Delimitations of the Study

- The study focused on a specific market segment: the domestic airline category in South Africa.
- The study was confined to seven airlines that fly within South African borders, namely; British Airways (BA), Kulula, South African Airways (SAA), Mango, Safair, Blue Crane and CemAir.
- Only regular customers (who fly more than three times per year) were included in this research.

1.7. Definition of Terms

1. **Brand Authenticity** has been defined as "a subjective evaluation of genuineness ascribed to a brand by a consumer" (Napoli et al.,, 2014, p. 1091).
2. **Anthropomorphism** has been defined as the attribution of human characteristics and features to non-human entities (Aggarwal & Mcgill, 2012).
3. **Perceived warmth** has been defined as the belief that the brand has good intentions and acts in the consumers best interests (Kervyn et al.,, 2012).
4. **Perceived competence** has been defined as the belief that the brand has the ability to carry out their intentions (Kervyn et al.,, 2012).
5. **Brand trust** has been defined as: "the confident expectations about the brand's reliability and intentions in situations entailing risk to the consumer" (Delgado-Ballester, 2004, p. 586).
6. **Brand reliability** has been defined as being: "… based on the extent to which the consumer believes that the brand accomplishes its value promise" (Delgado-Ballester, 2004, p. 575).
7. **Brand intentions** has been defined as being: "…the extent to which the consumer believes that the brand would hold consumer's interests ahead of its self-interest" (Delgado-Ballester, 2004, p. 575).

1.8. Assumptions

- Based on the literature review, it was assumed that originality, continuity, credibility and integrity were the four most important dimensions of authentic brands.
- Due to a strong literary overlap, it was assumed that there was a causal relationship between the variables (brand authenticity, perceived warmth and competence, and brand trust).
- It was assumed that the respondents were honest in their answering of the questions and that their answers are representative of the truth.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The following chapter contains a detailed review of the academic literature on brand authenticity, perceived warmth and competence, and brand trust. The literature review comprises two parts, A and B.

As the relationship between brand authenticity and brand trust was inherent to the conceptual model (Figure 1), Part A provides a detailed review of the literature on these two constructs and their relationship as it is discussed in previous academic research.

Perceived warmth and competence were hypothesised as mediator variables in the relationship between brand authenticity and brand trust. Part B presents the theoretical framework for the study and the hypotheses' development with a detailed discussion on perceived warmth and competence in brands. This section includes a brief review of the literature on brand authenticity in relation to perceived warmth, and perceived warmth in relation to brand trust, which led to the development of hypothesis one. It also includes a brief review of the literature on brand authenticity in relation to perceived competence, and perceived competence in relation to brand trust, which led to the development of hypothesis two.

The aim of the literature review was to demonstrate a deep understanding of previous research on each variable, and to show the logical development of the research hypotheses, presented at the conclusion of Chapter 2.

2.1. Conceptual Model

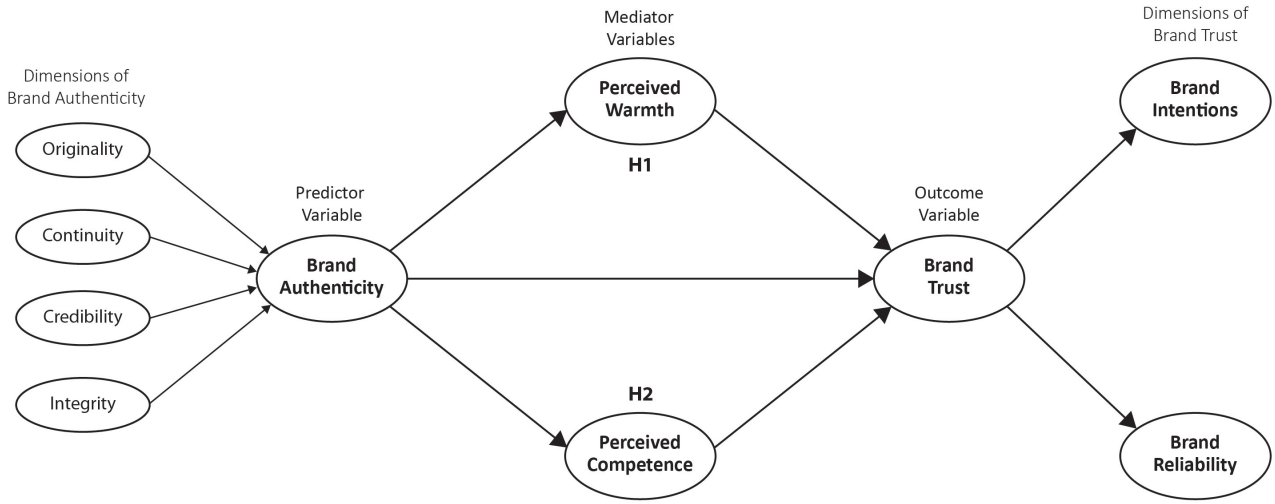


Figure 1: Conceptual Model

Predictor, Mediator and Outcome Variables

The conceptual model (refer to Figure 1 on page 11) shows the relationships that were investigated in the study. The key variables were brand authenticity, perceived warmth and competence, and brand trust. The model looked specifically at the causal relationships between brand authenticity (predictor) and brand trust (outcome), where perceived warmth and competence were hypothesised as the mediator variables in this relationship. Brand authenticity was postulated as having four dimensions: originality, continuity, credibility and integrity. Brand trust was postulated as having two dimensions, brand intentions and brand reliability (Delgado-Ballester, 2004).

2.2. Overview

Today, brand authenticity is of critical importance to brand users (Gilmore & Pine, 2007). So much so that Brown et al., (2003, p. 21) described brand authenticity as one of the "cornerstones of contemporary marketing". To overcome a world that lacks meaning, consumers seek that which is authentic (Beverland & Farrelly, 2010; Leigh et al.,, 2006). However, brand authenticity remains an unsolved mystery in academic literature. This latent construct is highly complex and there is great inconsistency in its conceptualisations and definitions (Beverland, 2005a; Beverland, 2005b; Bruhn et al.,, 2012; Pace, 2015; Taylor, 2001).

In line with the first research problem to establish and evaluate its most pertinent dimensions, the literature review delves into great detail on brand authenticity. It includes a summary of brand authenticity from over 30 relevant research studies. The meaning of brand authenticity evolved from an understanding of authenticity as a construct on its own and so, this is included in the literature review. There are three predominant types of authenticity: objective, constructive and existential**.** Authenticity can be inherent as in objective authenticity (Beverland, 2005a; Morhart et al.,, 2015); it can be inferred as in constructive authenticity (Beverland & Farrelly, 2010); and, it can be used for self-expression as in existential authenticity (Reisinger & Steiner, 2006; Wang, 1999).

Throughout the literature, authenticity is repeatedly described as that which is "genuine, real and true" (Arnould & Price, 2000; Beverland & Farrelly, 2010; Grayson & Martinec, 2004; Kennick, 1985; Reisinger & Steiner, 2006). Numerous authors have defined brand authenticity as an evaluation of the perceived extent of genuineness (Fine, 2003; Hopper et al.,, 2015; MacCannell, 1973; Napoli et al.,, 2014; Postrel, 2002; Reisinger & Steiner, 2006). This recurring idea led to the selected definition of brand authenticity for this study: "a subjective evaluation of genuineness ascribed to a brand by a consumer" (Napoli et al.,, 2014, p. 1091).

What is equally as important is that the meaning of brand authenticity is contextual (Grayson, 2002; Grayson & Martinec, 2004). Brand authenticity changes according to the social and cultural contexts in which it is evaluated (Beverland, 2005a; Eggers et al.,, 2013). Consumers co-create the meaning of brand authenticity according to their own understanding of what is genuine, sincere, real and true (Beverland & Farrelly, 2010; D. Holt, 1998; Leigh et al.,, 2006; Molleda, 2010; Pace, 2015; R. A. Peterson, 1997).

To understand the practical implications of brand authenticity in strategic marketing, it is necessary to study its dimensions and attributes. Several recent studies have investigated the dimensions of brand authenticity and there is undeniable repetition across them. These important studies claim the following key dimensions of brand authenticity: "individuality", "originality" and "naturalness" (Bruhn et al.,, 2012; Schallehn et al.,, 2014); "credibility" and "reliability" (Bruhn et al.,, 2012; Morhart et al.,, 2015); "consistency" (Eggers et al.,, 2013; Schallehn et al.,, 2014) and "continuity" (Bruhn et al.,, 2012; Morhart et al.,, 2015); and, "integrity" and "symbolism" (Morhart et al.,, 2015).

From an evaluation of the literature, four dimensions for brand authenticity were postulated in the conceptual model; they were originality, continuity, credibility and integrity (Bruhn et al.,, 2012; Morhart et al.,, 2015). These four dimensions are discussed from an academic perspective and from a practical perspective. The literature review discusses some ideas as to how authenticity becomes apparent in the daily activities of brands, specifically through brand organisational values, and marketing and communication strategies.

The conceptual model shows an implicit relationship between brand authenticity and brand trust (outcome variable) and the second research sub-problem was to demonstrate the impact of this relationship. Brand authenticity has been repeatedly linked to brand trust (Eggers et al.,, 2013; Hon & Grunig, 1999; Napoli et al.,, 2014; Schallehn et al.,, 2014). In essence, authentic brands are committed to delivering on their promises (Bruhn et al.,, 2012; Eggers et al.,, 2013; Morhart et al.,, 2015) and consumers trust brands that perform as promised (Napoli et al.,, 2014). In times of consumer scepticism, trust is in decline and authenticity provides just the antidote for this (Bruhn et al.,, 2012; Eggers et al.,, 2013; Gerzema, 2009).

The renewal of brand trust is of great interest to brand managers (Gerzema, 2009; Porter & Kramer, 2011; Rosica et al.,, 2007). Like brand authenticity, brand trust is a latent and highly complex construct (Hobbs & Goddard, 2015). Foundational research on brand trust includes studies by Morgan and Hunt (1994), Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001) and Delgado-Ballester and Luis Munuera-Alemán (2001). However, it was Delgado-Ballester (2004) who found that brand trust is a two-dimensional construct comprising brand intentions and brand reliability. Brand intentions are based on the extent to which a consumer believes that a brand has their best interests in mind, and brand reliability is based on the extent to which a consumer believes that that brand achieves what it promises (Delgado-Ballester, 2004).

After an extensive review of the literature on brand authenticity and brand trust, it was believed that there could be a possible relationship between these constructs and two additional variables, perceived warmth and competence. This was due to a strong overlap between the dimensions of authentic brands, with the perceived warmth and competence, and the conceptualisation of brand trust as containing brand intentions and brand reliability. This led to the identification of a third research problem, which was to ascertain whether perceived warmth and competence could be deemed mediator variables in the relationship between brand authenticity and brand trust.

For many years now, it has been widely accepted that brands adopt humanlike traits (J. Aaker, 1997; J. Aaker et al.,, 2010; Aggarwal & McGill, 2007, 2012; Fournier, 1998, 2009; Fournier & Alvarez, 2012; Kervyn et al.,, 2012). The process of making brands more humanlike, is referred to as brand anthropomorphism (Aggarwal & McGill, 2007). Humanised brands are believed to have more meaningful relationships with their customers (Fournier & Alvarez, 2012; Kervyn et al.,, 2012; Kim & McGill, 2011; Malone & Fiske, 2013). Furthermore, research demonstrates that consumers relate to brands in the same way they do people (Fournier, 1998; Fournier & Alvarez, 2012). In interpersonal relationships, humans evaluate others based on perceived warmth and competence (Cuddy et al.,, 2007, 2008; Fiske et al.,, 2002). It has been found that consumers form judgements about brands on the basis of these same two dimensions (J. Aaker et al.,, 2004; J. Aaker et al.,, 2010; Kervyn et al.,, 2012). Brands that are to succeed in the age of marketing, where meaningful customer relationships are key to brand trust, are those that enhance brand anthropomorphism through expressions of warmth and competence (Fournier & Alvarez, 2012; Malone & Fiske, 2013).

As per the two hypotheses of this research, perceived warmth and competence are discussed in detail in the literature review. Simply put, perceived warmth is felt when a consumer believes the brand to have good intentions, and perceived competence when the consumer believes the brand to have the ability to carry out those intentions (J. Aaker et al.,, 2004; J. Aaker et al.,, 2010; Kervyn et al.,, 2012; Malone & Fiske, 2013). The Brands as Intentional Agents Framework (BIAF) (Kervyn et al.,, 2012) provided the theoretical framework for this study. This framework evolved out of two well-tested social psychology models, known as the Stereotype Content Model (SCM) and the BIAS (Behaviour from Intergroup Affect and Stereotype) map (Cuddy et al.,, 2007). The BIAF is a two-by-two matrix that shows four possible combinations of perceived warmth and competence in brands, and the consumers' emotional and behavioural outcomes thereof. The BIAF is said to be a valuable tool in understanding the way in which consumers perceive, feel towards and relate to brands (Kervyn et al.,, 2012). It has even been referred to as a "trust model" (p. 182) that could provide insight into understanding how perceived warmth and competence could enhance brand trust (Fournier & Alvarez, 2012).

As perceived warmth and competence are hypothesised as mediator variables in the relationship between brand authenticity and brand trust, each is discussed in relation to these constructs. Warmth is described as "…assessing whether one is kind, friendly, and good-natured; whether one appears sincere, honest, moral, and trustworthy…" (Malone & Fiske, 2013, p. 22). So too is brand authenticity synonymous with "sincerity" (Beverland, 2005a; Fine, 2003; Napoli et al.,, 2014; Pace, 2015), "honesty" (Morhart et al.,, 2015), "morality" (Bendix, 1997; Morhart et al.,, 2015) and "trust" (Eggers et al.,, 2013). Trust has been described as the feeling of security when one believes that another has positive intentions and will act according to one's best interests (Delgado-Ballester & Luis Munuera-Alemán, 2001; Doney & Cannon, 1997). Perceived warmth is felt when one perceives the brand to have good intentions and to be acting in the best interests of the consumer (Kervyn et al.,, 2012). The literature suggested a possible relationship between brand authenticity, perceived warmth and brand trust, which led to the development of hypothesis one.

Perceived competence in brands is understood as the degree to which the consumer believes that a brand has the required skills and knowledge to deliver on its promise (Coulter & Coulter, 2002). Authentic brands are committed to delivering on their brand promise (Schallehn et al.,, 2014). Credibility, a key dimension of brand authenticity, has been found to have a positive impact on perceived competence (Keller, 2012; Morhart et al.,, 2015; Moscarani, 2007). So too is brand trust, specifically brand reliability, related to a promise of performance (Delgado-Ballester, 2004; Delgado-Ballester & Luis Munuera-Alemán, 2001). Previous studies have demonstrated that competence increases brand trust (Li et al.,, 2008; Schallehn et al.,, 2014). Kervyn et al., (2012) proved brand loyalty to be a behavioural outcome of perceived competence, and loyalty is widely accepted as leading to brand trust (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; Delgado-Ballester & Luis Munuera-Alemán, 2001; Lau & Lee, 1999). The literature suggested a possible relationship between brand authenticity, perceived competence and brand trust, which led to the development of hypothesis two.

2.3. Literature Review Part A: Brand Authenticity and Brand Trust

2.3.1. Brand Authenticity

Sub-problem 1: Establish and evaluate the most pertinent dimensions of brand authenticity.

Grayson and Martinec (2004) point out that consumers have demanded authenticity for the longest time – from authenticity in religious relics to luxury goods. However, Shen and Kim (2012) posed the question of whether authenticity is not just another marketing buzzword? Peñaloza (2000) answered this question some 12 years prior to that, stating that authenticity was no trend at all, but a real consumer attempt to transform the current state of brand consumption. Lasn (1999, p. xvi) said quite boldly about brand authenticity: "And then on the ruins of the old consumer culture, we will build a new one with a non-commercial heart and soul".

Globalisation and commodification are said to be responsible for the destruction of authenticity over several decades (MacCannell, 1973). Consumers are bombarded with unashamed commercial intent, meaningless marketing messages, copies, fakes and counterfeits (D. Holt, 2002; Leigh et al.,, 2006). Baudrillard (1988) used the word *simulacrum* to describe this sea of sameness that consumers are faced with; a pervasive lack of depth and originality to an era of hypercreation. In this age of mass culture, consumers feel an overwhelming loss of meaning as post-modern brands are largely perceived as fake, driving a return towards that which is believed to be authentic (Beverland & Farrelly, 2010; D. Holt, 2002; Leigh et al.,, 2006; Taylor, 2001). To regain a sense of value, consumers seek out authentic brands and experiences (Burnett & Hutton, 2007; Fine, 2003; Gilmore & Pine, 2007; D. Holt, 1998; Peñaloza, 2000). This is evident, for example, in the growing popularity of authentic tourism, covered extensively in academic literature (Bruner, 1989; Chhabra, Healy, & Sills, 2003; Cohen, 1988; Engeset & Elvekrok, 2015; MacCannell, 1973; Reisinger & Steiner, 2006; Steiner & Reisinger, 2006; Taylor, 2001; Wang, 1999). For the most part, academics agree that authenticity has now become an integral part of life, consumption and brand strategy (Brown et al.,, 2003; Gilmore & Pine, 2007; Grayson & Martinec, 2004).

Brands are seeking new ways to differentiate themselves in the communication clutter (Alexander, 2009). Brand managers face the reality that almost all goods and services have long become commodities (Gilmore & Pine, 2007); superior product quality and great service are expected (Beverland, 2005b; Beverland et al.,, 2008); and distinctive benefits or new technologies are rarely innovative anymore (Burnett & Hutton, 2007). Gilmore and Pine (2007, p. 5) explained: “Authenticity has overtaken quality as the prevailing criterion, just as quality overtook cost, and as cost overtook availability”. Brands need to strengthen the connection they have with their customers by focusing not only on performance, but on what they stand for as an organisation (Burnett & Hutton, 2007). As authenticity has a positive affect on brand relationship quality (Fritz et al.,, 2017), there is a growing trend towards using authenticity as a positioning tool (Beverland, 2005a; Beverland, 2005b; Bruhn et al.,, 2012; Grayson & Martinec, 2004). Authenticity is today considered a key success factor in brand strategy (Schallehn et al.,, 2014).

The Search for a Definition

Authenticity has been studied in various disciplines: art, anthropology, psychology, sociology, education, human communications, strategic communication, marketing, advertising, branding, management and leadership (Molleda & Jain, 2013; Shen & Kim, 2012). Numerous authors agree that the meaning of authenticity is dependent on the context and the subject that is being evaluated (Arnould & Price, 2000; Grayson, 2002; Grayson & Martinec, 2004; Leigh et al.,, 2006; Wang, 1999). It is a socially constructed concept – whereby its meaning is in need of constant negotiation due to an ever-changing world (Chhabra,

2005; Engeset & Elvekrok, 2015; K. Holt, 2012). What is consistent is that authenticity generally involves some process of evaluation by a person about a subject (Newman & Dhar, 2014).

Since the early 1980's, there has been diverse debate on the definition of authenticity in academic research (Taylor, 2001). To this day, there remains an inconsistent and fragmented understanding of authenticity, particularly as it is applied to branding (Beverland, 2005a; Beverland, 2005b; Bruhn et al.,, 2012). Taylor (2001, p. 8) states: "…there are as many definitions of authenticity as there are those who write about it". Pace (2015) attributes the multitude of conceptualisations of brand authenticity to the rich and complex nature of the construct. Academics seem unable to agree, so much so, that Reisinger and Steiner (2006) concluded that the quest for an accepted definition of brand authenticity should be abandoned altogether.

However, authenticity remains a critical criterion for consumers and an important differentiator for brands (D. A. Aaker, 1996; Gilmore & Pine, 2007; Keller, 1993). Therefore, the pursuit of clarity on the subject should continue and in line with the first sub-problem of this study, an extensive literature review was conducted to come to a deeper understanding of brand authenticity and to find a suitable definition for this research.

Types of Authenticity

In order to understand brand authenticity, it is necessary to understand authenticity as it is understood in social psychology. Descriptions of authenticity have been grouped into three perspectives, each related to a particular school of thought. The three predominant types of authenticity are objective, constructive and existential authenticity**.** In short, authenticity can be inherent (objective); it can be inferred (constructive); or used for self-expression (existential).

a) Objective Authenticity

From an objective perspective, authenticity is considered to be an intrinsic quality within an object (i.e. it is not externally fabricated) (Beverland, 2005a; Morhart et al.,, 2015). It is defined as: "…an authoritative judgement that an object is what it claims to be, that it is genuine" (Hopper et al.,, 2015, p. 319). According to Reisinger and Steiner (2006), the objectivist perspective comes from a modernist way of thinking that believes that there is an objective reality of the world. Authenticity can be measured against defined standards of what is genuine, original and true (Reisinger & Steiner, 2006). The objectivist perspective states that there are absolute criteria against which one can measure authenticity (Grayson & Martinec, 2004; Leigh et al.,, 2006; MacCannell, 1973). Authenticity must then be evaluated by an expert who is familiar with these criteria (Trilling, 2009). For example, in the evaluation of art, an expert will assess whether the art is what it claims to be and is worth the asking price (Wang, 1999).

Objective authenticity is similar to indexical authenticity, which occurs when an object is believed to be 'the original' (Grayson & Martinec, 2004; Leigh et al.,, 2006; Morhart et al.,, 2015). An individual receives cues which serve as factual indicators that the object is what it claims to be (Morhart et al.,, 2015; Napoli et al.,, 2014). For example, to assess whether an antique chair is an original Victorian piece, a potential buyer would require verification in the form of a document confirming its true origin (Grayson & Martinec, 2004).

Indexical cues are often used in conveying objective authenticity to consumers evaluating brands. For example, in the branding of luxury wines, a factual representation of an historical time or place serves as a cue of authenticity (Beverland, 2005a). However, the objectivist perspective presents a finite way of thinking that is problematic for many and has led to continuous debate. Phillips (1997) states outright that there are no objective criteria with which one can evaluate authenticity. With constructivism and postmodernism, the objectivist perspective has become less prevalent in academic research, but it is still commonly used in business (Reisinger & Steiner, 2006).

b) Constructive Authenticity

The postmodern way of thinking views authenticity as a more fluid concept (Alexander, 2009; Reisinger & Steiner, 2006). Constructive authenticity claims that authenticity is subjective and contextual – it reflects the experiences of society and is based on their interpretations of what is authentic (Beverland & Farrelly, 2010; Bruhn et al.,, 2012; Leigh et al.,, 2006; Molleda & Jain, 2013). Due to its subjective nature, constructive authenticity is fundamentally different to objective authenticity (Grayson & Martinec, 2004). It has been defined as the projection of one's own beliefs, expectations and perspectives onto an entity (Wang, 1999).

The constructivist perspective believes that there is no single version of history that can be deemed the absolute truth; as the truth itself is a socially negotiable concept that is relative, determined by context, and driven by ideology (Cohen, 1988; Leigh et al.,, 2006; Morhart et al.,, 2015; Reisinger & Steiner, 2006). As constructive authenticity is dependent on the interpretations of individuals, there are various understandings of what is authentic (Leigh et al.,, 2006; Morhart et al.,, 2015; Reisinger & Steiner, 2006).

It is believed that different cues indicate authenticity for different societal groups (D. Holt, 1998). Just as objective (or indexical) authenticity is dependent on indexical cues; constructive authenticity is dependent on iconic cues. An iconic cue indicates that something is similar to something else – it resembles what the object claims to be and reflects what it should be (Grayson & Martinec, 2004). Constructive (or iconic) authenticity has also been referred to as approximate authenticity, which comes about when there is a link between an object, a period or an organisational form (such as a brand) (Beverland & Farrelly, 2010). Beverland et al., (2008) describe approximate authenticity as using abstract or iconic cues to create the

impression of sincerity, referred to as “authenticity as aura”. For example, authenticity in the art world creates a powerful impression (or aura) of quality (Beverland & Farrelly, 2010; Brown et al.,, 2003).

In branding, constructive authenticity is understood as a value placed on an offering (the brand or product) by the observer (the consumer) (Chhabra, 2005). For their own reference in evaluating the world around them, consumers create notions of what they believe is authentic (Grayson & Martinec, 2004; Leigh et al.,, 2006; Rose & Wood, 2005; Taylor, 2001). Beverland and Farrelly (2010) claim that consumers ascribe authenticity based on their judgements of what is certifiably true and sincere. The consumers’ understanding of authenticity is moulded by their life experiences and aspirations (Molleda, 2010). It may also be influenced by their knowledge of and interest in what is being evaluated (Grazian, 2005). The brand essence, for example, serves as an iconic cue; it is based on personal interpretation and indicates that it is truly the brand (Grayson & Martinec, 2004; Morhart et al.,, 2015).

In a postmodern world, consumers then co-create authenticity (Pace, 2015). They are viewed as proficient and creative producers of authenticity in brands (Beverland & Farrelly, 2010; D. Holt, 1998; Leigh et al.,, 2006; Molleda, 2010; Pace, 2015; R. A. Peterson, 1997). Constructive authenticity is socially or personally constructed; it is the result of the consumers’ personal understanding of what is authentic and them ascribing authenticity to brands that fit within that understanding (Beverland et al.,, 2008; Grayson & Martinec, 2004).

c) Existential Authenticity

As per constructive authenticity, existential authenticity is grounded in the postmodern perspective that views authenticity as a maleable concept (Reisinger & Steiner, 2006). However, existential authenticity describes authenticity specifically as a means for self-expression. Existential authenticity is defined as: “…a dynamic of being and becoming true to one’s self, being one’s own, and not being what others expect” (Hopper et al.,, 2015, p. 320). Kierkegaard (1985) states that having a strong sense of self, knowing one’s self and living in accordance with this self, is what it means to be authentic. An authentic person behaves in a way that is led by their personal identity and mimics certain self-defining attributes (Erikson, 1977). An authentic brand behaves in a similar fashion; it is clear about what it stands for and behaves according to those intrinsic values, rather than pandering to the latest trend (Eggers et al.,, 2013; Schallehn et al.,, 2014).

In brand consumption, existential authenticity comes about when consumers buy into authentic products, brands and experiences as a means of self-authentication or expression (Arnould & Price, 2000; Beverland & Farrelly, 2010; Wang, 1999). This idea is widely accepted and forms a fundamental part of research on what it means to be human (Heidegger, 1962, 1996). Belk (1988) demonstrated how consumers have relationships with brands in order to entrench their self-identity and signal this to others. Guèvremont and Grohmann (2016) showed how consumers, who view themselves as authentic, seek out authentic brands

when they feel socially excluded or experience feelings of self-inauthenticity. Consumers purchase authentic brands to reflect a desire for a deeper sense of self (Beverland et al.,, 2008; Leigh et al.,, 2006).

The postmodern consumer is highly active in their pursuit of consumption experiences that activate their inner feelings (Leigh et al.,, 2006). This becomes apparent in brand communities, where the consumer participates to gain social status (Beverland & Farrelly, 2010; Leigh et al.,, 2006). In a study of the subculture of the MG sports car, Leigh et al., (2006) found that consumers fulfil their existential needs, not only through driving the high status car, but by showing commitment to the brand community (Leigh et al.,, 2006).

Beverland and Farrelly (2010) found that consumers' personal goals are reflective of how and where they find authenticity. This reinforces the subjective nature of existential authenticity, as one consumer may find authenticity in a brand that another considers inauthentic (Beverland & Farrelly, 2010). In their search for authenticity, consumers tend to focus on earnest brand attributes and downplay others (Beverland & Farrelly, 2010). A brand that reflects the inner personal truth of its consumers is perceived as authentic (Postrel, 2002). Authenticity must then be examined from the perspective of the organisation and its consumers, as both contribute to its meaning (Molleda & Jain, 2013).

Table 1 presents a summary of the three types of authenticity as per the literature. Morhart et al., (2015) claim that brand authenticity is not limited to one type of authenticity, but arises out of the interplay between objective, constructive and existential authenticity.

Table 1: Summary of Three Types of Authenticity

Type	Definition	Key Ideas
Objective Authenticity	"…An authoritative judgement that an object is what it claims to be, that it is genuine" (Hopper et al.,, 2015, p. 319).	• Authenticity is measured against defined standards and criteria (Grayson & Martinec, 2004; Reisinger & Steiner, 2006) • Indexical cues serve as factual representations of brand authenticity (Beverland, 2005a)
Constructive Authenticity	The projection of one's own beliefs, expectations and perspectives onto an entity (Wang, 1999).	• Authenticity as subjective and contextual; personally and socially constructed (Beverland & Farrelly, 2010; Bruhn et al.,, 2012) • Iconic cues (such as brand essence) create a link to what it claims to be and should be (Grayson & Martinec, 2004; Morhart et al.,, 2015) • Iconic cues create an impression of sincerity (Beverland et al.,, 2008) • **Consumers co-create authenticity** (Beverland & Farrelly, 2010; Molleda & Jain, 2013)
Existential Authenticity	"…A dynamic of being and becoming true to one's self, being one's own, and not being what others expect" (Hopper et al.,, 2015, p. 320).	• Authenticity as self-expression (Arnould & Price, 2000; Wang, 1999) • Strong sense of self and free from hypocrisy (Kierkegaard, 1985; Starr, 2008) • Authenticity should be examined from the perspective of **brand and consumer** (Molleda & Jain, 2013) • Brand communities are key to creating existential authenticity in brands (Leigh et al.,, 2006)

The meaning of authenticity is constantly evolving according to perceptions of what is authentic (Chhabra, 2005; Molleda, 2010; Postrel, 2002). Grayson and Martinec (2004) confirm that the three types of authenticity apply to brands and are not mutually exclusive. Consumers ascribe authenticity to brands when they receive cues that the brand is what it claims to be (objective authenticity); when their subjective understanding of authenticity aligns with the brand promise (constructive authenticity); and when the brand fulfils their existential needs (existential authenticity) (Morhart et al.,, 2015).

Authenticity is also not a conclusive condition in that one is either authentic or inauthentic, but rather, authenticity can be gauged across a scale, making some objects perceived as more authentic than others (Alexander, 2009; Shen & Kim, 2012). The same is true of authentic brands, where the perceived authenticity of a brand is dependent on a number of contributing factors (Alexander, 2009).

Defining Brand Authenticity

Brand authenticity can be real or contrived (Beverland, 2005a). Some authors claim that authenticity is more often contrived (Brown et al.,, 2003; D. Holt, 2002; R. A. Peterson, 1997). Many brands create the impression of authenticity through positioning and adopting authentic imagery such as narratives, historical images and quality guarantees (Beverland, 2005a; Brown et al.,, 2003; R. A. Peterson, 1997). Beverland (2005a) cited well-known champagne brand, Dom Perignon, as an example of fabricated authenticity. In the 1860's, producers of this product wrote the story that Dom Perignon had invented champagne. This was nothing but strategic storytelling and to this day, the story creates an air of authenticity for the brand (Beverland, 2005a). Another example is Bombay Sapphire, where the brand story is set in the time of the British Raj in India. Again, this is completely fabricated as Bombay Sapphire is actually made in Bermuda in the Atlantic (Eggers et al.,, 2013).

Symbolic stories and narratives are referred to as brand allegories (Brown et al.,, 2003). The question remains whether the use of brand allegories is in itself authentic. Eggers et al., (2013) state that to be authentic, a brand should be clear about its history. Truthfulness should be at the heart of authentic organisational behaviour (Shen & Kim, 2012). However, as learnt from the constructivist perspective, authenticity can mean different things for consumers in different contexts (Grayson & Martinec, 2004). Gilmore and Pine (2007) state that even fabricated authenticity can be authentic, since authenticity is based on the personal and subjective interpretations of individuals.

For as many authors that believe that authenticity is contrived, there are those that believe that it is a quality that manifests itself through the genuine values, attributes and behaviour of an organisation (Beverland, 2005a; Gilmore & Pine, 2007). Authenticity is a tool to highlight an honorable set of values and distinguish a brand from its competitors (Beverland et al.,, 2008). Gilmore and Pine (2007) define authenticity against two

measures: whether the brand is true to itself, and whether the experience is what it claims to be**.** Even brands with commercial motives can be perceived as authentic, if their motives and values are sincere (Pace, 2015). Authentic brands put sincerity at the heart of their organisation (Authentic Brand Index, 2008)**.**

Authenticity is repeatedly described as that which is genuine, real and true (Arnould & Price, 2000; Beverland & Farrelly, 2010; Grayson & Martinec, 2004; Kennick, 1985; Reisinger & Steiner, 2006). The evaluation of authenticity against the perceived extent of genuineness reappears throughout the literature (Fine, 2003; Hopper et al.,, 2015; MacCannell, 1973; Napoli et al.,, 2014; Postrel, 2002; Reisinger & Steiner, 2006). Genuine is defined as: "…being natural or not foreign, as being real, true, and not counterfeit" (Starr, 2008, p. 58). Genuineness in brands is demonstrated with the congruency of ideals, values, and actions, and through truthful behaviour (Henderson & Brookhart, 1996; Molleda & Jain, 2013; Shen & Kim, 2012; Starr, 2008). In this research study, brand authenticity was defined as: "…the subjective evaluation of genuineness ascribed to a brand by a consumer" (Napoli et al.,, 2014, p. 1091).

Dimensions of Brand Authenticity

Several recent studies have investigated the dimensions of brand authenticity and developed appropriate measurement scales. As there was strong repetition, the dimensions of brand authenticity were grouped accordingly. The key dimensions of brand authenticity are: "individuality", "originality" and "naturalness" (Bruhn et al.,, 2012; Schallehn et al.,, 2014); "credibility" and "reliability" (Bruhn et al.,, 2012; Morhart et al.,, 2015); "consistency" (Eggers et al.,, 2013; Schallehn et al.,, 2014) and "continuity" (Bruhn et al.,, 2012; Morhart et al.,, 2015); and, "integrity" and "symbolism" (Morhart et al.,, 2015).

1) Originality, Individuality and Naturalness

Brand authenticity is conveyed through any semblance of origins, originality and uniqueness (Vann, 2006). Perceived originality is described as an assessment of whether the brand is unique (Bruhn et al.,, 2012). Similarly, individuality is defined as the unique manner in which the brand delivers on its promise (Schallehn et al.,, 2014). Originality and individuality in brand authenticity are then two sides to the same coin.

Authenticity is synonymous with genuineness, where genuine is defined as "being natural or not foreign, as being real, true" (Starr, 2008, p. 58). Bruhn et al., (2012) describe naturalness as any indication of "genuineness and realness" (p. 568). Consumers increasingly view the world in terms of what is real and what is fake – preferring that which is believed to be real (Engeset & Elvekrok, 2015; Vann, 2006). Authentic organisations act in accordance with their true self (Shen & Kim, 2012). To be natural is to be perceived as the original. Therefore, the dimensions of individuality, originality and naturalness all describe the brand

differentiating itself from its competitors through a novel approach to branding and embedding the brand within a genuine context. For this study, they were grouped into a single dimension, referred to as originality.

2) Continuity and Consistency

Of all the dimensions of brand authenticity, continuity and consistency are discussed most frequently (Bruhn et al.,, 2012; Eggers et al.,, 2013; Morhart et al.,, 2015; Schallehn et al.,, 2014). Continuity refers to the timelessness of a brand and its ability to outlive trends (Bruhn et al.,, 2012; Morhart et al.,, 2015). A brand that offers continuity has a clear concept and vision that it pursues long-term (Bruhn et al.,, 2012) and its brand attributes remain stable over time (Schallehn et al.,, 2014).

Consistency has traditionally been defined as the state achieved when each element of a marketing mix reflects the greater intentions of the brand (Park & Zaltman, 1987). Consistency is felt when the communications and customer experiences are consistent with the identity, vision and values of the organisation (Eggers et al.,, 2013; Schallehn et al.,, 2014). For this study, continuity and consistency were grouped into a single dimension, referred to as continuity.

3) Credibility and Reliability

Continuity and consistency lead to brand credibility and reliability (Bruhn et al.,, 2012; Eggers et al.,, 2013; Erdem & Swait, 1998; Schallehn et al.,, 2014). Authentic brands are associated with high levels of credibility and reliability (Molleda, 2010; Molleda & Jain, 2013; Morhart et al.,, 2015).

Brand credibility is the believability of the intentions of a brand, and is dependent on the willingness and ability of the brand to deliver on its brand promise (Erdem & Swait, 1998, 2004; Erdem, Swait, & Louviere, 2002). In order to repeatedly deliver on the brand promise, the values of the brand should be integral to its practices and actions (Eggers et al.,, 2013). Brand reliability relates to the dependability of the brand; whether it can be relied on to keep its promises (Delgado-Ballester, 2004). Bruhn et al., (2012) found reliability to be associated with trustfulness and credibility. In short then, a brand is both credible and reliable if it delivers on its promises (Bruhn et al.,, 2012; Morhart et al.,, 2015). As credibility and reliability are very closely linked, the third dimension of brand authenticity was simply referred to as credibility.

4) Integrity and Symbolism

Morhart et al., (2015) included both integrity and symbolism as dimensions of brand authenticity. An authentic brand has wholesome values and truly cares for its customers (Morhart et al.,, 2015). Integrity is felt with consistent and fair behaviour (Shen & Kim, 2012). It is reflected in the virtuous intentions of the brand and signifies its moral purity.

Symbolism occurs when the brand has an air of sincerity that adds value for consumers (Beverland, 2005a). It is felt when the brand has qualities that resonate with its customers and contribute to their identity construction by adding personal meaning for them (Morhart et al.,, 2015). Integrity and symbolism generally refer to the moral standpoint of the brand. As integrity encompasses symbolism, the fourth dimension of brand authenticity for this study, is referred to as integrity.

To summarise, the four postulated dimensions of brand authenticity were:

1. **Originality:** the uniqueness of the brand
2. **Continuity:** the brand attributes are consistent and stable
3. **Credibility:** the brand delivers on its promises
4. **Integrity:** the moral purity of the brand

Table 2: Summary of Brand Authenticity Dimensions

Dimension	Description / Definition	Key Source(s)
Originality		
Originality	"To be creative, original and/or innovative" (Bruhn et al.,, 2012, p. 569)	Bruhn et al., (2012)
Individuality	"The unique way in which a brand fulfils its promise" (Schallehn et al.,, 2014, p. 194)	Schallehn et al., (2014)
Naturalness	"…Indications regarding genuineness and realness" (Bruhn et al.,, 2012, p. 568)	Bruhn et al., (2012)
Continuity		
Continuity	"A brand's timelessness, historicity and its ability to transcend trends" (Morhart et al.,, 2015, p. 202)	Bruhn et al., (2012) Morhart et al., (2015) Schallehn et al., (2014)
Consistency	"Measures those attributes which are expressed by its reiterative current brand behaviour" (Schallehn et al.,, 2014, p. 194)	Eggers et al., (2013) Schallehn et al., (2014)
Congruency	"Congruency between individual value and brand value and a high degree of commitment to brand values…" (Eggers et al.,, 2013, p. 342)	Eggers et al., (2013)
Credibility		
Credibility	"The brand's willingness and ability to deliver on their promises" (Morhart et al.,, 2015, p. 202)	Morhart et al., (2015)
Reliability	"…Trustfulness, credibility and keeping promises…" (Bruhn et al.,, 2012, p. 570)	Bruhn et al., (2012)
Customer Orientation	"...Generating and sustaining a shared sense of brand meaning that provides superior value to stakeholders…" (Ewing & Napoli, 2005, p. 842)	Eggers et al., (2013)
Integrity		
Integrity	"...Based on virtue reflected in the brand's intentions and in the values it communicates" (Morhart et al.,, 2015, p. 202)	Morhart et al., (2015)
Symbolism	"…The symbolic quality of the brand that consumers can use to define who they are and who they are not" (Morhart et al.,, 2015, p. 203)	Morhart et al., (2015)

Brand Authenticity in Action

This section discusses some of the ways in which authenticity is brought to life in brand building and communications. There are a number of key traits of authentic brands including: heritage and pedigree (continuity); stylistic consistency (consistency); quality commitments (reliability); relationship to place (originality); method of production (integrity); and downplaying commercial motives (symbolism) (Beverland, 2005a; Beverland, 2006). The traits are discussed as they relate to each of the four postulated dimensions.

Originality: the uniqueness of the brand

a) History, Heritage and Tradition

Gilmore and Pine (2007) state that being authentic is being true to oneself, which is heavily dependent on knowing and understanding one's history, heritage and traditions. In his investigation of the self-taught artist, Fine (2003) established that to be authentic, the artist required a rich biography. The same is true of brands.

In a time of meaninglessness, consumers seek brands that are original and relevant (Arnould & Price, 2000; Beverland, 2005a; Brown et al.,, 2003). Authentic brands use storytelling to establish connections to the brand's historical contexts (Alexander, 2009; Napoli et al.,, 2014). Brand managers attempt to create unique brand stories through allusions to time and place (Alexander, 2009). In doing so, they incite a sense of nostalgia for their customers (Fritz et al.,, 2017; Napoli et al.,, 2014). At the end of the twentieth century, there was a surge in nostalgic concepts in advertising; consumers felt the need to retrospect to a better time, when the world was less commercialised and complex (Brown et al.,, 2003; Chhabra et al.,, 2003).

There is often a "miasma of meaning" (p. 552) surrounding an authentic brand (Alexander, 2009). They are immersed in their origins, history, heritage and traditions (Fine, 2003; Gilmore & Pine, 2007; Molleda & Jain, 2013; Newman & Dhar, 2014). Newman and Dhar (2014) state that it is common for brands to communicate their exact place of origin in order to be perceived as more authentic. For example, Hershey's chocolates are synonymous with Hershey, Pennsylvania. A connection to the physical place of origin appeals to consumers as it symbolically represents a core aspect of the brand (constructive authenticity through an iconic cue) (Newman & Dhar, 2014).

According to Bruhn et al., (2012), giving the brand relevance in the country and culture in which it operates, known as *local icon value,* is another common strategy for creating a sense of originality. Consumers identify more with brands that have contextual significance - connecting with their own personal values and goals (existential authenticity) (Beverland et al.,, 2008; Bruhn et al.,, 2012; Engeset & Elvekrok, 2015). Brands that embody the consumer's national identity are perceived as more authentic (Bruhn et al.,, 2012). They create connections between people and brand communities serve as a haven for those that are likeminded (Brown

et al.,, 2003). For example, MG sports car owners recall stories about the British heritage of the brand and this evokes a sense of solidarity (Leigh et al.,, 2006).

Bruhn et al., (2012) also found expressions of creativity and innovation to enhance perceived brand originality. A common characteristic of authentic brands is their unique position in the market (Pace, 2015). Consumers tend to perceive brands that have a unique approach, and are not copies of their competitors, as more authentic (Gilmore & Pine, 2007; R. A. Peterson, 2005).

Continuity: the brand attributes are consistent and stable

b) Identity, Vision and Values

Consistency and continuity are fundamental in building authentic brands (Schallehn et al.,, 2014). Brands show consistency when their communications and experiences are in line with their identity, vision and values; and continuity, when those attributes remain stable (Eggers et al.,, 2013; Schallehn et al.,, 2014).

According to Bruhn et al., (2012), consistency takes various forms. It refers to consistency in the visual identity of the brand, including the name, logo, slogan, fonts and brand colours. Communications should also be consistent for various stakeholders, both internal and external. Retailers and customers should not receive conflicting brand messages. Statements and arguments made by the organisation should also be consistent in order to portray a clear vision of who the brand is and what they stand for (Bruhn et al.,, 2012).

Authentic brands are “built from the inside out” (Faust & Householder, 2009, p. 47). Eggers et al., (2013) state that brands, such as Apple, Porsche and Colgate make promises to their stakeholders that are aligned with their internal organisational values. Consistency must be felt across various brand elements and that includes employees. Consistency between the organisation’s values and the values of its employees is referred to as brand congruency. Employees who feel that the internal values of the organisation match their own personal values, are more committed to delivering on the brand’s goals (Eggers et al.,, 2013).

The relationship between continuity and brand authenticity has been found to be even more significant than that of consistency and authenticity (Schallehn et al.,, 2014). Continuity signifies pedigree and a long-lasting commitment to quality (Beverland, 2005a; Beverland, 2006). Morhart et al., (2015) found that many respondents frequently mentioned continuity when asked what makes a brand authentic. They cited examples of brand giants such as Coca-Cola, Heinz and Campbell (Morhart et al.,, 2015). Continuity can take a variety of forms and even be evident in the brand’s originality: from a brand’s pledge to its place of origin, to its heritage through reference to its founders, and to cues about tradition and culture woven into the communications (Bruhn et al.,, 2012).

Beverland (2005a) found that when a brand's history or story became diluted, consumers perceived the brand as having lost an element of charisma. The challenge for brand managers is in retaining a link to the past (originality), whilst remaining relevant to an evolving consumer in a changing marketplace (Beverland, 2005a). Although a gradual loss of continuity can be expected, brands need to proactively remind consumers of their history. For example, Nike re-launched their signature product, the Air Jordan sneaker, in an attempt to create a feeling of nostalgia for their customers and remind them of their iconic history as a brand (Schallehn et al.,, 2014).

Credibility: the brand delivers on its promises

c) Delivering the Brand Promise

Credibility and reliability come down to the brand delivering on its promise (Bruhn et al.,, 2012; Morhart et al.,, 2015). Authentic brands are dedicated to delivering whole-heartedly on the promises they make to their customers (Eggers et al.,, 2013). These brands have an intrinsic commitment to creating superior value (Eggers et al.,, 2013). To do so, they demonstrate strong brand customer orientation by understanding and satisfying the needs of their customers (Gupta & Lehmann, 2003; Mukerjee, 2013).

Credibility becomes particularly crucial in low involvement situations or when a consumer lacks the motivation to make an informed decision (Fournier & Alvarez, 2012). Consistency and continuity enhance brand credibility and reliability through a commitment to quality that enhances perceived value (Beverland, 2005a; Bruhn et al.,, 2012; Morhart et al.,, 2015). The brand itself should serve as the quality cue (Lassoued & Hobbs, 2015; Morgan & Hunt, 1994). In a study of luxury wine brands, Beverland (2005a) found real commitments to quality to be a recurring trait in brands that were perceived as authentic. Authentic wineries were found to be "fanatical about detail" and dedicated to understanding how the intricacies of production contributed to a superior customer experience (Beverland, 2005a, p. 1015).

Brand authenticity cannot then simply be communicated as a brand message or slogan, it must be felt by the consumer through experiences (Molleda, 2010). Gilmore and Pine (2007, p. 90) state: "if you say you're authentic, then you'd better be authentic". In a study by Morhart et al., (2015), a respondent considered Walmart to be a highly authentic brand as the organisation repeatedly delivers on its promise of unbeatable prices. Consumers felt that an authentic brand will in no way betray them by breaking their promise to them (Morhart et al.,, 2015).

There is great debate around this issue of 'being versus doing' (Beverland, 2005a; Beverland & Farrelly, 2010). Brands that do what they say they will are said to have sincere and honest motives - to be authentic (Beverland, 2005a; Fisher & Vallaster, 2010; Morhart et al.,, 2015). D. Holt (2002) explained that

postmodern brands are largely perceived as inauthentic as often, the values skilfully woven into the brand messages differ from their actions. Major consumer dissatisfaction occurs when there is this breakdown between promises and actions (D. Holt, 2002). This ultimately leads to a lack of trust (Eggers et al.,, 2013). In a world where consumers increasingly mistrust brands, words are not enough; brands must prove their good intentions through tangible commitments (Eggers et al.,, 2013; Gerzema, 2009; Molleda & Jain, 2013).

Integrity: the moral purity of the brand

d) Moral Authenticity

From a socio-psychological perspective, authenticity indicates a moral strength that is unwavering (Fine, 2003; Schallehn et al.,, 2014). Authentic brands are the same; they inspire consumers to a higher goal (Gilmore & Pine, 2007). Important qualities of authentic brands are morality and having an ethical compass (Beverland, 2006; Beverland & Farrelly, 2010; Pace, 2015). The moral philosophy and beliefs of the organisation should be reflected in all its practices and behaviours (Molleda & Jain, 2013). It is necessary for the organisation to create a culture that adopts and lives these moral values (Napoli et al.,, 2014).

Authentic organisational behaviour is also synonymous with transparency (Molleda & Jain, 2013). The growing demand for open and truthful communication is fuelled by new technologies that have given consumers unprecedented access to information that might have previously been hidden from them (Hicks, 2013). Consumers demand that brands no longer act as ventriloquists, but reveal all to the public (D. Holt, 2002). This demand for transparency is creating a wave of authentic organisations (Gilmore & Pine, 2007; Molleda & Roberts, 2008; Shen & Kim, 2012). For example, after years of concealing unethical production methods and facing enormous criticism from the public, Nike made the monumental decision to reveal all to the public. Nike improved the working conditions in its factories and implemented new regulations allowing independent factory inspections to ensure their ethical practices (D. Holt, 2002).

Walumbwa, Wang, Wang, Schaubroeck, and Avolio (2010) posit that openness and a clear sense of self should be most strongly felt through the leadership of an organisation. Brands that share accurate information through open dialogue with their customers and stakeholders, give those stakeholders the opportunity to really assess the brands moral integrity (Molleda & Jain, 2013). Authentic leaders do not manipulate their stakeholders (Henderson & Brookhart, 1996). They are able to monitor and evaluate their own behaviour and this openness allows them the freedom to make honest mistakes (Shen & Kim, 2012). Authenticity, through transparent behaviour at every level, allows brands to be true to themselves without having to be perfect (Beverland, 2005a; Beverland et al.,, 2008).

There is also fierce debate whether a brand that has commercial orientation can still be considered authentic. Commerce and authenticity have always been at odds (Beverland, Farrelly, & Quester, 2010). D. Holt (2002) states that consumers perceive postmodern brands as largely inauthentic because their commercial intention emanates from their communications. Some say, to be perceived as authentic, brands should be distant from any sort of commercial orientation (D. Holt, 2002). Others echo this sentiment (Beverland, 2005a; Beverland, 2006; Morhart et al.,, 2015). Brands such as Ben and Jerry's and The Body Shop purposefully downplay any commercial agenda in order to differentiate themselves from their competitors; this is referred to as stealth branding (Beverland, 2006).

However, Pace (2015) states that in times of difficulty, consumers want to know that brands are making a positive contribution to the economy. He states that brands with commercial intent are not necessarily viewed as less authentic or sincere (Pace, 2015). Beverland and Farrelly (2010) agreed that consumers still find authenticity in commercial products. For example, McDonald's is often criticised for their pervasive presence across the globe, making the brand seem more commercially orientated. However, consumers may actually view the omnipresence of McDonald's as a sign that the brand is accessible and creates a universal connection between people (Beverland & Farrelly, 2010). Fritz et al., (2017) found brand commercialisation and brand social commitment to be equally important dimensions of brand authenticity.

Table 3 provides a summary of the key trait of authentic brands, according to the four postulated dimensions (originality, continuity, credibility and integrity).

Table 3: Summary of Brand Authenticity Traits

Dimension	Brand Traits	Source(s)
Originality		
History, Heritage & Tradition	**Miasma of meaning:** an immersion in history, heritage and traditions	Alexander (2009) Beverland (2005a) Bruhn et al., (2012) Molleda and Jain (2013) Napoli et al., (2014) Newman and Dhar (2014) Pace (2015)
	Brand allegories: unique brand stories through allusions to time and place	
	Local icon value: giving the brand cultural and contextual relevance	
	Unique positioning: through creativity and innovation	
Continuity		
Identity, Vision & Values	**Clear vision:** who they are and what they stand for, alignment to brand values	Beverland (2005a) Bruhn et al., (2012) Eggers et al., (2013) Morhart et al., (2015)
	Consistent communication: visual identity, internal and external marketing and communication	
	Pedigree and quality: the timelessness of the brand and its attributes remaining stable over time	

Credibility		
Delivering on the brand promise	**Brand promise:** delivering superior value through real customer orientation	Beverland (2005a) Beverland et al., (2008) Bruhn et al., (2012) Eggers et al., (2013) Morhart et al., (2015)
	Quality commitments: the brand itself should serve as a quality cue	
	Tangible decisions and actions: don't just say, do	
Integrity		
Moral authenticity	**Transparency:** open and truthful internal and external communication	Henderson and Brookhart (1996) Molleda and Jain (2013) Pace (2015)
	Authentic leadership: open dialogue with stakeholders, free from manipulation	
	Commercial orientation: making a positive contribution to the economy	

2.3.2. Brand Authenticity in Relation to Brand Trust

Sub-problem 2: Demonstrate the impact of brand authenticity on brand trust.

Authenticity has been repeatedly linked to brand trust (Eggers et al.,, 2013; Hon & Grunig, 1999; Napoli et al.,, 2014; Schallehn et al.,, 2014). Trust (like authenticity) is associated with consistency, competence, honesty, fairness, responsibility, helpfulness and benevolence (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Napoli et al., (2014) state that brand authenticity and brand trust are conceptually similar, yet still distinct from one another.

Brand trust is conceptualised as having two dimensions, brand intentions and brand reliability (Delgado-Ballester, 2004). Authenticity has been found to have both affective and functional attributes. Consumers believe that authentic brands will repeatedly act in the best interests of society and their customers, demonstrating sound brand intentions (Beverland, 2005a; Napoli et al.,, 2014). Authentic brands are perceived as reliable, through trustfulness, credibility and delivering on their promises (Bruhn et al.,, 2012).

With trickery and deception in marketing becoming commonplace, brand trust has become increasingly rare (D. Holt, 2002) and authenticity, increasingly important (Eggers et al.,, 2013). Trust evolves out of perceived risk; consumers seek trustworthy brands when they feel uncertain or insecure (Delgado-Ballester & Luis Munuera-Alemán, 2001; Doney & Cannon, 1997). Authenticity has been found to alleviate this consumer uncertainty (Bruhn et al.,, 2012) and to be the perfect remedy for brands wanting to rebuild trust (Eggers et al.,, 2013). This is why brands like Coca-Cola promise to be "the real thing", or Adidas claims to be "once innovative, now classic, always authentic", and Nike positions themselves as "authentic athletic performance" (Schallehn et al.,, 2014, p. 192). Authentic brands are committed to delivering on their promises and consumers are more trusting of brands that they believe will perform (Bruhn et al.,, 2012; Eggers et al.,, 2013; Morhart et al.,, 2015; Napoli et al.,, 2014).

2.3.3. Brand Trust

Research on trust has been extensive and has revealed the difficulties of defining this construct due to its highly complex and latent nature (Hobbs & Goddard, 2015). Much of the theory on brand trust is rooted in the fields of sociology, psychology and economics (Delgado-Ballester & Luis Munuera-Alemán, 2001; Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt, & Camerer, 1998). This research has then been adapted for use in marketing and branding (Dowell et al.,, 2013).

A classic, and possibly simplistic view of interpersonal trust, is that it is the general expectancy that one can depend on the word of another (Rotter, 1967). Rousseau et al., (1998) defined trust as a willingness to accept vulnerability on the basis of positive expectations regarding the intentions and behaviour of another. Morgan and Hunt (1994) viewed trust as being borne out of one's affirmative belief in the reliability and integrity of another. McAllister (1995) named two types of trust: emotional or warm trust (when one has another's best interests at heart), and rational or cognitive trust (when one believes that another can accomplish a given task). These early definitions make mention of two important facets of trust: the affective (intentions and integrity) and the functional (behaviour and reliability).

In sociology, trust has been organised into broad categories; namely, institutional trust (trust in regulatory bodies), generalised trust (trust in others), calculative trust (trust based on rational evaluation) and relational trust (trust derived over time and through interaction) (Hobbs & Goddard, 2015). Brand trust develops over time, through direct experiences and occurs in the context of a relationship (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; Delgado-Ballester & Luis Munuera-Alemán, 2001). Therefore, it may be more closely associated with relational trust.

Trust is a fundamental component of any valuable social interaction (Delgado-Ballester & Luis Munuera-Alemán, 2001). According to Dwyer, Schurr, and Oh (1987), two kinds of relationships exist; discrete transactions and relational exchanges. Discrete transactions have a definitive start, end and a short duration; whilst relational exchanges are built upon previous and continuous interactions, and have a long duration (Dwyer et al.,, 1987). It is trust, and not satisfaction, that distinguishes relational exchanges from discrete transactions (Delgado-Ballester & Luis Munuera-Alemán, 2001). Due to its utilitarian nature, satisfaction is more applicable to transactional exchanges that are short-term and repetitive (J. Hess & Story, 2005). Trust, like the relational exchange, is more enduring in nature (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001).

Since the late 1980's, trust has become an important construct in branding, mainly due to the growing importance of relationship marketing (Delgado-Ballester & Luis Munuera-Alemán, 2001; J. Hess & Story, 2005; Lantieri & Chiagouris, 2009). Relationship marketing is defined by Morgan and Hunt (1994, p. 22) as "having all marketing activities directed toward establishing, developing and maintaining successful relational

exchanges". Successful relationships between brands and their customers are interactive, connective and ongoing (Vargo & Lusch, 2011). It is widely accepted that brand trust is key to successful brand-consumer relationships (Delgado-Ballester & Luis Munuera-Alemán, 2001; Fournier, 1998; Morgan & Hunt, 1994). According to Hiscock (2001), the ultimate goal of marketing is to create a formidable bond between the brand and its consumer, and trust is key to enhancing this bond. There is also reverse causality between trust and consumer-brand relationships; as the presence of brand trust in a relationship then deepens the meaning thereof (Delgado-Ballester & Luis Munuera-Alemán, 2001; Hiscock, 2001).

Brand Trust as Two-Dimensional

The definitions of brand trust have been strongly contested in the literature. Brand trust is said to be created through confidence in the same two dimensions as interpersonal trust: reliability and integrity (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). However, in their definition of brand trust, Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001) describe brand trust as the willingness of the consumer to rely solely on the ability of the brand to deliver on its promise. Delgado-Ballester and Luis Munuera-Alemán (2001) supported this and found that brand trust had only one distinct dimension: brand reliability. It was believed that brand intentions (integrity) is merely an abstract brand attribute that leads consumers to feel more secure, but not necessarily engenders trust (Delgado-Ballester & Luis Munuera-Alemán, 2001). Sung and Kim (2010) stated the opposite, that trustworthiness evolves out of integrity, when the consumer has confidence that the brand will perform in a sincere and honest manner.

After further investigation, the idea of brand trust as a two-dimensional construct was reintroduced to academic literature. The definition of brand trust was expanded as follows: "the confident expectations about the brand's reliability and intentions in situations entailing risk to the consumer" (Delgado-Ballester, 2004, p. 586). In recent studies, both Sahin, Zehir, and Kitapçı (2011) and Greenberg (2014) reaffirmed brand trust as comprising brand intentions and brand reliability. In an exercise to come to a consensus on the definition of trust, Greenberg (2014) deduced that trust is the belief that an organisation can accomplish their objectives, as they are both competent and have sound intentions. Sahin et al., (2011) included brand intentions and brand reliability in their measurement of brand trust, but measured it as one-dimensional.

According to Delgado-Ballester (2004), brand intentions are dependent on whether the consumer believes the brand would act in their best interests and brand reliability is dependent on whether the consumer believes that the brand can fulfil its promise. The consumer will make judgements about whether a brand is trustworthy based on both cognitive and emotional brand attributes (Delgado-Ballester, 2004). The meanings of brand intentions and brand reliability overlap with those of warmth and competence, respectively. As a result of this, in this research brand trust was postulated as a two-dimensional and the definition by Delgado-Ballester (2004) was deemed appropriate.

Decline in Brand Trust

In the last two or more decades, there has been a major decline in brand trust (Eggers et al.,, 2013; Lantieri & Chiagouris, 2009; Malone & Fiske, 2013). Malone and Fiske (2013) attribute this to companies being focused on profitability and meaningless transactions with their customers. In a qualitative study, Lantieri and Chiagouris (2009) identified various trends that could have resulted in this phenomenon. These include a cynical consumer, who is not only more sophisticated but less tolerant of corporate missteps that can no longer be hidden. Another is a general decrease in quality; cost cutting has resulted in service decline and a significant increase in product recalls. Companies have also become far removed from their customers, when all they crave is human interaction. There is far too much choice with little difference between value offerings and consumers do not know where to place their trust. Lastly, relationship marketing seems to be a trend that adds little value for customers. CRM (Customer Relationship Management) systems are taking from consumers but offering little, if anything, in return (Lantieri & Chiagouris, 2009). A lack of trust could result in consumer resistance to new technologies and changes in behaviours that might have been beneficial to brands (Hobbs & Goddard, 2015). This threat provides even more reason for brands to better understand how to maintain or better still, increase brand trust (Malone & Fiske, 2013).

Trust arises out of vulnerability and perceived risk (Delgado-Ballester & Luis Munuera-Alemán, 2001; Rousseau et al.,, 1998). Sweeney, Soutar, and Johnson (1999, p. 81) define perceived risk as the "subjective expectation of a loss". Naturally, a consumer will turn to a trusted brand when they feel like they have something to lose (Delgado-Ballester & Luis Munuera-Alemán, 2001). At times like this, the consumer uses judgements about the brand to guide them in their decision-making (Delgado-Ballester & Luis Munuera-Alemán, 2001; Sung & Kim, 2010). Past consumption experiences and word-of-mouth are vital to creating positive perceptions that build brand trust (Delgado-Ballester & Luis Munuera-Alemán, 2001; Hatch & Schultz, 2010). There is nothing like a first-hand account to generate feelings that are relevant and truly alleviate uncertainty (Dwyer et al.,, 1987).

A single positive experience (discrete transaction) with a brand only leads to satisfaction, whilst brand trust develops when the consumer believes that they will experience this satisfaction again in future (Delgado-Ballester, 2004). J. Hess and Story (2005) posit that trust cannot exist without satisfaction (it is a condition thereof), yet satisfaction can exist without trust. As brand trust increases, so does satisfaction (Sahin et al.,, 2011). Satisfaction is dependent on perceived quality, performance and reliability (J. Hess & Story, 2005). It can be argued that whilst satisfaction is dependent on reliability, there is the additional dimension of integrity that distinguishes trust from satisfaction (J. Hess & Story, 2005; Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Trust, unlike satisfaction, ignites a personal and meaningful connection between brand and consumer (J. Hess & Story, 2005). Repeated positive experiences are imperative to building brand trust (Lassoued & Hobbs, 2015).

Outcomes of Brand Trust

Brand trust creates consumer-brand relationships that are valuable, and worthy of commitment and loyalty (Berry, 1993; Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Trust has been found to have a positive impact on relationship commitment (Morgan & Hunt, 1994) and brand loyalty (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; Delgado-Ballester & Luis Munuera-Alemán, 2001; Sung & Kim, 2010; Zehir, Şahin, Kitapçı, & Özşahin, 2011). According to Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001), there is reverse causality in the relationships between brand trust, commitment and brand loyalty. Not only does brand trust lead to brand loyalty, but increased brand loyalty then further deepens brand trust. The relationship between these constructs is continuous and reciprocal in nature (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001).

The theory of double jeopardy, as it is applied to marketing, states that brands with loyal customers actually have greater market share (Ehrenberg, Goodhardt, & Barwise, 1990). Loyalty results in repeat purchase (Jacoby & Kyner, 1973) and higher price tolerance (Delgado-Ballester & Luis Munuera-Alemán, 2001; Jacoby & Chestnut, 1978). High levels of consumer loyalty also increase the barrier to entry for competitors, improve the ability to respond to competitor threats, increase sales and revenue, and result in a more stable customer base (Delgado-Ballester & Luis Munuera-Alemán, 2001). Therefore, brand trust is linked to company profitability and even, brand equity (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; Lantieri & Chiagouris, 2009).

2.4. Literature Review Part B: Hypothesis Development

2.4.1. Warmth and Competence

Sub-problem 3: Ascertain whether perceived warmth and competence can be deemed mediator variables in the relationship between brand authenticity and brand trust.

Social Psychology Background

The theory on warmth and competence in brands is rooted in the field of social psychology. Specifically, in a model that has been repeatedly tested and validated, known as the Stereotype Content Model (SCM) (Cuddy et al.,, 2007). The SCM states that people form social perceptions based an the evaluation of two dimensions: warmth and competence (Cuddy et al.,, 2007, 2008; Fiske et al.,, 2002). Warmth is based on whether one perceives another to have good intentions, and competence on whether one perceives another to have the ability to carry out those intentions (Fiske et al.,, 2002). According to Cuddy et al., (2008), warmth traits include good-natured, trustworthy, tolerant, friendly and sincere; whilst competence traits include capable, skilful, intelligent and confident. It is widely accepted that warmth traits benefit others (other-interest), whilst competence traits benefit the self (self-interest) (Cuddy et al.,, 2008; Fiske et al.,, 2002; Judd, James-Hawkins, Yzerbyt, & Kashima, 2005; Peeters, 1983; Wojciszke, Bazinska, & Jaworski, 1998).

Warmth and competence overlap with other well-known constructs in psychology (Cuddy et al.,, 2008). Judd et al., (2005) refer to collectivism and individualism respectively. There is communion and agency (Bakan, 1956), which originated in personality psychology and is linked to gender stereotyping. Communion has been defined as practices linking interactions, relationships and interpersonal behaviours; whilst agency as supporting people in performing tasks, solving problems and achieving their goals (Ybarra, Chan, Park, Burnstein, Monin, & Stanik, 2008). Wojciszke et al., (1998) refer to morality and competence. Morality includes traits such as fair, generous, honest, righteous and understanding, and is related to warmth-trustworthiness. Competence is linked to the intellect and includes clever, creative, efficient, foresighted and knowledgeable (Wojciszke et al.,, 1998).

The primary tenet of the SCM (Cuddy et al.,, 2007) is that interpersonal judgements are formed on the basis of perceived warmth and competence. Warmth and competence not only influence judgements of individuals, but they account for large variance when looking at stereotype groups (J. Aaker et al.,, 2010). Figure 2 shows various stereotype groups plotted on the two-by-two matrix that contains four clusters of warmth by competence combinations – warm-competent, warm-incompetent, cold-competent and cold-incompetent (Cuddy et al.,, 2007, 2008; Fiske et al.,, 2002). Stereotype groups such as the poor are widely perceived as cold-incompetent (bottom left); the elderly are perceived as warm-incompetent (top left); the British are perceived as cold-competent (bottom right); and Americans, housewives and the middle-class are perceived as warm-competent (top right) (Cuddy et al.,, 2007, 2008).

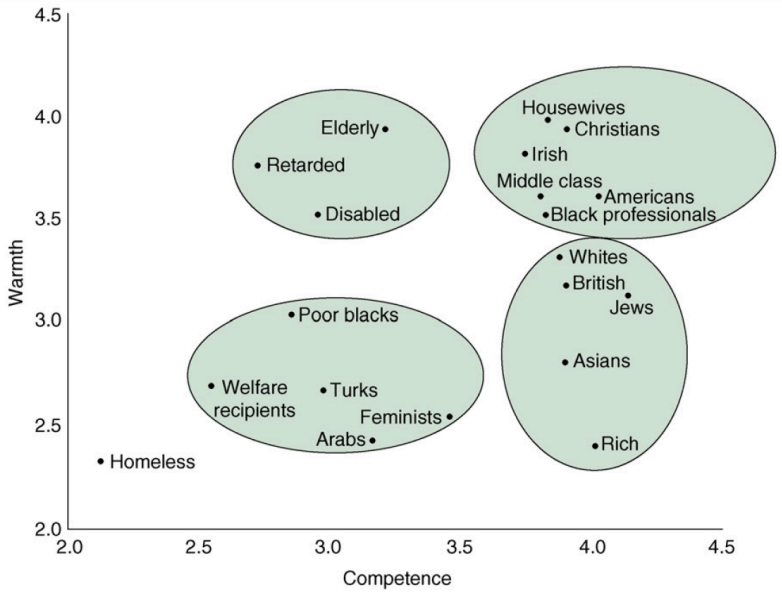


Figure 2: Warmth and Competence Perceptions of Stereotype Groups in the Stereotype Content Model (SCM) (Cuddy et al.,, 2007) (Note: group labels are not endorsed by the authors)

Theory from the SCM (Cuddy et al.,, 2007) is strongly influenced by other social variances such as competition and status (Russell & Fiske, 2008). Competitors are perceived as cold, whilst allies as warm; high-status individuals as competent, whilst low status individuals as incompetent (Cuddy et al.,, 2008; Russell & Fiske, 2008). In the judgement of groups, people tend to ascribe either warmth or competence, whereas in the judgement of individuals, people may ascribe both (J. Aaker et al.,, 2010). There is evidence that warmth is the primary dimension as it is assessed first and carries more weight (Cuddy et al.,, 2008).

Cuddy et al., (2007) also developed the Behavior from Intergroup Affect and Stereotypes (BIAS) map as an additional tool to illustrate the emotional and behavioural outcomes of warmth and competence (refer to Figure 3). These emotional responses can be summarised as follows: the poor (cold-incompetent) evoke feelings of contempt, the elderly (warm-incompetent) evoke feelings of pity, the British (cold-competent) evoke feelings of envy and Americans, housewives and the middle-class (warm-competent) evoke feelings of admiration (Cuddy et al.,, 2007, 2008). Those that are perceived as warm are well-liked and those that are perceived as competent are well-respected (Kervyn et al.,, 2012; Wojciszke, Abele, & Baryla, 2009).

The BIAS map (Cuddy et al.,, 2007) goes on to demonstrate the behavioural outcomes of warmth and competence. Warmth facilitates active response, whilst competence facilitates passive response. Groups that are perceived as warm incite active facilitation (for example: receiving help); groups that are perceived as cold incite active harm (for example: being attacked); groups that are perceived as competent incite passive facilitation (for example: cooperation); and groups that are perceived as incompetent incite passive harm (for example: neglect or being ignored) (Cuddy et al.,, 2007, 2008).

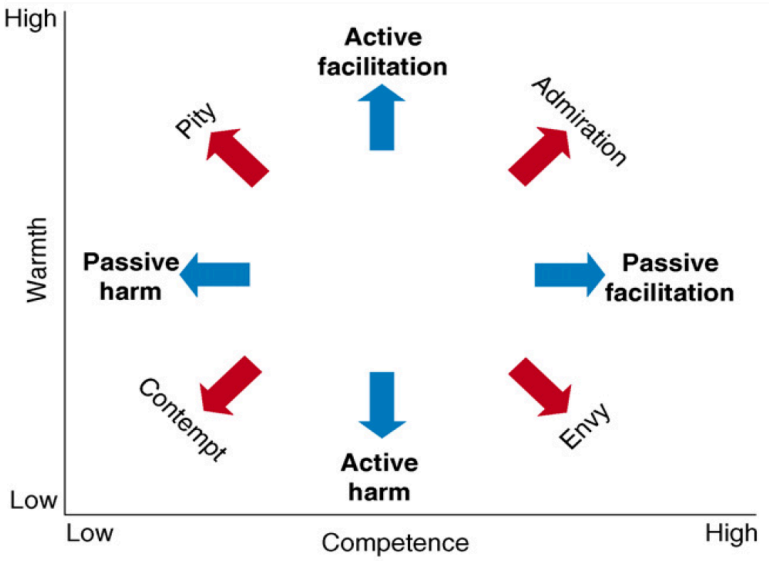


Figure 3: Emotional and Behavioural Responses to Warmth and Competence as per the Stereotype Content Model (SCM) and the Behaviour from Intergroup Affect and Stereotype (BIAS) Map (Cuddy et al.,, 2007)

Distinct behaviours then follow each combination of warmth-by-competence. Specifically: admired (warm-competent) groups, such as Americans, evoke both active and passive facilitation (receiving help and cooperation); whilst resented (cold-incompetent) groups, such as the poor or homeless, evoke both active and passive harm (being attacked and neglected). Groups that are strong on either warmth or competence, elicit more volatile behavioural responses. Specifically: pitied (warm-incompetent) groups, such as the elderly, evoke active facilitation and/or passive harm (receiving help or being neglected); whilst envied (cold-competent) groups, such as the British, evoke passive facilitation and/or active harm (cooperation or being attacked) (Cuddy et al.,, 2007, 2008).

Due to globalisation and the world today, encounters between different social groups are frequent (Cuddy et al.,, 2008). There is neurological data that supports the theories of the SCM and the BIAS map (Cuddy et al.,, 2007). The research on perceived warmth and competence as they relate to social psychology is so robust that these dimensions have been deemed fundamental to interpersonal relationships (Cuddy et al.,, 2007). Kervyn et al., (2012) found this research so vigorous that they claim that the model can apply not only across cultures, but to a variety of social targets, and even brands.

Warmth & Competence in Brands

J. Aaker et al., (2010) posed the question whether people then evaluate brands on the same basis of warmth and competence. Fiske et al., (2007) claimed that brands do not have the friend or foe consequences that apply in interpersonal relationships. In addition, it was said to be unlikely that an inanimate object could be evaluated in the same manner as an animate object or person (Fiske et al.,, 2007). This stance was due to the evolutionary nature of warmth and competence over many years and the belief that this evaluative process would be irrelevant to consumers relating to brands (J. Aaker et al.,, 2010). However, are brands today really inanimate?

For several years now consumers have attributed humanlike traits to brands (J. Aaker, 1997; J. Aaker et al.,, 2010; Aggarwal & McGill, 2007, 2012; Fournier, 1998, 2009; Fournier & Alvarez, 2012; Kervyn et al.,, 2012). Pivotal in this area of research was the development of theory on brand personality; where personality traits, usually reserved for people, could be applied to brands (J. Aaker, 1997). It was Fournier (1998) that then suggested that people relate to brands in the same way as they do to people and even have relationships with them. Today, this idea is widely accepted in marketing research (Fournier & Alvarez, 2012). This forms part of research on brand anthropomorphism; where anthropomorphism is defined as the attribution of human characteristics and features to non-human entities (Aggarwal & Mcgill, 2012). Warmth and competence are said to enhance brand anthropomorphism, making brands more relatable to consumers (Fournier & Alvarez, 2012). So, it can be deduced that brands are no longer simply inanimate objects.

Although anthropomorphism has been studied for hundreds of years in philosophy, its appeal in marketing is still poorly understood in spite of a growing human inclination to anthropomorphise (Brown, 2010; Hudson, Huang, Roth, & Madden, 2016) . Kim and McGill (2011) posit that there are two types of brand anthropomorphism. The first is analogical in nature; where schematic indicators are used to create cognitive associations with human characteristics. For example, a brand that meets customer expectations is perceived as trustworthy – the quality of trustworthiness, which is usually reserved for people, makes the brand seem more human. Theories on brand personality belong in this first group (Kim & McGill, 2011). The brand personality scale includes five traits: sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication, and ruggedness (J. Aaker, 1997). There are strong similarities between sincerity and warmth (Kervyn et al.,, 2012), and competence is included. With this first type of anthropomorphism in marketing, human qualities are simply observable traits in the brand (Kim & McGill, 2011). This notion that brands can be infused with humanlike traits is no longer questioned in academic research (Bennett & Hill, 2012).

Kim and McGill (2011) state that the second form of anthropomorphism in marketing takes consumers a step closer to really believing that a brand is human. In this instance, the brand is perceived as having a humanlike mental state (Kim & McGill, 2011). An anthropomorphised brand is a palpable entity – having senses, goals, a mentality, a temper and even an appetite for power (Fournier & Alvarez, 2012). Puzakova, Kwak, and Rocereto (2009, p. 413) refer to anthropomorphised brands as having: "…various emotional states, mind, soul and conscious behaviours". In brand anthropomorphism of this nature, the consumer starts to view the brand as having the capacity for care and concern (warmth) (Kim & McGill, 2011). Brands that can achieve this are said to make it far easier for consumers to draw real comparisons between their interpersonal relationships and their relationships with brands (Kim & McGill, 2011; Malone & Fiske, 2013). This notion that people can attribute a complex mental state to an inanimate object has been studied extensively in philosophy (Arico, 2010). However, it is not yet widely accepted in academic research on branding and is even contested by some (Fournier & Alvarez, 2012; Knobe & Prinz, 2008).

Regardless, through expressions of warmth and competence, anthropomorphised brands are believed to have stronger, more meaningful relationships with their customers (Fournier & Alvarez, 2012; Kervyn et al.,, 2012; Kim & McGill, 2011; Malone & Fiske, 2013). Perceived warmth is felt when a consumer believes the brand to have good intentions, and perceived competence when the consumer believes the brand to have the ability to carry out those intentions (J. Aaker et al.,, 2004; J. Aaker et al.,, 2010; Kervyn et al.,, 2012; Malone & Fiske, 2013). According to Malone and Fiske (2013), warmth is measured on the basis of perceived traits including warm, friendly, likeable, trustworthy, honest and sincere; and competence on the basis of perceived traits including capable, intelligent and skilled. Brands that are to succeed in the age of marketing where customer relationships play centre stage, are those that project humanlike qualities through expressions of warmth and competence (Malone & Fiske, 2013).

Warmth has been described as a “positive, mild, volatile emotion involving physiological arousal and precipitated by experiencing directly or vicariously a love, family, or friendship relationship” (D. A. Aaker, Stayman, & Hagerty, 1986, p. 366). Gestures of warmth in particular make consumers feel the same way about brands as they do about their friends and family (J. Aaker et al.,, 2010; Malone & Fiske, 2013). Popular human brands that display both warmth and competence include Coca-Cola, Hershey’s and Johnson & Johnson (Kervyn et al.,, 2012). These brands have strong customer relationships and high brand loyalty (Fournier, 2009; Fournier & Alvarez, 2012).

Warmth and competence also relate to other constructs such as brand reputation (J. Aaker et al.,, 2010). A brand’s reputation is based on the consumer’s evaluation of various aspects of the organisation, including warm and competent attributes (Fombrun & Shanley, 1990). When the consumer believes that the brand has their best interests at heart (warmth), the brand reputation signals trustworthiness (J. Aaker et al.,, 2010). Brand competence is evaluated on the basis of quality, reliability, durability and consistency (Kervyn et al.,, 2012). Brands develop competent reputations when consumers perceive a high value offering (Devine & Halpern, 2001; Halpern, 2001).

In the last decade, there has been growing interest in research on warmth and competence as it applies to brands. J. Aaker et al., (2010) confirmed that non-profit brands are generally perceived as warmer, but less competent than for-profit brands. Research has supported the idea that consumers evaluate brands based on expressions of warmth and competence (J. Aaker et al.,, 2010; Andrei & ZAIÞ, 2014; Fournier & Alvarez, 2012; Kervyn et al.,, 2012; Malone & Fiske, 2013). Kervyn et al., (2012) developed a theoretical framework that can be used to understand this better.

Theoretical Framework: The BIAF (Brands as Intentional Agents Framework)

Kervyn et al., (2012) developed an adaptation of the SCM and the BIAS map (Cuddy et al.,, 2007), referred to as the Brands as Intentional Agents Framework (BIAF). This theoretical framework explains three aspects of brand perception as they relate to warmth and competence: the evaluative dimensions, the emotional reactions and the corresponding behavioural responses (Kervyn et al.,, 2012).

The BIAF (Kervyn et al.,, 2012) is a two-by-two matrix with four clusters that illustrate four possible combinations of warmth-by-competence in brands (refer to Figure 4). For the evaluation of brands and not people, the BIAF refers to intentions (warmth) and ability (competence). This is done to emphasise the intention and ability of a corporate entity rather than a person (Kervyn et al.,, 2012). However, to avoid confusion with the two dimensions of brand trust (brand intentions and brand reliability), the terms warmth and competence were used throughout this study.

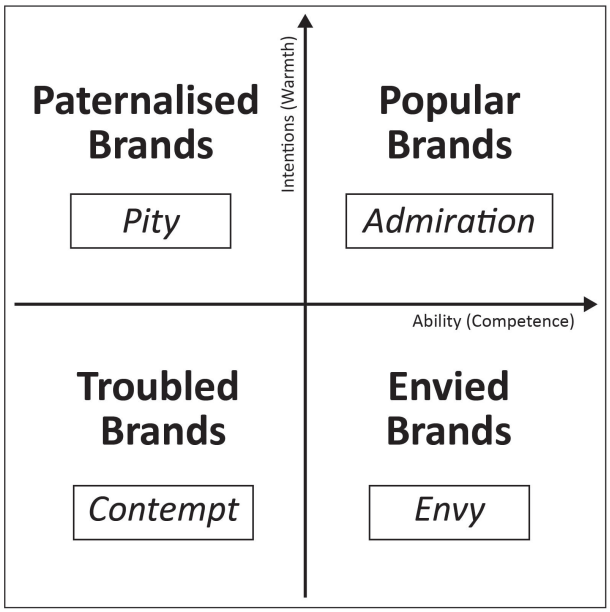


Figure 4: The Brands as Intentional Agents Framework (BIAF) (Kervyn et al.,, 2012)

The four clusters of the BIAF (Kervyn et al.,, 2012) (refer to Figure 5) are cold-incompetent (unable/ill-intentioned), cold-competent (able/ill-intentioned), warm-incompetent (unable/well-intentioned) and warm-competent (able/well-intentioned). The BIAF also shows the emotional consumer responses of perceived warmth and competence in brands and they are the same as those of interpersonal relationships. Like people, cold-incompetent brands elicit contempt, cold-competent brands elicit envy, warm-incompetent brands elicit pity and warm-competent brands elicit admiration (Kervyn et al.,, 2012).

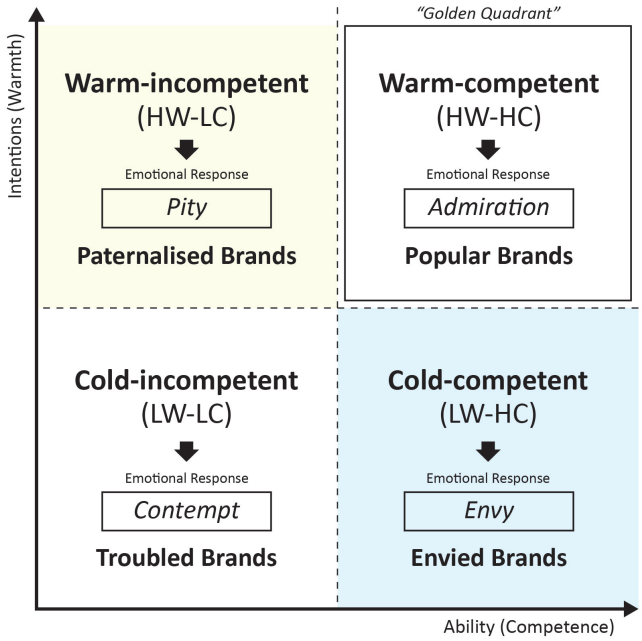


Figure 5: Synopsis of Theory on the Brands as Intentional Agents Framework (BIAF) (Kervyn et al.,, 2012)

Brands that are seen as high in both warmth and competence are said to belong to the "golden quadrant", evoking the highest levels of admiration and consumer loyalty (J. Aaker et al.,, 2012; J. Aaker et al.,, 2010; Fournier & Alvarez, 2012; Zawisza & Pittard, 2015). According to Kervyn et al., (2012), popular brands (such as Coca-Cola and Hershey's) are perceived as warm-competent, making them "golden quadrant" brands. Consumers view these brands as having both positive intentions and sound ability. At the opposite end of the spectrum, brands that are perceived as cold-incompetent, as a result of negative publicity or misbehaviour (such as BP), are considered troubled brands. Brands that are perceived as competent but cold (such as Porsche or Rolex), are considered envied (or luxury) brands. Brands that are perceived as warm but incompetent (such as public transport brands or NGO's) are considered paternalised brands (Kervyn et al.,, 2012). J. Aaker et al., (2010) reiterated this in their study of non-profit versus for-profit brands, where non-profit brands were viewed as more warm than competent.

The BIAF can be considered a brand management system; delivering on practical utility and providing guidance for brand managers (Fournier & Alvarez, 2012). Kervyn et al., (2012) state that the framework can be used to present a landscape of perceptions so that brands can be compared. In psychology, stereotype groups consistently, even across cultures, land in a the same quadrant of the SCM and BIAS map (Cuddy et al.,, 2007, 2008). Similarly, Kervyn et al., (2012) propose that certain stereotype or model brands will unfailingly belong to a specific quadrant of the BIAF. To demonstrate this, a study of 16 brands was conducted and the results are shown in Figure 6 (Kervyn et al.,, 2012).

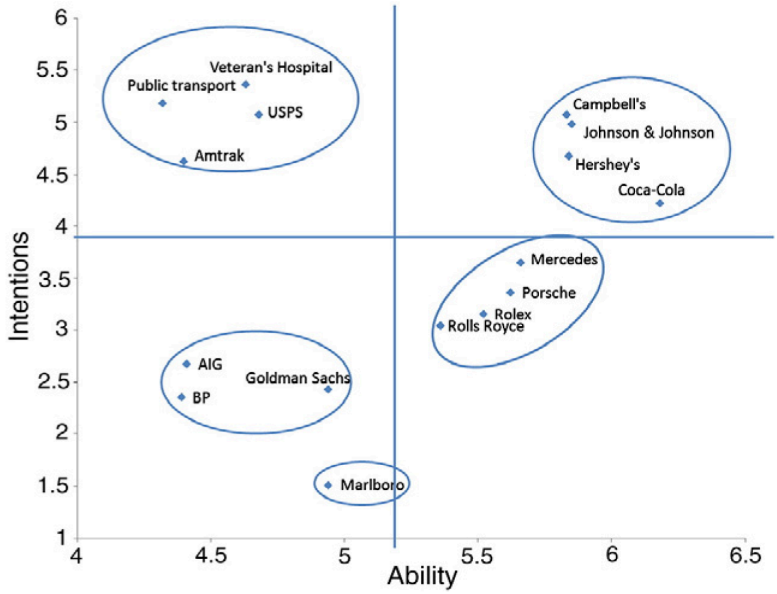


Figure 6: Warmth (Intentions) and Competence (Ability) Scores of 16 Brands (Kervyn et al.,, 2012)

Creating "Golden Quadrant" Brands

Due to significant consumer scepticism and decreases in brand trust, a cultivation of admiration through expressions of warmth and competence is needed now more than ever (J. Aaker et al.,, 2012; J. Aaker et al.,, 2010; Gerzema, 2009; D. Holt, 2002). Fournier and Alvarez (2012) state that advancing the theories of the BIAF (Kervyn et al.,, 2012) requires shedding light on the mechanisms and processes that can be used to enhance perceptions of warmth and competence in brands. It has been said that the marketing mix, the organisational values and employee behaviour can all be used for this (Fournier & Alvarez, 2012).

Some of the most admired brands in the world include Google, Apple and Southwest Airlines (J. Aaker et al.,, 2012). Southwest Airlines is known for putting the customer's interests first and this is clear display of their warmth (Lantieri & Chiagouris, 2009). A study of the world's most admired brands by Fortune Magazine (2015), provides insight into what it takes to build "golden quadrant" brands and includes Starbucks and General Electric as examples. Admired brands exhibit warm and competent attributes, such as: people management (warmth); social responsibility (warmth); quality of products, services and management (competence); and financial security (competence) (Fortune Magazine, 2015). Table 4 provides a summary of the traits of warm and competent brands as per the literature.

Table 4: Traits of Warm and/or Competent Brands

Warmth	Source(s)	Competence	Source(s)
Friendly, likeable, trustworthy, honest and sincere, with an accommodating orientation	Kervyn et al., (2012) Malone and Fiske (2013)	Capable, intelligent and skilled	Kervyn et al., (2012) Malone and Fiske (2013)
Helpfulness	Kervyn et al., (2012)	Conscientiousness and efficiency	Kervyn et al., (2012)
Other-interest: a willingness to benefit their customers, even at their own expense	Cuddy et al., (2008) Malone and Fiske (2013)	Self-interest	Cuddy et al., (2008)
Evaluated on the basis of kindness, reciprocity, honesty and sincerity	J. S. Hess (1995) Sung and Kim (2010)	Evaluated on the basis of quality, reliability, durability and consistency	Kervyn et al., (2012)
Consumer believes the brand to have good intentions	J. Aaker et al., (2010) Kervyn et al., (2012)	Consumer believes the brand to be able to carry out their intentions	J. Aaker et al., (2010) Kervyn et al., (2012)
"…trusted to be sensitive to consumer's needs"	MacInnis (2012, p. 196)	*"…trusted to fulfil consumer's needs"*	MacInnis (2012, p. 196)
Consumers feel the same way as they do about their friends and family	J. Aaker et al., (2010) Kervyn et al., (2012)	Consumer observations about brand knowledge, expertise, and performance, to complete a task and satisfy needs	Coulter and Coulter (2002)

Solving problems quickly, being consistent and having efficient, friendly staff (i.e. people management)	Fortune Magazine (2015) J. Hess and Story (2005)	Associated with high quality products, services and management and consistency	Fortune Magazine (2015) Lantieri and Chiagouris (2009)
Displaying a genuine commitment to the community and their customers (i.e. social responsibility)	Fortune Magazine (2015) J. Hess and Story (2005)	Financial security and significant economic contribution	Fortune Magazine (2015) Pace (2015)
Subsidised or non-profit brands	J. Aaker et al., (2010) Kervyn et al., (2012)	Luxury brands	Kervyn et al., (2012)
Offer shared value	Porter and Kramer (2011) Malone and Fiske (2013)	A high value offering	Devine and Halpern (2001) Hallberg (2004)

Outcomes of Perceived Warmth and Competence

According to the BIAF (Kervyn et al.,, 2012), the behavioural outcomes of warmth and competence in brands differ to those of interpersonal relationships, as they relate specifically to consumer actions. Purchase intent and brand loyalty have been proven to be two behavioural outcomes of perceived warmth (intentions) and competence (ability) in brands (Kervyn et al.,, 2012).

Other behavioural outcomes of warmth and competence include increased consumer engagement and connection (J. Aaker et al.,, 2012); word-of-mouth and brand advocacy (Andrei & ZAIÞ, 2014); positive brand attitudes and intentions (Ivens et al.,, 2015); commitment (J. Hess & Story, 2005); and brand trust (Lau & Lee, 1999; Li et al.,, 2008). Although some research has been conducted on warmth and competence perceptions in relation to brand trust, there are several authors that call for this area to be explored further (J. Aaker et al.,, 2012; Fournier & Alvarez, 2012; MacInnis, 2012).

There is also debate in the literature around whether warmth or competence is a stronger driver of positive consumer actions. In online networking, Andrei and ZAIÞ (2014) found warmth to be a stronger driver of online brand advocacy and competence to be more impactful in driving purchase intent. J. Aaker et al., (2012) concluded that non-profit brands should pursue competence in order to increase purchase intent. However, this was on condition that non-profit brands were already perceived as predominantly warm.

Zawisza and Pittard (2015) stated that either dimension might be a stronger driver of purchase intent and which one is entirely influenced by context such as purchase involvement, level of consumer anxiety and advertising appeal. It has been suggested that the golden quadrant no longer refers to the highest levels of warmth and competence, but to their optimal levels within a specific context or market segment (Zawisza & Pittard, 2015). Bennett and Hill (2012) and Kervyn et al., (2012) found both warmth and competence to be equally important. Kervyn et al., (2012) found that consumers form judgements about brands so heavily

based on warmth and competence, that these dimensions collectively accounted for almost 50% of consumer loyalty, purchase intent and likelihood to recommend (Kervyn et al.,, 2012; Malone & Fiske, 2013).

2.4.2. Warmth in Relation to Brand Authenticity

For brand managers, warmth perceptions are more malleable than competence and can be easier to create or enhance, especially when the brand is already perceived as competent (J. Aaker et al.,, 2012). Pepsico is a brand that is actively trying to shift perceptions from being viewed as having only strong ability (competence) to now having equally good intentions (warmth) (Kervyn et al.,, 2012). There is evidence of this in their "Performance with Purpose" strategy where the focus is on creating shared value (Kervyn et al.,, 2012; Porter & Kramer, 2011). Another example of a brand trying to enhance warmth perceptions is large pharmaceutical company, Merck, whose brand slogan is "Where patients come first" (J. Aaker et al.,, 2012).

Brand authenticity has been linked to warmth (Grandey, Fisk, Mattila, Jansen, & Sideman, 2005). Warmth has been described as: "…assessing whether one is kind, friendly, and good-natured; whether one appears sincere, honest, moral, and trustworthy; and whether one possesses an accommodating orientation" (Malone & Fiske, 2013, p. 22). Brands express their good intentions (warmth) by resolving problems quickly, being consistent, having efficient, friendly staff and displaying a genuine commitment to the community and their customers (J. Hess & Story, 2005). This behaviour echoes many of the attributes of authentic brands; particularly having a genuine commitment to the community (Porter & Kramer, 2011).

Brand authenticity is also synonymous with "sincerity" (Beverland, 2005a; Fine, 2003; Napoli et al.,, 2014; Pace, 2015), "integrity" (Morhart et al.,, 2015) and "transparency" (Molleda & Jain, 2013; Shen & Kim, 2012). If a brand is sincere, it is perceived as authentic (Napoli et al.,, 2014; Pace, 2015). Similarly, if a brand is sincere, it is perceived as warm (Malone & Fiske, 2013).

2.4.3. Warmth in Relation to Brand Trust

According to Sung and Kim (2010), trust is built by not only providing quality, but by doing so in a sincere manner. Some authors believe that consumers expect a brand to satisfy their functional needs and that trust then develops mainly out of the added emotional security of kindness and reciprocity (Ashraf, Bohnet, & Piankov, 2006; J. S. Hess, 1995). Delgado-Ballester (2004) argued that brand intentions have a stronger impact on consumers than brand reliability, as the latter may not always be an accurate reflection of the brand's true values. Brands that are perceived as honest and sincere, are more likely to be trusted by consumers, than those that offer quality alone (Sung & Kim, 2010).

The literature demonstrates strong ties between warmth and brand trust. Warmth is indicative of the brands honesty, integrity, sincerity, kindness and good intentions (Kervyn et al.,, 2012). Brand trust is dependent on

the perception of the brand's fairness and integrity (Morgan & Hunt, 1994; Singh, Iglesias, & Batista-Foguet, 2012). Integrity is so closely related to brand trust that it has even been postulated as a sub-dimension thereof (Hon & Grunig, 1999; Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995). Perceived brand ethicality has been found to have a positive affect on brand trust (J. Hess & Story, 2005; Singh et al.,, 2012). Trust has also been associated with benevolence and honesty (Coulter & Coulter, 2002; Doney & Cannon, 1997; Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Warmth has been said to be particularly important for service brands that need to build trust, where employees displaying warmth and kindness is key (Alan & Kabadayı, 2014; Zawisza & Pittard, 2015).

Trust has been described as the feeling of security based on the belief that another has positive intentions and will act in one's best interests (Delgado-Ballester & Luis Munuera-Alemán, 2001; Doney & Cannon, 1997). This description echoes the definition of brand warmth exactly; where perceived warmth is felt when one perceives the brand to have good intentions and to act in the best interests of the consumer (Kervyn et al.,, 2012). MacInnis (2012, p. 196) described warm brands as "those that are *trusted to be sensitive to consumer's needs*". The use of the word "trusted" is almost intuitive, demonstrating a close connection between warmth and trust. In addition, Kervyn et al., (2012) found brand loyalty to be a key behavioural outcome of warmth perceptions in brands and loyalty is widely accepted as leading to brand trust (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; Delgado-Ballester & Luis Munuera-Alemán, 2001; Lau & Lee, 1999). As the literature demonstrated close ties between brand authenticity, perceived warmth, and brand trust, the following hypothesis was proposed:

2.4.4. Hypothesis 1

H1: Perceived warmth mediates the relationship between brand authenticity and brand trust.

2.4.5. Competence in Relation to Brand Authenticity

The literature demonstrates links between brand authenticity and competence. Competence has been described as the degree to which the consumer believes that the brand has the required skills and knowledge to deliver on its promise (Kervyn et al.,, 2012). Authentic brands deliver on their promises (Schallehn et al.,, 2014). As a result, they are perceived as reliable (Bruhn et al.,, 2012) and credible (Morhart et al.,, 2015). They ensure that they meet the needs of their customers through continuity and consistency in their communications and actions (Bruhn et al.,, 2012; Eggers et al.,, 2013; Morhart et al.,, 2015; Schallehn et al.,, 2014; Shen & Kim, 2012). Both credibility and reliability, key dimensions of brand authenticity, have been proven to have a positive impact on perceived competence (Keller, 2012; Morgan & Hunt, 1994; Morhart et al.,, 2015; Moscarani, 2007).

Delivering on the brand promise is an indication of both brand authenticity and competence. Authentic brands are customer orientated and committed to providing superior value for their customers through a quality offering (Beverland, 2005a; Beverland & Farrelly, 2010; Eggers et al.,, 2013). The fact that authentic brands should be perceived as competent is repeated throughout the literature.

2.4.6. Competence in Relation to Brand Trust

Perceived competence has also been repeatedly linked to brand trust (J. Aaker et al.,, 2012; Coulter & Coulter, 2002; Doney & Cannon, 1997; Lassoued & Hobbs, 2015). It has been empirically proven to increase brand trust (Lau & Lee, 1999; Li et al.,, 2008; Schallehn et al.,, 2014) and to even be a key component thereof (Hon & Grunig, 1999; Mayer et al.,, 1995; Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Competence and trust are so connected in academic research that they have even been referred to as a single type of organisational trust: competency trust. Competency trust in business-to-business relationships is the expectation that a business partner will perform (Ahmed, Patterson, & Styles, 1999; Dowell et al.,, 2013; Mayer et al.,, 1995).

Like brand authenticity and perceived competence, the link between perceived competence and brand trust lies in whether the brand delivers on its promise. Perceived competence is based on whether one perceives the brand to have the ability to carry out their intentions (Kervyn et al.,, 2012). MacInnis (2012) describes competent brands as being trusted to fulfil needs**.** Competence has also been described as consumer observations of a brand's knowledge, expertise, and performance to complete a task and satisfy needs (Coulter & Coulter, 2002). Doney and Cannon (1997) describe the calculative process of purchase decision-making, where the consumer weighs up the costs versus the rewards. First and foremost, the consumer evaluates the ability of the brand to meet its obligations (Doney & Cannon, 1997). Brand trust is said to develop out of a set of perceived attitudes about the brand, including perceived competence (Alan & Kabadayı, 2014; Lassoued & Hobbs, 2015). The literature suggests that if a brand is perceived to be competent in performance, it will be more trusted by consumers.

Brand reliability, one of two dimensions of brand trust, addresses a promise of performance (Delgado-Ballester, 2004; Delgado-Ballester & Luis Munuera-Alemán, 2001). Brand reliability is derived from brand attributes of a competence-based nature (Delgado-Ballester, 2004), such as product quality and consistency (Lantieri & Chiagouris, 2009). As the literature demonstrated close ties between brand authenticity, perceived competence, and brand trust, the following second hypothesis was proposed:

2.4.7. Hypothesis 2

H2: Perceived competence mediates the relationship between brand authenticity and brand trust.

2.5. Conclusion

Brand trust is in global decline and many authors have attributed this to brands not delivering on their promises. One way to rebuild brand trust is through creating authentic brands that are committed to their values and are perceived as more humanlike through expressions of warmth and competence. This researched addressed this current and important problem in branding.

The academic literature suggested close ties between the four constructs (brand authenticity, perceived warmth and competence, and brad trust) leading to the development of the conceptual model and two research hypotheses. Many of the traits of authentic brands overlapped with those of warm and competent brands. For example, integrity and morality are key to both authenticity and perceived warmth; and continuity, consistency, credibility and reliability are key to both authenticity and perceived competence.

In addition, brand trust is widely accepted as having two important components: brand intentions and brand reliability. These are communicated through the affective and cognitive attributes of the brand, which again echo expressions of warmth and competence. By definition alone, warmth and brand intentions sound the same, as both relate to the wholesome intentions of the brand and the brand having the consumer's best interests at the heart of the organisation. Competence and brand reliability were also similar, and relate to the brand delivering on its value promise. After an extensive review, the strong conceptual overlaps between the constructs were undeniable and led to the belief that there were relationships to be investigated.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

Methodology is described by Neuman (2011, p. 2) as "understanding the entire research process – including its social-organisational context, philosophical assumptions, ethical principles, and the political impact of new knowledge from the research enterprise". Research is underpinned by a paradigm or belief that informs the methodology (Symon & Cassell, 2012). There are three possible research paradigms: positivist, interpretive and critical. This study was located in a positivist paradigm and adopted a quantitative methodology; the most common approach to research in the social sciences. Positivism believes in a single truth; where knowledge can either be confirmed or rejected (Bryman, 2012). This chapter discusses the research methodology that of this study in great detail.

3.1. Research Strategy

The research strategy provides a charter for the way in which the author will proceed through the research (Wagner, Kawulich, & Garner, 2012). It is defined as the "general orientation to the conduct of social research" (Bryman, 2012, p. 35). The research strategy may be based on one of two distinct clusters, quantitative or qualitative research (Bryman, 2012; Neuman, 2011).

This study adopted a quantitative research strategy. Babbie (2015) describes quantitative research as the numeric representation of observations used to explain a specific phenomenon. Numerical data is used to explain an area of research by determining the nature of relationships through identifying cause and effect (Wagner et al.,, 2012). The aim of this study was to test the ideas identified in past literature and a quantitative approach was considered the most appropriate to do so.

An important aspect of this research was to investigate the dimensions of brand authenticity. Brand authenticity is a complex, multi-dimensional construct with meaning that is contextual and constantly changing (Beverland, 2005a). The understanding of brand authenticity in academic research is in its infancy (Schallehn et al.,, 2014). Due to its latent nature, much of the original research on brand authenticity was qualitative (Alexander, 2009; Beverland, 2006; Beverland & Farrelly, 2010; Beverland et al.,, 2008; Hopper et al.,, 2015; Leigh et al.,, 2006). However, in the last five years or so, academic research has adopted more quantitative or mixed-methodology approaches in order to quantify this phenomenon (Bruhn et al.,, 2012; Eggers et al.,, 2013; Engeset & Elvekrok, 2015; Morhart et al.,, 2015; Napoli et al.,, 2014; Schallehn et al.,, 2014). A quantitative research strategy was selected for this study due to its objective nature. By using statistical data, quantitative research emphasises objectivity as it involves robust standards and procedures that lead to the development of concrete conclusions (Neuman, 2011).

3.2. Research Design

The research design provides a framework as to how the data will be collected and analysed (Bryman, 2012). To ensure that the study will achieve its ultimate purpose, the research design should fit the research problem and the objectives of the study (Symon & Cassell, 2012).

A cross-sectional research design was selected for this study. According to Bryman (2012), this type of research design is commonly used to investigate two or more variables, with the intention to establish and evaluate patterns in the relationships between those variables at a single point in time. This study looked at more than one case (being customers of several domestic airline brands) with the intention to investigate the relationships between brand authenticity, perceived warmth and competence, and brand trust. Due to the nature and time constraints of the research, this research design was selected.

3.3. Research Procedure and Methods

The research method is the technique used for collecting data and involves a specific instrument (Bryman, 2012). For this study, a survey approach using a self-completion questionnaire was adopted. This method was deemed appropriate, as research of this nature requires a substantial sample size to be truly objective and credible, and it was hoped that a survey would achieve a large sample.

3.3.1. Target Population and Sampling

The target population for the study was regular customers of airline brands in South Africa. The sampling frame was made up of customers of seven domestic airlines that fly within South African borders, they were: Kulula, Mango, British Airways (BA), South African Airways (SAA), Safair, Blue Crane and CemAir. Many of these airline brands are well-known and fly frequently between the main local destinations. Hair, Anderson, Tatham, and William (1995) recommend a minimum sample size of 100 responses for factor analysis. However, Comrey and Lee (1973) are frequently cited as stating that a sample size of 300 responses is good. A larger sample size would be more representative of the target population.

Respondents were selected using non-probability convenience sampling. With this sampling method, the researcher selects the sample based on certain characteristics and identifies anyone he or she comes across to participate in the study (Neuman, 2011; Symon & Cassell, 2012). The qualifying criterion was consumers that fly within South Africa more than three times per year. A “frequent flyer” such as this should have a clear understanding of the brand and several experiences to refer to when answering questions. In addition, multiple positive brand experiences are required to build brand trust (Lassoued & Hobbs, 2015). Anyone that met the qualifying criteria and was willing to participate was asked to do so.

The following ethical considerations were made:

- Respondents were asked to participate by completing the questionnaire. They did so without being forced in any way and if they showed reluctance, they did not have to take part. Their participation was entirely voluntary and they could withdraw from answering at any time.
- Assistants that distributed the questionnaires provided a brief explanation and were available to answer any questions during the time that the respondent was completing the questionnaire. The questionnaire included a short description of the purpose of the research, which was primarily academic. This was done to ensure that participants were fully informed and not deceived in any way.
- Respondents were assured of their anonymity and confidentiality over the information provided. They had anonymity in the sense that the researcher did not know their identities. They were not asked to provide their names or any information pertaining to their identity. For easy reference, numbers were assigned to the completed questionnaires. The information collected was not shared with any individual or organisation, except those working on the research study.
- The researcher ensured that the respondents were not harmed psychologically or emotionally, and that the reputation of respondents or the gatekeeper of the information was not damaged in the process of data collection. This included any possible stress, frustration, inconvenience or humiliation.
- Certain companies (Bidvest, Lanseria airport, Comair, Mango and Safair) gave permission for the research to be conducted. The completed report will be shared with them in order to offer reciprocity, and the results may be used internally for strategic marketing purposes.

3.3.2. Data Collection Instrument

The study utilised a self-completion questionnaire, which is commonly used in quantitative research (Bryman, 2012). The first half of the questionnaire design was focused on capturing demographic and other characteristics of the respondents. The second half was focused on the measurement of the four constructs (brand authenticity, perceived warmth and competence, and brand trust) with a total of 35 items. Please refer to Appendix A for the full questionnaire.

The questionnaire design was structured as follows:

1. **Section A: Qualifying Question**

The qualifying question asked potential respondents whether they fly within South Africa at least three times per year. This was to establish if they were regular customers of the brand. If the person answered yes, they proceeded with the rest of the questionnaire. If they answered no, they were thanked for their time and asked not to continue.

2. **Section B: General Information (Demographic Profile)**

B1. Gender
B2. Marital Status
B3. Age
B4. Ethnicity
B5. Country of Origin
B6. Home Language
B7. City
B8. Education
B9. Employment Status

3. **Section C: Airline Selection**

This section asked respondents to identify the domestic airline they fly most often in South Africa. They were asked to answer the brand questions (Section D) based on an evaluation of that specific airline.

C1. Purpose of Travel
C2. Airline Options:
    1. British Airways (BA)
    2. Kulula
    3. Mango
    4. Safair
    5. South African Airways (SAA)
    6. Blue Crane
    7. CemAir

4. **Section D: Construct Measurement**

This section contained 35 items to measure the four constructs. The order was randomised and included 12 negatively worded items. The questions were categorised as follows:

1. **Brand Authenticity** (originality, continuity, credibility and integrity): 17 items (Bruhn et al.,, 2012; Morhart et al.,, 2015)
2. **Perceived Warmth**: 5 items (J. Aaker et al.,, 2010; Kervyn et al.,, 2012)
3. **Perceived Competence**: 5 items (J. Aaker et al.,, 2010; Kervyn et al.,, 2012)
4. **Brand Trust** (brand reliability and brand intentions): 8 items (Delgado-Ballester, 2004)

Brand Authenticity Instrument

The measurement instrument used for brand authenticity consisted of four questions, each of which measured a dimension of brand authenticity identified in the literature. These dimensions were originality, continuity, credibility and integrity. Originality, credibility and integrity each contained four items, whilst continuity contained five items. In total, there were 17 items to measure brand authenticity. The measurement of brand authenticity was extensive to address the first research sub-problem, which was to establish and evaluate the most pertinent dimensions of brand authenticity.

The brand authenticity instruments were sourced from studies by Bruhn et al., (2012) and Morhart et al., (2015). Research by Bruhn et al., (2012) included four dimensions for brand authenticity: continuity, originality, reliability and naturalness. Research by Morhart et al., (2015) also included four dimensions for brand authenticity: continuity, credibility, integrity and symbolism. After an extensive review of the literature, it was believed that the four postulated dimensions (originality, continuity, credibility and integrity) best encompassed brand authenticity as it is explained across the research. It was believed that combining the measurement scales from these two studies would give the most accurate and complete representation of the brand authenticity dimensions.

The four items on originality were sourced from Bruhn et al., (2012) and made up of items used to measure originality and naturalness. A sample item for originality was: “I think the brand is unique”. The five items on continuity were sourced predominantly from Bruhn et al., (2012). However, an additional item from Morhart et al., (2015) was included. A sample item for continuity was: “The brand is consistent over time”. The four items used to measure credibility were a combination of two items on credibility from Bruhn et al., (2012) and two items on reliability from Morhart et al., (2015). The literature demonstrated similarity between credibility and reliability, and so they were grouped into one dimension. A sample item for credibility was: “The brand’s promises are credible”. Finally, the four items on integrity were sourced from Morhart et al., (2015). A sample item for integrity was: “The brand is true to a set of moral values”.

These measurement instruments were selected for the following reasons:

- They met the necessary reliability and validity standards.
- They measure the dimensions of brand authenticity that were confirmed by the literature.
- The full measurement instrument for brand authenticity contained only 17 items, whilst other instruments had many more items, which could have been laborious for respondents.
- The selected instruments were directed at consumers, whilst others were directed at employees.

Perceived Warmth and Competence Instruments

The measurement instruments utilised for perceived warmth and competence were combined scales from J. Aaker et al., (2010) and Kervyn et al., (2012). The instrument for perceived warmth focused on the affective attributes of the brand (kind, warm, generous and friendly), whilst the instrument for perceived competence measured cognitive brand attributes (competent, effective, efficient and capable). The instrument by J. Aaker et al., (2010) was later utilised by Andrei and ZAIÞ (2014) in their study of warmth and competence in online networking brands. The instrument by Kervyn et al., (2012) has been used to measure the warmth and competence of large global brands such as Hershey's, Johnson & Johnson, Campbell's and Coca-Cola.

Perceived Warmth

The measurement instrument for perceived warmth consisted of five items, each of which measured a key attribute of brands that are perceived as warm or having good intentions. These four attributes were kind, warm, generous and friendly. Kind, generous and friendly were measured using one item each, and warmth was measured using two items. Three items (kind, generous and one warmth item) were sourced from J. Aaker et al., (2010), whilst two additional items (friendly and a second warmth item) were sourced from Kervyn et al., (2012). In this question, respondents were asked to react to statements such as: "The brand has a kind attitude" and "The brand has good intentions towards ordinary people".

Perceived Competence

The measurement instrument for perceived competence consisted of four items, each of which measured a key attribute of brands that are perceived as competent or having great ability. These four attributes were competent, effective, efficient and capable. Effective, efficient and capable were measured using one item each, and competent was measured using two items. Three competence items (effective, efficient and one competence item) were sourced from J. Aaker et al., (2010). The additional two items for perceived competence (capable and a second competence item) were sourced from Kervyn et al., (2012). An example of an item from this question was: "The brand is skilled and effective at achieving its goals".

These measurement instruments were selected for the following reasons:

- They met the necessary reliability and validity standards.
- They were developed and tested by well-respected authors in academic research.
- There are a limited number of instruments that exist to measure perceived warmth and competence.

Brand Trust Instrument

The measurement instrument for brand trust, known as the Brand Trust Scale (BTS), was sourced from Delgado-Ballester (2004). Brand trust has been conceptualised as a two-dimensional construct, made up of brand reliability and brand intentions (Delgado-Ballester, 2004). The instrument included two questions, one for brand reliability and one for brand intentions. Each question contained four items, resulting in a total of eight items to measure brand trust.

This measurement instrument was selected for the following reasons:

- The instrument met the necessary reliability and validity standards.
- The instrument included the two dimensions of brand trust, important to the research problem.
- Some authors used the same instrument to measure brand trust, albeit as a one-dimensional construct (Sahin et al.,, 2011; Zehir et al.,, 2011).

Please refer to Appendix B for a breakdown of the individual items and their corresponding sources.

Measurement Instrument Reliability

It was necessary to ensure that the research instruments that were used had been previously tested for reliability. Cronbach's coefficient alpha is a widely used estimator of reliability in measurement scales (R. Peterson & Kim, 2013). The Cronbach alpha scores for the adopted measurement instruments were found to be above 0,7 as recommended by Nunnally (1978). Table 5 documents the coefficient alpha scores of the adopted measurement instruments.

Table 5: Reliability of Adopted Measurement Instruments

Construct	Questions and Sources	Cronbach alpha (α)
Brand Authenticity (four dimensions)	1) Originality (Bruhn et al.,, 2012) 2) Continuity (Bruhn et al.,, 2012; Morhart et al.,, 2015) 3) Credibility (Bruhn et al.,, 2012; Morhart et al.,, 2015) 4) Integrity (Morhart et al.,, 2015)	**α = 0.90** **α = 0.90; α > = 0.70** **α = 0.90; α > = 0.70** **α > = 0.70**
Perceived Warmth	1) Kind, Warm and Generous (J. Aaker et al.,, 2010) 2) Warm and Friendly (Kervyn et al.,, 2012)	**α = 0.83** **α = 0.90**
Perceived Competence	1) Competent, Effective and Efficient (J. Aaker et al.,, 2010) 2) Competent and Capable (Kervyn et al.,, 2012)	**α = 0.84** **α = 0.90**
Brand Trust (two dimensions)	1) Brand Reliability (Delgado-Ballester, 2004) 2) Brand Intentions (Delgado-Ballester, 2004)	**α = 0.94** **α = 0.83**

Instrument Validity

Brand Authenticity Instruments

Bruhn et al., (2012) underwent an exhaustive, mixed-methodology process during the development and testing of their measurement instrument. This process confirmed the construct validity of the instrument. Confirmatory factor analysis was used, narrowing the items down to only 15 and confirming their postulated brand authenticity dimensions (continuity, originality, reliability and naturalness). Discriminant validity was tested using exploratory factor analysis and showed that the four factors (dimensions) loaded onto a single construct, brand authenticity (Bruhn et al.,, 2012).

During the development of their measurement instrument, Morhart et al., (2015) ensured content validity by using an expert panel to narrow down a list of potential items identified through an initial qualitative study. Thereafter, confirmatory factor analysis was used to narrow down the instrument to 15 items and confirm the four postulated dimensions of brand authenticity (continuity, credibility, integrity and symbolism). Discriminant validity was supported for all the constructs, with the exception of credibility with trustworthiness and sincerity. This lack of discriminant validity was believed to be on account of a conceptual overlap between these constructs; all of which relate to delivering on the brand promise, honesty and creating trust (Morhart et al.,, 2015).

Warmth and Competence Instruments

J. Aaker et al., (2010) mention only the external validity of their measurement instrument. It appeared to be an adaptation of instruments originally sourced from Judd et al., (2005) and Grandey et al., (2005). The measurement instrument by J. Aaker et al., (2010) has since been used by Andrei and ZAIÞ (2014) who confirmed its generalisability and validity in their study of online networking brands. There was no mention of the validity of the instrument by Kervyn et al., (2012).

Brand Trust Instrument

The brand trust measurement instrument was developed and tested by Delgado-Ballester (2004). Convergent and discriminant validity of the instrument was tested with positive results. This instrument has since been used by Sahin et al., (2011) and Zehir et al., (2011).

Adjustments to the Measurement Instruments

For the purpose of consistency, minor adjustments were made to the measurement instrument. Brand authenticity items were adjusted slightly to ensure consistent grammar. Perceived warmth and competence items by J. Aaker et al., (2010) were originally in question format, they were changed to short sentences.

Measurement Scale

A 10-point numeric rating scale was used to measure the responses. The scale utilised a numerical descriptor where respondents were asked to select a number, between 1 and 10 (where 1 means strongly disagree, 5 means neutral and 10 means strongly agree) that most accurately denoted their level of agreement with the statements presented to them. 10-point scales are appropriate when the variables to be measured are difficult to observe (latent) and multi-dimensional (Wong, 2013). This was the reason for adopting a scale of this kind.

3.3.3. Data Collection Procedures

The self-completion questionnaire was distributed using face-to-face data collection procedures. Table 6 outlines some of the advantages and disadvantages of this method of data collection according to Zohrabi (2013) and Hung and Law (2011).

Table 6: Advantages and Disadvantages of Face-to-face Data Collection

Advantages	Disadvantages
Higher degree of control over process and environment	Time-consuming procedure for data collection
More control over response	**Risk to data quality (using research assistants)**
Researcher available to answer respondent queries	Sometimes result in inaccurate or questionable answers
Higher response rate than Internet surveys	High sociability effects – researcher or assistant present
Limited possibility of technical issues	Higher cost of distribution (assistants, travel & printing)
Access to respondents without Internet connectivity	Geographic limitations due to travel implications
Gather data at field sites	Inability to refine, change or update surveys once printed
Simultaneous data collection (with assistants)	**Laborious manual data entry from hard copies**

Face-to-face data collection was selected for the primary purpose of collecting data at field sites, specifically at airports where the sampling frame could be easily accessed. This method also generally returns a higher response rate than Internet surveys. Two downfalls were the risk to data quality (specifically using assistants, as this was a national study) and the laborious capturing of data. In spite of this, the advantages outweighed the disadvantages and this method was found to be quite effective.

To access the sampling frame, the questionnaires were distributed at the domestic terminals of airports, in line with the focus on domestic airline brands only. Specifically, data was collected at Bidvest airport lounges across South Africa and at Lanseria, a single smaller airport located in northern Johannesburg. The necessary permissions to conduct the data collection at these locations were received.

Bidvest is a large services, distribution and trading company that owns several airport lounges. The questionnaires were distributed in airport lounges in the domestic terminals of four airports, namely; OR Tambo International (Johannesburg), Cape Town International, King Shaka International (Durban) and Port Elizabeth International. Upon arrival at the lounge, staff asked guests if they would be willing to participate in the research study while they waited in the lounge. Guests that were interested and willing to participate were provided with a hard copy of the questionnaire. The respondent then returned the completed questionnaire to staff on their way out. Data collection at the Bidvest lounges was conducted in June 2016.

A second batch of data was collected at Lanseria airport in Johannesburg. Lanseria is a privately owned airport used primarily for domestic travel and international charter flights. As there are no airport lounges at this airport, the printed questionnaires were distributed in the main domestic departures area. Airport staff handed the hard copy questionnaires to travellers that were willing to participate in the study while waiting. Data collection at Lanseria airport was conducted in September 2016.

3.3.4. Data Processing and Analysis

Neuman (2011) states that, in quantitative research, the researcher does several things to reach the point at which conclusions can be drawn. First, the researcher transcribes the data into a computer-readable format. Then the researcher summarises the data and presents the primary findings in tables, graphs or charts. Finally, the researcher interprets the data and gives meaning to the findings in relation to the research questions (Neuman, 2011). This procedure was followed in the data processing and analysis for the study.

Data Processing

Data processing involves transforming numerical information into data and often uses some form of coding (Babbie, 2015; Bryman, 2012). The information collected from the completed questionnaires included both nominal and ordinal data. The nominal data from sections A-C was quantified using coding; numbers were assigned to the respective attributes (e.g. male = 1; female = 2). Thereafter, all the numerical information was captured into Excel. To ensure data quality, the questionnaires were captured twice and a third spreadsheet was then used to check for errors. A final spreadsheet of data was used for analysis.

Data Analysis

The data was analysed using factor analysis, which is a multivariate statistical procedure that has many purposes. Factor analysis reduces a large number of variables into smaller sets, or factors (Williams, Onsman, & Brown, 2010). It is especially suitable when the model includes a large number of indicators and latent variables (Hair, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2011). Factor analysis examines the underlying dimensions in the data, as a means to confirm or reject hypotheses (Williams et al.,, 2010). This type of analysis is appropriate

when the focus of the study is to predict and evolve theory (Hair et al.,, 2011; Reinartz, Haenlein, & Henseler, 2009). It is for these reasons that factor analysis was selected for use in this study. The research objectives were to determine the dimensions of brand authenticity, and to investigate the relationships between the latent variables presented in a complex conceptual model.

Specifically, partial least squares (PLS) in SMART-PLS software was used. First, exploratory factor analysis was conducted to examine the factor structure, specifically, the loadings of the individual items on the postulated dimensions in the conceptual model. Second, confirmatory factor analysis with PLS path modelling was used to test the structural model and evaluate the results against the proposed hypotheses.

3.4. Research Reliability and Validity

Reliability and validity in research help certify the credibility, truthfulness and believability of the research findings (Neuman, 2011). Reliability refers to evaluating the stability of the measurement instrument; it seeks to ensure that the same results would be generated in repeated investigations of the same phenomenon (Babbie, 2015; Wagner et al.,, 2012). Validity addresses the issue of whether the study is actually measuring what it set out to measure (Bryman, 2012). Ensuring the reliability and validity of this study was fundamental in safeguarding its overall quality.

3.4.1. Reliability

A pilot study played an important part in ensuring the reliability of this research, specifically that of the measurement instrument that was used. In addition, Bidvest lounge staff and Lanseria airport staff were briefed on the purpose of the study, and the intricacies of the questionnaire. During the data collection, there was ongoing communication with the assistants that were distributing the questionnaires. However, the questionnaire in itself was designed to be self-explanatory and included a cover letter with easy-to-understand grammar throughout.

During the process of data analysis, internal reliability was checked. Studies have shown that Cronbach alpha or coefficient alpha underestimates true reliability and so, alternative estimators have been adopted (Osburn, 2000; R. Peterson & Kim, 2013; Sijtsma, 2009). One such alternative indicator is composite reliability. Construct reliability is demonstrated when the composite reliability indexes (CRI) are above the critical threshold of 0,7 (Carmines & Zeller, 1979). Individual item reliability was also checked and is demonstrated when the loadings are above 0,7 (Bernstein & Nunnally, 1994), or at least not below 0,4 (Hulland, 1999).

3.4.2. Construct Validity

Exploratory factor analysis is “intimately involved with questions of validity” (Nunnally, 1978, p. 112). Construct validity refers to the degree to which the empirical indicators used to measure a construct truly reflect or fit with that construct (Bryman, 2012; Neuman, 2011). Construct validity was examined using both convergent and discriminant validity. To measure convergent validity, the individual factor loadings should be above 0,6 and the average variance extractions (AVE’s) should be above 0,5. Discriminant validity refers to a distinction between the constructs that are being measured. For discriminant validity, the squared correlation between a pair of constructs must be less than the AVE for that construct. Both convergent and discriminant validity were assessed in the process of data analysis.

3.4.1. Internal Validity

Internal validity ensures that no errors have been made in the internal processes of conducting the research; specifically, errors that may impact the results and provide false conclusions (Neuman, 2011). It is concerned with whether the conclusions of the research can be deemed trustworthy (Bryman, 2012). Two factors contributed to the internal validity of the research. The first was a pilot study to test the measurement instrument and the second was the ongoing supervision of two academic professors.

3.4.2. External Validity

External validity is concerned with whether the results of the study can be generalised or transferred beyond a particular group or situation; making the research applicable to a different or wider context (Bryman, 2012; Neuman, 2011). A large sample size increases generalisability (Hair et al.,, 1995). Data was collected at five different airports across South Africa. The collection of data on a large and national scale helped to ensure a robust sample that was representative and increased the external validity of the findings.

3.5. Conclusion

It was believed that this research methodology would be most valuable for a study of this kind. Specifically, the objective nature of quantitative research and the growing trend to use this methodology when investigating brand authenticity and quantifying other latent constructs. Numerical data was gathered at airports across South Africa in the hope that it would return a large and representative sample. During the process of data capturing, entries were checked and re-checked several times to ensure data quality. A number of tests for the reliability and validity of the instruments and the collected data were conducted. The use of partial least squares, specifically exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis was deemed most appropriate due to the large number of variables in the structural model. In conclusion, the research methodology of the study was considered to be well thought-out, appropriate and extensive in its nature.

Chapter 4: Presentation of Results

This chapter presents the results of the research study. First, the results of the pilot study are presented, as these results led to some appropriate changes in the measurement instrument prior to the final data collection. Second, the characteristics of the sample are presented in table and graph format. Third, as a result of factor analysis using partial least squares (PLS), the results pertaining to the two hypotheses are shown. Finally, an additional analysis was conducted to establish if there were any significant differences between the different airlines and these results are presented in a series of tables.

4.1. Pilot Study

A pilot study of 24 respondents was conducted at the Wits Business School in Johannesburg in April 2016. The pilot study was conducted to test the general understanding of the measurement instrument and to select an appropriate measurement scale from two possible options:

1. A 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree; 3 = neutral; 5 = strongly agree).
2. A 10-point numeric rating scale that utilised a numerical descriptor where respondents were asked to rate the degree with which they agreed with the statements presented to them on a scale of 1 - 10 (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = neutral; 10 = strongly agree).

The key findings from the pilot study were as follows:

- 5 respondents had an issue with understanding item BAC1 ("The brand is timeless").
- One respondent suggested a short introductory paragraph explaining the study in more detail.
- For item BTI4 ("The brand would compensate me in some way for a problem with the product"), one respondent said that he had never experienced this situation and that this was not relevant to him.
- No other comprehension issues, specifically for those whose first language was not English.
- There were no issues or difficulties with understanding either of the proposed measurement scales. However, the 5-point Likert scale produced most responses in the range of 2 – 4. The 10-point Likert scale demonstrated more variety in the range of responses.

As a result, the following revisions were made to the measurement instrument:

- Item BAC1 ("The brand is timeless") was replaced with: “A brand with history”. This item was sourced from the same instrument by Morhart et al., (2015) used to measure brand continuity.
- As it was believed that the misunderstanding with item BAC1 could have been attributed to some respondents not having English as their first language, two questions addressing country of origin

and first language were added to Section B of the questionnaire (demographic information).

- A short introductory paragraph explaining the study in more detail was included.
- Item BTI4 ("The brand would compensate me in some way for a problem with the product") remained, as it was believed that it could be left up to the interpretation of the respondent.
- As the 10-point Likert scale demonstrated a broader range of responses, it was deemed superior to the 5-point scale and selected for use in the final study.

4.2. Characteristics of the Sample

The data collection returned a total of 473 responses. This included 301 from the Bidvest airport lounges (at four airports across South Africa) and 172 from Lanseria airport (in Johannesburg). To ensure data quality, 118 incomplete and incoherent questionnaires were discarded. This left a final sample size of 355 responses. Table 7 provides a description of the characteristic of the respondents as per the results of Section B that addressed their demographic profile.

Table 7: Demographic Profile of Respondents

Gender		**Ethnicity**		**Home Language**		**Education**	
Male	69,3%	Black	19,4%	English	49,0%	High school	13,5%
Female	30,7%	White	61,4%	Afrikaans	24,8%	Diploma	21,7%
Marital Status		Coloured	6,2%	Xhosa	4,8%	Degree	29,0%
Married	66,8%	Indian	10,4%	Zulu	3,9%	Post-grad	33,2%
Single	31,3%	Asian	0,3%	Venda	0,8%	Other	2,0%
No Response	2,0%	Other	0,8%	Tswana	3,1%	No Response	0,6%
Age		Not disclosed	1,4%	Other	1.1%	**Employment Status**	
17 or under	0,3%	**Country of Origin**		No Response	12,4%	Student	3,1%
18-25	8,7%	SA	87,6%	**City of Residence**		Employed	65,1%
26-35	22,8%	Rest of Africa	0,0%	Joburg	39,2%	Self	27,3%
36-45	26,2%	Other	2,0%	Pretoria	12,7%	Unemployed	0,6%
46 yrs up	42,0%	No Response	10,4%	Durban	18,3%	Other	3,1%
				Port Elizabeth	5,4%	No Response	0,8%
				Other	3,7%		
				No Response	1,4%		

The majority of respondents were married (66,8%) males (69,3%), over the age of 46 (42%). A large percentage of the sample was white (61,4%), English speaking (49%), South Africans (87,6%) from Johannesburg (39,2%), with post-graduate degrees (33,2%) and currently employed (65,1%).

The high non-response for item B5 (country of origin) and B6 (home language) could be attributed to two reasons. The first was that the data gathered from the pilot study was included in the final results and that this version of the questionnaire did not include these two items (they were added later due to the findings from the pilot). The second was that these two items required a written response, as opposed to the rest of the questions that used a multiple-choice format. This could have been a deterrent for respondents that were in a hurry and contributed to the high non-response.

Section C asked respondents their purpose of travel on that day (C1) and to select the airline they fly most often within South Africa (C2). Figures 7 and 8 illustrate their responses.

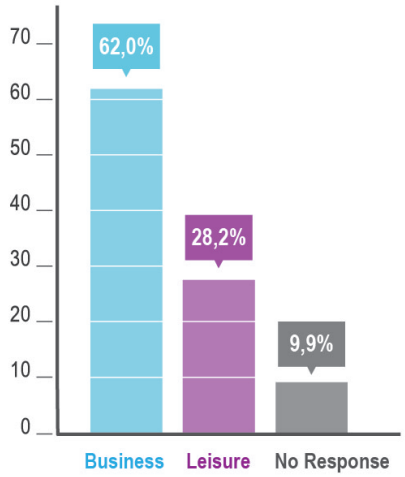


Figure 7: Purpose of Travel of Respondents

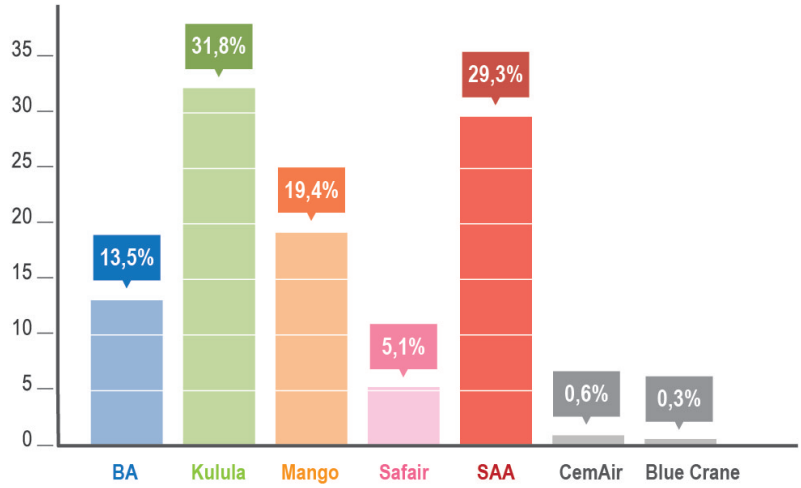


Figure 8: Airline Selection of Respondents

The graphs indicate that the majority of respondents were traveling for business purposes (62%). In addition, the three most common airlines flown by the respondents were Kulula (31,8%), South African Airways (29,3%) and Mango (19,4%).

4.3. Results Pertaining to Hypotheses 1 and 2

Factor analysis using partial least squares (PLS) was used. This method estimates the measurement model and the structural model simultaneously. There are three steps in applying PLS (Hulland, 1999):

1) Evaluating reliability and validity
2) Determining the nature of the relationships between the measures and constructs
3) Determining model appropriateness and selecting a final model

4.3.1. Exploratory Factor Analysis

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was used to examine internal reliability and construct validity. Based on the patterns of responses, EFA showed quite different factors compared to what was postulated as the dimensions of brand authenticity in the original path model. Table 8 shows the postulated brand authenticity dimensions and items, alongside the new factors.

Table 8: Postulated Brand Authenticity Dimensions vs. Factors after Analysis

Postulated Brand Authenticity Dimensions		**Dimensions / Factors After EFA***	
Originality	**Indicator**	**Original**	**Indicator**
The brand clearly distinguishes itself from other brands.	BAO1	The brand clearly distinguishes itself from other brands.	BAO1
The brand does not stand out from other brands.	BAO2R	The brand does not stand out from other brands.	BAO2R
I think the brand is unique.	BAO3	I think the brand is unique.	BAO3
The brand makes a genuine impression.	BAO4		
Credibility	**Indicator**	**Ethical**	**Indicator**
The brand will not betray me.	BACR1	The brand does not stay true to itself.	BAC3R
The brand is dishonest.	BACR2R	The brand has no moral principles.	BAI2R
My experience of the brand has shown me that it does not keep its promises.	BACR3R	The brand is dishonest.	BACR2R
The brand's promises are credible.	BACR4	My experience of the brand has shown me that it does not keep its promises.	BACR3R
Continuity	**Indicator**	**Genuine**	**Indicator**
A brand with history.	BAC1	The brand is consistent over time.	BAC2
The brand is consistent over time.	BAC2	The brand offers continuity.	BAC4
The brand does not stay true to itself.	BAC3R	The brand has a clear concept that it pursues.	BAC5
The brand offers continuity.	BAC4	The brand is true to a set of moral values.	BAI3
The brand has a clear concept that it pursues.	BAC5	The brand cares about its consumers.	BAI4
		The brand makes a genuine impression.	BAO4
		The brand's promises are credible.	BACR4
Integrity	**Indicator**		
The brand does not give back to its consumers.	BAI1R	*EFA = Exploratory Factor Analysis	
The brand has no moral principles.	BAI2R		
The brand is true to a set of moral values.	BAI3		
The brand cares about its consumers.	BAI4		

The first proposed dimension of brand authenticity was originality. After EFA, this factor was referred to as "original". The indicators in this factor remained fairly consistent, with the exception of item BAO4 ("the brand makes a genuine impression") which loaded better under a different factor.

Items from the remaining three postulated dimensions of brand authenticity (continuity, credibility and integrity) were reassigned to two new underlying factors in the data. They were "ethical" and "genuine". Ethical, the second factor, included items such as: "The brand is dishonest" and "My experience of the brand has shown me that it does not keep its promises". Genuine, the third factor was a combination of items from all four postulated brand authenticity dimensions. It was made up primarily of items that were from the continuity and integrity dimensions. Items that loaded under the new genuine factor included: "The brand makes a genuine impression"; "The brand has a clear concept that it pursues"; and "The brand cares about its customers". Due to cross or poor factor loadings, items BACR1 ("the brand will not betray me"), BAC1 ("a brand with history") and BAI1R ("the brand does not give back to its consumers") were removed altogether.

The items for perceived warmth and competence loaded favourably under those factors. However, for brand trust, six out of eight items loaded onto a single factor, brand trust. The EFA showed no distinction between brand intentions and brand reliability, the two postulated dimensions of brand trust. Items BTI2 ("I could not rely on the brand to solve the problem") and BTI4 ("The brand would compensate me in some way for the problem with the product") were removed due to cross or poor factor loadings.

As the EFA demonstrated that not all the postulated constructs were present, the original model was never run. The model was revised to accommodate the changes in the factor structure and included six factors. It was examined for internal reliability and convergent validity. Table 9 presents the results.

Table 9: Summary of Factor Results

Dimension / Factor	Indicator	Loading	CRI*	AVE**
Original	BAO1 BAO2R BAO3	0,846 0,681 0,779	**0,814**	**0,595**
Ethical	BAC3R BAI2R BACR2R BACR3R	0,740 0,851 0,868 0,828	**0,893**	**0,678**
Genuine	BAC2 BAC4 BAC5 BAI3 BAI4 BAO4 BACR4	0,752 0,719 0,784 0,766 0,836 0,834 0,808	**0,919**	**0,619**

Perceived Warmth (PW)	PW1 PW2 PW3 PW4 PW5	0,818 0,840 0,759 0,784 0,782	**0,897**	**0,635**
Perceived Competence (PC)	PC1 PC2R PC3 PC4 PC5R	0,875 0,678 0,728 0,804 0,792	**0,884**	**0,605**
Brand Trust (BT)	BTI1 BTI3R BTR1R BTR2 BTR3 BTR4	0,739 0,748 0,764 0,779 0,817 0,695	**0,890**	**0,574**

*CRI = Composite Reliability Index; **AVE = Average Variance Extracted

Internal Reliability and Convergent Validity

According to Carmines and Zeller (1979), to demonstrate reliability, the loadings of the individual items on their corresponding factors must be above 0,7. However, Hulland (1999) states that for factor analysis, only items with loadings of less than 0,4 should be discarded. As per Table 9, the items showed loadings above 0,675, with the majority above 0,7. To demonstrate internal consistency, the composite reliability indexes (CRI) were well above the recommended benchmark of 0,7 (Bernstein & Nunnally, 1994), and the average variances extracted (AVE's) were above 0,5. The model displayed internal reliability and convergent validity.

Discriminant Validity

For discriminant validity, the squared correlation between a pair of constructs must be less than the AVE for that construct (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). In evaluating discriminant validity, several critically high squared correlations were identified. The results are shown in table 10.

Table 10: Correlation Matrix of Construct Pairs

Factor	Genuine	Original	Ethical	PW	PC	BT	AVE
Genuine	**1**	0,370	0,332	**0,763**	**0,715**	**0,663**	**0,619**
Original	0,370	**1**	0,155	0,392	0,339	0,311	**0,593**
Ethical	0,332	0,155	**1**	0,237	0,455	0,547	**0,678**
PW[1]	**0,763**	0,392	0,237	**1**	**0,634**	0,564	**0,635**
PC[2]	**0,715**	0,339	0,455	**0,634**	**1**	**0,696**	**0,605**
BT[3]	**0,663**	0,311	0,547	0,564	**0,696**	**1**	**0,573**
AVE[4]	**0,619**	**0,593**	**0,678**	**0,635**	**0,605**	**0,573**	**0**

[1]PW = Perceived Warmth; [2]PC = Perceived Competence; [3]BT = Brand Trust; [4]AVE = Average Variance Extracted

The squared correlations indicated in bold were marked as critical as the values of those construct pairs were significantly higher than the AVE's. The problematic pairs were genuine and perceived warmth (0,763); genuine and perceived competence (0,715); brand trust and perceived competence (0,696); genuine and brand trust (0,663); and perceived warmth and competence (0,634). As a result, the model did not demonstrate discriminant validity. Perceived warmth and competence were even excluded from the model in an attempt to replicate the model by Schallehn et al., (2014). However, once again discriminant validity could not be achieved due to the high correlation between genuine and brand trust specifically.

4.3.2. Confirmatory Factor Analysis

The revised path model was examined using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). The correlation results are shown in Figure 9.

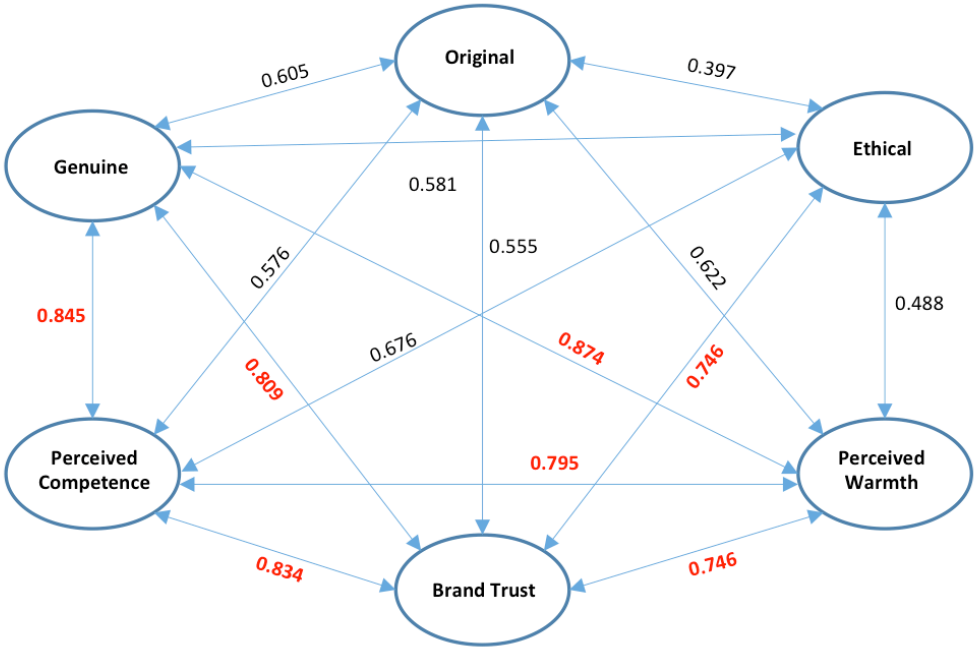


Figure 9: Results of Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

Once again, the results of the CFA indicated very high path co-efficients or correlations between the constructs. The values above 0,745 are indicated in bold. Any correlation value close to 1 (or -1) is problematic and there were seven critical pairs in the model.

To conclude this section, the hypotheses for this study were as follows:

Hypothesis 1: Perceived competence mediates the relationship between brand authenticity and brand trust.
Hypothesis 2: Perceived competence mediates the relationship between brand authenticity and brand trust.

Due to a lack of discriminant validity, the hypotheses could not be tested using the data that was collected.

4.4. Additional Analysis

Additional analysis using Kruskal-Wallis testing was conducted to compare the results between the airlines. The Kruskal-Wallis (Kruskal & Wallis, 1952) is a statistical test that evaluates any differences among three or more groups on a single, continuous variable (McKight & Najab, 2010). This test was conducted as the normality of the data could not be assumed and the Kruskal-Wallis test would indicate any significant differences. A significance level of 5% ($p < .05$) was used to test the following additional hypotheses:

Null Hypothesis (H_0): The mean values between the airline groups are all the same.

Hypothesis (H_a): The mean values between the airline groups are not all the same.

Tables 11 and 12 summarise the statistical results of the Kruskal-Wallis tests, where Table 12 illustrates the mean values and standard deviations by factor and airline.

Table 11: Number of Observations for Kruskal-Wallis Tests

Airline	Obs.	Airline	Obs.	Airline	Obs.
BA	48	Mango	69	*Other	41
Kulula	113	SAA	84	Other = Safair, Blue Crane & CemAir	

Table 12: Summary Statistics for Kruskal-Wallis Tests

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation
Ethical			**Perceived Competence**		
BA	8,415	1,754	BA	7,716	1,537
Kulula	7,958	2,074	Kulula	7,701	1,633
Mango	8,081	1,889	Mango	7,539	1,566
Other	8,282	2,001	Other	7,137	1,898
SAA	6,874	2,270	SAA	6,453	1,993
Original			**Perceived Warmth**		
BA	6,819	1,871	BA	6,583	1,581
Kulula	6,892	1,912	Kulula	7,050	1,738
Mango	6,333	1,743	Mango	7,060	1,551
Other	6,032	1,850	Other	6,179	1,930
SAA	5,771	2,118	SAA	5,887	1,833
Genuine			**Brand Trust**		
BA	7,163	1,594	BA	8,045	1,449
Kulula	7,220	1,648	Kulula	7,599	1,577
Mango	7,112	1,455	Mango	7,545	1,438
Other	6,406	1,855	Other	7,385	2,126
SAA	6,265	1,918	SAA	6,853	1,861

Table 13: Significance Values and Hypothesis Decisions for Kruskal-Wallis Tests

Factor	K Statistic	p Value	Decision
Ethical	25.029	< 0.0001	Reject H_0
PC	28.575	< 0.0001	Reject H_0
PW	31.149	< 0.0001	Reject H_0
BTR	16.110	0.0029	Reject H_0
Original	17.283	0.0017	Reject H_0
Genuine	20.817	0.0003	Reject H_0

Table 13 indicates the significance levels for each factor and their corresponding hypothesis decisions. A significance level of 5% ($p < .05$) was used to test the additional hypotheses. Significance values of less than 5% were found for all factors and null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected for all. The following tables present the significant differences between the airlines by factor using the Bonferroni test.

Table 14: Significant Differences for Ethical

Ethical					
	BA	**Kulula**	**Mango**	**Other**	**SAA**
BA	No	No	No	No	**Yes**
Kulula	No	No	No	No	**Yes**
Mango	No	No	No	No	**Yes**
Other	No	No	No	No	**Yes**
SAA	**Yes**	**Yes**	**Yes**	**Yes**	No

Table 15: Significant Differences for Original

Original					
	BA	**Kulula**	**Mango**	**Other**	**SAA**
BA	No	No	No	No	No
Kulula	No	No	No	No	**Yes**
Mango	No	No	No	No	No
Other	No	No	No	No	No
SAA	No	**Yes**	No	No	No

Table 16: Significant Differences for Genuine

Genuine					
	BA	**Kulula**	**Mango**	**Other**	**SAA**
BA	No	No	No	No	**Yes**
Kulula	No	No	No	No	**Yes**
Mango	No	No	No	No	**Yes**
Other	No	No	No	No	No
SAA	**Yes**	**Yes**	**Yes**	No	No

Table 17: Significant Differences for Perceived Competence

Perceived Competence					
	BA	Kulula	Mango	Other	SAA
BA	No	No	No	No	Yes
Kulula	No	No	No	No	Yes
Mango	No	No	No	No	Yes
Other	No	No	No	No	No
SAA	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No

Table 18: Significant Differences for Perceived Warmth

Perceived Warmth					
	BA	Kulula	Mango	Other	SAA
BA	No	No	No	No	No
Kulula	No	No	No	No	Yes
Mango	No	No	No	No	Yes
Other	No	No	No	No	No
SAA	No	Yes	Yes	No	No

Table 19: Significant Differences for Brand Trust

Brand Trust					
	BA	Kulula	Mango	Other	SAA
BA	No	No	No	No	Yes
Kulula	No	No	No	No	No
Mango	No	No	No	No	No
Other	No	No	No	No	No
SAA	Yes	No	No	No	No

The results indicated that SAA has significant differences to the some or all of the airlines on all the factors.

4.5. Conclusion

A large sample size of 355 responses was achieved, making for research that was generalisable and credible. The characteristics of the sample proved to be slightly homogenous with the majority of respondents being white, English-speaking males. They fly Kulula, SAA and Mango most frequently.

The data analysis revealed some unexpected findings but proved very interesting. Three factors, different to the four postulated dimensions of brand authenticity, were revealed: original, ethical and genuine. Brand trust was found to be one-dimensional, with no distinction between brand intentions and brand reliability. Although a revised path model demonstrated internal reliability and convergent validity, discriminant validity could not be proven as the correlations between the variables proved to be critically high. As a result, the hypotheses could not be tested. Additional analysis, using the Kruskal-Wallis and Bonferroni tests, showed significant differences between the results for SAA and those of the other airlines.

Chapter 5: Discussion of Results

5.1. Introduction

This study investigated the role of brand authenticity in the development of brand trust in South Africa. Four constructs were presented in the conceptual model: brand authenticity, perceived warmth, perceived competence, and brand trust. After an extensive literature review, brand authenticity was postulated as having four dimensions: originality, continuity, credibility and integrity (Bruhn et al.,, 2012; Morhart et al.,, 2015). Brand trust was postulated as two-dimensional, made up of brand intentions and brand reliability (Delgado-Ballester, 2004).

The aim of the research was to investigate the possibility of a causal relationship between brand authenticity and brand trust, and to establish whether perceived warmth and competence could be deemed mediator variables in this relationship. With the erosion of brand trust on a global scale (Eggers et al.,, 2013; Hobbs & Goddard, 2015), guidance as to how practitioners are able to rebuild trust, through authenticity and expressions of warmth and competence, would be of great value to brand builders. It was hoped that the results of this study would provide valuable insights for academics and practitioners alike.

A quantitative methodology was adopted whereby a self-completion questionnaire was distributed to frequent flyers at airports across South Africa. Participants were asked to evaluate one of seven domestic airline brands. The questionnaire design included a section to capture the demographic characteristics of the respondents, as well as a section for the measurement of the four constructs based on the respondents perceptions of the authenticity, warmth, competence and trust of their selected airline brand. A large sample of 355 responses was achieved. The study provided a platform to test previous literature and theories in a South African context and to evaluate the proposed hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1 (H_1): Perceived warmth mediates the relationship between brand authenticity and brand trust.

Hypothesis 2 (H_2): Perceived competence mediates the relationship between brand authenticity and brand trust.

The data analysis revealed several important findings, the most noteworthy being critically high correlations between the constructs (refer to Figure 9 on Page 66), rendering them indistinguishable in a causal model. As a result, the postulated hypotheses could not be tested using the data that was collected. This chapter discusses the four major empirical findings of this research and compares them to the literature, they were:

A. **Brand Authenticity:** Original, ethical and genuine as new factors
B. **Brand Trust**: Brand trust as a one-dimensional construct
C. **Correlation between the Constructs:** High correlations and a lack of discriminant validity
D. **Airlines:** SAA as an outlier amongst domestic airline brands in South Africa (additional analysis)

5.2. Finding A

5.2.1. Brand Authenticity

Brand authenticity was measured as a second-order construct with four postulated dimensions: originality, continuity, credibility and integrity. These dimensions were as per studies by Bruhn et al., (2012) and Morhart et al., (2015). Eggers et al., (2013) also measured brand authenticity as a second-order construct and confirmed three alternate dimensions for brand authenticity; brand consistency, brand customer orientation and brand congruency. Schallehn et al., (2014) measured brand authenticity directly and confirmed individuality, consistency and continuity to be dimensions thereof.

In this study, the results of exploratory factor analysis (EFA) revealed three new factors: original, ethical and genuine. These differed from the four postulated dimensions of brand authenticity. As brand authenticity was measured as a second-order construct, questions have to be asked about whether this (and past) research measured brand authenticity at all. However, very recently Akbar and Wymer (2016) measured brand authenticity as a second-order reflective-formative construct and confirmed two dimensions thereof: originality and genuineness. Their results are conducive with those of this research. So, although it has not been empirically confirmed that original, ethical and genuine are dimensions of brand authenticity in this research, the literature certainly points in favour of this. This is discussed in further detail.

1) Original

The original factor remained almost as it was postulated (originality) with three of four items loading favourably onto this factor. Table 20 provides a breakdown of this factor, including the source of each item in comparison with the postulated dimension.

Table 20: New Original Factor

Original				
Item	**Indicator**	**Source**	**Source Dimension**	**Postulated Dimension**
The brand clearly distinguishes itself from other brands.	BAO1	Bruhn et al., (2012)	Originality	Originality
The brand does not stand out from other brands.	BAO2R	Bruhn et al., (2012)	Originality	Originality
I think the brand is unique.	BAO3	Bruhn et al., (2012)	Originality	Originality

The three items that loaded onto original were sourced directly from Bruhn et al., (2012) who used these same items to measure originality as a postulated dimension of brand authenticity. Akbar and Wymer (2016) identified originality as one of two dimensions of brand authenticity. Originality is the brand differentiating itself from its competitors through a novel approach. It is conveyed through creativity and innovation, as well as by creating contextual significance and a distinct identity for the brand (Bruhn et al.,, 2012).

In the literature, originality and brand authenticity are repeatedly discussed in relation to one another. Vann (2006) stated that authenticity includes any ideas of origins, originality and uniqueness. Authenticity has been defined in terms of originality (amongst other things) (Fine, 2003; Goulding, 2000). Schallehn et al., (2014) found individuality (similar to originality) to be a predictor of brand authenticity and defined it as the unique manner in which the brand fulfils its promise. Gilmore and Pine (2007) included originality as one of five genres of authenticity in brands. Specifically, history and heritage all contribute to a sense of originality, and were repeatedly linked to brand authenticity (Akbar & Wymer, 2016; Beverland, 2006; Brown et al.,, 2003; Chhabra et al.,, 2003; Engeset & Elvekrok, 2015; Gilmore & Pine, 2007; Newman & Dhar, 2014).

This new factor also demonstrated that naturalness is distinct from originality, even though it was postulated as being part of the same dimension of brand authenticity. Item BAO4 (used by Bruhn et al., (2012) to measure naturalness) loaded onto the genuine factor and not onto the original factor. Bruhn et al., (2012) is accurate in describing naturalness as being genuine and real, and it is clearly distinct from brand originality.

5) Ethical

The new ethical factor was made up of a four items from the postulated continuity, integrity and credibility dimensions of brand authenticity. Table 21 provides a breakdown of this new factor, including the source of each item in comparison with the postulated dimension.

Table 21: New Ethical Factor

Ethical				
Item	**Indicator**	**Source**	**Source Dimension**	**Postulated Dimension**
The brand does not stay true to itself.	BAC3R	Bruhn et al., (2012)	Continuity	Continuity
The brand has no moral principles.	BAI2R	Morhart et al., (2015)	Integrity	Integrity
The brand is dishonest.	BACR2R	Morhart et al., (2015)	Credibility	Credibility
My experience of the brand has shown me that it does not keep its promises.	BACR3R	Bruhn et al., (2012)	Reliability	Credibility

Perceived brand ethicality is defined as the measure of honesty, responsibility and accountability of a brand (Singh et al.,, 2012). The items that loaded onto this new ethical factor originated from different brand authenticity dimensions in previous studies. However, looking at them collectively, they all relate to the brand having an ethical backbone.

Like originality, ethicality is closely related to brand authenticity. Authenticity has been described as a tool to highlight an honorable set of brand values (Beverland et al.,, 2008). Morality and honesty are frequently cited as important attributes of authentic brands (Beverland & Farrelly, 2010; Molleda & Jain, 2013; Pace, 2015). Morhart et al., (2015) found integrity, synonymous with ethicality, to be a dimension of brand authenticity. Integrity indicates the moral purity of a brand; its commitment to wholesome values and sincere actions (Morhart et al.,, 2015). Brand social commitment is an important predictor of brand authenticity (Fritz et al.,, 2017). Moreover, to measure integrity, Morhart et al., (2015) included an item about brand reliability ("the brand is reliable") and to measure credibility, they included an item about honesty ("the brand is honest"); demonstrating the interconnectedness of integrity, reliability, honesty and credibility.

Item BAC3R stated: "The brand does not stay true to itself", and item BACR3R stated: "My experience of the brand has shown me that it does not keep its promises". Gilmore and Pine (2007) evaluate authenticity based on two considerations: whether the brand remains true to itself and whether the actual experience is what it claims to be. These two sides of brand authenticity were measured by this new ethical factor.

Continuity refers to the timelessness of a brand: it having a clear concept that it pursues (Bruhn et al.,, 2012). Credibility and reliability are the result of brand continuity (Bruhn et al.,, 2012; Eggers et al.,, 2013; Schallehn et al.,, 2014). Item BAC3R ("The brand does not stay true to itself") was previously used by Bruhn et al., (2012) to measure continuity. However, in this study, this item loaded onto the ethical factor. This suggests that consumers perceive a brand that remains true to itself as one that is ethical.

Credibility and reliability are also highly dependent on delivery (Bruhn et al.,, 2012; Eggers et al.,, 2013; Molleda, 2010; Morhart et al.,, 2015). It has been said that the ethical nature of an authentic brand should be reflected not only in its values, but in its actions and behaviours (Molleda & Jain, 2013). Brands that do what they say they will are said to be authentic (Beverland, 2005a; Fisher & Vallaster, 2010; Morhart et al.,, 2015). This suggests that a brand that keeps its promises is one that is ethical too.

The results of this study support the idea of Gilmore and Pine (2007). It showed that perceived ethicality is established not only through the obvious measures of morality and honesty, but through signs of continuity and brand credibility too. The findings echo those of Morhart et al., (2015) who identified integrity as a key dimension of brand authenticity. However, as brand authenticity was measured as a second-order construct, it remains a question whether the ethical factor in this study is a dimension of brand authenticity.

6) Genuine

The new genuine was made up of the largest number of items from all four postulated dimensions of brand authenticity. Table 22 provides a breakdown of this new factor, including the source of each item in comparison with the postulated dimension.

Table 22: New Genuine Factor

Genuine				
Item	**Indicator**	**Source**	**Source Dimension**	**Postulated Dimension**
The brand is consistent over time.	BAC2	Bruhn et al., (2012)	Continuity	Continuity
The brand offers continuity.	BAC4	Bruhn et al., (2012)	Continuity	Continuity
The brand has a clear concept that it pursues.	BAC5	Bruhn et al., (2012)	Continuity	Continuity
The brand is true to a set of moral values.	BAI3	Morhart et al., (2015)	Integrity	Integrity
The brand cares about its consumers.	BAI4	Morhart et al., (2015)	Integrity	Integrity
The brand makes a genuine impression.	BAO4	Bruhn et al., (2012)	Naturalness	Originality
The brand's promises are credible.	BACR4	Bruhn et al., (2012)	Reliability	Credibility

Descriptions of genuine offer an explanation as to why the individual items loaded onto this factor. Genuine has been defined as being natural, real, true and not an imitation (Starr, 2008). To support this, the genuine factor included an item to evaluate naturalness (item BAO4). Genuineness is also expressed through the congruency of the brands ideals, values and actions, and through truthful and sincere behaviour (Molleda & Jain, 2013; Shen & Kim, 2012; Starr, 2008). To support this, the genuine factor included items to measure continuity (items BAC2/3/4), credibility (item BACR4) and integrity (items BAI3/4).

Recently, Akbar and Wymer (2016) identified genuineness as one of two dimensions of brand authenticity. Their work makes a very important contribution to advancing the understanding of brand authenticity, and fully supports the findings of this research. Almost all the literature on brand authenticity, points to the fact that genuineness is indicative of brand authenticity. Genuine is the term most commonly used to describe authenticity (Starr, 2008). Brand authenticity is repeatedly linked to genuineness in the literature (Arnould & Price, 2000; Beverland & Farrelly, 2010; Grayson & Martinec, 2004; Kennick, 1985; Reisinger & Steiner, 2006). Henderson and Brookhart (1996) explained that the perceived authenticity in an organisation is the result of genuine behaviour. In the case of a Colombian coffee brand, Molleda and Roberts (2008) found genuine attributes to be closely associated with perceived brand authenticity.

The link between genuine and brand authenticity was so evident that the following definition for brand authenticity was selected for this study: "a subjective evaluation of genuineness ascribed to a brand by a consumer" (Napoli et al.,, 2014, p. 1091). Although it cannot be confirmed that genuine in this research is a dimension of brand authenticity, the literature definitely demonstrates that it might be and this finding reinforced the appropriateness of the definition of brand authenticity by Napoli et al., (2014).

5.2.2. Conclusion to Brand Authenticity

Although the literature demonstrates that original, ethical and genuine are closely tied to brand authenticity, this research cannot confirm that they are dimensions of brand authenticity and not another construct. However, a recent study by Akbar and Wymer (2016) confirmed that originality and genuineness are two dimensions of brand authenticity. This greatly supports the findings of this research and suggests that original, ethical and genuine are indeed expressions of authenticity. In addition, this study reinforced some key points from the literature on brand authenticity.

Firstly, the study confirmed that brand authenticity is contextual and subjective (Beverland & Farrelly, 2010; Bruhn et al.,, 2012; Fritz et al.,, 2017; Grayson, 2002; Grayson & Martinec, 2004; Molleda & Jain, 2013). Consumers co-create authenticity – its meaning is dependent on their life experiences and their unique interpretations and understanding of what is authentic (Beverland & Farrelly, 2010; Leigh et al.,, 2006; Molleda, 2010). The results are conducive to constructive authenticity that is highly subjective and existential authenticity where the consumer uses the authenticity of a brand to signal their own authenticity to others (Beverland & Farrelly, 2010; Molleda & Jain, 2013). D. Holt (1998) also proposed that different cues infer authenticity for different societal groups. Perhaps it is a complex historical past that gives South Africa a unique view and renders results that differ to those of North America and Europe.

Secondly, the study reinforced that brand authenticity is extremely complex (Beverland, 2005a; Bruhn et al.,, 2012; Pace, 2015; Taylor, 2001). Over many decades of literature, there have been an overwhelming number of definitions for authenticity (Taylor, 2001). Yet, there remains an inconsistent and fragmented understanding of this construct, particularly as it is applied to branding (Beverland, 2005a; Beverland, 2005b; Bruhn et al.,, 2012). Although the unexpected findings of this research reaffirmed this complexity, the identification of genuine as a new factor made a valuable contribution towards the search for a definition by confirming that brand authenticity should be evaluated according to standards of what is genuine, real and true. The link between authenticity and genuineness is repeated throughout the literature (Arnould & Price, 2000; Beverland & Farrelly, 2010; Grayson & Martinec, 2004; Kennick, 1985; Reisinger & Steiner, 2006). Napoli et al., (2014, p. 1091) defined brand authenticity as “a subjective evaluation of genuineness ascribed to a brand by a consumer” and this definition is appropriate and supported by the research findings.

Reisinger and Steiner (2006) stated that the quest for an accepted definition of brand authenticity should be abandoned from research altogether, as the search for clarity on such a complex subject may be totally futile. However, this research takes a step towards finding a definition that could be widely supported. As brand authenticity remains an important criterion for brand users and brands, it is believed that the pursuit of clarity on the subject should continue.

5.3. Finding B

5.3.1. Brand Trust

The results showed that brand trust is not two-dimensional as postulated by Delgado-Ballester (2004). Six of eight items for brand intentions and brand reliability loaded onto a single factor, brand trust. Table 23 provides a detailed breakdown of this factor.

Table 23: Brand Trust Factor

Brand Trust				
Item	**Indicator**	**Source**	**Source Dimension**	**Postulated Dimension**
The brand would be honest and sincere in addressing my concerns.	BTI1	Delgado-Ballester (2004)	Intentions	Intentions
The brand makes no effort to satisfy me.	BTI3R	Delgado-Ballester (2004)	Intentions	Intentions
The brand never meets my expectations.	BTR1R	Delgado-Ballester (2004)	Reliability	Reliability
I feel confidence in the brand.	BTR2	Delgado-Ballester (2004)	Reliability	Reliability
The brand always disappoints me.	BTR3R	Delgado-Ballester (2004)	Reliability	Reliability
The brand name guarantees satisfaction.	BTR4	Delgado-Ballester (2004)	Reliability	Reliability

This finding contradicts Delgado-Ballester (2004) who found brand trust to be a two-dimensional construct, made up of brand intentions and brand reliability. Brand intentions are judged according to whether the consumer believes the brand would act in their best interests, and brand reliability on whether the consumer believes that the brand can fulfil its promise towards them (Delgado-Ballester, 2004).

However, Delgado-Ballester (2004) was not the first to suggest that brand trust has two important components. Morgan and Hunt (1994) found that brand trust develops out of one's affirmative belief in the reliability and integrity of another. McAllister (1995) identified two types of trust: emotional trust (when one has another's best interests at heart) and rational trust (when one believes that another can accomplish a given task). Some authors have even found brand trust to have more than two components. Dowell et al., (2013) found brand trust in the B2B environment to be a three-dimensional construct; made up of competency trust, integrity trust, and goodwill or benevolence trust.

Lassoued and Hobbs (2015) went so far as to hypothesise brand trust as a four-dimensional construct with perceived credibility, perceived competence, perceived benevolence and perceived reputation as dimensions thereof. However, in the same vein as this research, they too reported high correlations between their postulated dimensions and so they could not prove brand trust to be multi-dimensional. A revised model, with the four dimensions merged into a single factor (brand performance) then showed a positive and significant influence on brand trust.

Although the findings did not support brand trust as two-dimensional, they still demonstrate that brand trust has both cognitive and affective attributes, and this must be taken into account when evaluating brand trust. The brand trust factor was made up of items to measure both brand intentions (BTI1/3R) and brand reliability (BTR1R/2/3R/4). These findings echo the general understanding of brand trust from many studies. Sahin et al., (2011) and Zehir et al., (2011) measured brand trust as one-dimensional, but used the same measurement instrument developed by Delgado-Ballester (2004). In a qualitative investigation to better understand the nature of brand trust, Greenberg (2014) confirmed that trust develops out of intentions and ability. Erkmen and Hancer (2015) measured employee brand trust as one-dimensional using the measurement instrument by Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2002). Erkmen and Hancer (2015) selected that scale as it included indicators to measure three important facets of trust: reliability, honesty and safety. These examples all confirm the notion that brand trust should be measured as one-dimension but must contain items to measure its different facets.

Another interesting point for discussion is that the brand trust factor also included more items to measure brand reliability than brand intentions. It included two items to measure brand intentions (BTI1 and BTI3R) with only one (BTI1) that speaks directly to the brand's honesty and sincerity. Two additional items to measure brand intentions did not load onto this factor. This leads one to question whether brand reliability is then a stronger indicator of brand trust than brand intentions. Going back to early work on brand trust, Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001) found trust to be developed *solely* out of the reliability of the brand (i.e. its ability to deliver). Similarly, Delgado-Ballester and Luis Munuera-Alemán (2001) found brand trust to have had only one dimension: brand reliability. Brand intentions was considered an abstract attribute that leads consumers to feel more secure, but not necessarily incites trust (Delgado-Ballester & Luis Munuera-Alemán, 2001). However, some authors have argued that the additional dimension of integrity is what distinguishes trust from its more short-lived counterpart, satisfaction (J. Hess & Story, 2005; Morgan & Hunt, 1994).

5.3.2. Conclusion to Brand Trust

This research demonstrated that brand trust is not a two-dimensional construct as postulated by Delgado-Ballester (2004). This finding should not detract from the fact that brand intentions and brand reliability are still represented and therefore, brand trust still develops out of both affective and cognitive brand attributes. The affective side of brand trust usually makes reference to integrity, intentions, honesty or benevolence, whilst the cognitive attributes relate to the reliability, safety, competence or credibility of the brand. The question of whether one aspect is more important than the other, remains. Yet, according to recent literature, neither is dispensable in the measurement of brand trust. Displaying both the good intentions and reliability of the brand is even more important today, when trust is in decline and managers are doing everything they can to restore it.

5.4. Finding C

5.4.1. Correlations between the Constructs

Although the revised path model displayed both internal reliability and convergent validity, it showed critically high correlations between many of the construct pairs (refer to Figure 9 on page 66). The high correlations indicated sufficient similarity between the variables, rendering them indistinguishable in a causal model. As a result, the hypotheses could not be tested due to a lack of discriminant validity.

When conducting the literature review for this research report, it became apparent that there were very strong definitional and conceptual overlaps between the four constructs. Certain definitions were almost identical and key traits of some of the constructs corresponded with those of others. At times, the literature felt quite repetitive. Seven construct pairs in particular, displayed critically high correlations (above 0,7). Table 24 lists these pairs alongside the key areas of literary overlap and important studies that had similar or relevant findings to this research study. Each highly correlated pair is discussed in further detail.

Table 24: Correlation Matrix of Literature on Highly Correlated Construct Pairs

Construct Pair	Value	Conceptual Overlap (as per Literature)	Important Sources
1) Ethical and Brand Trust	0,746	Brand intentions = component of brand trust Attributes i.e. integrity, honesty, responsibility, accountability, sincerity and benevolence	Singh et al., (2012) → reported high correlation between perceived brand ethicality and brand trust (0,69) (p. 546)
2) Genuine and Brand Trust	0,809	Brand intentions and brand reliability correspond with honesty and consistency, both attributes of genuine brands. Genuine is linked to brand authenticity and brand authenticity is linked to brand trust.	Schallehn et al., (2014) → positive relationship between authenticity and brand trust, proved discriminant validity Napoli et al., (2014) → mention high correlations between brand authenticity, brand credibility and brand trust (p. 1095)
3) Genuine and Warmth	0,874	Attributes i.e. sincerity, honesty, friendliness, trustworthiness, kindness Genuine and warm brands are both sincere	-
4) Genuine and Competence	0,845	Attributes i.e. consistency, continuity and congruency lead to credibility and reliability Delivering on the brand promise as the result of true commitment to the brand values	-
5) Competence and Brand Trust	0,834	Brand reliability is evaluated through expressions of competence → competence then enhances brand trust Competence and brand trust are created when the brand delivers	Lau and Lee (1999) → positive and significant relationship between brand competence and brand trust; proved discriminant validity Li et al., (2008) → reported high correlation between competence and brand trust (0,81) (p. 14)

6) Warmth and Brand Trust	0,746	Brand intentions is evaluated through expressions of warmth, sincerity and benevolence → closely linked to brand trust Both relate to the brand having good intentions and acting in the best interests of its customers.	Li et al., (2008) → reported a high correlation between benevolence and brand trust (0,79) (p. 14) Sung and Kim (2010) → reported a high correlation between sincerity and brand trust (0,72) (p. 651)
7) Warmth and Competence	0,795	The evaluation of perceived warmth and competence in brands is largely subconscious as theory originates from social psychology.	Li et al., (2008) → reported a high correlation between competence and benevolence (0,70) (p. 14) Sung and Kim (2010) → reported a high correlation between competence and sincerity (0,82) (p. 651) Lassoued and Hobbs (2015) → reported high correlation (exceeding 0,90) between perceived competence and perceived benevolence (pp. 103-104)

1) Ethical and Brand Trust (0,746)

Brand ethicality and brand trust were highly correlated. One logical explanation for this is that ethical behaviour is key to building brand trust (Erkmen & Hancer, 2015; Greenberg, 2014; Sahin et al.,, 2011; Sung & Kim, 2010). The literature reaffirms that ethicality and brand trust go hand in hand.

Perceived brand ethicality is defined as the perception of a brand's honesty, responsibility and accountability (Singh et al.,, 2012). An ethical brand is one that promotes the wellbeing of society through integrity, diversity, respect and quality (Fan, 2005). Integrity, honesty, sincerity and benevolence are also important ingredients for building brand trust (Doney & Cannon, 1997; Dowell et al.,, 2013). Brand trust is built on a brand's intentions and reliability; where brand intentions are expressed through a commitment to the best interests of the customer, the community and society at large (Delgado-Ballester, 2004). To be ethical is to demonstrate integrity, and integrity is an indication of trustworthiness.

Singh et al., (2012) found perceived brand ethicality to enhance brand trust. However, in the same vein as this research, they too noted a high correlation between perceived brand ethicality and brand trust (0,690).

2) Genuine and Brand Trust (0,809)

A revised model without perceived warmth and competence was tested in an attempt to replicate the model of Schallehn et al., (2014). Even without warmth and competence, discriminant validity could not be proven due to the extremely high correlation between genuine and brand trust (0,809). Genuine and brand trust are discussed according to their conceptualisations in the literature.

To be genuine is to be natural, real and true to oneself (Engeset & Elvekrok, 2015; Starr, 2008). Genuineness in brands is expressed through a harmony between the brand's ideals, values and actions (Molleda & Jain, 2013). Brand trust is also associated with consistent and honest behaviour (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Therefore, brands that are genuine behave in a truthful and sincere manner and this type of demeanour enhances brand trust (Erkmen & Hancer, 2015; Shen & Kim, 2012; Starr, 2008).

There is little evidence of studies that have investigated the relationship between genuine and brand trust. However, genuineness is an essential part of authenticity (Beverland & Farrelly, 2010; Molleda & Jain, 2013). Authenticity has been proven to have a positive impact on brand trust (Schallehn et al.,, 2014). In line the findings of this research, Napoli et al., (2014) experienced high correlations between brand authenticity, brand trust and brand credibility; specifically when testing a one-factor model for brand authenticity.

3) Genuine and Warmth (0,874)

Genuine and warmth showed the highest correlation and this was not surprising at they are both measured on the basis of trustworthiness, honesty and sincerity (Malone & Fiske, 2013; Starr, 2008). The literary conceptualisation of genuine and warmth are very similar indeed.

Warmth is felt when a consumer believes the brand to have good intentions and to be good natured (J. Aaker et al.,, 2010; Kervyn et al.,, 2012). In social psychology, warmth is conveyed when one cares about the interests of others and adheres to some moral code (Cuddy et al.,, 2008). In brands, warmth is measured on the basis of perceived traits such as friendly, likeable, trustworthy, honest and sincere (Malone & Fiske, 2013). Similarly, brands that are genuine are truthful, honest and sincere (Starr, 2008). Sincerity is linked to genuineness (Starr, 2008) and to warmth (Napoli et al.,, 2014; Pace, 2015).

4) Genuine and Competence (0,845)

This high correlation was surprising as, unlike genuine and warmth, the conceptualisations of genuine and competence are quite distinct. However, both genuineness and competence are associated with high levels of consistency and credibility.

Genuineness is associated with congruent behaviour; where the brand's ideals, values and actions are aligned (Starr, 2008). Brand congruency is expressed through a high level of commitment to the brand values and the brand remaining true to itself (Eggers et al.,, 2013; Faust & Householder, 2009). Similarly, brand competence is evaluated on the basis of durability and consistency (Kervyn et al.,, 2012). It is defined as the degree to which the consumer believes that a brand has the required skills and knowledge to deliver on its promise (Malone & Fiske, 2013). Both genuineness and competence are then expressed through consistency, and a commitment to the brand's values and promises.

5) Competence and Brand Trust (0,834)

Several authors called for research that would provide insight as to how warm and competent perceptions cultivate consumer brand trust (J. Aaker et al.,, 2012; Fournier & Alvarez, 2012; MacInnis, 2012). This study showed that warmth, competence and brand trust are so deeply intertwined, that they are indistinct from one another. This makes sense in light of the literature as, not only has competence been found to enhance brand trust, but their definitions are quite similar too.

When one looks at the literature, the definitions of perceived competence and brand reliability (an important component of brand trust) are almost identical. Perceived competence has been defined as the belief that the brand has the ability to implement out their intentions (Kervyn et al.,, 2012). Competent brands are trusted to fulfil customer needs (Coulter & Coulter, 2002). In the same vein, brand reliability is the extent to which the consumer believes that the brand will accomplish its value promise (J. Aaker et al.,, 2004; J. Aaker et al.,, 2010; Kervyn et al.,, 2012; Malone & Fiske, 2013). Brand reliability is expressed through attributes that are competence-based (Delgado-Ballester, 2004; Eggers et al.,, 2013). Competence and brand trust are dependent on the effective capacity of a brand to deliver.

Lau and Lee (1999) found brand competence to increase brand trust, and reported no issues with discriminant validity. Li et al., (2008) examined brand trust as a second-order factor, where competence and benevolence were postulated as dimensions thereof. Although they claimed discriminant validity, they did not use the generally accepted measure of discriminant validity (squared correlations between constructs less than AVE for that construct). Supporting the findings of this research, Li et al., (2008) also found brand trust to be highly correlated to perceived competence (0,81).

6) Warmth and Brand Trust (0,746)

Brand trust is created through both the affective and cognitive attributes of the brand, where warmth is indicative of those affective attributes. Warmth signals trustworthiness (J. Aaker et al.,, 2010; MacInnis, 2012), and both perceived warmth and trust are enhanced through the brand's integrity or benevolence (Delgado-Ballester, 2004; Delgado-Ballester & Luis Munuera-Alemán, 2001; Kervyn et al.,, 2012).

When one looks at the literature, the definitions of perceived warmth and brand intentions (an important component of brand trust) are almost identical. Perceived warmth has been defined as the belief that the brand has good intentions and acts in the consumers best interests (Kervyn et al.,, 2012). Brand intentions have been defined as the extent to which the consumer believes that the brand holds the consumer's interests ahead of its own (Delgado-Ballester, 2004). Warmth and brand trust are both dependent on brand's the good intentions and expressed through the affective attributes of the brand.

Warmth is also synonymous with benevolence and sincerity. Li et al., (2008) reported a high correlation between benevolence and brand trust (0,79). Sung and Kim (2010) found sincerity to have a positive influence on brand trust, however, they too recorded a high correlation between them (0,72). In this regard, studies by Sung and Kim (2010) and Li et al., (2008) had similar findings to this one.

7) Warmth and Competence (0,795)

The two constructs that are quite distinct in their literary definitions, but still were found to be highly correlated were warmth and competence. Perceived warmth is defined as the belief that a brand has good intentions, whilst perceived competence is the belief that the brand has the ability to carry out those intentions (J. Aaker et al.,, 2004; J. Aaker et al.,, 2010; Kervyn et al.,, 2012; Malone & Fiske, 2013). Warmth is measured on the basis of perceived traits such as friendly, likeable, trustworthy, honest and sincere; and competence on the basis of capable, intelligent and skilled (Malone & Fiske, 2013).

In spite of their unique conceptualisations, previous studies have also recorded high correlations between constructs related to warmth (such as sincerity and benevolence) and competence. Sung and Kim (2010) reported high correlations between sincerity and competence for both initial and re-specified CFA (0,62 and 0,82, respectively). Li et al., (2008) reported a high correlation between benevolence and warmth (0,70). Lassoued and Hobbs (2015) hypothesised brand trust as a four-dimensional construct with perceived credibility, competence, benevolence and reputation as dimensions thereof. They too found high correlations between perceived competence and perceived benevolence (exceeding 0,90).

Lassoued and Hobbs (2015) attributed the high correlation between perceived warmth and competence to a possible definitional overlap between them. However, in the literature, their meanings are quite distinct. It is believed that the lack of discriminant validity could be attributed to the fact that judgement formation is largely subconscious. Theory on warmth and competence in brands originates from social psychology and there is neurological data that supports those theories. Even if warmth and competence are seemingly different from one another, the consumer does not actively distinguish between them.

5.4.2. Conclusion to Correlations between the Constructs

The high correlations between the constructs indicated that consumers view these constructs as one and the same; they do not distinguish between them. In some cases, this is clearly due to the fact that their conceptualisations are so similar and their traits overlap so strongly. In other cases, this comes down to the evaluative process simply being a subconscious one. Regardless, the lack of discriminant validity in this study actually proved to be a valuable finding. The six constructs in this research are deeply interconnected and this contributes a new and important perspective to marketing literature.

5.5. Finding D

5.5.1. Airlines

An additional analysis was conducted to establish whether there were significant differences between the results of the airlines. It was established that SAA is an outlier brand as it displayed differences on all six constructs. Table 25 provides a summary of the differences between SAA and the other airlines.

Table 25: Summary of Differences Between SAA and Other Airlines

SAA		Differences with Other Airlines			
Constructs	**Definition**	**BA**	**Kulula**	**Mango**	**Other**
Ethical	The measure of honesty, responsibility and accountability of the brand (Singh et al.,, 2012).	✔	✔	✔	✔
Original	"To be creative, original and/or innovative" (Bruhn et al.,, 2012, p. 569).	✖	✔	✖	✖
Genuine	Being natural, real, true and not an imitation (Starr, 2008).	✔	✔	✔	✖
Warmth	The belief that the brand has good intentions and acts in the consumers best interests (Kervyn et al.,, 2012).	✖	✔	✔	✖
Competence	The belief that the brand has the ability to carry out their intentions (Kervyn et al.,, 2012).	✔	✔	✔	✖
Brand Trust	"…the confident expectations about the brand's reliability and intentions in situations entailing risk to the consumer" (Delgado-Ballester, 2004, p. 586).	✔	✖	✖	✖

✔ = SAA showed a difference with this airline on this construct; ✖ = SAA did not show a difference with this airline on this construct

SAA was the only airline perceived as unethical. On brand originality, SAA was distinctly different to Kulula, making SAA unoriginal and Kulula original. However, the other airlines were also considered to be lacking in originality. SAA was lacking in genuineness and perceived competence, whilst BA, Kulula and Mango were not. On perceived warmth, SAA, BA and the other airlines were all lacking in this area and it was only Kulula and Mango that were considered warm brands. All the airline brands, except BA, were lacking in brand trust. Overall, SAA was identified as the outlier brand that requires work in every area. This is discussed in detail.

Brief Industry Overview

To better understand these results, it is necessary to look briefly at the airline industry in South Africa, specifically at SAA. South African Airways (SAA) is a state-owned entity and having been established in 1934, it is South Africa's oldest airline. A long-standing market leader, SAA has faced new competition with the arrival of several low-cost airlines into an industry that was formerly shared only with the privately-owned, Comair (Barros & Wanke, 2015). The domestic airline industry in South Africa is experiencing rapid growth due to the proliferation of low-cost carriers (Campbell & Vigar-Ellis, 2012).

According to Luke and Walters (2013), to remain a key player after industry deregulation, Comair became a franchise owner of British Airways (BA) in October 1996 and established South Africa's first low-cost carrier, Kulula, not long after in 2001. In response to the changing environment, SAA founded its own low-cost airline, Mango, in November 2006. Since then, several low-cost carriers such as 1time, Nationwide and Velvet Sky, have come and gone due to tough economic conditions and financial difficulties. However, Kulula and Mango remain industry front-runners alongside well-established SAA and BA (Luke & Walters, 2013). FlySafair is a market newcomer and commenced operations in October 2014 (Kriel & Walters, 2016).

Figure 10 shows the market share breakdown of the local domestic airline industry as per January 2015. The results of this research show similar findings as Kulula, SAA and Mango were revealed as the three most popular airlines amongst business travellers in South Africa (refer to Figure 8 on Page 62).

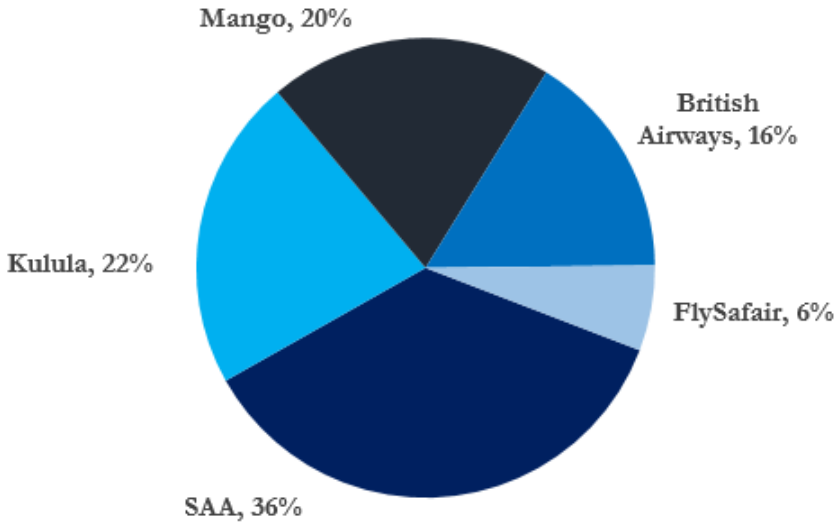


Figure 10: Market Share of Domestic Airlines in South Africa (% of seats by brand): January 2015 (Source: CAPA – Centre for Aviation, FlySafair and OAG)

SAA in Recent Years

As a state-owned entity, SAA comes with its fair share of political, managerial and administrative problems. Over the last few years, the airline has repeatedly made headline news. It is public knowledge that over the last decade, SAA has reported financial losses in the billions. According to Davis (2016), losses for 2014/2015 amounted to R5,6billion - inciting growing concerns about SAA's current board chairperson, Dudu Myeni. Despite ongoing promises of a turnaround, SAA continues to run at a loss and requires regular bailouts from the South African treasury (Southall, 2016).

In a study of the corporate governance of South African state-owned enterprises, Thomas (2012) found that SAA was performing at sub-standard levels of governance. Along with the national bailouts, SAA do not disclose adequate information and risk to their shareholders, or ensure a rigorous code of ethics to protect their rights; they use poor accounting and auditing practices, and show less than adequate levels of accountability to government; they implement no annual appraisal practices for their board who, in any case, show poor attendance; and there is no provision for a clear strategy moving forward (Thomas, 2012). SAA is clearly a brand in turmoil.

Application of Theory

One of the objectives of this research was to test and evolve theory on brand perception. The basic tenet of the Brands as Intentional Agents Framework (BIAF) (Kervyn et al.,, 2012) is that people evaluate brands on perceived warmth and competence. The BIAF is a two-by-two matrix that illustrates four possible combinations of perceived warmth (intentions) and competence (ability) in brands.

To test theory, the results pertaining to the airlines were applied to the BIAF (refer to Figure 4 on Page 40). As SAA was found to be different to some or all of the airlines on all the constructs, it can be considered an outlier amongst the airline brands. With regards to perceived warmth and competence: SAA was found to be different to BA, Kulula and Mango on competence; and to Kulula and Mango on warmth. BA, Kulula and Mango were viewed as competent, whilst SAA was viewed as incompetent. Kulula and Mango were viewed as warm, whilst SAA was viewed as cold. Figure 11 illustrates these results using the BIAF.

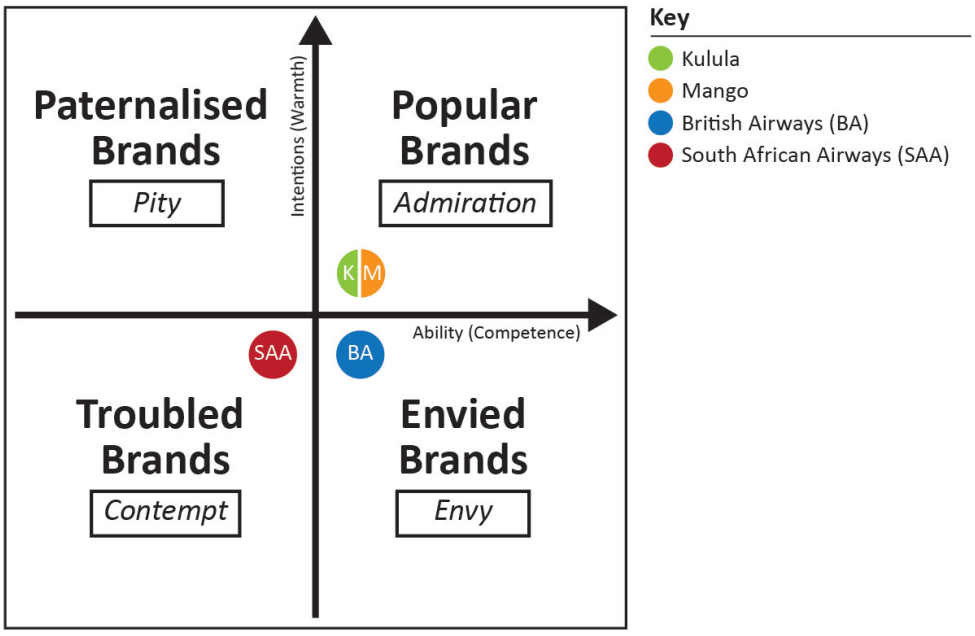


Figure 11: Competence and Warmth Scores of Four Domestic Airline Brands in South Africa on The Brands as Intentional Agents Framework (BIAF) (Kervyn et al.,, 2012)

Kervyn et al., (2012) state that the Brands as Intentional Agents Framework (BIAF) can be used as a tool to plot the competitive landscape of a particular industry, as demonstrated in Figure 11 which depicts the landscape of the domestic airline industry in South Africa. This research found that that SAA was perceived as cold-incompetent, belonging in the bottom-left quadrant of the matrix. As a result, SAA is considered a troubled brand and may receive feelings of contempt from consumers. With the same low levels of perceived warmth (i.e. cold) but higher levels of perceived competence, BA was perceived as cold-competent, making it an envied brand. Envied brands have also been referred to as "luxury brands". Finally, showing significant differences to SAA on both warmth and competence, Kulula and Mango are both perceived as warm-competent, making these popular domestic airline brands that receive feelings of admiration.

Brands that are high in both warmth and competence belong to the "golden quadrant" and evoke the highest levels of consumer admiration and loyalty (J. Aaker et al.,, 2012; J. Aaker et al.,, 2010; Fournier & Alvarez, 2012; Zawisza & Pittard, 2015). Kervyn et al., (2012) hoped that future research on brand perception would provide some explanation for a rapid shift in loyalty from well-established to newcomer brands. This research offers just that, as it investigates the perceptions of two well-established airlines (SAA and BA) in comparison to their less established, low-cost competitors (Kulula and Mango). The results of this research showed that Kulula and Mango are "golden quadrant" brands and this may explain their rapidly growing popularity. J. Aaker et al., (2012) state that whilst some brands are either viewed as warm or competent, it is those that manage to harness both that will succeed in a time of consumer mistrust.

5.5.2. Conclusion to Airlines

South African consumers do not view SAA in a positive light and it can be considered a deeply troubled brand. It is viewed as unoriginal, unethical, disingenuous, cold, incompetent and untrusted. This important finding led to two valuable insights that contribute to marketing research:

1. ***Heritage is not enough in creating a sense of originality***

Several authors have said that history, heritage and tradition enhance perceptions of originality and brand authenticity (Beverland, 2006; Beverland & Farrelly, 2010; Brown et al.,, 2003; Bruhn et al.,, 2012; Fritz et al.,, 2017; Newman & Dhar, 2014). Newman and Dhar (2014) found that it is common for brands to reinforce their authenticity by communicating their exact place of origin. Brands that embody the national identity are perceived as more authentic (J. Aaker et al.,, 2012; J. Aaker et al.,, 2010; Fournier & Alvarez, 2012; Zawisza & Pittard, 2015). Recently, Fritz et al., (2017) identified brand heritage and brand nostalgia as two important predictors of brand authenticity. However, the findings pertaining to SAA, lead one to question whether the use of history, heritage and tradition to enhance perceived brand originality (and authenticity) is out-dated.

Beverland (2005a) stated that a common challenge for brand managers today is retaining a link to the past, whilst remaining relevant in an ever-changing market place and this is clearly true for SAA. SAA is South Africa's oldest airline and has a deep sense of history and heritage. This aspect of the brand is highlighted at almost every brand contact point: from its brand identity (the iconic use of the South African flag), to the traditional attire of the flight attendants and advertising campaigns that use distinctive South African imagery (refer to Appendix C for visual examples). Yet, this research showed that SAA is perceived as the least original domestic airline in South Africa. In contrast, Kulula is designed to be distinctly South African, but not through traditional and sometimes tired local imagery. Kulula has a unique and quirky brand identity that is enhanced with edgy, creative marketing campaigns (refer to Appendix D for visual examples).

Bruhn et al., (2012) found that originality in authentic brands is enhanced through creativity and innovation. In essence, the findings of this research support this thinking. This is not to say that brand heritage and brand nostalgia (Fritz et al.,, 2017), are unimportant. However, this research suggests that to really entrench the perception of brand originality and authenticity, expressions of history, heritage and tradition need to be creative. Creativity can be the distinguishing factor between a brand that is perceived as real, or contrived.

2. *A breakdown of trust has far reaching implications*

The results also indicated that SAA is significantly different to BA on matters of brand trust. In other words, SAA is untrusted, whilst BA has high levels of trust. It is safe to assume that the reason for this is poor governance by SAA, as discussed by Thomas (2012). The lack of discriminant validity between the constructs implies that consumers are unable to distinguish between them: the result is that when one goes up, so does another, and vice versa. A breakdown of consumer brand trust then negatively affects the overall brand perception. So when brand trust is diminished, so are perceptions of originality, ethicality, genuineness, warmth and competence. SAA is the perfect example of this.

5.6. Conclusion

The findings of this research proved to be very interesting and make a significant contribution to the marketing research. The most important finding is certainly the lack of discriminant validity between the constructs. This demonstrates that consumers view brand originality, ethicality, genuineness, warmth, competence and trust as one and the same. They do not consciously distinguish between them and so, from the consumer perspective, these brand attributes are deeply interconnected. When one attribute is diminished, it will have a negative impact on the others. Similarly, when one is enhanced, it will elevate the rest. This has major theoretical and managerial implications, discussed in Chapter 6.

Chapter 6: Conclusions & Recommendations

6.1. Introduction

Interest in this area of research began with an insatiable curiosity about a topic that kept popping up in mainstream marketing media: *the human brand*. Brands that will succeed, at a time when trust is at an all-time low, are those that are perceived as human. Human brands are authentic – they are true to themselves and the customers they serve. They are committed to their values, deliver on their promises and as a result, they develop meaningful relationships with their customers. It was hoped that this research would decipher whether the *human brand* is just a new buzzword, or an idea that has academic and practical significance.

To develop a conceptual model, an in-depth literature review on the humanisation of brands was conducted. The review revealed a theoretical framework that originated in social psychology and was then adapted for a marketing context. The Brands as Intentional Agents Framework (BIAF) (Kervyn et al.,, 2012) states that consumers evaluate brands in the same way they do people: based on two dimensions of warmth and competence. The BIAF provides a measure for how brands have anthropomorphised through expressions of warmth and competence. The literature suggested that perceived warmth and competence were linked to brand authenticity and brand trust, but there was a need for research that would demonstrate exactly how.

First, the aim of this research was to investigate the dimensions of brand authenticity. Second, it was to establish whether brand authenticity has a positive impact on brand trust and third, to determine whether warmth and competence then mediate that relationship. Brand authenticity was postulated as having four dimensions – originality, continuity, credibility and integrity. Brand trust was postulated as having two dimensions – brand intentions and brand reliability (Delgado-Ballester, 2004). To achieve the best possible outcome, this research adopted a cross-disciplinary approach: combining literature, theory and empirical evidence to draw conclusions about the research problem.

The results proved interesting. Although the hypotheses could not be tested due to a lack of discriminant validity between the constructs, there were several important findings. Original, ethical and genuine were revealed as new factors, and brand trust was found to be one-dimensional. Most importantly, the high correlations between the six constructs (original, ethical, genuine, warmth, competence and trust) (refer to Figure 9 on page 66) demonstrated that consumers view these constructs as one and the same. As Kervyn et al., (2012) posit that expressions of warmth and competence enhance brand anthropomorphism, it can be deduced that all six constructs collectively contribute to human brands. This final chapter discusses the conclusions of the study, the theoretical and managerial implications of the findings and provides practical recommendations as to how brand managers can begin the journey towards building a human brand.

6.2. Conclusions of the Study

Due to the high correlations and the resultant lack of discriminant validity, the constructs were rendered indistinguishable in a causal model and the hypotheses could not be tested. The high correlations might be attributed to the strong literary overlaps between the constructs. Several other studies reported similar issues with discriminant validity between constructs that were the same or comparable (Lassoued & Hobbs, 2015; Lau & Lee, 1999; Li et al.,, 2008; Napoli et al.,, 2014; Sung & Kim, 2010). As the hypotheses could not be tested, the conclusions of this study are discussed in relation to the three research sub-problems.

Sub-problem 1: Establish and evaluate the most pertinent dimensions of brand authenticity.

Original, ethical and genuine were revealed as new factors; replacing the four postulated dimensions of brand authenticity (originality, continuity, credibility and integrity). As brand authenticity was measured as a second-order construct, it could not be concluded that these factors are dimensions of brand authenticity, and not another construct. Recently, Akbar and Wymer (2016) proved originality and genuineness to be two dimensions of brand authenticity and their research echoes the findings of this one. In addition, this study made some important contributions to research on brand authenticity.

The identification of genuine as a new factor reaffirmed the connection between genuineness and authenticity; repeated throughout the literature. There has been continuous debate around the definition on brand authenticity and the findings of this study posit that brand authenticity should be defined according to standards of what is genuine, real and true. It is believed that the following definition of brand authenticity is most appropriate and should be adopted going forward: “brand authenticity is a subjective evaluation of genuineness ascribed to a brand by a consumer” (Napoli et al.,, 2014, p. 1091).

This study also reinforced some other ideas about the nature of brand authenticity. As the findings differed to those of studies in the United States and Europe, brand authenticity is indeed contextual and subjective. Brand authenticity is co-created by consumers and its meaning is dependent on their personal understanding of what it means to be authentic. This study confirmed the importance of academic research in different social and cultural contexts, and the belief that brand managers must be familiar with their customers’ unique interpretations of brand authenticity before attempting to enhance perceptions thereof.

Finally, authentic brands are original, they adhere to an ethical compass, and they demonstrate a commitment to their values by delivering on their promises. As these factors have been linked to authenticity, and were highly correlated to warmth and competence, this research then implies that expressions of authenticity might also enhance the perception of a human brand. Authenticity and anthropomorphism in brands might be deeply connected and this creates an interesting opportunity for further research.

Sub-problem 2: Demonstrate the impact of brand authenticity on brand trust.

The results of the research meant that it was not possible to draw conclusions about the impact of brand authenticity on brand trust. However, an important finding in this regard was the establishment of brand trust as one-dimensional, and not two-dimensional as postulated by Delgado-Ballester (2004). This research confirmed that brand trust is an holistic concept and should no longer be considered to be two-dimensional. Going forward, academic research should refrain from measuring brand trust as two-dimensional.

However, the brand trust factor was still made up of items to measure both brand intentions and brand reliability. This confirmed that brand trust is still conveyed through both the affective and cognitive attributes of the brand. Researchers must be cognisant of this when scrutinising measurement instruments. Practitioners must be sure to work on both the wholesome intentions of the brand, expressed through integrity, honesty, sincerity and a genuine commitment to the interests of the customer, and its unwavering reliability, demonstrated through confidence, competence and delivering on the brand promise.

Sub-problem 3: Ascertain whether perceived warmth and competence can be deemed mediator variables in the relationship between brand authenticity and brand trust.

The results of this research found the constructs to be indistinguishable in a causal model and so the proposed relationships could not be evaluated. This finding demonstrated that consumers are unable to distinguish between the six constructs. Specifically, several authors called for research to investigate the relationships between perceived warmth, perceived competence and brand trust. This research found that warmth and competence are indistinguishable from brand trust. In hindsight, this actually makes sense as the definition of warmth is almost identical to that of brand intentions (one component of brand trust), and the definition of perceived competence is almost identical to that of brand reliability (the other component of brand trust). The same is true of the other constructs: their literary conceptualisations and traits are so similar that they are deeply intertwined. This has major theoretical and managerial implications.

6.3. Theoretical Implications

The findings of this research make a significant contribution to the theory of Kervyn et al., (2012) by presenting an alternative view of warmth and competence as evaluative dimensions in human brand perception. The high correlations between the constructs (refer to Figure 9 on page 66) led to two important theoretical implications:

1) ***As warmth and competence are indistinct, one is not more important than the other***
2) ***All six constructs in the model contribute to building the perception of a human brand***

First, authors have debated whether warmth is more important than competence, or vice versa. In social perception, Cuddy et al., (2008) argued that warmth is the primary dimension, as it is generally evaluated first and is considered more important. In brand perception, J. Aaker et al., (2010) questioned whether it is better to foster a reputation of warmth or competence first. This research made a start in answering this question. As warmth and competence were highly correlated, it could be deduced that one is no more or less important than the other. As consumers draw no distinction between them, they are equally important and necessary tools in building healthy brands.

Second, MacInnis (2012) suggested that the addition of other dimensions to the Brands as Intentional Agents Framework would be of substantial value to advancing theory on brand perception. Due to the high correlations between the six constructs, this research started to paint a picture beyond perceived warmth and competence. It demonstrated that all six constructs, and not only perceived warmth and competence, are key to building brands that are perceived as more human. Figure 12 provides a graphic illustration for this major finding by demonstrating the interconnectedness of the six constructs.

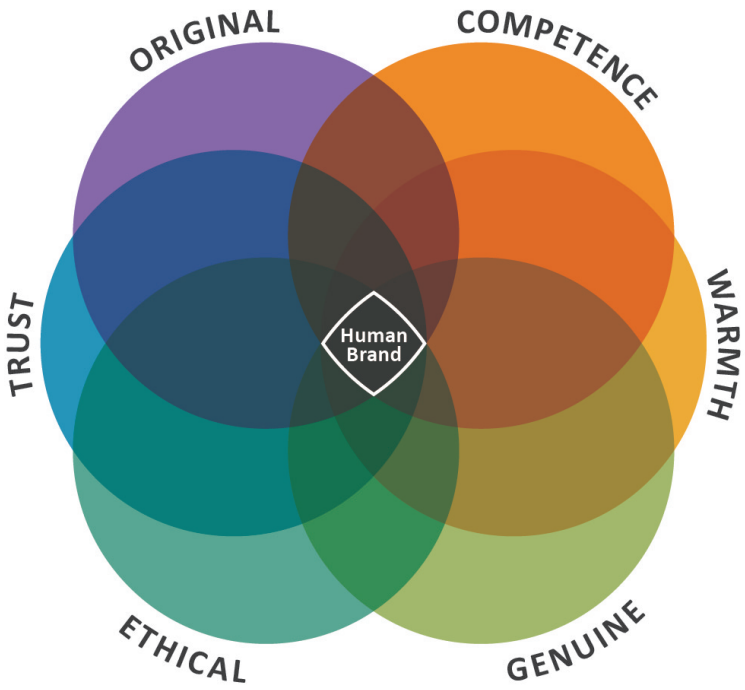


Figure 12: The Interconnectedness of Six Highly Correlated Constructs

Expressions of warmth and competence enhance brand anthropomorphism (J. Aaker et al.,, 2010; Kervyn et al.,, 2012; Malone & Fiske, 2013). As warmth and competence were found to be indistinct from the other constructs, it can be said that all six contribute to building human brands. These findings advance theory on brand perception by suggesting that the Brands as Intentional Agents Framework (Kervyn et al.,, 2012) be expanded to include all six constructs.

This research set out to establish whether the *human brand* is simply a new fad in marketing and branding, or an idea that has both academic and managerial significance. For the longest time, brand anthropomorphism has been viewed solely as a brand adopting humanlike characteristics (J. Aaker, 1997). However, brands today are becoming more and more complex. The process of humanising a brand is no longer a simple case of creating a brand personality. Kim and McGill (2011) describe the next level of brand anthropomorphism as the brand having the capacity for care and concern. Fournier and Alvarez (2012) go so far as to describe this progression as the brand having a mental-like state, goals and even a desire for power. Brands are more complex than they have ever been, and humans relate to them on a far deeper level than they ever have before.

However, this research proved that the humanisation of brands even goes beyond warmth and competence. If expressions of warmth and competence enhance the perception that a brand is more human, and warmth and competence are equivalent to originality, ethicality, genuineness and brand trust, then it is fair to say that all these constructs actually enhance the belief that a brand is more human. Consumers form judgements about brands in the same intuitive manner that they form judgements about the people around them. This research took a much-needed step in providing empirical evidence to support the notion that brands are becoming animate, and truly "human". The findings demonstrate that the *human brand* is an idea that actually has real academic significance, and important managerial implications.

6.4. Managerial Implications and Recommendations

Managerial Implications

The results of this research have important implications for brand managers. They show that it is not only expressions of warmth and competence that build human brands, but those of originality, ethicality, genuineness and trust. As consumers view these six brand dimensions as indistinct from one another, each dimension plays an essential role in enhancing the belief that a brand is "human". To build human brands, practitioners must first take note of three important points:

1) The human brand dimensions are six pieces to a single puzzle

As the human brand dimensions are indistinguishable from one another, they are deeply interconnected. The implication of this is that if one dimension is elevated, the others will be elevated. Inversely, if one is tarnished, the others will be negatively impacted too. The six human brand dimensions therefore fit together like the pieces of a puzzle as illustrated by Figure 13 on the following page.

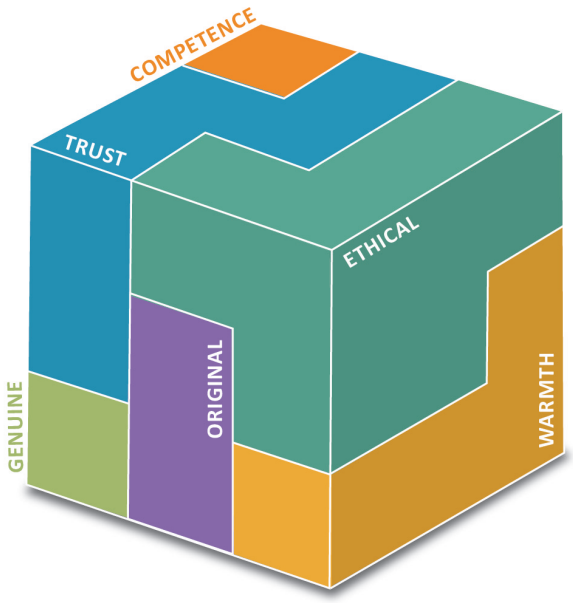


Figure 13: The Importance of Each Human Brand Dimension

When one piece of a puzzle is missing, the final picture is incomplete and the puzzle is damaged. The same principle applies to building a human brand. Each dimension is indispensable, without even one dimension, the perception of a human brand is incomplete. The six dimensions collectively contribute to the belief that a brand is more human. The major implication of this is that the management team must work on harnessing each and every dimension, as their power is in their unison. No factor can be ignored.

2) Building a human brand is a company-wide endeavour

As warmth, competence, ethicality, originality, genuineness and trust must be felt across every brand contact point, efforts to build a human brand cannot be left up to the brand manager and marketing team alone. The entire organisation must be mobilised and in support of this new growth path. The process should be driven by the executive leadership of the organisation, representing the various business units and infiltrating every one – from branding and marketing, to product development, design and engineering, resource management, customer service and sales – every department must actively participate. Building a human brand is a cross-functional practice and there is no room for silo-minded thinking.

3) Building a human brand requires a long-term commitment

Finally, it is important to note that the process of building a human brand does not happen overnight - it requires a long-term commitment and continues indefinitely. Each dimension must be harnessed and then, in time, they should not only be actively maintained, but improved as well. Longevity is key to building a human brand that benefits from meaningful relationships with its customers and the highest levels of loyalty.

Recommendations

One of the objectives of this research was to establish the exact tools that are required to build a human brand. The insights gathered from this research are packaged into a simple model that outlines the key steps in this process (Figure 14). This model is referred to as the Human Brand Model (HBM).

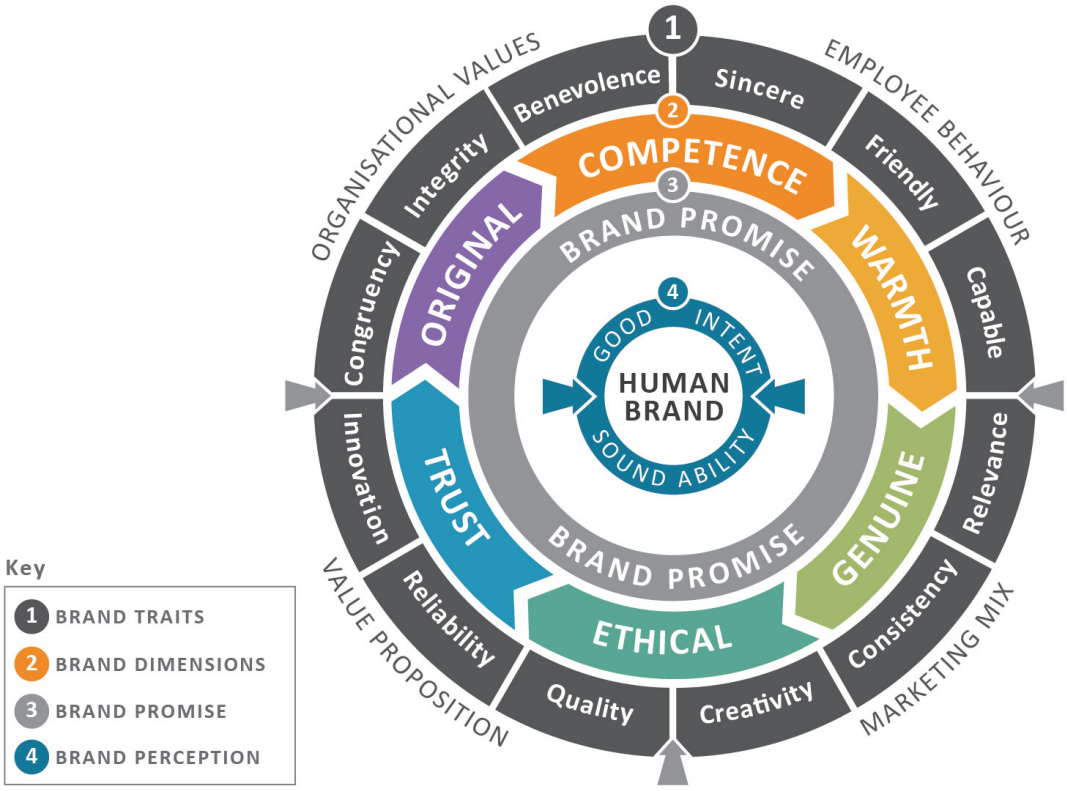


Figure 14: The Human Brand Model (HBM)

The Human Brand Model (HBM) is a graphic representation of what is required to build a brand that is perceived as human. There are four steps in this process – the first three indicate the brand inputs, and step four indicates the brand perception that comes about as a result of those managerial actions. Four concentric circles depict the four important steps in building a human brand, they are:

1. **Brand Traits:** The management team must actively harness a number of brand traits that span the organisational values, employee behaviour, the marketing mix and the value proposition.
2. **Brand Dimensions:** The brand traits (1) will enhance the six human brand dimensions (2).
3. **Brand Promise:** Delivering on the brand promise is the single most important deliverable for a human brand and the management team must continuously ensure this for their customers.
4. **Brand Perception:** As the result of building the traits (1), dimensions (2) and repeatedly delivering on the brand promise (3), consumers perceive the brand as having good intent and sound ability.

1. BRAND TRAITS

The outermost circle of the HBM (1) depicts the brands traits that are required for the brand to be perceived as human. Building these traits is the first step in the process of building a human brand, and can be the most difficult and time-consuming to get off the ground. The process requires someone to be at its helm, but they must have the support and input of the executive leadership of the entire organisation.

Ultimately, the customer should experience a human brand at every brand contact point and so, these brand traits span four different areas: the organisational values, employee behaviour, the marketing mix and the value proposition. Again, this is why it is so important to have the buy-in of every department.

Table 26 provides a more detailed outline of the human brand traits. It includes the "what" and "how" of each one. The "what" expands on the details of each trait and the "how" explains its implementation. This table can also serve as a handy checklist for the team leading this process. Each area is discussed in more detail.

Table 26: Human Brand Trait Checklist

Brand Trait	What	How	Check
ORGANISATIONAL VALUES			
Congruency	Commitment to the brand values	Congruency between ideals, values and actions	☐
Integrity	Commitment to the customers best interests	Transparency, responsibility & accountability	☐
Benevolence	Commitment to the community and society	Displayed through meaningful and sustainable CSI	☐
EMPLOYEE BEHAVIOUR			
Sincere	Natural, truthful and honest behaviour	Driven by authentic leadership and moral conduct	☐
Friendly	Friendly, helpful and kind attitude	Both internally and with clients/customers	☐
Capable	Empowered human resources	Armed with skills and decision-making capabilities	☐
MARKETING MIX			
Creativity	Creative strategic thinking	Marketing strategy and brand communications	☐
Consistency	Remaining true to the brand	Consistent messages and long-term brand continuity	☐
Relevance	Meaning and value for brand users	Contextual relevance	☐
VALUE PROPOSITION			
Quality	Highest quality product or service	Robust quality control	☐
Innovation	Product, service and customer experiences	Open-mindedness, talent and technology	☐
Reliability	Repeatedly delivering on the value promise	Measurement through customer feedback	☐

☐ = check when complete

Organisational Values

To build a human brand, congruency, integrity and benevolence must be included in the organisational values. Collectively, these three traits demonstrate a commitment to the brand values, its customers, the local community and society at large. Congruency is felt when the brand displays a deep commitment to its values by ensuring that those values are reflected in its actions. Integrity is felt when the brand displays a deep commitment to the best interests of its customers - holding the customer's interests even above its own, and at the heart of the organisation. Integrity is conveyed through transparent, responsible and accountable behaviour. Benevolence is felt when the brand displays a deep commitment to the welfare of the community and society that it serves. The brand conveys its benevolence through meaningful and sustainable corporate social investment that aligns with the brand values.

Employee Behaviour

Employee behaviour must reinforce the warmth and competence of the brand and so all employees (including the leadership) must come across as sincere, friendly and capable. This requires ongoing training and skills development. Sincerity is felt through natural, truthful and honest behaviour. To set an example, employees must be guided with authentic leadership and behaviour that adheres to a moral code of conduct. Friendliness is felt through a kind and helpful attitude. Friendly employees are willing to go out of their way to help not only a customer or client, but a fellow employee as well. Finally, to develop capable employees, it is important that they are empowered with skills and entrusted with the ability to make decisions. The ability to make a decision directly translates to an employee being able to solve a problem in an efficient and effective manner, and reinforce the value promise.

Marketing Mix

There are three traits that should come across in the strategic marketing and communications of the organisation. They are creativity, consistency and relevance. Creativity in marketing is key to developing a brand that is considered unique and different to its competitors. To embrace creativity, the marketing team must be open to new ideas and even willing to take (calculated) risks. Consistency in the marketing mix can take various forms. It includes consistency in the brand communications – from the visual identity to the marketing messages – and the long-term continuity of the brand. It is important to always remain true to the brand and avoid pandering to the latest industry trends, especially for the sake of. Finally, relevance is key. No matter what approach is taken with the marketing mix, it should always be relevant to the customer, the context (cultural and social) and the brand. Even in creativity, relevance is what differentiates a flop from a success. A brand that has significance is one that creates real meaning for its customers, and is ultimately perceived as authentic.

Value Proposition

The value proposition is the unique offering that will entice the customer to choose one brand over another and it may be a product, service or experience. In a human brand, the value proposition should be developed according to three guiding principles – quality, innovation and reliability. Quality is conveyed with an offering that meets extremely high and stringent criteria. To ensure this, product development and service design teams must be detail-orientated and enforce robust quality control. Brands that are perceived as original, do so by showing a tangible commitment to innovation. To drive innovation, they show an openness to bold, new ideas; they hire the most sought-after creative talent; and they invest in the latest technology. Finally, reliability is key to building a human brand. Reliability is felt when the brand repeatedly delivers on its value promise (and even exceeds expectation). Human brands solicit customer feedback on a regular basis and more than that; they use that feedback to further strengthen the value proposition.

2. BRAND DIMENSIONS

The second circle (2) displays the six human brand dimensions that are the result of building the brand traits in Step 1. Many of the brand traits enhance more than one dimension at a time and this is demonstrated in Table 27 that shows which brand traits contribute to which brand dimension.

Table 27: Human Brand Traits by Human Brand Dimensions

Brand Traits	Brand Dimensions					
	Original	*Ethical*	*Genuine*	*Warmth*	*Competence*	*Brand Trust*
Congruency		✔	✔			✔
Integrity		✔	✔	✔		✔
Benevolence		✔	✔	✔		✔
Sincere		✔	✔	✔		✔
Friendly			✔	✔		
Capable					✔	✔
Creativity	✔				✔	
Consistency		✔	✔		✔	✔
Relevance	✔		✔			✔
Quality			✔		✔	✔
Innovation	✔					
Reliability		✔			✔	✔

✔ = The human brand trait (left) contributes to enhancing the human brand dimension (top)

Table 27 shows how the various brand traits enhance the different brand dimensions. For example, to create the perception of a brand that is perceived as warm, the brand manager should build a number of brand traits: including friendliness (through a helpful and kind attitude); benevolence (through a tangible commitment to customers, the community and society in general); sincerity (through behaviour that is natural, truthful and honest, and authentic leadership); and integrity (through a genuine commitment to the best interests of the customer).

The most important point to note about building a human brand is that the six dimensions are all deeply connected. This means that no single dimension can be ignored as they impact one another. If one dimension is enhanced, the other will be perceived more favourably. However, if one is tarnished, the others will be negatively impacted too. For example, if a brand does something to diminish brand trust (e.g. Ford Kuga case in South Africa), the management must not only rebuild brand trust, but they should make an extra effort to reinforce their originality, ethicality, genuineness, warmth and competence too. The other five dimensions will collectively contribute to rebuilding trust. The same can be said of all the dimensions in relation to one another.

3. BRAND PROMISE

The third circle (3) depicts the final step in building a human brand: ensuring that the value promise is met at each and every brand contact point. This is the single most important deliverable for the management team. If the brand does not deliver on its promise, all the work building the human brand traits and dimensions will be wasted. First, the management team must define the brand promise and communicate it to everyone in the organisation. All employees must buy into the promise and show a commitment to delivering on it. Surprisingly, many forget to do this seemingly obvious task. Second, the brand must be steadfast about getting regular customer feedback to ensure that the customers needs are being met. More than that, they must be serious about using that feedback to improve and evolve the brand promise.

4. BRAND PERCEPTION

The innermost circle (4) shows the brand perception that comes about as a result of the brand's hard work in delivering on the human brand traits (1), building the necessary dimensions (2) and repeatedly delivering on the brand promise (3). If the brand is successful in its efforts, the consumer will perceive the brand to have good intentions and sound ability. A brand that has good intentions put its customers interests first, and a brand that has sound intentions is one that has the capabilities to deliver. When a brand shows good intentions and sound abilities, consumers relate to it on a deeper level and perceive it as humanlike. Human brands receive feelings of admiration from consumers; they have meaningful brand-customer relationships, and the highest levels of brand loyalty and purchase intent. These are the ultimate benefits for the brand.

The Human Brand Model (HBM) makes a start in providing an outline as to how human brands can be built at a practical level. The ideas put together in the model are all supported by the literature, theories on brand perception and the findings of this study. The best-case scenario is that with time and practice, the philosophies of the Human Brand Model (HBM) become so entrenched that its implementation becomes second nature to the leadership and the entire organisation.

6.5. Research Limitations

i. The sample of this research was largely male (69,3%) and white (61,4%). It may have presented a biased point of view that was not entirely representative of the population of South Africa.
ii. Lounge and airport staff was used to distribute the questionnaires. Concerns about data quality accounted for a high number of discarded responses.
iii. Time allowing, a qualitative component to this research would have been of great value. This might have been in the form of further consumer research, investigating their understanding of brand authenticity, or from the perspective of the airline brands.

6.6. Suggestions for Further Research

Theories on brand perception, particularly those involving complex constructs such as brand authenticity and brand trust, are constantly evolving and ongoing research is always necessary due to the ever-changing nature of these constructs. This final section presents several suggestions for future research, based on the findings of this study:

1. Although there are several measurement scales for brand authenticity, there remains a need for a widely accepted one that can be tested in different contexts. Further research could measure brand authenticity directly, with original, ethical and genuine as dimensions thereof. The literature and the findings of this study suggest ties between brand authenticity and these factors. As debates on brand authenticity ensue, further research is always necessary and would add great value to research in a field that is of great interest to academics and practitioners.

2. Future research could test the theories of the Brands as Intentional Agents Framework (BIAF) Fournier and Alvarez (2012), specifically in different countries and industries. To build on the findings of this research, these studies must include constructs beyond warmth and competence. It is also believed that research on brand anthropomorphism would benefit from additional empirical evidence. Brand authenticity could be measured directly, with the six constructs as predictor variables and brand anthropomorphism as an outcome variable. Any further research in this field would advance theory on brand perception and provide clarity about the humanisation of brands.

3. Further studies could investigate the predictors and outcomes of brand anthropomorphism. Research on the exact brand traits that enhance brand anthropomorphism, and the benefits that humanised brands hold for practitioners, would be of great value. Further studies may measure brand anthropomorphism directly with brand traits suggested in this research (e.g. congruency, integrity, benevolence) as predictors thereof. Studies may also look at consumer behavioural outcomes such as brand advocacy, brand loyalty and purchase intent.

4. Due to the subjective and complex nature of these constructs, research in this field would also benefit from a qualitative component. It is believed that a mixed-method approach would offer the best possible outcome for this type of enquiry.

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Appendices

1.1. Appendix A: Data Collection Instrument

The University of the Witwatersrand
Graduate School of Business Administration
Email: portal.sivan@gmail.com
Date: June 2016

Wits Business School
Sculpting global leaders

Questionnaire

Investigation Into The Role Of Brand Authenticity In The Development Of Brand Trust In South Africa

I am a Master of Management student at the Wits Business School. This study is a requirement for the completion of my degree. It is based on an investigation into the Role of Brand Authenticity in the Development of Brand Trust in South Africa – looking at how brands that have authentic attributes, such as originality, credibility, continuity and integrity, are more trusted by consumers. This questionnaire will only take 10 - 15 minutes of your time, and your answers will remain strictly confidential.

I thank you in advance for taking the time to complete the following questionnaire.
Your co-operation is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,
Researcher: Sivan Portal

Research Supervisor: Prof. R Abratt

SECTION A: TRAVEL FREQUENCY (QUALIFYING QUESTION)

This section establishes your eligibility to answer the quesionnaire. Please indicate your answer by putting a cross (X) in the appropriate box.

A1. Do you fly domestically (within South Africa) at least 3 times per year?

Yes		No	

If you answered **"Yes"** above, please continue with the rest of the questionnaire below. If you answered **"No"**, you are not required to continue with the questionnaire. Thank you.

SECTION B: GENERAL INFORMATION

This section is asking for your background information. Please indicate your answer by putting a cross (X) in the appropriate box. All information will remain confidential.

B1. Please indicate your gender.

Male		Female	

B2. Please indicate your marital status.

Married		Single	

B3. Please indicate your age category.

17 years or less	
18 – 25 years	
26 – 35 years	
36 – 45 years	
46 years upwards	

B4. For statistical purposes, please indicate your racial profile.

Black		Asian	
White		I prefer not to disclose	
Coloured		Other (specify)	
Indian			

B5. What is your country of residence?

_____

B6. What is your home language?

_____

B7. If living in South Africa, please indicate the city or nearest city, to where you live.

Johannesburg		Cape Town	
Pretoria		Port Elizabeth	
Durban		Other (specify)	

B8. Please indicate your highest level of education.

High School		Post Graduate Degree	
Diploma		Other (specify)	
Degree			

B9. Please indicate your employment status.

Student		Unemployed	
Employed		Other (specify)	
Self-employed			

SECTION C: AIRLINE SELECTION

This section establishes the purpose of your travel and which airline you fly most often. Please indicate your answer by putting a cross (X) in the appropriate box.

C1. What is the purpose of your travel today?

Business		Leisure	

C2. Which <u>one</u> of the following domestic airlines do you fly **<u>most often</u>**?

British Airways (BA)		South African Airways (SAA)	
Kulula		Blue Crane	
Mango		CemAir	
Safair (FlySafair)			

IMPORTANT: Please rate the questions in Section D with regards to the airline you selected in Question C2 above. Please rate <u>ONE airline</u> only.

SECTION D: ABOUT THE AIRLINE

Airline: _____ (Answer to Question C2)

Please rate the questions below with respect to the airline above. **On a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 means strongly disagree, 5 means neutral, and 10 means strongly agree, please rate the extent with which you agree with the following statements.**

CODE	Question	Rating
BAC1	A brand with history.	
BTR4	The brand name guarantees satisfaction.	
BAC2	The brand is consistent over time.	
BAI1	The brand does not give back to its consumers.	
BTR2	I feel confidence in the brand.	
PW5	The brand has good intentions toward ordinary people.	
BAC3	The brand does not stay true to itself.	
BTI2	I could not rely on the brand to solve a problem.	
PC3	The brand is skilled and effective at achieving its goals.	
BTI1	The brand would be honest and sincere in addressing my concerns.	
BAO4	The brand makes a genuine impression.	
BTR3	The brand always disappoints me.	
BAO3	I think the brand is unique.	
PW3	The brand consistently acts with the public's best interests in mind.	
BTR1	The brand never meets my expectations.	
BAC4	The brand offers continuity.	
PC5	The brand is not efficient.	
BTI3	The brand makes no effort to satisfy me.	
BAO1	The brand clearly distinguishes itself from other brands.	
BACR1	The brand will not betray me.	
BAO2	The brand does not stand out from other brands.	
BTI4	The brand would compensate me in some way for a problem with the product.	
BAC5	The brand has a clear concept that it pursues.	
BACR2	The brand is dishonest.	
BACR3	My experience of the brand has shown me that it does not keep its promises.	
PW2	The brand is generous through its offer.	
BACR4	The brand's promises are credible.	
PW1	The brand has a kind attitude.	
PC4	The brand is effective in the market.	
BAI2	The brand has no moral principles.	
PW4	The brand is warm.	
PC1	The brand is highly competent in it's field.	
BAI3	The brand is true to a set of moral values.	
PC2	The brand lacks the ability to implement its intentions.	
BAI4	The brand cares about its consumers.	

Thank you for participating in this study. Your time is greatly appreciated.

1.2. Appendix B: Instrument Items & Corresponding Sources

Brand Authenticity

CODE	Originality	Source	Dimension
BAO1	The brand clearly distinguishes itself from other brands.	(Bruhn, Schoenmüller, Schäfer, & Heinrich, 2012)	Originality
BAO2*	The brand does not stand out from other brands.	(Bruhn et al.,, 2012)	Originality
BAO3	I think the brand is unique.	(Bruhn et al.,, 2012)	Originality
BAO4	The brand makes a genuine impression.	(Bruhn et al.,, 2012)	Naturalness

CODE	Continuity	Source	Dimension
BAC1	A brand with history.	(Morhart, Malär, Guèvremont, Girardin, & Grohmann, 2015)	Continuity
BAC2	The brand is consistent over time.	(Bruhn et al.,, 2012)	Continuity
BAC3*	The brand does not stay true to itself.	(Bruhn et al.,, 2012)	Continuity
BAC4	The brand offers continuity.	(Bruhn et al.,, 2012)	Continuity
BAC5	The brand has a clear concept that it pursues.	(Bruhn et al.,, 2012)	Continuity

	Credibility	Source	Dimension
BACR1	The brand will not betray me.	(Morhart et al.,, 2015)	Credibility
BACR2*	The brand is dishonest.	(Morhart et al.,, 2015)	Credibility
BACR3*	My experience of the brand has shown me that it does not keep its promises.	(Bruhn et al.,, 2012)	Reliability
BACR4	The brand's promises are credible.	(Bruhn et al.,, 2012)	Reliability

	Integrity	Source	Dimension
BAI1*	The brand does not give back to its consumers.	(Morhart et al.,, 2015)	Integrity
BAI2*	The brand has no moral principles.	(Morhart et al.,, 2015)	Integrity
BAI3	The brand is true to a set of moral values.	(Morhart et al.,, 2015)	Integrity
BAI4	The brand cares about its consumers.	(Morhart et al.,, 2015)	Integrity

Warmth & Competence

	Perceived Warmth	Source	Attribute
PW1	The brand has a kind attitude.	(Aaker, Vohs, & Mogilner, 2010)	Kind
PW2	The brand is generous through its offer.	(Aaker et al.,, 2010)	Generous
PW3	The brand consistently acts with the public's best interests in mind.	(Kervyn, Fiske, & Malone, 2012)	Warm
PW4	The brand is warm.	(Aaker et al.,, 2010)	Warm
PW5	The brand has good intentions toward ordinary people.	(Kervyn et al.,, 2012)	Friendly

	Perceived Competence	Source	Attribute
PC1	The brand is highly competent in it's field.	(Aaker et al.,, 2010)	Competent
PC2*	The brand lacks the ability to implement its intentions.	(Kervyn et al.,, 2012)	Competent
PC3	The brand is skilled and effective at achieving its goals.	(Kervyn et al.,, 2012)	Capable
PC4	The brand is effective in the market.	(Aaker et al.,, 2010)	Effective
PC5*	The brand is not efficient.	(Aaker et al.,, 2010)	Efficient

Brand Trust (BTS)

	Brand Reliability	Source	Dimension
BTR1*	The brand never meets my expectations.	(Delgado-Ballester, 2004)	Brand Reliability
BTR2	I feel confidence in the brand.	(Delgado-Ballester, 2004)	Brand Reliability
BTR3*	The brand always disappoints me.	(Delgado-Ballester, 2004)	Brand Reliability
BTR4	The brand name guarantees satisfaction.	(Delgado-Ballester, 2004)	Brand Reliability

	Brand Intentions	Source	Dimension
BTI1	The brand would be honest and sincere in addressing my concerns.	(Delgado-Ballester, 2004)	Brand Intentions
BTI2*	I could not rely on the brand to solve the problem.	(Delgado-Ballester, 2004)	Brand Intentions
BTI3*	The brand makes no effort to satisfy me.	(Delgado-Ballester, 2004)	Brand Intentions
BTI4	The brand would compensate me in some way for the problem with the product.	(Delgado-Ballester, 2004)	Brand Intentions

1.3. Appendix C: SAA Brand Communication Examples















1.4. Appendix D: Kulula Brand Communication Examples



