

To explore employee perceptions of their company as an environmentally sustainable brand, using
The Body Shop as a case study

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I hereby declare that the Research Report submitted for the Bachelor of Commerce Honours in Strategic Brand Management degree to The Independent Institute of Education is my own work and has not previously been submitted to another University or Higher Education Institution for degree purposes.

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ABSTRACT

With the growing issues of climate change and global warming, companies are continuously incorporating environmental sustainability policies into their organisations (van der Werff, Steg & Keizer, 2013). Thus it is important for companies to ensure that their employees understand and engage with their environmental sustainability philosophy in order to effectively deliver the brand's environmentally sustainable brand identity to consumers (Rosenbluth & Peters, 2002; Raineri & Paillé; 2015). The research problem relates to evaluating how The Body Shop (an environmentally sustainable organisation) employees perceive the environmental sustainability philosophy and policies of their company. The purpose of this research is to explore how having a focus on environmental sustainability within a company needs to be incorporated throughout the organisation so that employees are also able to deliver on the brand's environmentally sustainable brand identity (Rosenbluth & Peters, 2002). The reasoned action theory by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) was selected in order to evaluate how employee perceptions of their company as an environmentally sustainable brand are formed. The study was conducted amongst fourteen The Body Shop employees across seven Johannesburg branches, using qualitative surveys to collect the data from participants. The key finding of this research paper was that the majority of employees did not fully understand the environmental sustainability philosophy and policies of The Body Shop, which was found to be due to a lack of sufficient communication from The Body Shop, specifically regarding their environmental sustainability. This thus hinders their ability to effectively deliver on the environmentally sustainable brand identity of The Body Shop. This finding can assist The Body Shop, as well as other environmentally sustainable brands, to ensure that their environmental sustainability philosophy and policies are effectively implemented throughout their organisation.

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CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

1.1. INTRODUCTION

With the growing issues of climate change and global warming, companies are continuously incorporating environmental sustainability policies into their organisations (van der Werff, Steg & Keizer, 2013). Many stakeholders, and specifically consumers also expect companies to incorporate these environmental sustainability policies into their businesses (Eccles, Ioannou & Serafeim, 2012). Additionally, there has been solid evidence that proves the link between sustainability and a company's long-term success (Eccles, Ioannou & Serafeim, 2012).

When an organisation is building their brand identity, they are able to positively influence their brand's associations with consumers by having strong environmental sustainability policies in place (Chen et al., 2017). These brand associations are determined by consumers' understandings of the brand (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2009). These understandings are then formed through their interactions with the brand, and, often, through dealing with the brand's employees (Harris & de Chernatony, 2001). Thus it is important for a company's employees to portray the brand identity that the organisation wishes for the brand.

This research aims to explore how employees perceive and understand the environmental sustainability practices that are adopted by their company, and to what extent these perceptions align with employees' individual philosophical outlooks regarding the environment and corporate responsibility towards it.

Identifying an employee's personal environmental values as well their perceptions of the brand's sustainability policies, will assist in understanding whether the employees contribute or not to the brand identity of the company and thus their desired brand image.

Additionally, by identifying what internal communications are currently in place regarding environmental sustainability within an organisation, this will assist in understanding employees' perceptions regarding environmental sustainability and the underlying reasons behind these perceptions.

Therefore, in order to evaluate employee perceptions of their organisation as an environmentally sustainable brand, The Body Shop has been selected as a case study. The Body Shop is a highly respected international personal care brand that operates in South Africa, which focuses on making a positive difference by producing their products ethically and sustainably (Leaping Bunny, 2014). The Body Shop offers naturally-inspired, high-quality skincare, make-up and hair care

(Leaping Bunny, 2014). The foundation of The Body Shop is rooted in environmental activism (Hope, 2017). According to Carlos Jardim (2017), the general manager of The Body Shop South Africa, they position themselves in the market as a “skin care, beauty and fragrance brand and strives to be the most ethical business in the world”. Therefore this research paper seeks to explore the perceptions that The Body Shop employees have about their organisation’s environmental sustainability, and whether or not their personal environmental values and beliefs align with the environmental sustainability philosophy of The Body Shop.

1.2. RATIONALE

In the South African business context of today, triple bottom line reporting is a very relevant phenomenon (Struwig & Van Rensburg, 2016). But more than that, companies also have a responsibility to be good brand citizens and support the sustainability of the citizens of tomorrow (The Institute of Directors in Southern Africa, 2016). If an organization wishes to effectively mitigate the impact of humans on the environment, it is imperative that they incorporate environmental sustainability into their organization, and that these environmental sustainability policies are effectively carried out, which in part lies with employees ability to portray and act on these policies.

The purpose of this research is to explore employees’ perceptions of their organization’s environmental sustainability philosophy and policies and whether or not their personal environmental values and beliefs align with that of their organization’s environmental sustainability philosophy. Moreover, having a focus on environmental sustainability within a company needs to be incorporated throughout the organisation so that employees are also able to deliver on the brand’s promise of environmental sustainability, which would lead to a more coherent brand identity.

From conducting research, it appears that a more prevalent focus is placed on consumer perceptions of a company as an environmentally sustainable brand, which allows for an opportunity to explore, in more depth, the phenomenon that surrounds employees’ perceptions of their company as an environmentally sustainable brand.

A company cannot be successful without consumers purchasing their products, however employees are often the first line of communication with a company (Rosenbluth & Peters, 2002). In a report released by Bain & Company, they identified that many employees did not see the importance of environmental sustainability for the business (MacCarthy, 2017).

It is therefore important to research employee perceptions (and not just consumer perceptions) of the company, as this perception of the employee can be portrayed through the company’s brand

identity and thus ultimately onto the consumer through their interactions with employees (Quirke, 2008).

The intent of this research is to explore employees' perceptions of their company's environmental sustainability philosophy and policies in order to identify whether employees understand and are able to align themselves with their philosophy and policies, and are thus able to deliver on the environmentally sustainable brand identity of their company through their behaviour within the organisation. Ultimately this research aims to understand the underlying reasons behind these employees' perceptions, and to identify whether there are any discrepancies between the desired brand identity of an organisation and their employee's ability to portray this identity.

Additionally, this research aims to contribute to the gaps within the current literature that addresses three key areas. Firstly, the gap in the literature within the South African context that does not effectively address what employees' perceptions are of environmental sustainability. Secondly, current research neglects the importance of internal communication within an organization that specifically relates to their environmental sustainable development policies. And thirdly, whether the environmental values and beliefs of employees align with their company's environmental sustainability focus.

This research will be useful as it contributes to the identified gaps in literature. It will also be useful for South African corporates to know how employees' perceptions of their brand are shaped, as this will impact their environmentally sustainable brand identity. Once corporates know what their employees' perceptions are of their sustainable development, they can react accordingly. It may be possible that they need to adjust their internal communications with employees or hire employees with more aligned values to them.

1.3. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The research problem under investigation is to: Evaluate The Body Shop employees' perceptions of the environmental sustainability philosophy and policies of their company.

1.4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- Do the personal values and beliefs, regarding environmental sustainability practices of employees, align with that of The Body Shop?
- What do employees perceive their role to be in terms of representing the brand identity of The Body Shop?
- Are internal communications effectively used to orientate employees to The Body Shop's environmental philosophy and policies?

1.5. RESEARCH AIMS

- To determine whether the personal values and beliefs, regarding environmental sustainability practices of employees, align with that of The Body Shop.
- To determine what employees perceive their role to be in terms of representing the brand identity of The Body Shop.
- To determine whether internal communications are effectively used to orientate employees to The Body Shop's environmental philosophy and policies.

1.6. CONCEPTUALIZATION

- Environmental sustainability (within the corporate context), refers to achieving financial objectives without sacrificing environmental values (Khalili, 2011).
- Environmental values and beliefs are the values and beliefs a person has about the relationship between humanity and nature (Raineri & Paillé, 2015). Where values refer to beliefs or desirable goals that guide a certain action (Pohling et al., 2015). And beliefs refer to a state of mind of the world that can be true or false (Krueger & Grafman, 2013)
- The role of employees in an environmentally sustainable brand refers to the expected or prescribed behaviour that is associated with their position in their environmentally sustainable company (Business Dictionary, 2017).
- Internal communications refer to the formal and informal communications that take place internally in all the different levels within an organisation (Chmielecki, 2015).
- Employee perceptions are the meanings and values that employees base on their observations and evaluations of their companies policies, events, leadership goals and reward systems (Kopelman et al., 1990).
- Brand identity refers to the outward expression of the brand that is created by the company, which fundamentally acts as the means by which a consumer recognizes how a brand differs from their competitor (Kapferer, 1986).

1.7. LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Limitations in the context of research refers to the constraints or limits within a research study that are out of the researchers control, such as time, financial resources and access to information (Enslin, 2014:275).

The researcher identified the following limitations:

- Time will be a limitation, as given more time would allow the researcher to collect surveys from more employees, thereby more insights could be collected for the study.
- Due to resource constraints, the sample that was used is not an accurate representation of the total population of employees.
- Although initially intended to be all of The Body Shop employees in South Africa, the total population for the research study was limited to The Body Shop Johannesburg employees only, as the researcher had to hand deliver the surveys to the participants.
- The sample size was limited by the willingness of The Body Shop employees to take part in the study, where they formed the total population of the research study, and the study was done on a voluntary basis.
- As the research deals with employees, a possible limitation may include the honesty of their answers, as they may not want to appear badly to The Body Shop. Additionally, because participants knew that they were being assessed on their understanding of their work environment, they may have felt pressured to portray a certain image.
- The researcher may encounter sample errors when collecting the data, as some employees may not answer certain questions, because they do not know what to say, or alternatively, they may not want to answer the question.
- This research study is qualitative in nature and therefore the validity of its findings will be difficult to prove.
- As the research uses a qualitative questionnaire to collect data, the questions will have limited flexibility, as there will be no further opportunity to probe for more information from the participants.
- As this research study uses non-probability sampling, not all possible participants have an equal chance of being selected to take part in the study.

Delimitations refer to the definitive choices a researcher makes when he or she decides on the scope of a specific research study (Enslin, 2014:276).

The researcher identified the following delimitations:

- This research study is only looking at The Body Shop as a case study to evaluate the research problem, as it allowed the researcher to explore a specific environmentally sustainable organization in depth that would allow the researcher to gain the most valuable insights.
- This research only looks at The Body Shop within South Africa and specifically in Johannesburg, and therefore the study will focus solely on employees in Johannesburg and findings may thus be limited to The Body Shop Johannesburg context.
- In line with the reasoned action theory, this study is not looking at employees actual behaviors within their organization, but rather their intended behaviors.
- This research study will not be looking at sustainability as a whole, but rather focuses solely on environmental sustainability.

1.8. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical considerations are very important when conducting research as they influence the nature and standard for the behaviour and attitude of the study (Maree, 2016). The researcher took into account various ethical considerations throughout the research process, including the following, which will be addressed in Chapter 3 in more detail; consent from The Body Shop as well as employees, withdrawal from the study by participants, potential situations that could lead to potentially skewed findings, and the need for anonymity and confidentiality by participants. The researcher also ensured ethics throughout the research process. Such considerations included that the research findings were not skewed, nor was any information falsified or misused. The researcher did not use any inappropriate research methods nor involve bias in any way during the duration of the study. The researcher also did not distort any results in any shape or form (Louw, 2014:265).

1.9. CONCLUSION

The following research study was divided into five chapters. Chapter one was used to provide context to the research problem as well as outline the research questions. Chapter 2 will provide an overview on the current literature appropriate to the research topic. Chapter 3 will provide an extensive overview of the methodology that was used to conduct this research study. Chapter 4 will then outline the findings obtained from data collection, and the interpretations thereof. And thus Chapter 5 will provide a conclusion to the research study by answering the research questions posed in Chapter 1, as well as provide recommendations for the future of The Body Shop as well as for future research on the research topic.

1.10. FORTHCOMING CHAPTERS

- Chapter 2: Literature Review
- Chapter 3: Methodology
- Chapter 4: Findings and Interpretations
- Chapter 5: Conclusion and Recommendations

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. INTRODUCTION

Pursuing environmental sustainability has become an important objective for companies in order to effectively mitigate climate change and global warming (van der Werff, Steg & Keizer, 2013; Raineri & Paillé, 2015). With a continually increasing need to protect the environment, the pursuit of sustainability by companies has become more important than ever (Khalili, 2011). Due to this heightened importance, companies who choose to pursue sustainable development have ensured that sustainability has been integrated into their strategic and operational decision making processes (Lacy et al., 2010; Thomas & Lamm, 2012).

In addition to protecting the environment, there have been other changing views as to the business case of why companies actually incorporate environmental sustainability into their business practices. On the one hand companies have incorporated environmental sustainability because it enhances their reputation and helps the company to comply with laws and regulations (McKinsey & Company, 2011). Additionally, we are also seeing a move to pursuing environmental sustainability because it has a direct financial impact that is material to the company and it can provide them with a competitive advantage (Haanaes et al., 2013; McKinsey & Company, 2014). However on the other hand, many companies advocate for “greater corporate environmental sustainability” as there is a genuine, moral concern for the environment and the future of humanity (Wright, 2016).

According to Olivier Boiral (2008), a leading author on the topic of corporate citizenship, most research is focused on the costs and benefits of implementing an environmental management system for companies, as well as the rationales for implementing environmental sustainability strategies into the company (Thomas & Lamm, 2012). Therefore because of this focus, individual’s perception of environmental sustainability has received little attention (Tascioglu, 2014; Evans and Davis, 2014). Thus, there is an opportunity for this research to explore employees’ perceptions and beliefs regarding environmental sustainability.

Within the current literature, there has also been a focus placed on the consumer’s perceptions as a driver for the business case for corporate social responsibility (CSR) (Smith, Read & López-Rodríguez, 2010), also leaving an opportunity for this research to explore in more detail the employee’s perceptions as a driver for the business case for CSR. Ascertaining employees’ perceptions are important, as employees are vital to the company, as they do the work that keeps the business running. Good employees attract good customers (Nichols, 2006). “Employees are on the front line of customer interaction”, and because of this, they have the ability to influence the company’s brand identity as perceived by the consumer (Bahreini, 2015).

There has also been a focus within current literature on the importance of internal communication between organizations and its employees, as this influences employees' perceptions of their company (Punjaisri & Wilson, 2007). However, there is a gap in the current literature that deals with the importance of internal communication within an organization that specifically relates to their environmental sustainability development policies.

This research paper focuses on understanding what a brand's employees' perceptions are, of their company as an environmentally sustainable brand, and thus ultimately what the implications of these perceptions on their behavior within the organization entail. This research is also looking to explore whether employees actually understand their brand's environmental sustainability and whether employees' environmental values and beliefs align with that of their company, therefore contributing to the company's environmental sustainability philosophy or if their environmental values and beliefs don't align with the company, then whether this will have a negative impact on the brand identity of the company. The following chapter will explain and evaluate the key concepts and theories that pertain to this study and how they relate to the research problem through a review of current literature.

In order to achieve a robust conceptual framework, it is important to establish what environmental sustainability is, specifically in the corporate context. It is also important to set out an empirical background based on current literature, concerning the meaning of employees' personal environmental philosophies, the impact of employee perceptions on brand identity, the role of employees within an environmentally sustainable brand, as well as the internal communication utilized by an environmentally sustainable brand to orientate their employees with their environmental philosophy. As The Body Shop has been selected as a case study, this chapter will provide more extensive information about the brand and what makes them an environmentally sustainable organization. And lastly the research will discuss the theoretical framework, being the reasoned action theory, which will be used to evaluate this research.

2.2. DEFINING ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY IN THE CORPORATE CONTEXT

As the basis of this research topic is concerned with environmental sustainability, it is important to have a clear understanding of what environmental sustainability is as a concept as well as how it is relevant in the corporate context. A widely accepted definition of sustainability comes from The Brundtland Report (1987), which was commissioned by the United Nations through the World Commission on Environment and Development. According to The Brundtland Report, "sustainable development" refers to humanity meeting their needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987). Kuhlman and Farrington (2010) expand on the definition of sustainable development, specifically focusing in the environmental context, where they highlight the conflict

between the desires of mankind to lead a good life today with the limitations that nature imposes on us.

Historically, the term sustainability was first used in forestry where it referred to “never harvesting more than what the forest yields in new growth” (Kuhlman & Farrington, 2010). Another author that focuses on this exhaustibility of resources is Hotelling (1931), where his research explores the idea of the infinite amount of time available to mankind coupled with limited resources, where the amount of resources that can be gathered is limited to the amount that is left over from the preceding period.

Daily and Ehrlich (1992) concur with this concept of sustainability, regarding where the population is at or below carrying capacity. Where carrying capacity refers to the maximum size of the population that an area is able to support currently without hindering the ability of the same area to support the same population in the future (Roughgarden, 1979). Simply, it is the amount of renewable resources that an area and population is able to support (Roughgarden, 1979).

For the purposes of this research paper, sustainability will be confined to the environmental context, where the population is able to fulfill their current needs without compromising the future of the environment by depleting the earth’s limited resources in the present.

To bring this idea of sustainability back to the research topic at hand, it is necessary to determine how sustainability affects companies and its role in the corporate context.

From a business perspective, sustainability means achieving financial objectives without sacrificing environmental values (Khalili, 2011). Additionally, the goal of businesses should be to provide their stakeholders with a high quality of life presently as well as for future generations, whilst preserving the resources that are constrained by the environment (Khalili, 2011).

Elkington (1994) coined the concept of the triple bottom line. Expanding on the concept of profit being the bottom line for companies, the triple bottom line includes social and environmental aspects as well. The World Bank (n.d.) also identified these three pillars that contribute to sustainable development, namely “economic growth, environmental stewardship, and social inclusion”. Meaning that not only do companies have a responsibility to maintain and grow profits for their stakeholders, but they also have a duty to address social and environmental issues.

Elkington (1994) also identified the trend in the business world of corporate environmentalism, where companies play a key role when it comes to sustainable development as they have the ability to materially impact the state of the environment.

This brings us to King IV (2016), a code of corporate conduct, which acts as a guideline for South African companies to become responsible corporate citizens. The foundation of King IV is “ethical leadership, the organization in society, corporate citizenship, sustainable development, stakeholder inclusivity, integrated thinking and integrated reporting” (The Institute of Directors in Southern Africa, 2016). Within South Africa, King IV acts as a guideline for companies to follow if they want to be responsible corporate citizens, where corporate citizenship refers to companies following ethical business practices towards their stakeholders (Bowen, 1953). These ethical business practices include taking the necessary precautions and actions to protect the environment such as pursuing environmental sustainable development.

For the purposes of this research, environmental sustainability in the corporate context refers to companies acting as responsible corporate citizens by following the practice of sustainable development within their strategic and operational decision making processes. Not only are they conscious of their profit making abilities, but also that they have a responsibility to protect the environment for future generations. Where companies understand and pursue sustainable development, this is referred to as corporate social responsibility (CSR) (Kim, Lee & Yang, 2015). A key element in ensuring and contributing to sustainable development, is to increase public awareness and educate others about various sustainable development issues (Varicak, Petravic & Wasserbauer, 2012).

It is also necessary to determine what actually constitutes environmental sustainable development actions in practice. Embree (2016) highlights some key actions that a company can take to ensure that their company pursues environmental sustainable development. These various actions include; investing in clean energy such as solar power, utilizing renewable resources such as recycling old materials as well as using recycled materials for production, ensuring company solutions are environmentally friendly and promoting an understanding of climate change and the importance of ensuring environmental sustainability within an organizations corporate culture (Embree, 2016).

Raineri and Paillé (2015) added to these key environmental management activities with activities like pollution prevention, waste management and resource minimization, using cleaner technology and eco-innovations and incorporating environmental training into their organization.

Thus a company’s environmental sustainability philosophy refers to their worldviews or values relating to their normative ideals concerning the importance of a sustainable environment (Loukola & Kyllönen, 2005). And thus their environmental sustainability policies refers to those policies that a company has in place to carry out said philosophy.

2.3. ENVIRONMENTAL VALUES AND BELIEFS

Environmental ethics is a discipline within philosophy that seeks to study and understand the moral relationship between human beings to the environment and its non-human contents (Brennan & Lo, 2016). In other words, it refers to the extent of the moral obligation that man has, to preserve and care for the non-human world (Gillaspy, n.d.). Environmental ethics questions the assumed superiority that humans have towards other species on earth (Brennan & Lo, 2016). Additionally, it also evaluates the rational arguments about assigning an intrinsic value to the “natural environment and its non-human contents” (Brennan & Lo, 2016). These questions and rethinkings have led to the perceptions that there is a serious environmental crisis, whereby the growth of the human population has threatened the viability of the planets limited support systems (Brennan & Lo, 2016). Such interactions cover; the depletion of the earth’s natural resources, loss of biodiversity, pollution, destruction of eco-systems and climate change (Gillaspy, n.d.). How this relates to personal environmental philosophies, is that this need for a development of environmental ethics has called for a “basic change of values” (Brennan & Lo, 2016). Environmental ethics help to explain “man's moral and ethical obligations toward the environment” (Gillaspy, n.d.). Thus when looking at environmental ethics, human values become a determining factor (Gillaspy, n.d.).

Stern et al. (1999) proposed, that the reason people support certain movements is directly linked to their values, beliefs and personal norms. As this research is looking at the alignment of employees’ personal values and beliefs in relation to the environmental philosophy of their company, it is necessary to determine what is meant by values and beliefs relating to environmental sustainability for employees.

According to Pohling et al. (2015), values refer to beliefs or desirable goals that guide a certain action. In other words, they are the things that are important to individuals, which they use to evaluate certain events, or decide if something is right or wrong (Gillaspy, n.d.). The levels of one’s values are different for everyone, because individuals do not place the same degree of importance for everything in their lives (Gillaspy, n.d.). Krueger and Grafman (2013) state that beliefs are a state of mind of the world that can be true or false. Additionally, a belief refers to the probability that a given object is related to an attribute (be that an object, concept or goal) (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). And, according to Rokeach (1969), values and beliefs are the fundamental factors that lead individuals to perform certain actions.

Environmental values and beliefs are those values and beliefs a person has about the relationship between humanity and nature (Raineri & Paillé, 2015). The environmental values and beliefs of a person are usually based on their feelings of a moral obligation towards protecting the environment

for future generations (Corraliza & Berenguer, 2000). Where a moral obligation in this case refers to the duty one has, as set by their values to act pro-environmentally.

For the purposes of this research, “environmental values and beliefs” refers to the state of mind that an individual has relating to the state of the environment as well as the importance they place on environmentally friendly behavior.

Thus it is important to explore employee’s personal environmental values and beliefs, as this will aid in understanding how employees perceive their company as an environmentally sustainable brand and if this is impacted by their own personal environmental values and beliefs.

2.4. EMPLOYEE PERCEPTIONS

As the basis of this research aims to understand what employees’ perceptions are of their company as an environmentally sustainable brand, it is therefore important to understand what is meant by employee perceptions.

The idea of perceptions was first defined by Judd (1909), who stated that perceptions are the present interpretations that one has, that allows one to make an analysis or interpretation where they are able to form a reaction. Judd (1909) also believes that these impressions and interpretations exist in the background of ones consciousness. This, then, explains why individuals have a tendency towards a certain reaction.

Evans and Davis (2014) do not disagree with this assessment of perceptions, however they simplify the meaning by pointing out that perceptions are simply one’s internalised feelings and cognitions that impact one’s behaviour.

If we relate this back to employee perceptions of their company, these are the meanings and values that employees base on their observations and evaluations of their company’s policies, events, leadership goals and reward systems (Kopelman et al.,1990). Therefore, based on how a company presents itself to their employees, the employees instinctively form a belief about the company.

From this we can deduce that employees’ perceptions of their company refers to their present interpretations and understandings of their company, and the meanings and values that they are able to assign to these interpretations. If we relate this back to the research topic, if employees’ perceptions of their company do not align with their brand’s desired identity, how would employees then be able to deliver on the values of an environmentally sustainable brand. It is thus important

to determine what is meant by brand identity, since we require an understanding of its alignment with employees' perceptions.

2.5. BRAND IDENTITY

One of the first authors to discuss the concept of brand identity was Kapferer (1986), who explained how the brand identity of a company refers to the outward expression of the brand that is created by the company, which fundamentally acts as the means by which a consumer recognizes how a brand differs from their competitor. Kapferer (1997) expanded on his evaluation of brand identity when he created the concept of the brand identity prism to better explain the different components of brand identity. The different components of Kapferer's 'brand identity prism' include the external elements of brand identity like the physique, the relationship and the reflection, as well as the internal elements, like the personality, the culture and the self-image (Kapferer, 1997). The physique is the brand's physical features. The relationship refers to the brand's relationship with consumers. The reflection refers to the stereotypical consumer of the brand. The personality specifies the brand character. The culture is the system of values and principles that regulates a brand's behaviour. Lastly, the self-image mirrors the target audience of the brand.

However, an alternate definition is posed by Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2009), where they refer to a company's brand identity as the set of brand associations that the company wishes to create and maintain with regards to their brand, where brand associations depict what the consumer understands about the brand. Similarly, Keller (2003) defines brand identity as the process of developing a mind-set that ensures recognition by customers through linking it with customer's requirements.

We are thus able to determine an appropriate definition for the purpose of this research, that defines brand identity as the set of brand associations that a company creates for their brand, that are aimed at helping consumers to better understand and recognize the brand in relation to their competitors. It is therefore also imperative that a company has a clear and non-conflicting brand identity as this assists the company in associating themselves with a healthy brand image (de Chernatony, 1999). For the purposes of this research study, the key brand identity association that will be explored is that of an environmentally sustainable brand.

2.6. THE ROLE OF EMPLOYEES IN AN ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE BRAND

A 'role' refers to an expected or prescribed behaviour that is associated with a particular status or position within a group or organisation (Business Dictionary, 2017). Similarly, according to Encyclopaedia Britannica (n.d), a 'role' refers to a behaviour that is expected of an individual, who occupies a certain status or social position. Thus a 'role' refers to the pattern of behaviour that

helps to identify and place an individual in society (Encyclopaedia Britannica, n.d). Therefore an employee's role refers to the expected or prescribed behaviour that is associated with their position in their company.

Harris and de Chernatony (2001) argue that an employee is no longer merely a part of the company, but that they also act as brand ambassadors for their company and are therefore vital in the depiction of the brands identity. This is also explained in the fact that a unique characteristic of the company is their emotional values, which are communicated through employees' interactions with different stakeholders (Harris & de Chernatony, 2001). Where a company is able to depict their environmental values clearly and effectively through their employees, they are able to differentiate themselves from their competitors, contributing to their unique brand identity (Harris & de Chernatony, 2001). According to Bahreini (2015), the customer's experience with a brand starts with the first contact an individual has with a brand, which is usually the company's employee. We can thus deduce that an opportunity lies with the employee to build a relationship with the customer.

Harris and de Chernatony (2001) identify how brand identity is concerned with how employees (and managers) make a brand unique and it is therefore important that the employees' values and behaviours are consistent with that of the company's environmental values in order to create a coherent brand identity. This unique identity is also an element of the success of a company's branding which occurs when employees behave in alignment with the brands identity.

Employees' relationship with consumers is inherently characterized by the values that form part of the brand's identity and therefore affect the brands relationship with consumers (Harris & de Chernatony, 2001). Additionally, employees need to be able to educate consumers about the advantages of pro environmentally friendly behaviour (Ahmad, 2015).

Thus, companies need to ensure that their employees act in compliance with the values of the company as this will determine how a company is perceived by their stakeholders through their brand identity (Harris & de Chernatony, 2001). Employees are therefore of vital importance to the company as their value alignment with the firm can either reinforce or undermine the brand identity that the company wishes to convey (Harris & de Chernatony, 2001).

Raineri and Paillé (2015) have found that employees' environmental commitment is based on their sense of attachment to environmental concerns, which is based on their personal environmental values and beliefs. In other words, where employee's personal environmental values and beliefs align with that of the company's environmental philosophy, they are more likely to behave according to the company's environmentally sustainable brand identity they are trying to create.

Raineri and Paillé (2015) assert that personal environmental beliefs influence pro-environmental behaviour in the workplace. Where an employee voluntarily engages in pro-environmental behaviour, they are contributing to their company's environmental efforts, thus allowing corporate greening to be a mutually reinforcing process (Raineri & Paillé, 2015). Thus where an employee's environmental values and beliefs align with their company's environmental sustainability philosophy they are able to contribute to the company's sustainable development practices thereby positively reinforcing the company's brand identity.

Where a company has a sufficient sustainable development philosophy, they need to communicate this to their employees. By doing so, they are able to influence the environmental values of their employees, which determine their behaviour within the organization. Thus it is important to determine what is meant by internal communication and further explore its role within an organisation.

2.7. IMPORTANCE OF INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

Internal communication influences the brand knowledge, attitudes and behaviours of employees by incorporating training and development programmes as well as internal communication tools such as daily briefing, newsletters and notice boards (Punjaisri & Wilson, 2007). To simplify, internal communications refers to the formal and informal communications that take place internally in all the different levels within an organisation (Chmielecki, 2015).

According to Zaumane (2016), internal communication is considered to be a tool that allows employees and management to have a mutual understanding about what is expected from them. Punjaisri and Wilson (2007) add to this concept by identifying how internal communication within an organization directly influences not only the extent of an employee's performance of their role in relation to their brands identity, but also that internal communication directly influences the attitudes that an employee has toward their brand, which ultimately affects their performance.

In terms of internal communication, Raineri and Paillé, (2015) have found that employees are more likely to show interest or involve themselves in the pro-environmental behaviours of the company when the company communicates a clear message about the need to protect the environment. Quirke (2008) also highlights the importance of internal communication as this determines employee's behaviour, which can affect the company's reputation and therefore the brand identity they wish to create.

A troublesome problem is thus identified by Quirke (2008), who explains that the reputation of a company is vulnerable to employees' behaviour. Quirke (2008) therefore highlights the need for effective and efficient communication with employees. Punjaisri and Wilson (2007) reinforce this idea by identifying how the success of internal communication is largely dependant on employees' attitudes and behaviours in relation to delivering the brand's identity to external stakeholders and that effective internal communication will help to align the behaviour of employees with their brand's values.

Good internal communication within an organisation is consistent with good corporate branding, where the success of internal branding is dependent on employees' identification with the brand environmental values that are communicated to them, which allow them to effectively deliver on the brand's identity (Punjaisri & Wilson, 2007). Additionally, good internal communication with regards to environmental sustainability, allows employees to clearly understand the purpose of the organization, and they are thus able to effectively deliver on the brand's environmental sustainability, which also leads to a more coherent brand identity (Punjaisri & Wilson, 2007). Furthermore, a key to brand success is the link between strong internal branding and communication and the behaviour of employees (de Chernatony & Cottam, 2008).

By incorporating a corporate environmental policy, organizations are ultimately able to build a sense of employee commitment to environmental sustainability, which is important, as employees are vital to a company's success (Rosenbluth & Peters, 2002).

Through internal communication companies are able to explain to their employees what their values and beliefs are in relation to environmental sustainable development, and therefore one can deduce how effective internal communications within an organisation directly influences behaviours of employees in relation to delivering their brands identity. This can also then positively effect the perceptions an employee has about their organisation.

2.8. THE BODY SHOP: CASE STUDY

As The Body Shop has been selected as a South African case study of an environmentally sustainable brand; it is important to explore precisely who they are, and what exactly their environmental philosophy and policies entail. Additionally it important to determine the value they place on their employees in delivering their brand's environmental philosophy and policies, as well as how they actually communicate their environmental sustainability philosophy with their employees.

The Body Shop was founded by Anita Roddick in 1976 in Brighton, England (The Body Shop, 2017). Currently The Body Shop has over 3000 stores in more than 60 countries, and specifically, in South Africa, they currently have 56 stores (The Body Shop, 2017; Jardim, 2017). The Body Shop's product offerings include; make-up, hair care and skincare (The Body Shop, 2017). They focus their efforts on producing their products ethically and sustainably, by following fair trade practices, sourcing ingredients ethically, and are strongly against animal testing (Schwartz, 2016; The Body Shop, 2017). As one of the earliest pioneers in 'green business', The Body Shop are constantly committed to exploring new ways of running their business in a more environmentally sustainable way (The Body Shop, 2015). The Body Shop's fundamental business philosophy is that their business can be a source for good, where their company manifesto is to "Enrich Not Exploit" (The Body Shop, 2017).

Their mission statement states, "As part of our Enrich Not Exploit™ Commitment, we've made it our mission to enrich our products, our people and our planet" (The Body Shop, 2017). Additionally, one of their five core values focuses on protecting the environment (The Body Shop, 2015). Part of their commitment to enrich the planet includes enriching the biodiversity where they grow their ingredients as well as actively campaigning for the support of areas that are of "outstanding natural value to the planet" that are under threat (The Body Shop, 2017).

The Body Shop are committed to reducing their environmental impact, where some of their past initiatives included: working with Greenpeace to promote renewable energy, using environmentally sustainable ingredients, incorporating sustainable shop-fitting materials and advocating for the protection of the Brazilian rainforest and the Amazon (The Body Shop, 2015). Additionally, they are constantly exploring new ways of reducing their energy consumption, incorporating more renewable energy into their business, researching and utilizing more sustainable materials for their products, packaging and stores, reducing their water consumption, reducing their waste generated, focusing on recycling where possible and incorporating more recyclable packaging, as well as planting and protecting more trees than they will use in their packaging (The Body Shop, 2015).

According to The Body Shop founder Anita Roddick, their environmental and ethical ideals "have to be shared by everyone connected with the business- staff, suppliers and customers", as they actually want to make a positive change and a sufficient impact on the environment locally, nationally and internationally (The Body Shop, 2015). The researcher conducted an interview with Carlos Jardim, the general manager of The Body Shop South Africa, and found that their three top stakeholders, in order of importance include their customers, employees and community trade partners (Jardim, 2017).

Where a stakeholder can be defined as “a person, group or organisation that has interest or concern in an organisation” (Business Dictionary, 2017). Additionally, stakeholders are any entities that can affect or be affected by an organization’s actions (Business Dictionary, 2017). Firstly their customers are their top stakeholders, as they believe that they share the same values as the brand, which helps them in turn, achieve their business and sustainability goals (Jardim, 2017). Additionally, customers have an interest in the business and require the brand to continue providing them with products and services at good price points, whilst doing the world good (Jardim, 2017). Secondly, employees, as they believe that their staff chose to work at The Body Shop because they find an affiliation with the brands values (Jardim, 2017). Additionally, their employees have other interests in the business as they look to build careers in order to develop within the organisation (Jardim, 2017). And thirdly, community trade partners, because community trade forms the heart of their business and they depend on their partners, as do their partners on them (Jardim, 2017). Additionally, they strive to give support and sustained trade to the people who need it the most, and thus, they source quality ingredients from expert producers around the world in order to enrich economically vulnerable communities (Jardim, 2017).

According to The Body Shop, in order to orientate employees to the brand’s environmental sustainability philosophy and policies, they focus on two key areas, namely, training and encouragement (Jardim, 2017). In addition to proving all training materials to employees in store and on their intranet, they also conduct in person training (Jardim, 2017). Employees first undergo induction training when they initially join The Body Shop as a once off training (or as they see fit), which covers the brands fundamental philosophies of “enrich not exploit, community trade, forever against animal testing, 100% vegetarian” (Jardim, 2017). Thereafter, training includes community trade training (which occurs twice a year), new product development training with community trade ingredients (which occurs every two months), as well as training that relates to their specific campaigns ie. animal testing (which are usually two-three times a year, depending on when the campaigns change) (Jardim, 2017).

The second area of orientating employees to the brand focuses on encouraging employees to do their own research about the brand, where they are encouraged to visit The Body Shop website to view the history of their campaigns and to see how they are tracking their sustainability goals (Jardim, 2017).

When looking for new employees to hire The Body Shop looks for passion, with a can do attitude and truthfulness (Jardim, 2017). “We hire the smile and train the skill” (Jardim, 2017). Additionally, they also look for relevant retail experience as the work is physically demanding and thus requires a resilient personality (Jardim, 2017).

And finally, The Body Shop believe their employees' role in carrying out their environmental philosophy and policies, to be acting in their own personal capacity to participate in charitable initiatives, due to their affiliation with the brand (Jardim, 2017). They do however, encourage their employees to take part in campaigns that are initiated by The Body Shop, such as gathering petition signatures, partaking in protest marches, or giving their time to assist with different causes (Jardim, 2017).

2.9. THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

A paradigm refers to a model of understanding that incorporates a set of theories and ideas, in other words a conceptual framework, that acts as a model to understand and provide solutions for a particular problem that is under investigation, through particular traditions of scientific research (Kuhn, 1996). In other words, it is the method of research that will dictate the content of the research paper.

A constructivist approach in research allows for a better understanding of human experiences (Cohen & Manion, 1994) and the lived experiences from the point of view of those who live them day-to-day (Schwandt, Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). This research seeks to understand the day-to-day lived experiences of employees that inform their perceptions of their company as an environmentally sustainable brand.

Tubey, Rotich and Bengat (2015) explain how a constructivist paradigm is naturalistic because it studies how real-world situations unfold naturally without manipulating the situation. This research aims to do just that, by understanding the real-world situation of how employees' perceptions of their company as an environmentally sustainable brand, can influence their abilities to deliver the values of their company's environmental sustainability philosophy, where the situation will also not be manipulated by the researcher.

Schwandt, Denzin and Lincoln (1994) identify how, from a constructivist perspective, the world is composed of facts where the goal of research is to identify what the world is really like, by developing a pattern of meaning throughout the research process (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). We can therefore deduce that constructivist research aims to understand what is happening or how a phenomenon came to be, and by understanding this, one is able to establish a pattern for the behaviour of a group of individuals. This research aims to understand employees' perceptions of their company as an environmentally sustainable brand and through this, we are able to establish a pattern that could determine employee behaviour based on their personal value alignment with their company's environmental sustainability philosophy.

Additionally, by establishing a pattern of behaviour that helps to determine certain outcomes, one is able to allude to possible changes that could be used to address a need to change a certain outcome (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis & Bezuidenhout, 2014).

Based on this constructivist paradigm, an appropriate research tradition is that of a cybernetics or phenomenological tradition. Littlejohn and Foss (2011) explain the phenomenological tradition as the study of the interpretations of individuals that they come to understand through their personal experiences. Although this theory may assist in studying employee perceptions of their company, that is not simply all this research is aiming to ascertain.

Littlejohn and Foss (2011) explain that the basis of cybernetics is the idea of a system, where a system is components that interact with one another. These interactions help form their relationship with one another. The use of a cybernetic tradition will help to understand the relationship between employees' perceptions of their company as an environmentally sustainable brand and thus how this affects their behaviours that are reflected in the brand identity of the company.

By using cybernetics and not simply a phenomenological tradition, the research is able to not only understand the employee perceptions of their company as an environmentally sustainable brand, but why these perceptions are the way that they are. By understanding how the company interacts with their employees, or the relationship between the personal environmental values and beliefs of employees and their company's sustainable development philosophy, cybernetics will thus help to understand the reasons for the specific perceptions of employees.

When looking at individual's perceptions of an environmentally sustainable brand, a common meta-theory that is used is the social identity theory, which is evident in the following studies (Evans & Davis, 2014; Tascioglu, 2014; Shirazi, Lorestani & Mazidi, 2013). Social identity theory looks at how individuals define themselves in relation to a group where their concept of self also comes from this particular group (Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

However this research is looking to ascertain an underlying understanding of the actions taken by employees in terms of their perception's of their company as an environmentally sustainable brand and not simply looking at how employees define themselves in relation to whether they have environmental values or not, and therefore the use of the social identity theory would be inappropriate to evaluate this research.

The meta-theory that has been selected to conceptualize the cybernetic tradition is that of the reasoned-action theory, as the theory of reasoned action on the other hand looks at this underlying understanding of the relationships between attitudes, intentions and behaviours (Fishbein, 1967).

Fishbein (1963) describes the reasoned action theory as follows; an individual holds a certain belief about an object that they relate to the various attributes of this object, these associations of the objects attributes have an implicit response which is called an attitude, therefore the responses are a result of that attitude of the given object, and these responses are thus used to predict future responses based on the same attitudes. Fishbein (1963:29) also highlights that a person's attitude towards an object is based on the beliefs they hold in respect of that object and therefore their responses are subject to those beliefs.

Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) elaborate on this theory by explaining that a behaviour results from a certain behavioural intention. This behavioural intention is based on two aspects; either a person's attitude towards a behaviour and their subjective norms, in other words, the beliefs that one has about how they think others would like them to behave (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). Where the attitude is also formed or elicited by a given stimulus (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975:26). The behaviour is thus better predicted when there is an understanding of the attitude towards a behaviour.



Figure 2.1. Reasoned Action Theory, Source: Fishbein and Ajzen (1975).

The reasoned action theory explained in detail:

Step 1: *Stimulus condition*- this refers to an object or event that elicits a behavioural response (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975:28). In other words, a person is exposed to something that results in a certain response from them.

Step 2: *Beliefs and evaluations*- this refers to the probability that a given object is related to a specific attribute (ie. another concept, object or goal) (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975:28). In other words, what they believe about a certain object, and their evaluations thereof.

And *normative beliefs or motivation to comply* – this refers to how others perceive ones actions, which influences and motivations one to perform said actions (Nisson & Earl, 2016).

Step 3: *Attitude*- a person's attitude is based on his beliefs and his evaluated responses associated with those beliefs (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975:29). In other words, the given stimulus object elicits a variety of responses (attitudes) based on specific characteristics, attributes or qualities of the object (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975:28).

And *subjective norm*- The influence that other people have on the persons attitudes or behaviours (Nisson & Earl, 2016). In other words, this refers to the social pressures to perform an expected behaviour (Nisson & Earl, 2016).

Step 4: *Behavioural intention* – refer to the perceived likelihood of performing a certain behaviour (Nisson & Earl, 2016).

For the purposes of this research, the reasoned action theory will be used to understand employee perceptions of their company as an environmentally sustainable brand, and thus their 'intended behaviour', by exploring the reasons for these perceptions.

This research is seeking to understand the reasons for employee perceptions (thus the stimulus conditions that create either beliefs and evaluations, or normative beliefs and motivations to comply), as well as to understand what employees believe their role to be in carrying out their company's environmental philosophy (thus the intended behaviour). However, this study is not exploring employees' actual behaviours, and thus identifying employees' actual behaviour as a result of their intended behaviour is out of the scope of this research study. Rather than predicting employee behaviour, it seeks to understand the reasons that would lead to employees intended behaviour, in other words, their perceptions that contribute to their believed role in carrying out their company's environmental philosophy.

Thus for the purposes of this study, the reasoned action theory will be used to explore how a given stimulus (ie. employees' personal environmental values and beliefs, or internal communications from their employer), allow them to form beliefs and evaluations or motivations to comply (about their company's environmental sustainability, or how they perceive environmental sustainability as influenced by their company's own philosophy and thus expectations (about their role in delivering this philosophy) from their employees), which creates their attitude or a subjective norm (their perceptions about their company's environmental sustainability, or what is expected from them

within their company), which thus in turn, creates employees behavioural intention (thus how they intend to act or perceive their role to be in delivering their company's environmental philosophy).

The reasoned action theory will thus be used to explain how employee perceptions are formed (which lead to them to certain behavioural intentions), based on certain stimulus, beliefs and evaluations and thus attitudes (their own personal environmental values and beliefs), as well as normative beliefs and thus subjective norms (how their company's own environmental philosophy influences them and their expected role in delivering this philosophy), which leads them to their intended behaviour (their actual intention of delivering their company's environmental philosophy).

Thus the questions that were asked to employees when conducting the data collection process, have incorporated these factors in order to explore the research topic of employee perceptions of their company's environmental sustainability philosophy, how this has been communicated to them, what they believe their role to be in carrying out this philosophy, and how their own personal environmental philosophy aligns with that of their company.

Armitage and Conner (2001) criticize reasoned action theory as a means to predict behaviour as they claim that the theory of reasoned action only explains 39% of the changes in behavioural intentions and 27% of changes in actual intention. However, this is only the view of these specific authors, and the reasoned action theory has been used successfully in order to predict and explain behaviours and intentions (Glanz, Rimer & Viswanath, 2008) and is therefore still a useful theory. In relation to this research, the actions and behaviours of employees within their company can be reasoned based on their relationship with their employer, where this also includes their perceptions of their company. Through qualitative surveys with employees, the research will use the reasoned action theory to ascertain and elaborate on the reasons behind intended behaviours.

The reasoned action theory is also still appropriate, as the research is not looking to predict employee behaviour but rather identify a pattern of intended behaviour through understanding the underlying reasons for their perceptions of their company as a sustainable brand. The ability to predict employee behaviour may arise as a by-product of using the reasoned action theory in this research to understand employee behaviours, but it is not the aim of this research.

Another criticism of this theory states that attitudes form part of the main ideas of the reasoned action theory, and it is evident that there is a problem in measuring and defining attitudes, which therefore suggests that the reasoned action theory does not contribute to the ability to predict behavior (Ackermann & Palmer, 2014).

However, this criticism is not relevant to this research, as the research is not trying to ascertain a certain measurement for employee attitudes, but rather it is focused on understanding the reasons for these attitudes. And again this research is not trying to predict employee behaviours based on their attitudes, but rather, identify a pattern in their intended behaviour that will allow one to understand the reasons for their actions.

For the purposes of this research, the reasoned action theory will aid in understanding the intended behaviours of employees by ascertaining their perceptions of their company as a sustainable brand. By identifying their attitude towards their company as a sustainable brand and their values and beliefs that determine this attitude, the research will be able to identify a pattern in employee responses that lead to their intended behaviours.

2.10. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, based on a review of the current literature, key concepts were explained in order to provide clear meanings and understandings of the dynamics that will be discussed in relation to this research topic. The key concepts included; environmental sustainability, environmental values and beliefs, the role of employees within an environmentally sustainable brand, internal communications, employee perceptions and brand identity. Thus the literature would suggest that that in order effectively deliver on an environmentally sustainable brand identity, employees' personal values and beliefs regarding environmental sustainability should align with that of their company. Additionally, employees play an important role within an organisation in delivering their environmentally sustainable brand identity, as they are an important element of how consumers, as well as other stakeholders perceive the brand, and can thus have a material impact on the success of the organisation as a whole. Therefore, internal communications are vitally important, as they provide employees with knowledge about the brand, in addition to providing employees with an understanding about what is expected from them. Within the research to come, the reasoned action theory will be used as a framework in order to evaluate the responses from the qualitative questionnaires with employees and thus to identify patterns in employee behaviours.

To conclude, Evans and Davis (2014) have identified how employee behaviours are affected by their personal perceptions of their company as a sustainable brand. Consequently if employees' values don't align with that of their company or if the company's sustainable values are not effectively communicated by the company to their employees, how are employees able to deliver on the values of a sustainable brand. Additionally, if employees' behaviours depicted by their relationships with customers are in conflict with the values of their sustainable brand, how are they then able to deliver a coherent brand identity? Where a coherent brand identity will allow

consumers to have a clear understanding of the brand and associate a healthy brand performance with the company.

This research thus seeks to understand the perceptions of employees surrounding the environmental sustainability within their company. Additionally, this research seeks to determine whether employees' personal environmental values and beliefs align with the organization's sustainable philosophy. And where employees' personal environmental values and beliefs align with that of their company, they are able to effectively promote their company's environmental brand values and behave accordingly, which ultimately impacts the brand identity of the company.

The following chapter, Chapter 3, will present the methodology that will be used to conduct this research study.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1. INTRODUCTION

Environmental sustainable development has become a key responsibility for companies to pursue in order to contribute to effectively mitigating the impact of environmental issues. However in order to effectively pursue environmental sustainable development, this needs to be incorporated throughout an organisation. Employees are thus a vital part of an organisations environmental sustainability, as they are often the front line of communication between consumers and the brand, and thus it is imperative that they are able to effectively deliver on the environmentally sustainable brand identity of their organisation. Thus if employees don't share the same values as The Body Shop, or if they don't understand their company's environmental philosophy and policies, how are they then able to deliver on their company's brand identity of an environmentally sustainable brand. The following chapter will outline the methodological orientation, population and sampling, data collection method, data analysis method, reliability and trustworthiness as well as the ethical considerations that will be used to conduct this research study.

3.2. METHODOLOGICAL ORIENTATION

Research methodology refers to the way in which data is collected and analysed (Du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014, p.289). The research objective of this study is that of an exploratory nature, as exploratory research focuses on gaining a greater understanding of a phenomena in its own right (Maree, 2016:53). Additionally, as this paper utilizes a constructivist perspective, an exploratory approach is appropriate. This research paper seeks to explore employee perceptions of their company's environmental sustainability philosophy in order to understand the possible reasons behind these perceptions. Additionally, exploratory research is used to investigate new information about a phenomenon, as the knowledge that is currently available is limited (Maree, 2016:55). As previously discussed, there is a gap in current literature that deals with the phenomenon of employee perceptions of their company as an environmentally sustainable brand, and therefore this research aims to explore this topic in order to obtain a greater understanding about this phenomenon.

There are two types of research orientations, namely qualitative and quantitative research. Quantitative research is usually used to test hypothesis that are derived from theories (Du Plooy et al., 2014:148). Additionally, a quantitative approach uses numerical measurements to quantify a certain outcome (Creswell, 2005). Qualitative research on the other hand relies on words and meanings rather than numerical data and statistics to analyse data (Du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014:30; Maree, 2016:53).

A key aspect of a qualitative orientation is that it is used to gain an understanding of opinions or motivations behind a phenomenon (Du Plooy et al., 2014:148). Additionally, it focuses on extracting meaning from the data that is collected (Maree, 2016:53). Similarly, Strydom and Bezuidenhout (2014:175), explain that qualitative research focuses on the underlying meanings of the subjective experiences of a phenomenon. Additionally, a qualitative orientation allows the researcher to obtain more detailed data than that of a quantitative orientation (Strydom & Bezuidenhout, 2014:173).

The use of a qualitative orientation is therefore appropriate to this study for a number of reasons. Firstly, this research uses an exploratory objective, and an exploratory approach is appropriate when conducting qualitative research (Maree, 2016:54). This is because both seek to obtain a greater understanding and extract meanings about a phenomenon. Additionally, this research seeks a greater understanding surrounding employee perceptions and therefore more detailed data is necessary to obtain more valuable findings.

This research seeks to extract meaning from the data that will be collected from employees. Additionally, this research seeks to understand the underlying reasons and motivations behind employees' perceptions of their organization as an environmentally sustainable brand based on the subjective experiences of employees. Where these subjective experiences could be due to the internal communications by a company with their employees or the alignment of employees' personal environmental values with their organizations sustainable philosophy.

Additionally, qualitative research is used when determining individual's feelings and emotions, as it is not possible to quantify these feelings and emotions (Strydom & Bezuidenhout, 2014:173). As this research seeks to determine employees' perceptions, which are formed by their feelings and emotions, it is thus necessary to use qualitative research as these perceptions are not quantifiable and it is not operational to numerically measure one's perceptions, and therefore the use of a quantitative orientation would be inappropriate.

The use of a qualitative orientation is also suited to the selected paradigm of constructivism, as they both allow for better understandings of human experiences (Cohen & Manion, 1994).

3.3. POPULATION AND SAMPLING

A population in research refers to the group of people or things, who possess the same attributes or characteristics that the researcher is interested in (Davis, 2014:133). Therefore, based on the research topic of employees' perceptions of their company's environmental sustainable philosophy, an appropriate population would be employees of companies that pursue

environmental sustainable development, which operate within South Africa. This population is appropriate as it speaks directly to the subjects of the research topic and therefore provides a first-hand perspective of the employees' perceptions. However, to clarify this population, The Body Shop employees have been selected to act as a case study. The reason The Body Shop was chosen, was because of their commitment to environmental sustainability, which was evidenced in Chapter 2. To refine this population even further, as this study is specifically focusing on the research problem within the South African context, The Body Shop employees in Johannesburg is defined as the population.

As it is usually impossible to include the entire population in a research study due to resource constraints, it is necessary to make use of sampling (Maree, 2016:192). A sample refers to the individuals that the researcher is able to gain access to within the predetermined population (Davis, 2014:132). As this research is using a qualitative orientation, an appropriate sample percentage of the population, is 10%, and additionally, the sample was based on the nature of the research (Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2014). Additionally, as it is impracticable to target the entire population, due to resource constraints such as time and geographic spread of The Body Shop stores, the researcher had to rely on data obtained from a sample of the population, rather than the entire population as a whole (Davis, 2014). The entire population of The Body Shop employees in Johannesburg included 85 employees (Jardim, 2017).

There are two types of sampling methods, namely probability sampling and non-probability sampling (Maree, 2016:192). Probability sampling occurs when the sample is chosen completely at random where each unit within the population has an equal chance of being selected as part of the sample (Pascoe, 2014:136). Non-probability sampling on the other hand, occurs when it is impossible to determine who forms part of the entire population or when it is difficult to access the entire population (Pascoe, 2014:136). And therefore the sample would not be able to be chosen completely at random. Additionally, non-probability sampling is most often used in qualitative research (Pascoe, 2014:137). This research utilized non-probability sampling, as it was difficult to gain access to all of the employees of The Body Shop within Johannesburg.

The method of non-probability sampling that was used was volunteer sampling. Volunteer sampling refers to a sample of individuals that volunteer to participate in a study (Pascoe, 2014:144). This method is appropriate as it takes into account the ethical considerations of dealing with employees of companies. For instance, a company is not allowed to give out their employees' personal details without their consent. Thus in order to obtain a sample of The Body Shop employees in Johannesburg, and to ensure that the ethical consideration was taken into account, an email with the survey was sent out by the Human Resources Manager from The Body Shop to the entire population of employees to determine who would be interested in volunteering to form

part of the sample (see Appendix 4). The final sample included fourteen participants, and thus consisted of 16% of the population, which is greater than the appropriate percentage of 10%.

3.4. DATA COLLECTION METHOD

As this research follows a qualitative research orientation, an appropriate approach to data collection is obtrusive field research. This is where research is conducted in the natural environment of the phenomena (Strydom & Bezuidenhout, 2014:175). Based on this approach, the data collection method that has been selected is qualitative surveys.

A survey is a tool used to gather information from a sample in order to construct a description of the attributes of the sample's population (Jansen, 2010). A distinguishing feature of the qualitative survey is that it structures the data findings in order to match variations in variables with variations in other variables (Jansen, 2010). This matching of variables is appropriate to this study as this research follows a constructivist approach, which seeks to find patterns in the collected data.

Qualitative surveys do not seek to quantify the number of participants with certain characteristics, but rather they establish meanings for variations in certain characteristics of participants (Jansen, 2010). Thus this is an appropriate data collection method, as this research seeks to explore the meanings behind employees' perceptions.

Additionally, a qualitative survey is appropriate as this research seeks to explore and understand the underlying reasons as to what employees' perceptions are of their company and whether their environmental values and beliefs align with their company's environmental sustainability philosophy.

This research aims to identify patterns in employees behaviours based on their perceptions and attitudes towards their company as an environmentally sustainable brand. These perceptions of employees form the basis of the reasons of their actions and thus by conducting qualitative surveys with employees, one will be able to understand the perceptions of employees, and thus will be able to identify a pattern in their behaviour.

A key difference between a qualitative survey and a quantitative survey is that a qualitative survey uses open-ended questions rather than close-ended questions (Dudovskiy, n.d.). Open-ended questions do not suggest possible answers and participants are required to answer the questions in their own words (Business Dictionary, n.d.). An advantage of open-ended questions is that they may produce unexpected answers, which allows the research to be more original and valuable (Dudovskiy, n.d.). Additionally it allows participants to give honest and detailed answers (Maree,

2016:180). However, the disadvantage of using open-ended questions is that the results of the findings are difficult to analyse (Maree, 2016:180).

Exploratory research questions use open-ended rather than close-ended questions to obtain findings, as open-ended questions allow for a greater understanding of a phenomena (Maree, 2016:53). And thus the use of a qualitative survey is appropriate as it allows for a greater understanding of employee perceptions, which is what this research seeks to obtain. And additionally, it allows the research to construct information about employees, such as their perceptions and environmental values.

The questions in the survey were open-ended, and structured in a way that dealt with the theoretical foundation being the reasoned action theory of this research study. For instance, questions were asked to identify the attitudes employees had towards certain actions, in other words, their 'reasons'. As well as questions were asked to determine the behavioural intention and behaviours of employees, in other words, their 'actions'.

The wording and sequence of the questions within a qualitative survey were also important to take into consideration. The questions needed to be ordered in a way that did not confuse the participant and followed a logical order (Maree, 2016:179). The wording used avoided factors such as difficult language, ambiguity, double-barrelled questions, leading questions and questions that contain bias, as these factors may have led to participants interpreting the questions differently and therefore the data collected would become meaningless (Maree, 2016:179).

The data collection was done with sales advisors as well as store managers. By using employees from multiple hierarchal levels, this research was not limited to the perceptions of certain employees within The Body Shop, and thus the findings can be more reliably applied to The Body Shop as a whole.

The researcher initially wanted to use Google Forms as a platform to distribute the surveys as the research was supposed to be a national study within South Africa, however the Human Resources (HR) Manager from The Body Shop who was needed to send the link out to their employees (as to ensure that all ethical considerations were taken into account), was unable to open the link and suggested using a different platform, and in addition, according to the HR Manager, the actual stores of The Body Shop are unable to open online surveys because they work on an intranet service. The researcher then compiled the questions in a word document to be emailed to and sent back by The Body Shop employees. The HR Manager then sent the email to their employee database, where all employees were given the opportunity to voluntarily respond to the survey in just less than two weeks. However this method of data collection only resulted in three employees

completing the survey. As this was not a sufficient sample for the research study, the researcher then physically hand delivered thirty surveys to the employees of seven of The Body Shop stores in Johannesburg in order to provide the employees with another opportunity to volunteer to take part in the research study. The researcher visited their Norwood, Melrose Arch, Sandton, Rosebank, Hyde Park, Killarney and Eastgate stores. The researcher then collected the responses once the employees who elected to do so had completed them. This method yielded a further nineteen responses.

Thus in total, the sample consisted of twenty-two employees. In the data collection process, it was found that some participants did not answer question one and two of the survey in terms of their personal environmental values and beliefs, but rather focused on their personal values and beliefs in general. Thus because employees either misunderstood or misinterpreted what the questions were asking, eight survey responses had to be disregarded. Thus the final sample is fourteen employees.

Once the completed surveys were collected, the researcher then tabulated the responses as follows:

The Body Shop Employee Survey				
Collection Method:	Participant name:	Date received:	Experience:	Job Title:
Qualitative survey	Participant one	22/09/17	2 years	Sales Advisor
Qualitative survey	Participant two	27/09/17	6 years	Store Manager
Qualitative survey	Participant three	15/09/17	5 years	Store Manager
Qualitative survey	Participant four	15/09/17	1 year, 3 months	Sales Advisor
Qualitative survey	Participant five	15/09/17	3 years	Sales Advisor
Qualitative survey	Participant six	21/09/17	1 year	Sales Advisor
Qualitative survey	Participant seven	21/09/17	2 years	Store Manager
Qualitative survey	Participant eight	21/09/17	8 months	Sales Advisor
Qualitative survey	Participant nine	21/09/17	7 years	Store Manager

Qualitative survey	Participant ten	21/09/17	2 years	Sales Advisor
Qualitative survey	Participant eleven	22/09/17	-	-
Qualitative survey	Participant twelve	22/09/17	-	-
Qualitative survey	Participant thirteen	25/08/17	1 year, 9 months	Sales Advisor
Qualitative survey	Participant fourteen	12/08/17	8 months	Sales Advisor

Table 3.1 The Body Shop employee survey record

In order to ensure that the research was reliable, before the research was conducted with the sample of participants, the researcher conducted pre-testing and pilot testing. The pre-testing was conducted with the researcher's supervisor in order to test the composition of the qualitative survey. Once it had been accepted, the researcher conducted a pilot test by sending the questions to the HR Manager to evaluate the questions and to ensure that the qualitative survey would actually test what the researcher set out to test and that the questions are worded and structured correctly, thus ensuring that the research method would not malfunction later on in the research process. Based on this pilot test, it was suggested that question three and question seven be reworded, as they were unclear. See appendix 1 for the original wordings of those two questions, and appendix 2 for the final questions.

3.5. DATA ANALYSIS METHOD

The aim of analysing data in a qualitative data analysis is to interpret and examine meaningful and symbolic content (Maree, 2016:109). It therefore establishes how participants determine a meaning for a given phenomena by analysing their perceptions, attitudes, understandings, values, feelings and experiences of the phenomena (Maree, 2016:109). As this research is taking a qualitative orientation, an appropriate method to analyse the data is a thematic content analysis. Content analysis is a technique that compresses collected data into smaller content categories that are based on specific rules of coding, in order to sift through large volumes of data (Maree, 2016:109). A thematic content analysis adds an additional element, where it also analyses the latent meanings of the collected data (Maree, 2016:112). The advantage of this is that it aids in understanding the lived experiences of participants by understanding the underlying meanings behind their words and actions (Maree, 2016:111).

The Huberman and Miles (1994) framework for qualitative data analysis will be used, as it allows the researcher to evaluate the answers of the employees in the surveys as well as the underlying

meanings behind these answers, and thus it will provide the researcher with the most informative and useful answers (Miles, Huberman & Saldaña, 2014).

The Huberman and Miles framework sets out three steps to analyse the data, namely data reduction, data display and data interpretation (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Data reduction refers to the process of taking the total amount of data collected and reducing and organising it into only relevant data (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In order to organize the data that was collected, this research used thematic coding. A code refers to a label that assigns meaning to information (Miles & Huberman, 1994:56). And thematic coding refers to the process of reducing information into meaningful analytical units (Maree, 2016:116). Additionally, according to Bezuidenhout and Cronje (2014:237), it refers to the breaking down of text and ordering it into meaningful concepts or categories. The researcher utilized inductive analysis to create the organized categories, as inductive analysis allows for themes to emerge naturally as a result of evaluating the research (Thomas, 2006). The researcher did not use a theoretical model with re-determined categories, but rather let the categories emerge based on the research itself, and thus the use of inductive analysis was appropriate.

The researcher developed five categories to organize the data into meaningful sections namely, employees' personal environmental philosophies, employees' perceived role in carrying out their company's environmental philosophy, employees' understanding of The Body Shop's environmental sustainability philosophy and policies, internal communication regarding environmental sustainability and employee perceptions about the role of The Body Shop in environmental sustainability. Within each category, coding was used to identify certain themes in the collected survey responses, in order to present the data in a more meaningful and simplified manner.

When developing the code, certain considerations were taken into account, including that the codes were valid and accurately reflected what was being researched, mutually exclusive with no overlap in meaning and exhaustive while still including only relevant data (Bezuidenhout & Cronje, 2014:239).

The data was then displayed in a format that depicted the coding and categories of the data (Miles & Huberman, 1994). This research thus utilized tables and pie charts in order to organize the data categories, as it allowed the researcher to clearly present the various themes that were identified in each category.

And finally, the data was interpreted in order to develop conclusions based on the patterns of findings identified in the data that was collected from the employee participants (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

3.6. RELIABILITY AND TRUSTWORTHINESS

Reliability refers to the ability of the same method of research to generate the same result if it were to be repeated by a different researcher (Koonin, 2014:257). In other words, it refers to the extent that the research method is repeatable and consistent (Maree, 2016:238). Reliability is concerned with the credibility of the research findings (Welman et al., 2005:145). Additionally, it is also concerned about the probability that the research methods will not malfunction (Welman et al., 2005:145). And therefore the reliability of this research study was considered throughout the research process.

In order to enhance the reliability of this research, pre-testing and pilot testing took place before the data collection begins. A pre-test was conducted with a supervisor and a pilot test was conducted with the HR manager from The Body Shop. These tests were used to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the survey by taking into consideration the words and sequence of the questions as previously discussed. Based on the above tests, variations in the questions were thus applied, as outlined above, in order to ensure that the questions were reliable.

Trustworthiness is also a very important aspect to consider when conducting qualitative research (Koonin, 2014:258). In order to ensure trustworthiness within a study, it should incorporate four aspects, namely; credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Koonin, 2014:258).

Credibility refers to the accuracy of the interpretation of the data that was obtained from the participants (Koonin, 2014:258). Credibility also relates to the establishment of believability and truth of the research findings (Bryman, 2012:390). Credibility is also described as the method of internal validity (Koonin, 2014:258). In order to ensure credibility, the survey posed to participants incorporated no leading, misleading, double-barreled or unclear questions. And additionally, the surveys were accurately recorded.

Transferability refers to the ability of the findings to be applied to a similar situation and will provide similar results (Koonin, 2014:258). Therefore it refers to the external validity and degree to which the results can be applied outside a specific research study (Koonin, 2014:259). Qualitative research usually can't be generalized to a population (Creswell, 1994). In this study, it was hard to ensure transferability, as the findings were based on The Body Shop employee responses, and thus was limited to a specific brand and a specific population. Additionally, due to the qualitative

nature of this research study, it will be hard to replicate peoples feeling and emotions in a future study.

Dependability refers to reliability of the process of integrating the data collected, data analyzed and the data findings (Koonin, 2014:259). Additionally, dependability uses an auditing approach to ensure reliability of the research process (Bryman, 2012:392). The researcher ensured dependability by recording each phase of the process as well as auditing each phase as the research progressed.

Confirmability refers to how well the findings of the researcher are supported by the data that has been collected (Koonin, 2014:259). In order to ensure confirmability, accurate logs were kept of all the data that was collected and additionally it will be kept after the duration of the research study has ended so that collected data can be verified if the need arises. Additionally, to ensure confirmability, participant employees were used on a voluntary basis to ensure that the data collected was objective.

3.7. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical considerations are very important when conducting research as they influence the nature and standard for the behaviour and attitude of the study (Maree, 2016). The ethical considerations must be taken into account at various levels, and in this case, at the participant and researcher level (Louw, 2014:263).

Firstly, the researcher ensured that all participants in the study gave informed consent. This ensures that the participants are aware that they are taking part in a study and that they know what the research study entails (Louw, 2014:264). The researcher did this by including a paragraph above the survey questions explaining what the study entailed, and that by completing the survey; employees were consenting to take part in the study (see Appendix 3).

The researcher did not provide any incentives to the participants to take part in the study and did not cause any harm or deception to the participants, as this could lead to potentially skewed research findings (Louw, 2014:265).

The researcher also ensured that where participants' elected their responses to be kept confidential or anonymous, this was strictly adhered to and sensitive information was also dealt with caution (Louw, 2014:267). The researcher asked employees to provide their duration of employment as well as their job title, however, the researcher made it clear to participants that this was not a requirement, in case participants did not feel comfortable including this information, as it

could potentially be traced back to them. Thus two employees elected to not provide this information.

The researcher also provided participants with the opportunity to withdraw from the study at any time if they felt uncomfortable in continuing to take part in the research study. This was done by including a paragraph stating that employees could opt out of the survey at any time should they have felt uncomfortable with the questions (see Appendix 3). As the honesty of employees may have been a limitation to the study, as participants knew that they were being assessed on their understanding of their work environment, and the study was being done with consent from The Body Shop, the researcher emphasized that there were no right or wrong answers (see appendix 3).

The researcher also ensured ethical considerations were met by first approaching the Human Resources (HR) manager from The Body Shop, to see if they would be interested in participating in the study. The researcher was then able to obtain formal consent from The Body Shop to conduct the study with their employees (see Appendix 4) (Maree, 2016:44). Additionally, the researcher ensured that the study was done on a voluntary basis, and thus employees were given the option to take part in the study or not.

The researcher also ensured ethics throughout the research process. These considerations included: The research findings were not skewed, nor was any information falsified or misused. The researcher did not use any inappropriate research methods nor involve bias in any way during the duration of the study. The researcher also did not distort any results in any shape or form.

3.8. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this research paper sought to evaluate how employees perceive the environmental sustainability practices that are adopted by their company and to what extent these perceptions align with employees individual philosophical outlooks regarding the environment and corporate responsibility towards it. Ultimately, if employee perceptions of the brand don't match the company's desired brand identity, then how will the employees be able to deliver the values of an environmentally sustainable brand.

Due to the exploratory nature of this research study, a qualitative approach was thus appropriate. The non-probability method was used to sample the population of employees of The Body Shop employees in Johannesburg. Field research was conducted with these sampled participants using qualitative surveys as a tool to collect the data. Thereafter a thematic content analysis was used to evaluate the data using the Huberman and Miles approach, by firstly reducing the data, displaying

the data and then interpreting the data. Reliability was enhanced through a pre-test as well as a pilot test. Trustworthiness was enhanced throughout the research study, by ensuring four aspects, namely; credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Additionally, the researcher adhered to all the ethical considerations identified, including ensuring that all participants in the study gave informed consent, no incentives were offered to the participants to take part in the study, ensuring that where participants' elected their responses to be kept confidential or anonymous, this was strictly adhered to, participants were provided with the opportunity to withdraw from the study, formal consent from The Body Shop to conduct the study with their employees was obtained, as well as ethics were insured throughout the research process.

The following chapter, Chapter 4 will thus present the findings and interpretations as described in the above chapter.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATIONS

4.1. INTRODUCTION

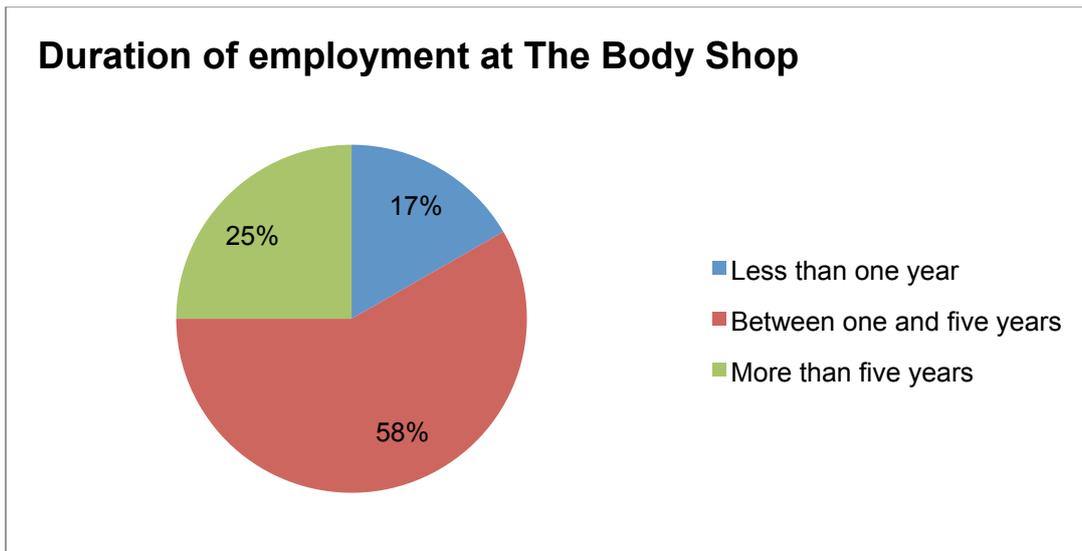
The following chapter will report on the research findings that were obtained from the qualitative surveys that were conducted with The Body Shop employees, as well as provide interpretations based on these findings. The qualitative surveys were utilised in order to explore employee perceptions of their company as an environmentally sustainable brand. Part of this exploration focused on finding out whether employees' personal environmental values aligned with that of The Body Shop, how internal communications are utilised by The Body Shop to orientate their employees to the brands environmental philosophy as well as what employees felt their role to be in carrying out The Body Shops environmental philosophy. Thus if employees don't share the same values as The Body Shop, or if they don't understand their company's environmental philosophy and policies, how are they then able to deliver on their company's brand identity of an environmentally sustainable brand. The following chapter utilised a thematic content analysis to organise and interpret the data that was collected from the employees. These data findings will firstly be presented in tables and graphs based on themes that were identified during the coding process that was used to organise the raw data. These findings will then be analysed in conjunction with the relevant literature as discussed in Chapter 2, in order to derive interpretations that will form the basis of the answers of the research questions, which were proposed in Chapter 1. Additionally, the reasoned action theory will be used as a basis for the interpretation of the research findings.

The following chapter will firstly present the biographical information about the employee participants, and thereafter the employee survey responses have been presented in five categories in order to interpret the findings. There are five categories which cover, employees' personal environmental philosophies, employees' perceived role in carrying out their company's environmental philosophy, employees' understanding of The Body Shop's environmental sustainability philosophy and policies, internal communication regarding environmental sustainability and employee perceptions about the role of The Body Shop in environmental sustainability.

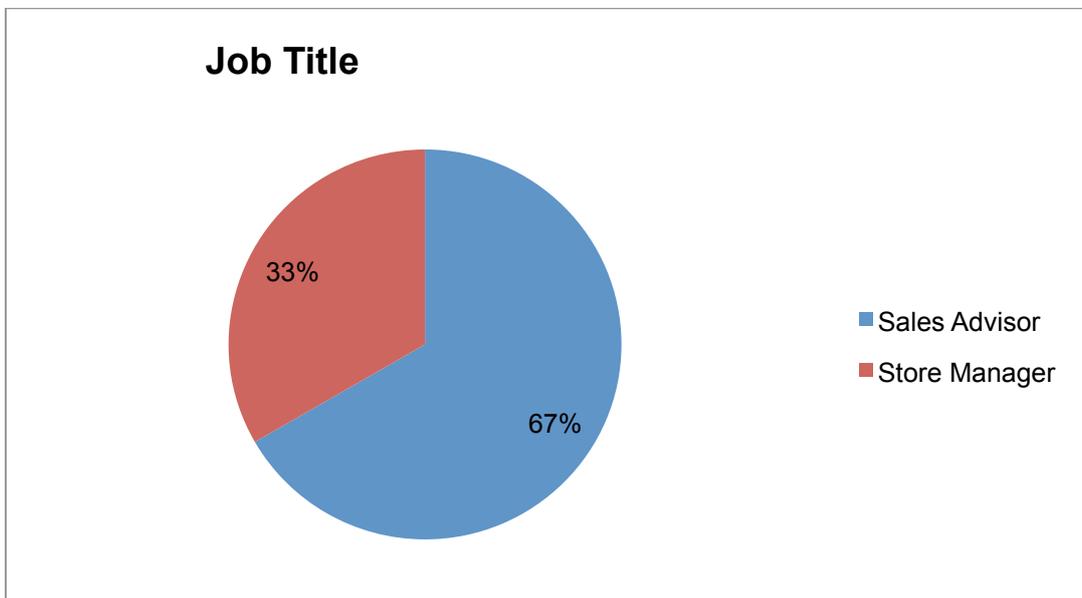
4.2. BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Employees were first asked to give some personal details about their current employment at The Body Shop. The data is presented below in two pie charts. The questions asked employees for their duration of employment as well as job title. These questions were asked in order to identify whether employees' survey answers depended on their job titles or duration of employment, in

order to identify possible commonalities in their responses. It is important to note however, that two employees elected to not provide this information as their responses for these two questions were left blank. It was found that the majority of employees (at 58%) have been with The Body Shop between one and five years, which should give them sufficient time to understand The Body Shop's environmental philosophy and practices. Additionally, the majority of employees are sales advisors rather than store managers, which makes sense, as the ratio of sales advisors to store managers is much higher as there is only one manager per store, and multiple sales advisors per store.



Pie chart 4.1 Duration of employment at The Body Shop



Pie chart 4.2 Job title held at The Body Shop

As the biographic information about employee participants has now been discussed, next it is important to actually present and interpret the findings from the survey responses in conjunction

with the relevant literature. The first category that will be discussed is employees' personal environmental philosophies.

4.3. EMPLOYEES' PERSONAL ENVIRONMENTAL PHILOSOPHIES

The following category will discuss employees' personal environmental philosophies, which includes their personal values and beliefs relating to the environment and the actions that they take to enact these values in practice, as well as to what extent they believe they are making a significant difference in protecting the environment. Environmental values and beliefs refer to those values and beliefs a person has about the relationship between humanity and nature (Raineri & Paillé, 2015). Where values refer to the beliefs that one has that guide a certain action, and beliefs refer to the state of mind that one holds about the world (Krueger & Grafman, 2013; Pohling et al., 2015). Thus an operational definition has been presented as the beliefs and state of mind employees hold about humanity's responsibility to nature and the importance they place on environmentally friendly behavior. It can also be described as the extent to which one places an importance on preserving and caring for the non-human world (Gillaspy, n.d.). The following findings were based on survey responses from questions one, two, three and four from section B of the survey, which asked employees to describe their environmental values and beliefs, how they incorporate those values into their lives, and if they believe in their personal capacity, they are making a significant difference in protecting the environment. The data that was collected from the qualitative surveys is presented in a table below, which contained the coded participants' responses about employees' personal environmental philosophies into three identified themes, namely the ideas of protection, passion and knowledge.

Employees personal environmental philosophies			
Theme:	Operational Definition:	Frequency:	Verbatim Quote:
Protection	The act of protecting the environment from harm	7/14	"to save and protect the environment" - Participant 13
Passion	Feeling strongly about the importance of nature	6/14	"...believe in commitment" – Participant 3
Knowledge	Information acquired about the importance of the environment	5/14	"knowledgeable because I try as much to self-educate about environmental

			matters” – Participant 14
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Table 4.1 Employees’ personal environmental philosophies

4.3.1. Protection

An operational definition has been posed as ‘the act of protecting the environment from harm’. According to Brennan and Lo (2016), man’s obligation to preserve the environment and its non-human contents is a key debate in which environmental ethics are based around. Additionally, environmental values and beliefs are based on an individuals feeling towards protecting the environment for future generations (Corraliza & Berenguer, 2000). Environmental ethics questions the assumed superiority that humans have towards other species on earth, in other words, non-human species (Brennan & Lo, 2016). Thus where an individual believes that humans and non-humans are equal, they would hold strong pro-environmental values.

Seven out of the fourteen The Body Shop employees described how their personal environmental philosophy incorporated this idea of protecting the environment. Words such as “protect” and “save” were used to describe Participant 9’s environmental values. Additionally, Participant 6 also used the word “protect”. How these employees enact these pro-environmental values into their lives, focuses on the notion of “re-duce, re-use, re-cycle”, “...to save and protect the environment” as explained by Participant 13. Participant 9 describes how he/she enacts his/her environmental values, by “using older shopping bags, save water by taking a shower instead of bathing...recycling plastic and paper”. Additionally, Participant 10 explains, “I separate our trash at home...for recycling”. Participant 6 describes his/her personal environmental philosophy as “to protect environment and not just people who live in it”.

It is also important to note that all fourteen employees believe that they are making a significant impact in their personal capacity, in protecting the environment. However, the majority of participants did not elaborate on why they believed this to be so. Where some employees did elaborate, three reinforced their pro-environmental action, and only one employee, Participant 14, mentioned, “change begins with yourself. I do believe the small act of making people aware and sharing environmentally-aware knowledge benefits the environment”.

Thus based on literature’s explanations of what constitutes holding strong environmental values, being one who believes in protecting the environment or that humans are not superior to other species on earth, it can be deduced that these seven employees hold strong environmental values, which therefore corroborates the literature.

4.3.2. Passion

Within the context of the findings, 'passion' can be referred to as having strong feelings about the importance of nature. Environmental ethics discusses man's moral and ethical obligations towards the environment (Gillaspy, n.d.). Thus the extent to which it is believed that man has a moral obligation to protect the environment, determines whether someone holds strong pro-environmental values (Gillaspy, n.d.). In other words, where an individual believes that they have a responsibility to protect the environment, they would hold strong pro-environmental values. Although it is important to note, that not everyone will place the same degree of importance in everything in their lives, and thus the level of ones environmental values would be different for everyone (Gillaspy, n.d.).

Six out of the fourteen employees mentioned feeling passionate about the environment. For example, Participant 1 describes his/her values as "strong, bold, passionate" and "I feel strongly...(about saving the environment)". Participant 14 also explained his/her environmental values as "conscious" and "unconventional", because "I believe I make a conscious effort to support the environment, unconventional because the society and people I'm surrounded by do not share the same belief", where he/she also explained that he/she is "trying to live as close to an environmentally friendly lifestyle as possible". It is important to note that two employees, Participants 11 and 12, did not show any indication of having strong environmental values and beliefs as they merely stated that they value "nature" but were unable to elaborate on this idea and simply stated "those are the top priorities to our company" (Participant 11).

This feeling of a moral *obligation* presented in the literature is reinforced in some of the employees' responses, whereby they feel a responsibility towards the environment. When describing his/her values, Participant 10 explains, "(keep the environment clean) because I believe that ...everyone should be responsible for that". Additionally, Participant 4 used the word "responsibility" to describe his/her environmental philosophy.

Thus these ideas of passion and responsibility towards the environment supports literatures determinant of strong environmental values being, a feeling of a strong moral obligation towards the environment as well as placing an importance on environmentally friendly behaviour, and thus it can be deduced that these employees hold strong environmental values.

4.3.3. Knowledge

The idea of knowledge in relation to employees' personal environmental philosophies can be explained as information acquired about the importance of the environment. Literature did not

focus on a key determinant of environmental values being knowledge or education. The reason being, that simply being aware or educating one self about environmental matters, does not mean that one holds strong environmental values, but rather that they are interested to learn more about the environment.

It was found that five out of fourteen employees mentioned ideas around this theme of knowledge when describing their environmental philosophies. However, as some of these five employees also spoke about the other themes mentioned above, (which has been established that they hold strong environmental values), it is important to distinguish which employees spoke about this theme of 'knowledge' in isolation, as it would suggest that they do not hold as strong environmental values.

Two out of the five employees spoke about this idea of knowledge relating to their environmental philosophies. Where Participant 4 mentioned that he/she values communication as it "provide us with good...awareness". Thus it can be deduced that these employees perhaps do not hold strong environmental values, as they simply value "awareness" rather than actually feeling an obligation to protect the environment, as the literature suggests is needed in order to hold strong environmental values.

On the other hand, three out of the five employees also spoke about other themes. For example, Participant 7 explains how he/she values "education", "through educating people they get a clear understanding of how important it is to protect the environment", additionally, "I train people to recycle every plastic packages". Therefore although these participants value awareness, they also value protection and passion, and thus they hold strong environmental values as literature suggests.

4.3.4. Interpretation

As the majority of The Body Shop participant employees hold strong environmental values, and engage in pro-environmental behaviour, they are in a better position to deliver their company's environmental philosophy. Additionally, this will allow them to contribute to their company's environmental efforts. And thus by doing so, they are able to positively impact The Body Shop's environmental sustainability progress, therefore contributing to a stronger environmental sustainability brand identity for the organisation.

However, almost a third of The Body Shop employees (four out of fourteen) do not seem to hold strong environmental values and beliefs according to their responses and the relevant literature. This hinders The Body Shop's environmentally sustainable brand identity, as, if all employees don't hold strong environmental values themselves, how are they then able to deliver the environmental

values of The Body Shop, thereby contributing to a strong environmentally sustainable brand identity. According to The Body Shop, currently when hiring new employees they look for passion, a can do attitude, truthfulness and relevant retail experience (Jardim, 2017). What is thus lacking is that there is no requirement of hiring a new employee, whereby they need to hold strong environmental values. Thus it is important that The Body Shop ensure that a key requirement when hiring new employees is to ensure that they hold strong environmental values.

As previously mentioned, when asking employees whether they believed that they are making a significant impact in their personal capacity, in protecting the environment, all participants said yes, however, the majority of participants did not elaborate on why they believed this to be so. It is possible that employees did not feel that they could be honest in their responses, as a limitation of this study is the honesty of employees' responses. Because participants knew that they were being assessed on their understanding of their work environment, they may have felt pressured to portray a certain image. And this may explain the disconnect between employee responses where they believed they were making a significant difference in protecting the environment, but could not elaborate on it. Additionally, it is possible that the format of study itself could not allow someone to be totally honest, as employees knew that The Body Shop consented to the study, and knew that their responses might come back to them, if they answered in a way that would shine a negative light on the employees themselves.

The key takeout is that each and every employee needs to hold strong environmental philosophies in order to deliver on the environmentally sustainable brand identity of The Body Shop.

When applying the reasoned action theory, these strong environmental values act as a 'stimulus object' (an event that elicits a behavioural response) (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975), in forming beliefs and evaluations (in other words their perceptions) of their company's environmental sustainability philosophy. Therefore as the majority of employees have strong environmental values in place, they are in a better position to be able to relate to and understand the environmental sustainability philosophy of The Body Shop.

4.4. EMPLOYEES' PERCEIVED ROLE IN CARRYING OUT THEIR COMPANY'S ENVIRONMENTAL PHILOSOPHY

A 'role' refers to an expected or prescribed behaviour that is associated with a particular status or position within a group or organisation (Business Dictionary, 2017). Perceptions on the other hand refer to ones internalised feelings and cognitions that impact their behaviour (Evans & Davis, 2014). Thus employees perceived role refers to employees internalised feelings about the expected or prescribed behaviour from them in carrying out their company's environmental

philosophy. The following findings were based on survey responses from question five from section B of the survey, which asked employees what they believed their personal role to be in carrying out their company’s environmental philosophy. The data that was collected from employee participant is presented in a table below, which has coded participants’ responses about their perceived role in carrying out their company’s environmental philosophy into two identified themes, namely educating others, and knowing the company’s philosophy and policies.

Employees’ perceived role in carrying out their company’s environmental philosophy			
Theme:	Operational Definition:	Frequency:	Verbatim Quote:
Educating others	Sharing knowledge with others	12/14	“Spreading the word to each and every customer” – Participant 7
Knowing the company’s philosophy and policies	Being aware and internalizing the company’s philosophy and policies	3/14	“To be knowledgeable about the company’s environmental ethos” – Participant 14

Table 4.2 Employees’ perceived role in carrying out their company’s environmental philosophy

4.4.1. Educating others

Educating others in relation to this category of employees’ perceived role in carrying out their company’s environmental philosophy, can be defined as sharing knowledge with others (about their company’s environmental philosophy). According to Harris and de Chernatony (2001), a company’s unique values are communicated through employees, through their interactions with different stakeholders. According to Ahmad (2015), employees need to be able to educate consumers about the advantages of pro-environmentally friendly behavior.

An overwhelming majority of employees, at twelve out of the fourteen participants, explained that they perceived their role in carrying out The Body Shop’s environmental philosophy to be that of educating others. Participant 1 describes his/her role as “to be able to inform customers about what we do”. Participant 8 elaborates even further, and explains his/her role as “educating people about doing good and being good to our environment so resources are able to sustain us even longer”.

Thus employee responses aligns with the literature, and it can thus be deduced that these employees do understand that their role in carrying out The Body Shop's environmental philosophy is to educate others and share their knowledge about pro-environmentally friendly behavior.

4.4.2. Knowing the companies philosophy and policies

Additionally, according to Harris and de Chernatony (2001), employees' relationships with customers are characterised by the values that form part of an organisation. These values form part of the brands identity, and thus affect how consumers perceive the brand through their employees. Thus it is important for employees to actually know their company's values and policies in order to relate these on to their customers.

A minority, at only three out of the fourteen participant employees spoke about how they believed their role to be, actually knowing their company's philosophy and policies in order to carry out their company's environmental philosophy. Participant 9 explained how in conveying the company's message out to people, he/she believes his/her role to be "to give the correct information". Thus in relation to the literature, this finding would suggest that the majority of employees do not fully understand every aspect of their role in carrying out The Body Shop's environmental philosophy.

4.4.3. Interpretation

Findings show that the majority of The Body Shop's participant employees understand that their role in carrying out The Body Shop's environmental philosophy is to educate others. However, only the minority understand that their role actually includes knowing and understanding The Body Shop's philosophy in the first place. Thus employees understand that they need to actually convey The Body Shop's environmental philosophy onto consumers, but they don't fully understand that in order to do so, they need to fully understand the philosophy in the first place. Thus if they do not fully understand The Body Shop's environmental philosophy, how are they then able to deliver on the environmentally sustainable brand identity of The Body Shop.

Additionally, according to Harris and de Chernatony (2001), employees' role in carrying out their company's environmental philosophy is to behave in alignment with this philosophy. Only one employee, participant 13, actually mentioned that he/she believes his/her role to be "compliant to all my company's philosophy, never do anything that would contradict with it". Thus it can be interpreted that perhaps the majority of employees don't perceive their role to be actually 'living the brand', in other words, they don't believe that part of their role as an employee of The Body Shop, is to act in their personal capacity in alignment with The Body Shop's environmental philosophy. This presents a key issue if employees don't act in alignment with The Body Shop's environmental

sustainability philosophy, as this can negatively impact their brand identity, would could thus be portrayed onto consumers.

It is important to note that according to The Body Shop, they believe their employees' role in carrying out their environmental philosophy and policies, to act in their own personal capacity and participate in charitable initiatives, due to their affiliation with the brand (Jardim, 2017). Only one employee, Participant 7, mentioned that he/she takes part in an initiative as part of his/her religious or spiritual training, whereby once a week they go "clean the riverbanks". And thus this finding would suggest that the majority of employees do not actually fulfil their role in carrying out The Body Shop's environmental philosophy and policies, in accordance with The Body Shop's own beliefs. And thus it is important that The Body Shop ensure that they are effectively communicating to their employees this expectation of them, so that they are able to accurately fulfil their role in carrying out The Body Shop's environmental philosophy and policies, thereby contributing to their environmentally sustainable brand identity.

When applying the reasoned action theory, this perceived role of employees in carrying out The Body Shop's environmental philosophy, acts as the behavioural intention, (their perceived likelihood of performing a certain behaviour, in other words, their actions within the company) for employees, which determines their actual behaviours within the organisation (Nisson & Earl, 2016). Thus it is important to understand why the majority of employees do not fully understand their perceived role, as in some ways it aligns with the literature and in other ways, their perceived role is not fully in line with what is expected of them. Perhaps the reason why there is a slight disconnect, is that The Body Shop are not sufficiently communicating to their employees what is expected of them, and thus if this is true, it is important that they ensure that this is communicated to them.

4.5. EMPLOYEES' UNDERSTANDING OF THE BODY SHOP'S ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY PHILOSOPHY AND POLICIES

The following category will discuss how The Body Shop employees actually understand the environmental sustainability philosophy of The Body Shop. The Body Shop's environmental sustainability philosophy refers to their worldview and values concerning the importance of a sustainable environment (Loukola & Kyllönen, 2005). From the literature review that was provided in Chapter 2, it is evident that The Body Shop has a strong environmental sustainability philosophy whereby they place a high importance on ensuring a sustainable environment. Additionally, they have many environmental sustainability policies in place in order to ensure that they are contributing to a more sustainable environment, such as enriching the biodiversity where they grow their ingredients, using sustainable materials for their products, packaging and stores where

possible, reducing their water consumption, reducing their waste, and focusing on recycling as much as possible, to name a few (The Body Shop, 2015). The following findings were based on survey responses from questions one, two, three and four from section C of the survey. The questions asked employees to describe The Body Shop’s environmental values and beliefs, and environmental sustainability philosophy and policies. The data that was collected from employee participant is presented in a table below, which has coded participants’ responses about their perspectives and understanding of the environmental sustainability philosophy of The Body Shop into four key themes, namely enriching and compassionate, the importance of all stakeholders, social sustainability philosophy and policies, and being environmentally friendly.

Employees’ understanding of The Body Shop’s environmental sustainability philosophy			
Theme:	Operational Definition:	Frequency:	Verbatim Quote:
Enriching and compassionate	Enhancing the value or the quality of and showing concern or care for other entities	12/14	“to enrich not exploit” – Participant 10
The importance of all stakeholders	The Body Shop places an importance on all entities that can affect or be affected by their actions	11/14	“people, animal, planet” – Participant 3
Economic and social sustainability philosophy and policies	Sustainability philosophy and policies excluding those relating to the environment	11/14	“not tested on animals”, “vegetarian ,vegan friendly”, “we are committed to working fairly with our farmers and suppliers and helping the community to thrive” – Participant 8

Environmentally friendly	Those actions that aim to protect and not harm the environment.	5/14	“sustaining environment, reducing energy we consume” – Participant 6
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Table 4.3 Employees’ understanding of The Body Shop’s environmental sustainability philosophy and policies

4.5.1. Enriching and compassionate

Enriching can be explained as enhancing the value or the quality of something, where being compassionate can be explained as showing concern or care for other entities. According to The Body Shop (2017), their company manifesto is to “enrich not exploit”, where they focus their efforts on producing their products ethically and sustainably. Additionally, one of their core values focuses on enriching the planet (as well as their products and people) (The Body Shop, 2017). The Body Shop is constantly committed to exploring new ways of running their business in a more environmentally sustainable way, and was one of the earliest pioneers in ‘green business’ (The Body Shop, 2015). Part of their fundamental business philosophy is that their business can be a source for good (The Body Shop, 2017).

This sentiment of enriching others was very evident in employee responses, whereby twelve out of the fourteen participants mentioned something along the lines of ‘enrichment’ when describing The Body Shop’s environmental philosophy and policies. Seven participants (Participant 4, 5, 6, 10, 11, 12 and 13) used the exact words “enrich not exploit” when describing The Body Shop’s environmental philosophy and policies. Where Participant 3 and 9’s responses included “enrich our product” or “enriching peoples lives” respectively.

Half of the participants, at seven employees described The Body Shop’s environmentally sustainable philosophy and values relating to protecting and caring for the environment. Participant 9 used the words “supporting and protecting”, and Participants 1 and 2 used the words “beauty with heart”.

Thus it is evident that the majority of The Body Shop employee participants understand that The Body Shop’s environmental sustainability philosophy focuses on enriching and caring for other entities.

4.5.2. The importance of all stakeholders

A stakeholder can be classified as any entity that can affect or be affected by an organization's actions (Business Dictionary, 2017). According to The Body Shop, their mission is focused on enriching their products, people and planet (The Body Shop, 2017). Thus this shows how they place an importance on all stakeholders of The Body Shop.

The majority of employees, at eleven out of fourteen participants explained how they understand The Body Shop's sustainability philosophy encompasses everyone. Participant 13 explained how The Body Shop "focuses more on the society, environment, animals and people". Additionally, Participant 9 explains how The Body Shop "is all about (supporting and protecting) the environment and the people in it".

This finding of the majority of employees perceiving that The Body Shop's sustainability philosophy encompasses everyone, thus aligns with The Body Shop's desired sustainability philosophy, where they place an importance on all stakeholders.

4.5.3. Economic and social sustainability philosophy and policies

Economic and social sustainability philosophy and policies refer to sustainability philosophies and policies excluding those relating to the environment. According to The World Bank (n.d.), the three pillars of sustainable development are "economic growth, environmental stewardship and social inclusion". Thus although sustainability was confined to the environmental context for the purpose of this research study, sustainability *does* include the economic and social aspects as well. According to The Body Shop, they focus their efforts on producing their products ethically and sustainably, by following fair trade practices, sourcing ingredients ethically, and are strongly against animal testing (Schwartz, 2016; The Body Shop, 2017).

Although the questions in the surveys to employees, specifically asked about environmental sustainability, the majority of participants also spoke about social and economical sustainability. Eleven out of the fourteen participants described The Body Shop's sustainability mainly focusing on these elements. Participant 13 along with ten other employees spoke about The Body Shop engaging in "community fair trade". Participant 9 along with six other employees spoke about The Body Shop being "against animal testing". And Participant 5 along with two other employees spoke about The Body Shop being "100% vegetarian".

Thus although the question did not ask for non-environmental sustainability philosophies and policies, the majority of employees corroborate and understand most of these aspects of what The Body Shop has in place with regards to their sustainability as a whole.

4.5.4. Environmentally friendly

Environmentally friendly refers to those actions that aim to protect and not harm the environment. One of The Body Shop's five core values focuses on 'protecting the environment' (The Body Shop, 2015). Part of The Body Shop's aim to enrich the planet includes elements such as: enriching the biodiversity where they grow their ingredients, actively campaigning for areas of "outstanding natural value to the planet" that are under threat, using and promoting renewable energy, using environmentally sustainable ingredients, reducing their energy consumption and waste production, recycling where possible, and incorporating more recyclable packaging for their products (The Body Shop, 2015; The Body Shop, 2017).

Only a few of the employees, at five out of fourteen participants actually understood The Body Shop's sustainability in terms of the environment. Participant 3 described how "their products are environmentally friendly", and Participant 14 described how The Body Shop is "committed to its earliest values by holding the environment in the highest regard".

Thus only a minority of employees supported the literature in terms of understanding The Body Shop's environmental sustainability philosophy and policies.

4.5.5. Interpretation

The above findings therefore suggest that although employees know that The Body Shop's environmental sustainability philosophy and policies incorporate the importance of all stakeholders and is enriching and compassionate, it is evident that only a minority of employees actually understand what The Body Shop's environmental sustainability philosophy and policies actually incorporate. Additionally, when asked to describe The Body Shop's environmental sustainability philosophy, two employees (Participant 10 and 11) left the answer blank. Participant 2 responded "no" and Participant 1 simply said, "it is excellent". Thus this shows that it would seem that four out of the fourteen employees do not actually know anything about any of The Body Shop's sustainability philosophies. Additionally, findings also show that the majority of employees were only able to describe The Body Shop's social and economical sustainability philosophies.

Additionally, it was found that the majority of employees (at 58%) have been with The Body Shop between one and five years, which should give them sufficient time to understand The Body

Shop's environmental philosophy and practices. And thus it presents a problem for The Body Shop, that not all of their employees fully understand their environmental philosophy and practices, and therefore it is imperative that going forward all employees sufficiently understand, so that they are able to deliver on The Body Shop's desired brand identity of being an environmentally sustainable brand.

The key takeout is that if The Body Shop wants their employees to actually be able to deliver on their environmental sustainability philosophies, it is imperative that employees are actually aware of them and fully understand them in the first place. This also links to the discussion in the previous category, whereby the majority of employees did not perceive their role in delivering The Body Shop's environmental sustainability philosophy and policies, to actually know and understand The Body Shop's environmental sustainability philosophy in the first place. Thus it can be deduced that the reason the majority of employees do not fully understand The Body Shop's environmental sustainability philosophy and policies, is that they do not perceive their role to be actually knowing and understanding them, before they are then able to share this knowledge with The Body Shop's customers.

When applying the reasoned action theory, employees' perspective and (lack of) understanding of The Body Shop's environmental sustainability philosophy and policies, acts as employees' beliefs and evaluations, in other words, what they believe and understand about The Body Shop's environmental sustainability (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). This translates into their attitudes, in other words their response to these beliefs, whereby employees don't perceive their role to be actually knowing The Body Shop's environmental sustainability philosophy and policies.

4.6. INTERNAL COMMUNICATION REGARDING ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Internal communications can be defined as the formal and informal communications that take place internally in all the different levels within an organisation (Chmielecki, 2015). Through training, development programs and other internal communication tools, employees are able to obtain brand knowledge from their organisation (Punjaisri & Wilson, 2007). Additionally, through internal communication, employees and management are able to have a mutual understanding about what is expected from them (Zaumane, 2016). Good internal communication with regards to environmental sustainability allows employees to clearly understand the purpose of the organization and also builds a sense of commitment to environmental sustainability, and thus employees are able to effectively deliver on the brand's environmental sustainability, which also leads to a more coherent brand identity (Punjaisri & Wilson, 2007).

From the perspective of The Body Shop, in order to orientate their employees with their sustainability philosophy and policies, they focus their internal communication efforts on training and encouragement (Jardim, 2017). The Body Shop provides all their employees with training manuals and as well as conducts training in person (Jardim, 2017).

When an employee joins The Body Shop, they require induction training, which covers the brand's fundamental philosophies of "enrich not exploit, community trade, forever against animal testing, 100% vegetarian" (Jardim, 2017). Thereafter, training includes community trade training (which occurs twice a year), new product development training with community trade ingredients (which occurs every two months), as well as training that relates to their specific campaigns ie. animal testing (which are usually two-three times a year, depending on when the campaigns change) (Jardim, 2017).

The second area of orientating employees to their sustainability philosophy and policies focuses on encouraging employees to do their own research about the brand, where they are encouraged to visit The Body Shop website to view the history of their campaigns and to see the progress of their sustainability goals (Jardim, 2017).

4.6.1. Findings

The following findings were based on survey responses from question five of section C of the survey, which asked employees how The Body Shop communicated to them about their environmental sustainability philosophy and policies. The majority of employees at eleven out of fourteen participants, explained how The Body Shop's environmental philosophy and policies had been communicated to them via formal training, training manuals and other information that is sent out to stores. Participant 4 describes how they receive this information "via training", and Participant 13 describes how "information is communicated to all stores via email along with training manuals".

However only one employee, Participant 14, mentioned that he/she finds out about The Body Shop's environmental sustainability through "self-education". Additionally, there were a few employees who did not mention any of these factors at all, at three out of fourteen participants.

Therefore it is evident that the majority of employees actually corroborate The Body Shops internal communication methods, and thus it can be deduced that internal communication is generally being utilised effectively to communicate with employees. However the issue thus lies with the fact that the majority of employees do not actually sufficiently understand The Body Shop's

environmental sustainability philosophy and policies, and thus how are they able to deliver on the brand's environmentally sustainable brand identity.

4.6.2. Interpretation

As only one employee mentioned that he/she self-educates, this could suggest that the majority of employees don't actually spend their own time finding out about The Body Shop's environmental sustainability, which could suggest that either they feel like The Body Shop's current communications to them are sufficient, or they are not willing to actually take the time to find out more. Part of The Body Shop's internal communications, is encouraging their employees to find out more information about their environmental sustainability, however the majority of employees did not respond that they do so. This thus presents a problem, as employees can be argued to not be effectively fulfilling their duties as set out by The Body Shop, and thus how are they then able to effectively deliver on the environmentally sustainable brand identity of The Body Shop.

Additionally, the fact that three out of fourteen employees did not mention any of these communications from The Body Shop presents a problem. It may be possible that they did not understand the question, or alternatively they have not actively engaged in the training material and are thus unaware, which thus shows that perhaps there is a disconnect with the brand and its internal communications with a few of their employees. And thus if The Body Shop want to be as successful as possible, it is vital that all of their employees fully understand the purpose of internal communications.

Thus it is evident that The Body Shop is effectively communicating to the majority of their employees about their sustainability as a whole, however they are not sufficiently communicating to their employees about their environmental sustainability, which has thus resulted in a lack of understanding from the majority of their employees. According to Raineri and Paillé (2015), employees are more likely to show interest or involve themselves in the pro-environmental behaviours of their company, when the company communicates a clear message about the need to protect the environment. Thus The Body Shops needs to sufficiently communicate their environmental sustainability philosophy and policies if they want their employees to show interest and involve themselves in the pro-environmental behaviours of The Body Shop, thus contributing to their desired environmentally sustainable brand identity.

The Body Shop focuses their employee induction training on "enrich not exploit, community trade, forever against animal testing, 100% vegetarian" (Jardim, 2017). However, thereafter, training focuses on community trade, new products and specific campaigns such as their animal testing campaign (Jardim, 2017). This thus provides an explanation as to why there is a disconnect about

employees understanding of The Body Shop's environmental sustainability philosophy and policies. It would seem that The Body Shop do not focus their training on their environmental sustainability philosophy and policies, but rather that they focus on their social sustainability philosophy and policies. Additionally, it would seem that they educate their employees about their environmental sustainability when employees are inducted, but thereafter, training seems to focus on their social sustainability.

And thus the key takeout, is that if The Body Shop effectively and sufficiently communicates to their employees about their environmental sustainability, employees will be able to have a better understanding about the environmental philosophy of the company, which will build a better sense of commitment to environmental sustainability. Therefore employees will be in a better position to effectively deliver on The Body Shop's environmental philosophy, which will lead to a more coherent brand identity.

When applying the reasoned action theory, these internal communications act as a stimulus object to The Body Shop employees, which thus create their beliefs and thus attitudes on The Body Shop's environmental sustainability. From this it can be deduced that because The Body Shop employees are not being sufficiently communicated to about The Body Shop's environmental sustainability philosophy and policies, this has led to the majority of employees not fully understanding The Body Shop's environmental sustainability, which would not allow them to effectively deliver their role (their behaviour) in carrying out The Body Shop's environmental sustainability philosophy.

4.7. EMPLOYEE PERCEPTIONS ABOUT THE ROLE OF THE BODY SHOP IN ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Perceptions refer to those present interpretations that one has, that allows one to make an analysis or interpretation where they are able to form a reaction (Judd, 1909). Employee perceptions refer to the meanings and values that employees base on their observations and evaluations of their company's policies, events, leadership goals and reward systems (Kopelman et al., 1990). Thus an operational definition has been presented for employee perceptions as the present interpretations and understandings of their company and the meanings and values that they are able to assign to these interpretations. The following category will discuss how employees perceive the role of The Body Shop in environmental sustainability. The following findings were based on survey responses from questions six, seven and eight of section C of the survey. Question six asked employees whether they believed The Body Shop was making a significant difference in protecting the environment. Question seven asked employees what they believed their company's responsibility is towards the environment. Question eight asked

employees if there is anything that they would change about The Body Shop’s environmental sustainability philosophy and policies. The data that was collected from the qualitative surveys is presented in a table below, which contained the coded participants’ responses into three identified themes, namely protecting the environment, against animal testing and creating awareness.

Employee perceptions about the role of The Body Shop in environmental sustainability			
Theme:	Operational Definition:	Frequency:	Verbatim Quote:
Protecting the environment	Ensuring that the environment comes to no harm	10/14	“fighting to protect the planet” – Participant 6
Against animal testing	Strongly against animals being harmed in any way due to being tested for cosmetics purposes	7/14	“against animal testing” – Participant 7
Creating awareness	Informing others	3/14	“to inform as many people about the environment and how to take care of the environment” – Participant 1

Table 4.4 Employee perceptions about the role of The Body Shop in environmental sustainability

4.7.1. Protecting the environment

Protecting the environment can be defined as ensuring that the environment comes to no harm. The pursuit of sustainability by companies has directly resulted from a need to protect the environment (Khalili, 2011). Companies have the responsibility of environmental stewardship as an element of sustainable development practices (The World Bank, n.d). Thus the goal of businesses should be to provide their stakeholders with a high quality of life presently as well as for future generations, whilst preserving the resources that are constrained by the environment (Khalili, 2011). According to Elkington (1994), companies play a key role in sustainable development as they have the ability to materially impact the state of the environment.

The majority of The Body Shop employees, at ten out of fourteen participants, explained that they understood The Body Shop's role towards the environment, to be protecting the environment. Participant 13 explains how The Body Shop's responsibility is to "to sustain the environment where ingredients are sourced, use safest method so no organism is harmed or can suffer as the results, whether the environment or its habitat". Additionally, when asked whether they felt that The Body Shop is making a significant difference in protecting the environment, it is important to note, that every participant said yes. Participant 3 explains how "they help enrich the bio-diversity where they grow ingredients". When asked whether they would change anything about The Body Shop's environmental sustainability and policies, that the majority of employees at nine of out of fourteen participants said no, however it is interesting to note, that one employee said that he/she "would bring back recycling of empty containers of products bought from The Body Shop" (Participant 7).

Thus in terms of The Body Shop's role in environmental sustainability, the majority of employees' responses align with what is said in the literature, whereby their responsibility is to protect the environment

4.7.2. Against animal testing

Against animal testing can be defined as being strongly against animals being harmed in any way due to being tested for cosmetics purposes. One of the three pillars of sustainable development is social inclusion, whereby companies have a responsibility to address social issues (The World Bank, n.d). Animal testing would thus be regarded as a social issue rather than an environmental issue. The Body Shop, is strongly against animal testing, and actively campaign for the banning of animal testing (Jardim, 2017).

It is interesting to note, that almost half of the employees, at five out of fourteen participants explained how they believed The Body Shop's responsibility to the environment is to ensure animal safety, whereby no animals are tested on for cosmetics. Participant 12 explains how their responsibility is "not testing their products on animals". When asked whether employees believed that The Body Shop is making a significant difference in protecting the environment, again almost half the employees, at six out of fourteen participants responded along the lines of the fact that The Body Shop "is always and forever against animal testing" (Participant 6). Additionally, Participant 9 also explained how The Body Shop "already have over 2 million petitions signed against animal testing".

Thus it is evident that in terms of the literature that deals with environmental sustainability, almost half of The Body Shop employees depart from the literature, as they believe The Body Shop's role

in relation to environmental sustainability to be against animal testing, which is not an environmental issue, but rather a social one.

4.7.3. Creating awareness

Creating awareness can be defined as informing others about the importance of environmental sustainability. A key element in ensuring and contributing to sustainable development is to increase public awareness and educate others about various sustainable development issues (Varicak, Petracic & Wasserbauer, 2012).

It was significant to note, that only a few of The Body Shop employees, at three out of fourteen participants, perceived the role of The Body Shop in environmental sustainability to be creating awareness and informing others about the importance of environmental sustainability. Participant 14 explained how The Body Shop is making a significant difference in protecting the environment, by “inspiring businesses at large to trade (fairly and) sustainably”. Additionally, it was interesting to note, that when asked whether they would change anything about The Body Shop’s environmental sustainability philosophy and policies, Participant 4 explained how he/she would want to create more awareness about the “three pillars of The Body Shop...enrich our planet and enrich our people and enrich our product”.

Thus it is significant to note that the minority of employees’ perceptions about the role of The Body Shop in environmental sustainability actually corroborate the literature in terms of one of their roles being, creating awareness about sustainable development issues.

4.7.4. Interpretation

Although the majority of employees said the role of The Body Shop in environmental sustainability is to protect the environment, this is something that should be understood universally by each and every employee. Thus it is imperative that The Body Shop communicates with their employees the need to protect the environment in order to pursue their role in sustainable development, because if all employees don’t understand this, then the ability of The Body Shop brand to deliver on its environmental sustainability identity, is severely diminished.

Again almost half of the employees are not actually understanding this notion, that either the question focuses solely on environmental sustainability, or perhaps they don’t know how to answer, so they relate this to animal testing as this has been one of The Body Shop’s most recent campaigns. Thus either way, it is imperative that employees have a coherent enough understanding, whereby they are able to make the distinction, as they need to be able to deliver on

the environmental sustainability identity of The Body Shop, and not just their social sustainability identity, as this is an important part of The Body Shop's brand identity.

The Body Shop is an successful international brand with their footprint located around the globe, and thus it is important that all employees perceive The Body Shop's role to be creating awareness about environmental sustainability, as they are able to materially impact the state of the environment, by pursuing sustainability themselves as well as encouraging others to do the same. Additionally, if employees felt that the role of The Body Shop was to create awareness, they would be able to contribute in their personal capacity to create this awareness with customers as well as other people they come across in their personal lives, thus aiding in making the biggest possible impact.

And thus the key take out is that this category reinforces that not all employees actually understand the distinction between the three pillars of sustainability, and thus don't seem to understand what environmental sustainability is in particular. Perhaps this is because they are merely regurgitating what is being told to them in their training from The Body Shop, rather than actually fully internalising and understanding this knowledge. This thus hinders their ability to deliver the environmentally sustainable identity of The Body Shop to others, and in particular, their customers. Additionally, the role of The Body Shop in environmental sustainability thus needs to be understood by all employees in order to have the greatest impact.

When applying the reasoned action theory, this perceived role of The Body Shop in environmental sustainability by their employees acts as their attitudes that contribute to their behavioural intention, in other words these perceptions of The Body Shop's environmental sustainability influences how they intend to act in delivering their role within the organisation. Thus it is important for the employees to fully understand The Body Shop's environmental sustainability in order to effectively deliver their environmentally sustainable brand identity.

4.8. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the above chapter presented the findings that were obtained from the qualitative surveys with employees from The Body Shop. The findings were presented in five different categories, namely, employees' personal environmental philosophies, employees' perceived role in carrying out their company's environmental philosophy, employees' understanding of The Body Shop's environmental sustainability philosophy and policies, internal communication regarding environmental sustainability and employee perceptions about the role of The Body Shop in environmental sustainability. Thereafter each category, these findings were interpreted in order to provide meaning to what was found in the survey responses.

The most significant findings were as follows; the majority of employees hold strong environmental values and beliefs, and are thus in a position to better deliver on the environmentally sustainable brand identity of The Body Shop. Although the majority of employees understood their role to be educating others about The Body Shop's environmental sustainability philosophy and policies, only a minority believed their role to be actually knowing their philosophy and policies in the first place. Additionally, this led to only a minority of the employees being able to sufficiently explain The Body Shop's environmental sustainability philosophy and policies. This was found to be due to a lack of internal communication from The Body Shop in this regard, as they focus their internal communications on their social sustainability. It was also found that the majority of employees perceived the role of The Body Shop in environmental sustainability, to be protecting the environment, however a lot of employees related their role to social sustainability, and animal testing in particular, again which translates into a lack of sufficiently understanding environmental sustainability. Thus it is imperative that The Body Shop ensure that they effectively communicate to their employees about their environmental sustainability philosophy and practices, as well as what is expected of employees in regards to carrying these out. This will assist in ensuring that all employees are able to effectively deliver on the environmentally sustainable brand identity of The Body Shop.

The following chapter, Chapter 5, will answer the research questions as posed in Chapter 1 of this research paper. In addition, it will also provide recommendations for The Body Shop as well as environmentally sustainable brands in general, going forward.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. INTRODUCTION

With environmental issues being more prevalent than ever, companies have the responsibility to ensure that they are pursuing sustainable development in order to ensure that they are effectively mitigating the impact of humans on the environment. Employees are often the front line of communication between consumers and the brand, and thus it is imperative that they are able to effectively deliver on the environmentally sustainable brand identity of their organisation. This research study focuses on exploring The Body Shop employees' perceptions of their company as an environmentally sustainable brand, which will contribute to assessing whether all employees are in the optimal position to effectively deliver on The Body Shop's environmental sustainability brand identity.

The following chapter will answer the research questions as set out in Chapter 1, based on the findings and interpretations that were presented in Chapter 4. Additionally, it will address the research problem and provide recommendations based on these findings.

5.2. RESEARCH QUESTION 1

- Do the personal values and beliefs, regarding environmental sustainability practices of employees, align with that of The Body Shop?

It was found that the majority of The Body Shop employees hold strong environmental values and beliefs. These employees felt a strong need to protect the environment, and engage themselves in pro-environmental behaviour. Thus it can be deduced that the majority of The Body Shop employees' personal values and beliefs regarding environmental sustainability do align with that of The Body Shop.

However, almost a third of the employees do not seem to hold strong environmental values and beliefs according to their responses and the relevant literature. Therefore this minority of employees' personal values and beliefs regarding environmental sustainability do not align with that of The Body Shop. And thus how are these employees then able to deliver the environmental values of The Body Shop, thereby contributing to their environmentally sustainable brand identity.

All employees felt that they were making a significant difference in protecting the environment, however the majority of employees did not elaborate on why they believed this to be so. However, a key limitation was identified in this study, being the honesty of employees. As employees knew

that The Body Shop had consented to the study, and that they were being assessed on their understanding of their work environment, employees may have felt pressured to answer a certain way. And thus this may provide an explanation to the disconnect, whereby employees believed they were making a significant difference in protecting the environment, but could not elaborate on it.

As it is not unanimous that every employee's personal values and beliefs regarding environmental sustainability align with that of The Body Shop, this hinders The Body Shop's environmentally sustainable brand identity. And thus it is imperative that each and every person employed by The Body Shop needs to hold strong environmental philosophies in order to be able to effectively deliver on the environmentally sustainable brand identity of The Body Shop.

5.3. RESEARCH QUESTION 2

- What do employees perceive their role to be in terms of representing the brand identity of The Body Shop?

The majority of employees understand their role in carrying out The Body Shop's environmentally sustainable brand identity to be educating others. However only the minority understand that their role actually includes knowing and understanding The Body Shop's philosophy in the first place. Therefore, before employees are able to convey The Body Shop's environmental philosophy onto consumers, it is imperative that they fully understand The Body Shop's environmental philosophy.

Additionally, only one employee perceived his/her role to be actually behaving in alignment with The Body Shop's environmental philosophy. And therefore it is possible that the majority of employees do not perceive their role to be actually 'living the brand' by acting in their personal capacity in alignment with The Body Shop's environmental philosophy. This presents a key issue for The Body Shop, because if employees do not act in alignment with The Body Shop's environmental sustainability philosophy, this could negatively impact their brand identity. This can thus be conveyed onto their consumers, which could also negatively impact the reputation of the brand.

Additionally, from the perspective of The Body Shop, they believe their employees role in carrying out their environmental sustainability philosophy and policies to be acting in their personal capacity to participate in charitable initiatives, due to their affiliation with the brand. However only one employee mentioned that he/she actually takes part in an initiative, and thus it would seem that the majority of employees do not perceive their role to be in alignment with what is expected from them from The Body Shop.

5.4. RESEARCH QUESTION 3

- Are internal communications effectively used to orientate employees to The Body Shop's environmental philosophy and policies?

The Body Shop use various internal communication methods with their employees, such as training, training manuals, sending information to stores, as well as encouraging their employees to self-educate. Findings show that the majority of employees actually corroborate The Body Shops internal communication methods.

Although, findings revealed how only a minority of employees actually understand what The Body Shop's environmental sustainability philosophy and policies actually incorporate. It was also found that almost a third of employee do not actually know anything about any of The Body Shop's sustainability philosophies. Additionally, the majority of employees were only able to describe The Body Shop's social and economical sustainability philosophies and policies (focusing on their community fair trade and being against animal testing).

Thus, the various issues present themselves, firstly, whereby the majority of employees do not actually sufficiently understand The Body Shop's environmental sustainability philosophy and policies, which thus hinders their ability to deliver on the brand's environmentally sustainable brand identity.

And secondly only one employee had mentioned that he/she self-educates, which could suggest that the majority of employees don't actually spend their own time finding out about The Body Shop's environmental sustainability. This presents a problem, as from the perspective of The Body Shop, they expect their employees to self-educate. Thus it can be argued that employees are not effectively fulfilling their duties as set out by The Body Shop, and thus how are they then able to effectively deliver on the environmentally sustainable brand identity of The Body Shop.

Thirdly, as the majority of employees do not seem to perceive and understand that their role in carrying out The Body Shop's environmental philosophy and policies, is to actually know and understand them in the first place, this thus points to a lack of clear communication. And thus it can be deduced that the reason the majority of employees do not fully understand The Body Shop's environmental sustainability philosophy and policies, is that they do not perceive their role to be actually knowing and understanding them, before they are then able to share this knowledge with The Body Shop's customers.

And lastly, the fact that three out of fourteen employees did not mention any of these communications from The Body Shop presents a problem, as it is possible that they have not actively engaged in the training material and are thus unaware. This shows that perhaps there is a disconnect with the brand and its internal communications with a few of their employees.

The majority of employees have been with The Body Shop between one and five years, which should give them sufficient time to understand The Body Shop's environmental philosophy and practices and well as their full role in carrying out said philosophy and policies. It can therefore be deduced that internal communications are not actually being utilised effectively to orientate employees to The Body Shop's environmental sustainability philosophy and policies. And thus it is imperative that The Body Shop effectively communicates with their employees about their environmental philosophy and policies, as well as what is expected of them in carrying out said environmental philosophy and policies, so that going forward all employees are able to deliver on The Body Shop's desired brand identity of being an environmentally sustainable brand.

5.5. ADDRESSING THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

- The research problem under investigation is to: Evaluate The Body Shop employees' perceptions of the environmental sustainability philosophy and policies of their company.

From the findings and interpretations derived from this research study, it is evident that although the majority of employees believe that The Body Shop's role in environmental sustainability is to protect the environment, the majority of these employees do not actually fully understand The Body Shop's environmental sustainability philosophy and policies, possibly due to a lack of effective internal communications from The Body Shop. Findings show that The Body Shop employees know that The Body Shop's environmental sustainability philosophy and policies incorporate the importance of all stakeholders and are enriching and compassionate. However, it is evident that not all employees actually understand the distinction between the three pillars of sustainability being social, economical and environmental, and thus do not seem to understand what environmental sustainability is in particular. It is thus possible that employees are merely regurgitating what is being told to them in their training from The Body Shop, rather than actually fully internalising and understanding this knowledge. This thus hinders their ability to deliver the environmentally sustainable identity of The Body Shop to others, and in particular, The Body Shop's customers. The role of The Body Shop in environmental sustainability thus needs to be understood by all employees in order to have the greatest impact. Additionally, only a minority of employees perceived that the role of The Body Shop was to create awareness about environmental sustainability. However if employees universally understood this, it is more likely

that they would contribute in their personal capacity to create this awareness, thus aiding in making the biggest possible impact for environmental sustainability.

5.6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher recommends that The Body Shop implement a key requirement when hiring new employees, whereby they ensure that they hold strong environmental values and beliefs, so that they are able to effectively deliver on the environmentally sustainable brand identity of the company. The Body Shop already looks for passionate employees, however to extend this to their environmental sustainability, it is important to look for employees who extend this passion to working for an environmentally friendly organisation. Additionally, the company could also implement a 'green' job description, which could be included in the recruitment process. Thus in order to ensure that potential employees already have this passion for environmentalism, when recruiting new candidates, the company can look for candidates that already have knowledge of the basics of environmentally sustainable practices, such as recycling, nature conservation and pollution prevention. The company could also offer incentives for green behaviours, such as taking part in green initiatives, which can promote environmentally friendly behaviours.

The researcher also recommends that The Body Shop implement new communications that firstly focus on educating employees about their environmental sustainability philosophy and policies in particular. The main aim of these new communications would be to ensure that employees are actually able to internalise and understand what is being said, and not simply regurgitating what is being said, so that employees are able to effectively deliver this knowledge to their customers. Additionally, it is important for The Body Shop to effectively communicate the roles and behaviours they expect from their employees, as this will assist employees in knowing how they are actually contributing to the organisations environmental sustainability. The company could also have specific training to educate employees about environmentally friendly behaviours, such as waste reduction, energy conservation etc... Additionally, they can provide employees with the opportunity to engage with their company's environmentalism, by involving them in the process of environmental problem solving. An effective method may be to actually involve and engage their employees in their planning process, so that employees feel like they are a part of the journey and are thus more invested in the outcomes of their efforts. Additionally, The Body Shop can empower their employees by offering them a communication platform to provide their own ideas, which will keep them more engaged with the brand and build a better sense of commitment to environmental sustainability. This can be done using a suggestion email address where employees can email their ideas, or alternatively, a suggestion box can be provided during their training sessions. This can be very beneficial to the organisation when coming up with new ways to promote environmentalism within their employees, as it is evident that employees are willing to give their

input. For example, this research study found that an employee suggested that The Body Shop “bring back recycling of empty containers of products bought from The Body Shop” (Participant 7).

By implementing these recommendations, The Body Shop will be able to ensure that their employees sufficiently understand their environmental sustainability philosophy and policies and are thus in a better position to effectively deliver on The Body Shop’s environmental sustainability, which will lead to a more coherent brand identity. Additionally, other environmentally sustainable brands can also benefit by implementing these measures within their organisation, in order to ensure that their employees are effectively delivering on their environmentally sustainable brand identity.

For future research studies around the same or a similar topic, the researcher recommends utilising qualitative semi-structured interviews. The reason being is that the researcher believes these interviews would have provided an opportunity to probe employees for more detailed responses, and thus perhaps may have provided the study with even more valuable insights.

The key rationale for this research study, was to contribute to some gaps identified in the literature, within the South African context that addressed the following: Firstly, the gap in the literature within the South African context that does not effectively address what employees’ perceptions are of environmental sustainability. Secondly, current research neglects the importance of internal communication within an organization that specifically relates to their environmental sustainable development policies. And thirdly, whether the environmental values and beliefs of employees align with their company’s environmental sustainability focus. Additionally, the rationale of this study was to show how vitally important it is to incorporate environmental sustainability throughout the organisation, which includes employees, as this will assist the organisation in effectively delivering on their environmentally sustainable brand identity.

Additionally, this research study aided in determining how employees’ perceptions of their company’s environmental sustainability philosophy and policies are shaped, which is vitally important, as this affects their environmentally sustainable brand identity. Therefore The Body Shop as well as any other environmentally sustainable organisations that may be experiencing similar situations, are able to react accordingly. It was found that in order to have the greatest impact with their environmental sustainability, The Body Shop could adjust their internal communications with employees or ensure that they only hire employees with more aligned environmental values to them.

5.7. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this research study sought to evaluate employee perceptions of their company as an environmentally sustainable brand, by using The Body Shop as a case study. The research paper included five chapters, namely the introduction, literature review, methodology, findings and interpretations and finally the conclusion and recommendations. In the introductory chapter, Chapter 1, the researcher firstly presented the contextualisation of the research problem, followed by the research questions to be addressed in the study, as well as the limitations of the study. Chapter 2 provided a review of the current literature pertaining to the topic at hand, which covered the key concepts of environmental sustainability, environmental values and beliefs, the role of employees in an environmentally sustainable organisation, internal communications, employee perceptions, brand identity and the theoretical framework used for this study, being the reasoned action theory. Chapter 3 then provided a comprehensive overview on the methodology that was used to collect research findings. The study was conducted with a sample of fourteen participants from The Body Shop employees in Johannesburg, utilising a qualitative research survey to collect the data. Chapter 4 then analysed the data using the Huberman and Miles (1994) framework, whereby the data was organised into meaningful categories and thereafter the themes pertaining to each category were identified and presented in tables and pie charts in order to be analysed. Chapter 5 then proceeded to answer the research questions as set out in Chapter 1 of this study, which was followed by some recommendations that that could benefit The Body Shop as well as other environmentally sustainable brands.

The purpose of this research paper was to explore employees' perceptions of their organization's environmental sustainability philosophy and policies and whether or not their personal environmental values and beliefs aligned with that of their organization's environmental sustainability philosophy. This research paper identified how having a focus on environmental sustainability within a company needs to be incorporated throughout the organisation so that employees are able to deliver on the brand's identity of environmental sustainability, which would thus lead to a more coherent brand identity. The key findings were that the majority of employees hold strong environmental values and beliefs and are therefore in a better position to deliver on their company's environmental sustainable brand identity. However it is still imperative that all employees' personal environmental philosophies align with that of the body shop, so that all employees are able to effectively deliver on the body shops environmental sustainability philosophy and policies. Additionally, the majority of The Body Shop employees lacked a sufficient understanding of their company's environmental sustainability philosophy and policies, as well as their roles in portraying this environmentally sustainable brand identity, which was found to be due to a lack of a sufficient communication from The Body Shop about their environmental sustainability.

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APPENDIX 1: ORIGINAL QUALITATIVE SURVEY QUESTIONS

1. In three words, how would you describe your personal environmental values and beliefs?
2. Could you explain your choice of above words?
- 3. How do you believe you enact these values? Can you provide a detailed example?**
4. Do you believe you, in your personal capacity, are making a significant difference in protecting the environment?
5. What do you believe your personal role to be in carrying out your company's environmental philosophy?
6. In three words how would you describe your company's environmental values and beliefs?
- 7. Could you explain your choice of above words?**
8. Can you describe your company's environmental sustainability philosophy?
9. Can you describe your company's environmental sustainability policies?
10. In what way(s) has this been communicated to you? Please provide as much detail as possible.
11. Do you think The Body Shop is making a significant difference in protecting the environment?
12. What do you believe your company's responsibility is towards the environment?
13. Is there anything that you would change (whether that be add or take something away) about your company's environmental sustainability philosophy or policies?

APPENDIX 2: FINAL QUALITATIVE SURVEY QUESTIONS

1. In three words, how would you describe your personal environmental values and beliefs?
2. Can you explain why you chose those particular words?
- 3. How would you say that you incorporate those values into your life? Can you specifically describe something that you do?**
4. Do you believe you, in your personal capacity, are making a significant difference in protecting the environment?
5. What do you believe your personal role to be in carrying out your company's environmental philosophy?
6. In three words how would you describe your company's environmental values and beliefs?
- 7. Can you explain why you chose those particular words?**
8. Can you describe your company's environmental sustainability philosophy?
9. Can you describe your company's environmental sustainability policies?
10. In what way(s) has this been communicated to you? Please provide as much detail as possible.
11. Do you think The Body Shop is making a significant difference in protecting the environment?
12. What do you believe your company's responsibility is towards the environment?
13. Is there anything that you would change (whether that be add or take something away) about your company's environmental sustainability philosophy or policies?

APPENDIX 3: EMPLOYEE CONSENT

An evaluation of employee perceptions of their company as an environmentally sustainable brand

The following survey will ask a set of questions regarding your perceptions of environmental philosophy and practice. Environmental philosophy and practice means humanity's responsibility to nature. This survey relates directly to the Body Shop and your experiences as an employee.

Please note that this is an academic study, being conducted by an Honours student at Vega School of Brand Leadership, with the consent of The Body Shop. Your response will be kept confidential by the researcher.

The survey will take no longer than 15 minutes as it comprises of 13 questions. Please elaborate on your answers and ensure that you complete the survey honestly. Please note, that there are no right or wrong answers.

Completion of the survey will result in your consent being given with regard to utilizing the information received from the survey in the academic study. Feel free to opt out of the study at any given time if you feel uncomfortable with the questions.

Lastly, thank you for willingly participating in the study and providing the support required to complete the research.