



**VAAL UNIVERSITY  
OF TECHNOLOGY**

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**THE INFLUENCE OF GENERATION Y STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF BRAND  
COMMUNICATION, SERVICE QUALITY AND BRAND SATISFACTION ON BRAND  
LOYALTY IN TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION TRAINING  
COLLEGES IN GAUTENG**

ITANI LISTEN RAMUTHIVHELI

STUDENT NUMBER: 20053185

ORCID ID: 0000-0002-2918-7396

M. TECH

in the discipline

MARKETING

in the

FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT SCIENCES

at the

VAAL UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

**Supervisor: Dr K.L. Sharp**

**Co-supervisor: Prof H.B Dondolo**

## DECLARATION

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This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

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Date 3 March 2022

### STATEMENT 1

This dissertation is being submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Management in Marketing

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The dissertation is the result of my own independent work/ investigation, except otherwise stated. Other sources are acknowledged by giving explicit references. A bibliography is appended.

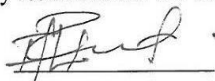
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## LETTER FROM THE LANGUAGE EDITOR

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*Jomone Miller*

Language Practitioner  
SATI No. 1002831  
BA Hons (Language practice)

www.jmuller.co.za  
Tel: +27 84 406 0029  
jomone@jmuller.co.za

### DECLARATION OF LANGUAGE EDITING

18 July 2022

To whom it may concern

This is to confirm that I, the undersigned, have language edited the completed research of Itani Listen Ramuthivheli entitled: *THE INFLUENCE OF GENERATION Y STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF BRAND COMMUNICATION, SERVICE QUALITY AND BRAND SATISFACTION ON BRAND LOYALTY IN TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION TRAINING COLLEGES IN GAUTENG.*

No changes were permanently affected and were left to the discretion of the author. The responsibility of implementing the recommended language changes rests with the author of the thesis.

Yours truly

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "J Miller".

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## ABSTRACT

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Due to the rapidly evolving and dynamic nature of the South African higher education sector, it is critical that institutions communicate their brands to stakeholders to enhance their perception of the institution as a quality service provider. Despite this, little attention has been paid to the influence of brand communication, brand satisfaction and service quality on brand loyalty in higher education, particularly in technical and vocational education and training (TVET). Research has demonstrated a positive relationship between brand communication, service quality, brand satisfaction and brand loyalty in the service sector; however, it is unknown whether such a relationship exists in the South African TVET sector. It is essential to investigate how Generation Y students perceive brand communication, brand satisfaction and service quality in the TVET sector in Gauteng.

Five TVET colleges were used as a convenience sample to recruit 500 students. In each college, students were given a self-administered questionnaire to complete during class time. The data was analysed using various statistical methods, including exploratory factor analysis, descriptive statistical analysis, correlation analysis and structural equation modelling.

The results of the study show that service quality and brand satisfaction have a strong positive influence on brand loyalty. However, the structural model results indicate that this study does not support a relationship between brand communication and brand loyalty. However, there was a significant influence of service quality on brand loyalty towards TVET colleges. In other words, students who have had positive experiences in contact with vocational colleges and are generally satisfied with the services they provide, will undoubtedly develop loyal inclinations towards them. The study also shows that brand loyalty is positively related to brand satisfaction.

This study contributes to the body of knowledge by empirically testing a model of the factors influencing brand loyalty among Generation Y students in TVET colleges. The study shows that brand communication, service quality and customer satisfaction are important factors that influence brand loyalty.

**Keywords:** students' perceptions, brand communication, service quality, brand satisfaction, brand loyalty, technical and vocational training.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

---

#### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

In recent years marketing and brand management of novel sectors, such as the educational sector, have become increasingly important (Abbas 2019:46). Dlamini (2018) indicates that branding is imperative, not merely for selling consumer products, but for selling higher education, particularly in the vibrant and challenging environments higher education institutions, such as TVET colleges, find themselves in today.

In 2002, in terms of the Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET), formerly known as Further Education and Training (FET) Act no. 98 of 1998, former technical colleges, colleges of education and training centers were renamed and categorised into 50 TVET colleges (Qonde 2013:27). This reformation process was undertaken to combine smaller and weaker colleges with stronger institutions to develop economies of scale, creating platforms and space to reach more students and offering a wider range of educational programmes. Consequently, South African TVET colleges have witnessed the fastest growth rate in higher education, which has led to the development of a highly competitive environment, with numerous TVET colleges competing for survival (Angelopulo 2013:62; Qonde 2013:29).

DeVries (2019) highlights that a brand is not something that can be duplicated, which results in it being a competitive advantage. Consequently, Peterdy (2022) indicates that by developing a strong brand, organisations, such as TVET colleges, will be less vulnerable to competitive marketing action, be more equipped to take advantage of brand extension opportunities and build long-term brand loyalty and satisfaction among their stakeholders. Trivikram (2017) suggests that a strong brand can distinguish organisations, such as TVET colleges, from each other.

One of the factors contributing to strengthening an organisation's brand is brand communication. Brand communication may be viewed as the primary integrative element in managing the brand in the minds of the consumers, employees, channel members, media, government regulators and communities (Bhasin 2021). Essentially, it involves informing consumers about a brand, convincing them to purchase the brand, and maintaining their memory of the brand (Cheng & Hu, 2020:396). It has long been recognised that brand communication is an essential component of

activities in TVET colleges and other organisations (Jurkowitsch, Vignali & Kaufmann 2007:9; Marzocchi, Morandin & Bergami 2013:167). In particular, brand communication aims to increase brand loyalty by strengthening stakeholders' attachment to the brand, thus embedding the brand in the minds of all stakeholders over time. Therefore, it can be said that brand communication is one of the most important factors for the successful introduction of a new service, especially between TVET colleges (Sainy & Attri 2017).

One of the most important characteristics of a TVET college is its relationship with its stakeholders. According to Lo (2012:2), TVET colleges should have a good relationship with their stakeholders and be attentive to the needs and requirements of those stakeholders. Similarly, McGrath (2012:627) asserts that the long-term success in TVET colleges largely depends on building trust and reliability with their stakeholders. Unfortunately, TVET colleges are currently facing numerous setbacks. These include their failure to improve stakeholder engagement with the brand and increase the conversion of prospects between them and their stakeholders (Rasool & Mahembe 2014:10).

There has been a view that TVET colleges are forced to meet stakeholder expectations through service quality (Leeders & Wierenga 2008:59; Tikly 2013:6), which highlights the need for these colleges to try to link service quality with the needs of potential stakeholders (Alves & Raposo 2010:78), with students being part of the stakeholders in these institutions. Unfortunately, students have been found to be receiving a poor level of service because of inadequate administrative staff training, systems, demotivated staff or staff with inappropriate attitudes being employed within TVET colleges (Mason, Mbambo & Pillay, 2018:27).

Studies that focus on students at tertiary institutions typically define them as individuals between 18 and 24 (Wolburg & Pokrywczynski 2001:34; Steel 2012). These students, who fall within the category of Generation Y, constitute approximately 43 percent of the South African population (Statistics South Africa, 2021). Generation Y members engaged in tertiary education represent an especially important segment to marketers, given that higher education often translates into higher future earning potential and a higher social status within a community (Bevan-Dye & Suruijlal 2011).

Gasca (2014) theorises that if marketers wish to relate to the individuals of the Generation Y cohort, they need to ensure their brands understand and emphasise what these individuals talk about and how they think. Lin and Chang (2013:96) postulate that these individuals are prone to be more accepting of new products or services being advertised, resulting in more competitors



competing for the spending power of these individuals, which will continue to increase as time progresses. Consequently, marketers need to introduce new products continuously to meet these consumers' needs and establish brand loyalty. In addition, marketers need to ensure that listen and respond to these customers, taking note of their questions, feedback and complaints if they wish to create and maintain positive interactions with these customers (Speier 2016). Since the role of TVET colleges remains crucial in the South African higher education landscape, a study on the perceptions of brand communication, service quality and brand satisfaction on brand loyalty in TVET colleges requires special attention.

## **1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

In an increasingly changing and dynamic South African higher education landscape, institutions must communicate their brands to stakeholders so that these stakeholders perceive the institution as offering quality service to have a satisfied stakeholder who is loyal to the institution. According to Akooje and McGrath (2008:132), TVET colleges must build institutions that are attuned to better satisfy the needs of the stakeholders through their brand. Few TVET colleges have attracted stakeholders (Beneke & Human 2010:437). In most TVET colleges, very little is done to communicate the brand to stakeholders, which may directly result from the lack of proper brand communication and service quality (Azoury, Daou & El Khoury 2013:5). In fact, only one study (Abubakar & Mokhtar 2015:196) appears to investigate this effect. This study was conducted in Nigeria. Given previous research on brand loyalty in service industries identifying a relationship between brand communication, service quality and brand satisfaction, it is unclear in the South African TVET sector. Therefore, the main purpose of this study is to examine Generation Y students' perceptions of brand communication, service quality and brand satisfaction on brand loyalty in TVET colleges in Gauteng.

## **1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The following objectives have been formulated for the study:

### **1.3.1 Primary objective**

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the influence of students' perceptions of brand communication, service quality and brand satisfaction on brand loyalty in TVET colleges in Gauteng.

### **1.3.2 Theoretical objectives**

In order to achieve the primary purpose of the study, the following theoretical objectives are set for the study:

- To review the literature on brand communication.
- To review the literature on service quality.
- To review the literature on brand satisfaction.
- To review the literature on brand loyalty.
- To review the literature on the influence of brand communication, service quality and brand satisfaction on brand loyalty.

### **1.3.3 Empirical objectives**

Following the primary objective of the study, the following empirical objectives are formulated:

- To measure students' perceptions of brand communication undertaken by TVET colleges.
- To examine students' perceptions of service quality within TVET colleges.
- To measure students' perceptions of brand satisfaction with TVET colleges.
- To investigate the influence of students' perceptions of brand communication undertaken by TVET colleges on students' brand loyalty towards TVET colleges.
- To investigate the influence of students' perception of service quality within TVET colleges on students' brand loyalty towards TVET colleges.
- To investigate the influence of students' perceptions of brand satisfaction with TVET colleges on students' brand loyalty towards TVET colleges.

## **1.4 HYPOTHESES**

Ho (2006:284) defines hypotheses as a declaration of something that should be observable in the actual world if the theory is correct. Furthermore, according to Babbie and Mouton (2003:643), hypotheses represent the link between two or more variables.

These hypotheses formulated below are in line with the theoretical and empirical objectives that this research study aims to satisfy. The literature review follows in Chapter 2.

H1: Brand communication has a significant positive influence on brand loyalty.

H2: Service quality has a significant positive influence on brand loyalty.

H3: Brand satisfaction with TVET colleges has a significant positive influence on students' brand loyalty.

The section below summarises the research design and methodology used in this research study.

## **1.5 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

Curwin and Slater (2008:183) define research design as a master plan that specifies the methods and procedures for collecting and analysing the information for a research study. Two research methods were undertaken, namely, a literature review and an empirical study. This section focusses on explaining the research methodology employed in the empirical portion of the study. The target population, sampling size, sampling method, data collection method and measurement instruments were discussed.

### **1.5.1 Literature review**

In order to underpin the empirical study, a review of South African and international literature was conducted using secondary data sources that include the internet, textbooks, businessjournals, academic journals and online academic databases. The literature reviewed includes a review of the literature about brand communication, service quality, brand satisfaction, brand loyalty and the influence of brand communication, service quality and brand satisfaction on brand loyalty.

### **1.5.2 The empirical study**

The empirical design for the study employed a quantitative approach. The quantitative approach is selected because it enhances the accuracy of results through detailed statistical analysis and avoids the element of subjectivity associated with the qualitative approach (Du Plessis & Rousseau 2007:21).

#### **1.5.2.1 Target population**

A target population is the subset of people from the populations who participated in the current study (Vanderstoep & Johnston 2009:25). The target population relevant to this study:

- Element: Full-time students, both male and female, between the ages of 18–26, enrolled at TVET colleges in Gauteng.
- Sampling unit: Five South African TVET colleges
- Extent: South Africa, Gauteng
- Time: 2018–2019

### **1.5.2.2 Sampling frame**

Malhotra (2010:373) defines the sampling frame as the concrete list of elements such as person, households and the like, from where the sample will be drawn. The sampling frame comprised 50 registered public South African TVET colleges (Elikplim 2022). A non-probability convenience sample of five TVET colleges located in Gauteng was selected for the list of 50 Public TVET colleges in South Africa – three of which are based in residential towns and two in the locations. The reason Gauteng was chosen for this study is that it comprises the largest share of the South African population (Stats SA, 2021). The reason for selecting these TVET colleges is the high student enrolment figures.

### **1.5.2.3 Sampling method**

Hair, Wolfenbarger, Ortinau and Bush (2008:256) identified two sampling methods, known as probability and non-probability sampling. All the elements or members of a population are included in the sample when using probability sampling. That is, elements that have a chance of being included have a probability that exceeds zero, which indicates the probability with which sample results deviate in differing degrees from the corresponding population values and estimate sampling error. Non-probability sampling uses selected population elements based on the availability or the researcher's personal judgement (Welman, Kruger & Mitchell 2009:56).

A non-probability convenience sample was used in this study. This constituted five TVET colleges located in Gauteng that were selected for the sampling frame – three of which are based in residential towns and two in the locations. The five TVET colleges selected for this study were contacted requesting permission to conduct the research. Once permission was obtained in writing, the lecturers at each of the five TVET colleges chosen from the sampling frame used were contacted, requesting them to ask their students to complete the questionnaire. The lecturers were informed that the questionnaire was to be completed voluntarily only and that no student was to be coerced into completing the questionnaire. Once permission was granted, a hand delivered,

self-administered questionnaire was distributed to the full-time undergraduate students during class time at each of the five TVET colleges between 2018 and 2019.

#### **1.5.2.4 Sample size**

A sample size is defined as the number of elements in a study's sample (Zikmund & Babin 2007:177). The sample size depends on factors such as variation of the characteristics found within the population to be researched and the desired reliability and accuracy of the outcome (Hair, Lukas, Miller, Bush & Ortinau 2008:189). For this study, the sample size was set at 500. In accordance with the study conducted by Fransen and Lodder (2010:802), Kemp and Bui (2011:432), Kumar (2008:166), Park and Bai (2012:4), Puja and Yukti (2011:210) and Zehir *et al.* (2011:1222), a sample size of 500 full-time students was considered sufficiently large. The sample size of 500 full-time students was split equally between the five TVET colleges, thereby allowing a sample size of 100 full-time undergraduate students per TVET college.

The sample size of 500 full-time Generation Y students was considered adequate for testing the hypothesis, especially in view of the use of structural equation modelling in this study. The number of responses needed to conduct structural equation modelling is generally 200.

#### **1.5.2.5 Data collection method and measuring instrument**

The data were collected through the distribution of self-administered questionnaires. According to Feinberg, Kinnear and Taylor (2012:264) structured questionnaires may be implemented to collect large amounts of information from a large number of respondents and the results obtained may be easily and quickly quantified. Moreover, when surveying many respondents, questionnaires are believed to be the most cost-effective.

The study variables were developed using a measuring scale adopted from prior studies. The questionnaire comprised five sections, namely Section A, B, C, D and Section E. Section A was used to gather demographic data and included multiple-choice and dichotomous questions. Section B consisted of questions on students' perception of brand communication undertaken by a TVET college, with six items adapted from Zehir *et al.* (2011:1222). Section C comprised questions on service quality, with ten items adapted from Zehir *et al.* (2011:1222). Section D consisted of questions on brand selection, with six items adapted from Senel (2011:146). Section E consisted of questions on brand loyalty, with five items adopted from Senel (2011:146). All the scale items were rephrased to fit the current context of the study.

Section B to E of the questionnaire applied a six-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly

disagree to 6 = strongly agree. The questionnaire included a cover letter describing the nature and purpose of the study and requesting participation. The questionnaire was piloted on a convenience sample of 50 students that did not form part of the sampling frame to ascertain its reliability. Results of this pilot test were duly coded and tabulated in Chapter 4.

### **1.5.3 Statistical analysis**

Descriptive statistics were used to explain the composition of the sample. The captured data were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) Version 28.0 and SmartPLS 4.0. Descriptive statistics were used to summarise and describe the data collected from the respondents. A combination of frequencies and correlations, along with reliability and validity analysis and significance tests, were also employed in this research study.

## **1.6 DEMARCATION OF THE STUDY**

This research study was undertaken among full-time registered students aged between 16 and 26 years. The participating students were registered at five South African TVET colleges between 2018 and 2019. Due to geographical, cost and time restrictions, the study was limited to five TVET colleges located in Gauteng, South Africa.

## **1.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Kolb (2008:13) illustrates ethical issues as the principles and guidelines that clarify the conditions under which research is conducted. The research study complied with the ethical standards of academic research, which among other things, protected the identities and interests of the respondents and guaranteed the confidentiality of the information provided by the respondents. Participation in the survey was voluntary and no one was forced to participate.

Before the commencement of the study, each of the five TVET colleges where the sample was drawn granted permission for their students to be surveyed. After receiving written consent from the colleges, the lecturers at each of the five TVET colleges selected were contacted and requested to ask their students to complete the survey. The lecturers were informed that the completion of the questionnaire was to be voluntary only and that no student was to be forced to complete the questionnaire. Once the study was approved, all five TVET colleges participating were given a hand-delivered, self-administered questionnaire. They were asked to administer it during class so full-time undergraduate students at each of the five institutions could provide feedback.

## 1.8 CHAPTER CLASSIFICATION

### **Chapter 1: Introduction and problem statement**

This chapter encompasses the introduction and background to the research study. It included an outline of the problem statement, the research objectives, and the research methodology used. This chapter concluded with the organisation and structure of the research study.

### **Chapter 2: Perceptions of brand communication and service quality**

This chapter provides a discussion on TVET colleges, brand communication and service quality, as well as the relationship between brand communication and brand satisfaction, service quality, brand satisfaction and brand loyalty.

### **Chapter 3: Research design and methodology**

The population, sampling method and data collection method are discussed in this chapter. Data analysis and statistical techniques are outlined. Here the problems experienced and the response rate to the questionnaire are discussed. Data analysis and statistical procedures used in the study are also discussed.

### **Chapter 4: Data presentation and analysis**

In this chapter, the research findings were analysed, interpreted and evaluated.

### **Chapter 5: Conclusions and recommendations of the study**

Recommendations emanating from the study are provided. Conclusions were made based on the findings. Limitations and implications for further research are highlighted in this chapter.

## 1.9 GLOSSARY

**Brand:** Either a name or a symbol used to identify and distinguish a product or service from others (Tatt 2010:3).

**Brand communication:** A strategic and operational process that involves the amalgamation of an organisation's internal and external communication instruments, to ensure that a consistent image of the organization or brand is conveyed (Sy 2021).

**Brand satisfaction:** The cumulative satisfaction of an overall consumer's assessment based on

the consumer's entire purchase and experience with a brand, product or service (Chinomona & Sandada 2013:1632).

**Service quality:** The total impression consumers form is based on the actual usefulness and excellence of an organisation's services (Nguyen & Gizaw 2014:14).

**Brand loyalty:** A consumer's conscious or unconscious decision, expressed through intention or behaviour, to repurchase a brand continually (Aaker 1991:3).

## **1.10 GENERAL**

- The referencing style is based on the Vaal University of Technology referencing guide, namely the adapted Harvard style.
- Tables and figures are placed on the relevant pages, as indicated in this dissertation's table of contents section.
- Where no sources have been cited for tables and figures, it denotes the researcher's work.
- Annexures are placed at the end of this dissertation.

## **1.11 CONCLUSION**

In this chapter the foundational context for the study was established by discussing the introduction and background of the study. The problem statement and objectives of the study were also highlighted. The research design and methodology were briefly outlined, including the target population, sample frame, sampling method, sample size, data collection method and measuring instrument. In addition, a brief description of the statistical analysis of the data, demarcation of the study and ethical considerations were provided.

The classification of chapters for the entire study was provided and the keywords emanating from the study were described.

The following chapter provides a detailed description of the literature review appropriate to the study.



## CHAPTER 2

### PERCEPTIONS OF BRAND COMMUNICATION AND SERVICE QUALITY

#### 2.1. INTRODUCTION

The primary goal of this chapter is to provide an overview of the literature. Section 2.2 provides a detailed explanation of the concept of a brand. The focus of Section 2.3 is on components of the brand, while Section 2.4 explains the concept of brand loyalty and highlights the approaches and the models of brand loyalty. Section 2.5 provides a discussion of the predictors of brand loyalty. Section 2.6 elaborates on the perception of brand communication on brand loyalty, while Section 2.7 discusses the concept of brand satisfaction on brand loyalty. The final section of this chapter, Section 2.8, examines service quality and measurement. This chapter ends with concluding remarks. The following section discusses the concept of a brand.

#### 2.2. THE CONCEPT OF A BRAND

Tatt (2010:3) defines a brand as a distinguished name or symbol intended to identify a product or a service. Jandaghi *et al.* (2011:152) argue that a brand is more than simply representing a product or service; instead, it serves a purpose in the economy. It serves as a visual representation of an organisation. According to Maurya and Mishra (2012:123), a brand represents a product or service in a market. American Marketing Association (2015) defines a brand as an experience represented by a collection of images and concepts shared by all stakeholders. Zehir *et al.* (2011:1220) add that a brand is a fundamental concept of what stakeholders desire, need and regard as valuable.

Sahin, Zehir and Kitapci (2012:1362) postulate that brands are not only names and symbols but represent and convey value about a product, service or organisation. Furthermore, Moolla (2010:21) observes that brands represent consumers' perceptions and feelings about a service and its performance, encompassing everything it means to consumers. Therefore, a brand is a critical element of organisational relationships with consumers (Kabadayi 2012:80).

The experiential aspect and psychological aspect are the two different aspects of a brand and offer a further explanation of the concept of a brand. The experiential aspect touches on all previous experiences that an individual has had with the brand (Tolba 2011:56), while the psychological aspect refers to a brand as subjective and symbolic (Kristinsdottir 2010:5).

This research uses the definition of a brand provided by Tatt (2010:3), who defines a brand as either a name or a symbol used to identify and distinguish a product or service from others. Keth (2016) adds that managing a brand, more commonly known as brand management, involves the use of strategies that organisations may employ to increase the perceived value of a brand, which will provide sustainability and growth. In addition, brand equity is an integral component of brand management, where the image of a brand forms an integral part of brand equity (Sadiq 2020:3). Pahwa (2021:5) articulates that while a product, its price, packaging, shape, colour and the like form the tangible elements of brand management, brand equity, brand identity, brand image and brand positioning form the intangible elements and are crucial for organisations wishing to not only sell a brand but build a long-term experience for their customers.

As such, the following sections outline the intangible elements of brand management, namely brand identity, brand image, brand position and brand equity.

### **2.3. INTANGIBLE ELEMENTS OF BRAND MANAGEMENT**

#### **2.3.1. Brand identity**

Brand identity refers to a brand's external expression, including name, manifestations and pictorial traits (Poshti & Bagheri 2015:264). Azizi and Khatami (2016:760) indicate that many companies' most critical intangible assets are brand identity and presence. Nenycz-Thiel (2013:83) highlights that brand identity is the crucial element and major source by which a brand introduces itself to clients and differentiates itself from competitors. According to Rosengren, Standoft and Sunbrandt (2010:5), brand identity is what the brand stands for, gives the brand meaning and makes the brand unique. A distinctive brand identity enables consumers to fulfil their self-definition needs for uniqueness (Shirazi, Lorestani & Mazidi 2013:159). Yuksel, Yuksel and Bilim (2010:276) claim that a brand with a strong identity is eager to satisfy the symbolic needs of customers and improve the brand value.

#### **2.3.2. Brand image**

Aaker (1996:69) defines brand image as a product's perception reflecting customer memory. Similarly, Kambiz and Safoura (2014:58) argue that brand image is a perception in the mind of the customer's good impression of a brand. As a result, Severi and Ling (2013:127) defined brand image as those psychological qualities that customers' subconscious has built into a brand via expectations and experience. According to Hsiung (2011:7733), brand image is a subjectively perceived image based on the reasoning of buyers. Fianto, Hadiwidjojo, Aisjah and Solimun

(2014:62) view brand image differently as they regard it as the symbolic meaning customers associate through specific attributes of products. Consequently, a positive brand image enables customers to produce a unique association to the brand that always exists in the mind.

### **2.3.3. Brand positioning**

Brand positioning is the act of placing an organisation's product to hold a distinct position in the minds of potential customers (Semans 2010:2). According to Janiszewska and Insch (2012:10), brand positioning refers to the way individuals perceive, think and feel about a particular brand. Keller (2008:98) maintains that brand positioning is what a brand is all about, how a brand is different from rivals and how a brand is comparable to competitors. Shoaib (2016:28) concludes that brand positioning explains why customers choose and utilise a specific brand.

### **2.3.4. Brand equity**

Shin, Kim, Lim and Kim (2014:2) define brand equity as value added by a specific brand to a corporation or consumers. Kotler and Armstrong (2010:243) refer to brand equity as customers' behaviour when exposed to a product. Furthermore, Alkhawalden, Salleh and Halim (2016:723) note that brand equity measures the brand strength in consumer preferences and loyalty. Finally, Ali and Mugadas (2015:892) relate brand equity with customers' reactions to marketing activities. Therefore, Loureiro and Miranda (2011:477) conclude that organisations need to build solid brand equity to prolong their competitiveness in the market.

## **2.4. BRAND LOYALTY**

Marketers have been studying the concept of brand loyalty over the years (Aaker 1991:32). Past research indicates that brand loyalty stems from a decision to repurchase a brand. Anik and Putri (2014:2) argue that brand loyalty develops from repetitive purchase behaviour. Aaker (1991:3) agrees with this argument and maintains that brand loyalty is "the consumer's conscious or unconscious decision, expressed through intention or behaviour, to repurchase a brand continually". Mattison, Newman and Liu (2010:2) voiced their views on brand loyalty by maintaining that brand loyalty consists of a consumer's commitment to repurchase or otherwise continue using a brand and can be demonstrated by the repetitive use of a service or other positive behaviour, such as word of mouth advocacy. Similarly, Mahmud and Gope (2012:26) view brand loyalty as a customer's decision, expressed through intention or behaviour, to repurchase a brand regularly.

Other authors have expressed their points of view. For Touzani and Temessek (2009:228), brand loyalty is a positive attitude towards a particular brand's continuous purchase. Chou (2013:676) defines brand loyalty as a strong preference for a brand compared to other comparable brand choices. In a similar sense, Nawaz and Usman (2011:213) define brand loyalty as a significant preference for a brand when compared to other comparable available brands. Finally, Jansen and Hansen (2006:442) indicate that brand loyalty implies a predisposition commitment to a particular brand or product.

As previously mentioned, recurring purchasing behaviour characterises brand loyalty (Kazemi, Hosseini & Moradi 2013:424). Furthermore, Sharma, Bhola, Malyan and Pant (2013:818) indicate that strong brand loyalty comprises six required components, which include biased behavioural reaction, expressed overtime, by some decision-making unit, regarding one or even more alternative brands from a group of such brands and a function of psychological processes.

There is a notion that brand loyalty is a multifaceted concept influenced by many variables, including the perceived value of the brand, brand trust, customer satisfaction, repeat purchase behaviour and consumer commitment. Brand loyalty is possible when individuals trust a brand, are content with the product or service and think that the brand helps them somehow. As a result, brand loyalty is dependent on commitment and repeat purchase behaviour, followed by perceived value, satisfaction and brand trust (Awan & Rehman 2014:20).

#### **2.4.1. APPROACHES TO BRAND LOYALTY**

According to Javalgi and Moberg (1997:170), brand loyalty consists of three major approaches, namely behavioural (Bass 1974:2; Tranberg & Hansen 1986:112), attitudinal (Bennet & Rundle-Thiele 2000:98) and composite (Jacoby 1971:50; Backman & Crompton 1991:207; Dick & Basu 1994:101; Baldinger & Rubison 1996:24).

##### **2.4.1.1. Behavioural approach**

According to Mehdi, Mojgan and Masoud (2013:11), a behavioural approach refers to a consumer's recurrent and systematic buying behaviour of a particular brand. Lim, Widdows and Park (2006:210) suggest that the behavioural approach is concerned with observable and actual buying behaviour. The number of purchases made, the regularity with which transactions are made, the amount of customer retention and the percentage of clients who use the product (Akhter, Abbasi, Ali & Afzal 2011:168) are the elements that assess the effectiveness of the behavioural approach. As seen in Figure 2.1 in Section 2.4.1.3, the behavioural approach represents a pattern

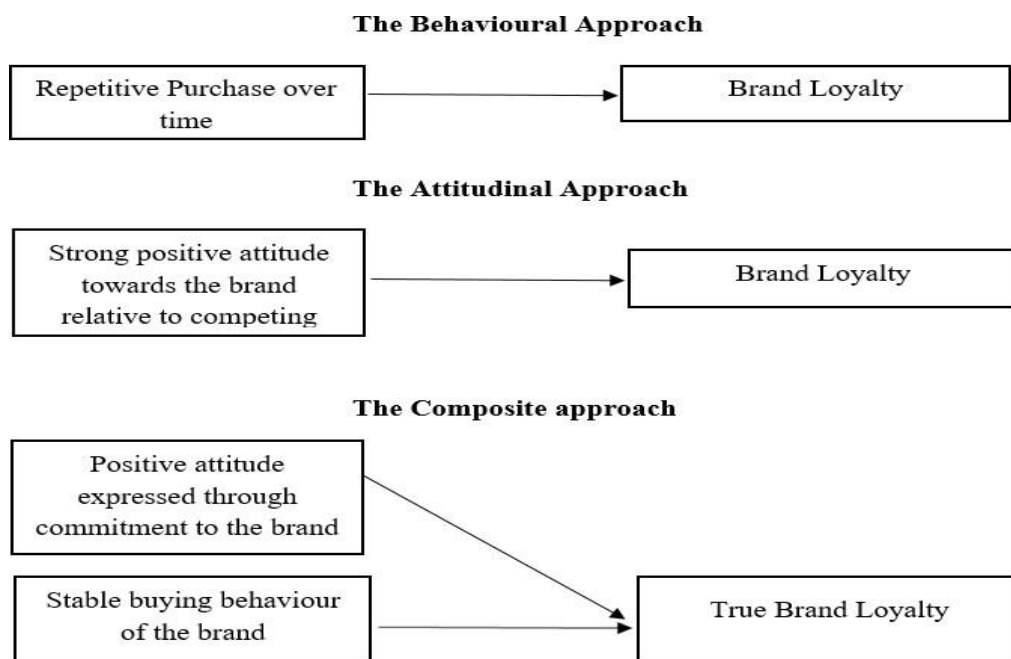
of repeated purchases over time. Consumption patterns repeated over time indicate a consumer's commitment to a particular brand (Brown 1952:54; Vebrova, Venclova & Rojik 2016:1798).

#### **2.4.1.2. Attitudinal approach**

In the 1970's, brand loyalty research attempted to operationalise the concept by examining customers' attitudes towards a brand (Candan, Unal & Ercis 2013:30). Mattison et al. (2010:2) highlighted that the attitudinal component is a customer's favorable views and attitude towards a brand, in comparison to a group of competing brands. In terms of brand loyalty, attitudes are primarily represented by brand preferences or a psychological proclivity towards a specific organisation's products, services or brand (Martisiute, Vilutyte & Grundey 2010:5). Consumer brand loyalty is frequently improved by understanding the factors that influence consumer brand loyalty and having more knowledge of how customers and organisations interact (Denoue & Saykiewicz, 2009:38). As such, the attitudinal approach has a high level of resonance in terms of brand loyalty development (Latif, Islam & Noor 2014:553). The attitudinal approach is measured by a customer's intention to repeat purchase, their tendency to make recommendations to other customers, their likelihood to engage in switching behavior to better competitors and lastly, a customer's attachment to the product (Anderson & Sullivan 1993:127; Chiou & Droge 2006:614; Boulding, Kalra, Staelin & Zeithaml 1993:8; Reich, McCleary, Tepanon & Weaver 2005:36; Back & Parks 2003:420; Back 2005:449; Tolba 2011:57; Latif, Islam & Noor 2014:553).

#### **2.4.1.3 Composite approach**

The third approach is the composite approach. According to Dick and Basu (1994:107), the composite approach includes behavioural and attitudinal approaches. Touzani and Temessek (2009:229) state that the composite approach focusses on determining consumers' positive attitudes through a commitment to a brand, which eventually leads to stable buying behaviour. The following diagram illustrates all the approaches to brand loyalty, namely, behavioural, attitudinal and composite approaches:



**Figure 2.1 Approaches to brand loyalty (Touzani & Temessek 2009:229)**

The following section explores the models of brand loyalty.

## **2.4.2. MODELS OF BRAND LOYALTY**

The brand loyalty model developed by Oliver (1999:34) includes four fundamental brand loyalty stages. The following section explains these loyalty stages, namely cognitive, affective, conative and action.

### **2.4.2.1. Cognitive**

Cognitive loyalty is a psychological preference for a brand that comprises positive attitudes and thoughts regarding purchasing a particular brand (Kuzgun 2012:24). In addition, the term cognitive loyalty refers to the decision to remain with a brand after considering the costs of switching and the features of that brand (Marshall 2010:72). Cognitive loyalty occurs when the expense of switching brands and analysis of the quality of the service are understood (Worthington, Russell-Bennett & Hartel 2009:244). As previously stated, cognitive loyalty is primarily concerned with the psychological preference for a particular brand and the expenses involved with moving to a different brand.

### **2.4.2.2. Affective**

Smith (2012:3) refers to affective loyalty as the customer's affinity for a specific brand. At this phase of loyalty, attachment to or attitude towards the brand has developed based on an

increasingly satisfying experience with the brand (Dahlgren 2011:25). Consumer commitment to the brand characterises the phase (Mehdi, Mojgan & Masoud 2012:11). Touzani and Temessek (2009:230) indicate that affective loyalty is closely related to the feelings and emotions towards the brand derived from satisfaction and repurchasing of the brand. At the same time, consumers may be vulnerable to switching behaviour (Murray 2012:8).

#### **2.4.2.3. Conative**

Back and Parks (2003:423) define conative loyalty as a hidden intentional behaviour whereby the customer will directly repurchase a specific brand. According to Oliver (1999:35), consumers are repeatedly satisfied with products or service performance in the conative phase. Bengul (2006:35) adds that commitment leads to an intention to repurchase a brand.

#### **2.4.2.4. Action**

At this stage, the frequency of a customer's repetitive purchase or use of a product or service determines loyalty (Candan *et al.* 2013:34). Therefore, action is the habit of going for the product or service of the same brand as a routine (Dick & Basu 1994:105). Customers who complete these four phases become loyal customers (Aboul-Ela 2015:35). Oliver (1999:95) outlines the loyalty phases illustrated in Table 2.1.

**Table 2.1. Loyalty phases and their vulnerabilities**

| <b>Loyalty phase</b> | <b>Characteristics</b>                                  | <b>Vulnerabilities</b>             |
|----------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| 1. Cognitive         | Advantageous qualities and features perceived           | Superficial, low-intensity loyalty |
| 2. Affective         | Attachment and attitude towards the brand establishment | Vulnerable to switching            |
| 3. Conative          | Commitment or plan to repurchase                        | Desire may remain unfulfilled      |
| 4. Action            | Strong eagerness to act                                 | Deteriorating performance          |

**Source: Oliver (1999:85)**

In the above table, cognitive loyalty focusses on a brand's perceived characteristics, affective loyalty is directed towards the brand likeability, and conative loyalty and experience occur when consumers intend to rebuy a brand. Finally, action loyalty is a deep commitment to the action of repurchasing.

Based on the Theory of Reasoned Action, consumer brand loyalty may be influenced by the attitudes consumers form towards a brand (Ha 1998). Consequently, Chinomona, Mahlangu and Pooe (2013:182) propose that consumers' attitudes may emanate from a positive evaluation of the brand service quality received, which could result in brand satisfaction, trust and preference. Consequently, this study has identified four predictors of brand loyalty which will be discussed in the following section, namely brand service quality, brand satisfaction, brand trust and brand preference.

## **2.5. PREDICTORS OF BRAND LOYALTY**

### **2.5.1. Brand service quality**

Heung, Wong and Qu (2002:34) describe brand service quality as the quality of services offered by a particular brand that surpasses or satisfies the expectations of a specific group of customers. Chinomona, Mahlangu and Pooe (2013:182) highlight that brand service quality and the associated behavioural outcomes have received much attention in the literature. Zehir *et al.* (2011:1220) argue that brand service quality influences customer satisfaction. Kazemi *et al.* (2013:424) found that brand service quality is essential for brand loyalty. Therefore, it can be



deduced that brand service quality is the perception of quality achieved by a brand.

### **2.5.2 Brand satisfaction**

Chinomona and Sandada (2013:1632) describe brand satisfaction as the cumulative satisfaction of a consumer's overall assessment based on the consumer's entire purchase and experience with a brand, product or service. Similarly, Nguyen and Gizaw (2014:17) describe brand satisfaction as an affective, emotional response to the repeated use of service situations and the positive reaction from previous experience with the brand. Xie and Chaipoopirutana (2014:22) concluded that brand satisfaction is a consumer's anticipation of the advantages and costs of a previous experience. According to Chinomona *et al.* (2015:182), brand satisfaction arises when a brand's performance matches or exceeds a customer's expectations. Several studies have been conducted to identify links between brand satisfaction and various other variables. For example, Ercis *et al.* (2012:1336) maintain that brand satisfaction is one of the antecedents of affective commitment on the part of consumers regarding their repurchase intentions. Indarini and Anandya (2019:123) theorise that brand satisfaction is associated with a favourable brand attitude.

Hosseini (2012:23) states that brand satisfaction is an attitude-like judgement following a purchase or a series of customer product interactions. Ningsih and Segoro (2014:1016) state that brand satisfaction is the overall attitude indicated from a customer evaluation after acquiring a product or service from a certain brand. Xie and Chaipoopirutana (2014:21) conclude that brand satisfaction is an attitude, assessment and emotional response shown by the customers after using a brand.

According to Deng, Lu, Wei and Zhang (2010:290), brand satisfaction is not enough anymore. They believe organisations should also ensure that satisfied customers are loyal to the brand. Thus, satisfaction is likely to be an important driver of loyalty in organisational settings, as it implies an evaluation of a brand's performance. As a result, it is critical in building the loyalty of an organisation's employees. Various studies report on a relationship between satisfaction and brand loyalty and state that although consumers can be satisfied without being loyal, they may be loyal and not satisfied (Kiyani, Niazi, Rizvi & Khan 2012:490; Ahmed, Rizwan, Ahmad & Ha 2014:311). Research indicates that satisfaction is the predecessor of brand loyalty (Russell-Bennett *et al.* 2007:1257). Therefore, brand loyalty can be increased by customer satisfaction and therefore increase the repetition of customers' purchases of the same products or services (Ahmed *et al.* 2014:311). Rahman (2012:57) found that customer satisfaction can help a brand build long and profitable relationships with customers. Marist, Yuliati and Najib (2014:58) found a high

correlation and a strong relationship between brand satisfaction and brandloyalty.

Considering this background in the literature and in line with previous studies, the present study hypothesises that brand satisfaction and brand loyalty are significantly and directly related and that there may even be a causal relationship between the two.

### **2.5.3 Brand trust**

Establishing brand trust is an important aspect that influences many other elements of the brand like pleasure, brand experience, brand preference, branding predictability, branding competency and trust in an organisation (Setyawan & Imronudin, 2015:38). La and Choi (2011:107) describe brand trust as confident consumer beliefs that the brand can be relied on to provide the promised products or services. Kim, Jin and Swinney (2008:43) define brand trust as the typical consumer's readiness to depend on the brand's capacity to execute its claimed functions. According to Zehir *et al.* (2011:28), brand trust is a connection between the brand and the customer, replacing personal interaction between an organisation and consumers. Among the outcomes of brand trust is brand loyalty (Alam & Yasin 2010:80)

### **2.5.4 Brand preference**

Keller and Lehmann (2006:743) describe brand preferences as a collection of brand assets and liabilities associated with a brand and a customer's subjective and intangible appraisal of a brand, in addition to and beyond the brand's objectively perceived value. Anand, Panchanathan and Rajasekaran (2013:46) argue that brand preference and brand choice are two distinct but closely linked characteristics that may assist consumers in making choices and activating brand buying decisions. Customers' choice of a brand adds to the brand's relative strength in the market (Shankar, Azar & Fuller 2008:46), resulting in the brand's brand value in the marketplace. The following section focuses on brand communication.

## **2.6 BRAND COMMUNICATION**

According to Walter, Cleff and Chu (2013:132), brand communication enhances and influences customer satisfaction by making consumers more attached to a brand. Brand communication describes the interaction between a brand and its customers (Schivinski & Dabrowski 2015:36). Baeva (2011:51) maintains that brand communication represents a brand's "voice" and establishes a dialogue while building relationships with consumers. Organisations use brand communication to inform, teach, persuade and remind stakeholders about the service and brands that they offer (Taskin, Emel, Karadamar & Memis 2016:367). According to Kotler and Keller (2007:89), brand

communication aims to explain to stakeholders what the organisation and its brand stand for and link brands to other individuals, places, events, brands, experiences and feelings. Sridhar (2013:77) adds that brand communication involves delivering the most compelling message to reach the intended target audience via an ideal medium. Thus, the primary purpose of brand communication is to expose the audience to a brand. Therefore, Edmonds (2013:105) maintains that marketers should communicate a clear benefit of a brand to the intended target audience, which is relevant and will capture attention and become influential in consumers' lives. Therefore, Heaton (2014:64) suggests that brand communication should foster the most constructive and positive influence over a specific brand as it evolves and exists in the minds of consumers.

Increasing awareness and higher recall to use the highest consumer response brand maximises brand loyalty (Sahin *et al.* 2012:1362). Brand recall and recognition, favourability, strength and uniqueness of a brand association in the consumer memory often measure brand communication (Panda 2004:9). Schivinski and Dabrowski (2015:7) indicate that brand communication positively influences brand loyalty. Based on this viewpoint, this study aims to investigate whether, in the context of TVET colleges, the effects of brand communication on brand loyalty can be demonstrated. Section 1.4 of Chapter 1 presents a hypothesis about the relationship between these two variables.

### **2.6.1 Objectives of brand communications**

The primary goal of brand communication is to inform, convince and remind the targeted audience about the brand that an organisation has to offer (Taskin *et al.* 2016:367). According to Schivinski and Dabrowski (2015:33), the ultimate goal of brand communication is to influence customers' behaviour towards a particular brand. Several organisations utilise brand communication to persuade customers that their product or service has a substantial and competitive advantage (Indarini & Anandya 2019:123). Sahin *et al.* (2012:1362) state that brand communication is the most important integrative factor in maintaining brand connections with customers and fostering brand attitudes, such as satisfaction and trust. Baeva (2011:52) offers four potential objectives for brand communications, including:

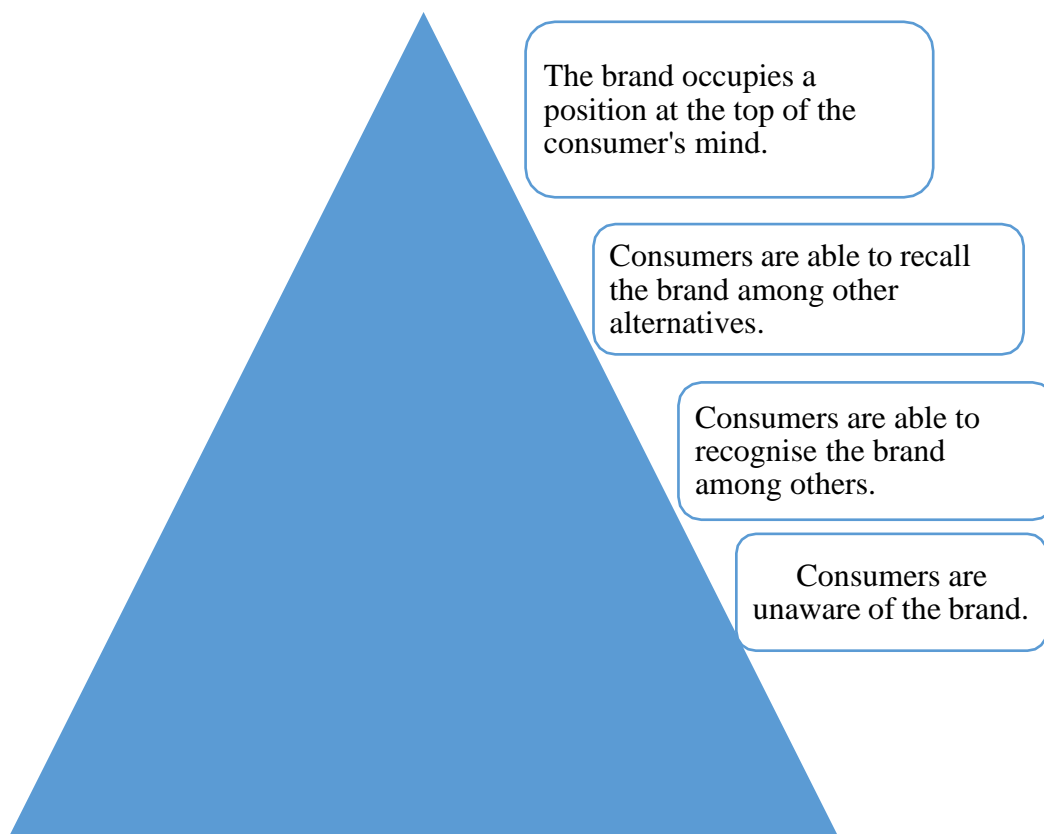
#### **2.6.1.1 Category need**

According to Kazemi *et al.* (2013:424), building a brand category is required to eliminate or fulfil a perceived disparity between a present motivational state and a desired emotional state.

### 2.6.1.2 Brand awareness

Kazemi *et al.* (2013:424) define brand awareness as the capacity to recognise or remember a particular brand within a category in sufficient detail to make a judgement about that brand. As Atilgan, Aksoy and Akinci (2005:224) point out, the level of awareness among consumers determines whether or not a brand is remembered throughout a necessary purchase process. According to O'Guinn *et al.* (2009:33), brand awareness is crucial in determining whether customers are familiar with a certain brand. As a result, customers become more educated about the brand due to increased brand recognition. Yuan and Jang (2008:285) claim that strong brand awareness will eventually lead to recall and purchase and lay the groundwork for brand loyalty in the long run (Chu, Lee & Chao 2012:1272).

Aaker (1991:61) explains that brand awareness exists on a continuum, from being unaware of a brand to being convinced that the brand is the only one of its kind in the product or service category. The brand awareness continuum consists of four levels, as shown in Figure 2.2.



**Figure 2.2: The brand awareness continuum (Source: adapted from Aaker 1991:61)**

At first, consumers are unaware of a brand. However, after some exposure to a brand, consumers recognise the brand and recall the brand (Soonarong 2011:16). That ultimately results in the brand being at the top of the consumers' minds, occupying a distinct position (Zohra 2011:169).

### **2.6.1.3 Brand attitude**

Brand attitude relates to customers' overall perception of a brand (Keller, 2002:88). Generally, customers possess attitudes towards organisations, brands, services and products (Xie & Chaipoopirutana 2014:21). The attitudes may be favourable or unfavourable, may remain for a long time or may change as customers obtain new experiences and thoughts (Ghorban 2012:31). According to Park, McInnis, Priester, Eisenrich and Lacobucci (2010:1), a consumer's brand attitude impacts his or her conduct towards an organisation, such as exhibiting interest in a brand, or buying the brand or preferring the brand over other choices.

### **2.6.1.4 Brand purchase intention**

Brand purchasing intentions refer to the future intent of buying behaviour and the economic decision involved in the purchasing process (Gilaninia, Taleghani & Mohammadi 2013:48). Yoo and Lee (2009:283) add that brand purchase intention has a broader scope of assumption rather than consumer behaviours and has a favourable effect on individual action. Naeem (2015:114) highlights that consumer intention towards branded products depends on brand attributes.

The following section discusses the modes of brand communication.

## **2.7 MODES OF BRAND COMMUNICATION**

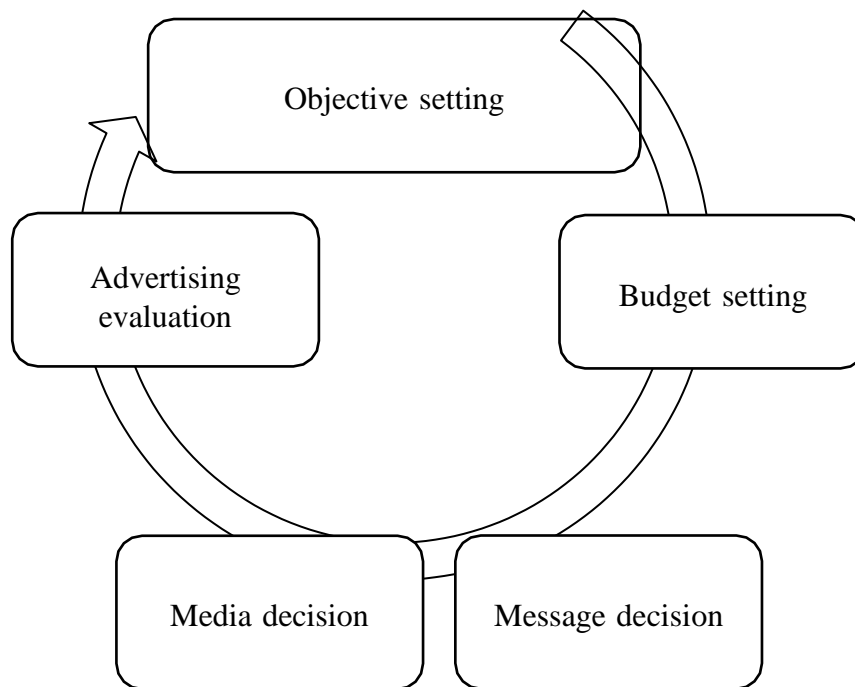
There are various modes of brand communication and these consist of advertising, sales promotion, events and experience, public relations, direct marketing and personal selling (Keller 2009:141).

### **2.7.1.1 Advertising**

Kotler and Armstrong (2010:450) define advertising as any paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas and services by an identified sponsor. Grace and O'Cass (2005:127) indicate that advertising involves paying to disseminate a message identifying a brand, product or service, or an organisation promoted to many individuals. It is used to create a long-term brand image (Frolova 2014:16). According to Baeva (2011:53), advertising offers

opportunities for amplified expressiveness and is also persuasive and able to reach geographically dispersed stakeholders efficiently. There are different advertising forms, including newspapers and television (Frolova 2014:6).

Kotler and Armstrong (2010:451) maintain that there are four important marketing management decisions when developing an advertising programme.



**Figure 2.3 Major advertising decisions (Kotler & Armstrong 2010:451)**

According to Kotler and Armstrong (2010:451), setting objectives is the first step in advertising. Kotler and Keller (2012:499) highlight that setting objectives is based on a past decision about consumers, positioning and brand communication, which define the job that advertising must do in the total marketing activities. Groenewald and Francis (2015:38) highlight that the main objective of advertising is to build customer relationships by communicating the brand.

Following the determination of the advertising objective, the organisation establishes an advertising budget. Many organisations use several popular approaches for determining the overall budget for advertising. These include the affordable method, the percentage of sales methodology, the competitive parity methodology and the objective and task methodology. The percentage of sales technique predicts income statements and balance sheets, where expenses change in the same proportion as sales and the sales estimate serves as a proxy for the actual cost of goods sold (Genenk & Neslin 1999:435). In business, the competitive parity is the desire to

achieve the same level of performance as a rival or the average for the industry (Terkan2014:241). When an organisation budgets for advertising, it employs the affordable technique (Sindhya 2013:2). Making a marketing budget is an example of an objective and task technique (Truong, McColl & Kitchen 2010:711). It consists of a series of procedures to identify and prioritise certain goals that an organisation wants to achieve via advertising.

After deciding on the message, a decision needs to be made regarding the media to be used. Selecting the advertising media is based on the reach, frequency and impact needed to achieve advertising objectives (Keller 2009:140). Therefore, organisations should also choose the best media vehicles, such as television, radio or newspapers.

### **2.7.1.2 Sales promotion**

A sales promotion is a short-term benefit to promote the trial or usage of a product or service. It includes consumer promotions, such as samples, discounts and prizes, display allowances and sales force promotions (Vecchio, Henard & Freling 2006:203). According to Simonson, Carmon and O' Curry (1994:24), sales promotion has the potential to capture consumers' attention. Furthermore, sales promotion serves as an enticement or contribution that adds value to a customer's experience (Chandon, Wansink, & Laurent 2000:66).

According to Keller (1993:223), sales promotion brings about the perceived value associated with the sales promotion experience, which can encompass both promotion exposure (e.g., seeing a promotion on a product) and promotion use (e.g., using a promotion) (e.g. redeeming a coupon or buying a promoted product). That means customers react to sales promotions due to their previous favourable product experiences. In addition, according to Chandon, Wansink and Laurent (2000:66), sales promotions also allow for upselling, which is when a consumer is persuaded to purchase a costlier item, and cross-selling, which is when a customer is persuaded to purchase a connected product.

### **2.7.1.3 Events and experience**

Events and experiences are activities and programmes sponsored by organisations that aim to generate brand-related encounters with customers (Kotler & Keller 2012:500). The practice of increasing the interest of an organisation and brand by linking the organisation with specific activities may also be characterised as events and experiences (Zarantonello & Schmitti 2013:4). The types of events that can be held are numerous and include incentives and reward programmes, product launches, open days, conferences, product sampling, publicity events, so-called "created"

events, roadshows, press conferences, corporate entertainment, charity fundraising, trade shows and product visitor attractions (Wood 2009:43). In addition, various other types of events, such as street fairs and pop-up stores, are often utilised by organisations to promote their products and services (Zarantonello & Schmitt 2013:258). In general, events and experiences assist organisations to increase customer loyalty to their brand (Kabadayi & Alan 2012:81).

#### **2.7.1.4 Public relations**

According to Ferrell and Hartline (2005:242), public relations promote or protect an organisation's brand. Public relations constitute a form of communication that focusses on managing the brand rather than dealing specifically with products or services (Kotler & Armstrong 2010:467). Keller (2009:141) postulates that public relations add credibility to a message and are ideal for creating immediate brand awareness when introducing new products or services in the market. In addition, public relations can build long-term brand loyalty (Gilaninia1, Taleghani & Mohammadi 2013:47).

#### **2.7.1.5 Direct marketing**

Direct marketing refers to mail, telephone, fax, e-mail and internet to communicate directly with specific stakeholders and prospects (Fill & Jamieson 2011:16). Direct marketing targets particular audiences to deliver personalised messages and build a relationship with them (Mongkol 2014:445).

#### **2.7.1.6. Personal selling**

Personal selling is defined as face-to-face interaction with prospective stakeholders to make presentations and answer questions (Keller 2009:141; Mongkol 2014:445). Stanton, Etzel and Walker (1994:345) argue that personal selling is the most effective tool at a later stage of the decision-making process, particularly in building stakeholder preference, conviction and action. In addition, personal selling aims to develop a good and long-lasting relationship between a salesperson and the customer, thereby creating brand loyalty.

## **2.8 SERVICE QUALITY**

The discrepancy between what consumers anticipate from a service and what they perceive as a service is called service quality (Parasuranman, Zeithaml & Berry 1988:23; Anselmsson, Johansson & Persson 2007:407). According to Auka, Bosire and Matern (2013:35), service quality refers to how a supplied service fits a customer's expectations. Nguyen and Gizaw



(2014:14) assert that service quality is the total impression consumers form based on the actual usefulness and excellence of an organisation's services. As a result, superior service quality provides customers with more value and a compelling argument for choosing one brand over another (Kayaman & Arasli 2007:93).

Hossein (2012:22) articulates that many organisations have realised the significance of concentrating on service quality to increase brand loyalty and develop their competence and organisational performance. Parasuraman *et al.* (1988:25) propose the famous model for measuring service quality, known as the SERVQUAL model. The model measures the variation in customer expectation and what customers perceive based on five factors, namely reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy and tangibility. Clow, Tripp and Kenny (1996:52) argue that consumers' perceived service quality reflects their perceptions of specific service dimensions, namely reliability, responsiveness, empathy, tangibility and assurance. The elements are discussed in Section 2.7.1.

Waseem (2016:27) defines perceived quality as a form of attitude related to satisfaction, which results from the consumption of expectations with the perception of performance. Therefore, understanding consumer attitudes better will help to develop an understanding of how consumers perceive service quality in an organisation (Wu, Liao, Chen & Hsu 2011:1161). By providing high-quality service, organisations can improve customer satisfaction, strengthen customer loyalty, ensure consistent workflow practices, reduce marketing costs, create a competitive advantage, improve market position and contribute to staff pride and satisfaction (Roostika 2011:287; Quoquab, Basiruddin & Rasid 2013:178; Ullah, Raza & Chander 2016:84). Similarly, high-quality service ensures long-term customer loyalty, where organisations can achieve this by exceeding customer expectations (Angelova & Zekiri 2011:245; Wu, Liao, Chen & Hsu 2011:26). Based on the literature presented in this section, hypothesis 2, as presented in Chapter 1, Section 1.4, was formulated, to demonstrate a relationship between service quality in TVET colleges and brand loyalty.

## **2.8.1 Elements of service quality**

The following variables are used to assess service quality:

### **2.8.1.1 Reliability**

According to Malik Ghafoor and Iqbal (2012:126), reliability is defined as an organisation's capacity to execute the service dependably, accurately and consistently while honouring

commitments on delivery, service provision, problem resolution, price and other aspects of the service. Furthermore, reliability concerns delivering a service correctly the first time, as promised (Zeithaml, Bitner, & Gremler 2006:107). The most crucial aspect in the eyes of consumers is the ability to deliver on promises concerning service outcomes and essential service quality (Chao, Wu & Yen 2015:61).

### **2.8.1.2 Responsiveness**

Responsiveness is the readiness to assist consumers and deliver quick services (Kurniawan 2010:23). Responding to client requests, inquiries, complaints and difficulties is responsiveness (Gounaris, Dimitriadis & Stathakopoulos 2010:144 2010:144). The time it takes an organisation to provide a service to a client is used to assess responsiveness (Hossein 2012:22). Customers' perceptions of responsiveness are damaged when they believe they must wait a lengthy period for assistance (Khan, Aabdean, Salman, Nadeem & Rizwan 2016:86).

### **2.8.1.3 Assurance**

The expertise and courtesy of employees and their capacity to inspire trust and confidence in an organisation's prospective clients are all examples of assurance (Caceres & Paparoidamis 2007:838). Assurance is critical for high-risk service organisations, such as financial institutions and stock exchanges (Addrisu 2011:20). Employees in high-risk organisations must have a specific degree of knowledge and skills to serve clients and make them feel confident (Saraswathi 2011:95).

### **2.8.1.4 Empathy**

Empathy is the ability to give compassionate, individualised customer service (Ivanauskiene & Volungenaite 2014:115). Individual and personalised attention to unique clients demonstrates empathy and reassure them that their demands are being met (Xie & Chaipoopirutana 2014:21). Because of this, organisations that give personal service to their consumers may acquire a competitive advantage over other organisations that do not treat their customers as individuals (Sanaratna, Peiris & Jayasundara 2010:2).

### **2.8.1.5 Tangibles**

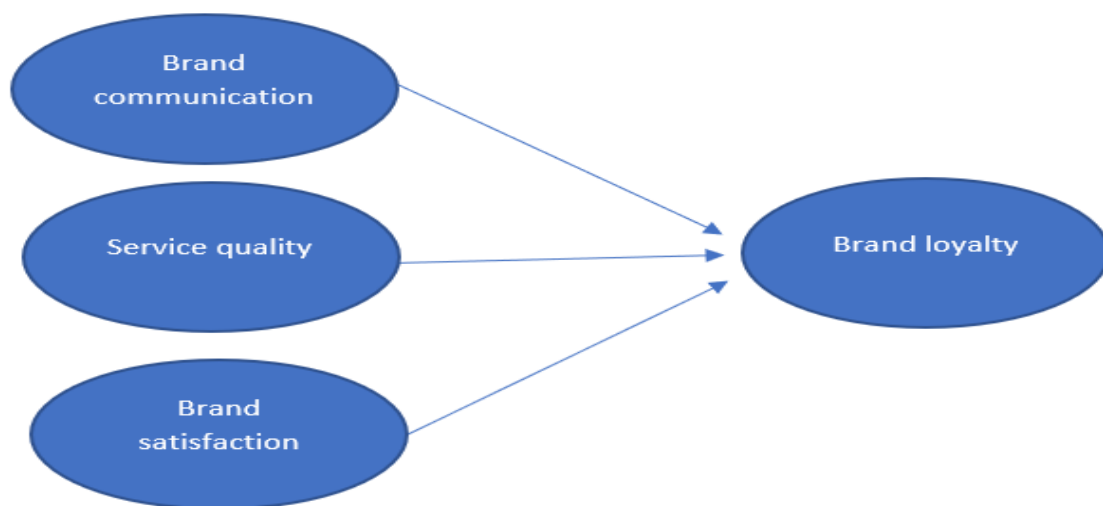
Tangibles are anything like physical buildings, equipment, staff and communication materials that have an actual appearance (Parasuranman *et al.* 1988:10). Tangibles may help improve the image of an organisation and give continuity and signal quality to consumers, although tangibles

are often used in conjunction with another service dimension (Arambewela & Hall 2008:130). Regarding physical facilities, Phiri and Mewabe (2013:97) discovered that an organisation's premises should have a decorative and a pleasant atmosphere to effect service quality, which leads to positive brand loyalty. As a result, Auka *et al.* (2013:48) conclude that the physical setting of the place of service, which includes aspects such as colour, texture, noise, odours and temperature, is essential and is capable of altering customer expectations as well as significantly influencing consumer response and satisfaction with a brand.

## 2.9 RESEARCH MODEL

After the literature review, a research model was developed, which is shown in Figure 1.

The research model provides an overview of the constructs under investigation in the current study and their relationship to each other. The relationship between the constructs will be tested later.



**Figure 2.4: Proposed research model**

## 2.10 CONCLUSION

The focus of this chapter was on the theoretical framework of the study by giving insight into brand loyalty. In Section 2.2, the concept of a brand was defined and explained in detail, followed by Section 2.3, which identified and discussed the components of a brand, such as brand identity, image, positioning and equity. Section 2.4 discussed brand loyalty and its approaches. Section 2.5 discussed the predictors of brand loyalty, such as brand service quality, brand satisfaction,

brand trust and brand preference. Section 2.6 discussed brand communication and its objectives. The section further discussed the modes of brand communication such as advertising, sales promotion, events and experience, public relations, direct marketing and personnel selling. Section 2.7 presented modes of communication. Section 2.8 provided the elements of service quality such as reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy and tangibles.

The following chapter addresses the research methodology and statistical methods used in the current study.

## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter explains the research methodologies employed in this study and justifies the approaches used. The study design, sampling method and data collecting method, including the techniques used to analyse the data, are all covered in detail in this chapter. Each section provides in-depth coverage of the study's design and methodology, data collecting techniques, administration of the questionnaires, statistical analysis, reliability and validity testing and ethical issues. Finally, the chapter provides a conclusion at the end.

#### 3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design refers to the execution of the research project (Malhotra 2010:73). Overall, the research design consists of three general categories, namely exploratory research, which primarily involves qualitative data, causal and descriptive research, which primarily involves quantitative data (McDaniel & Gates 2013:378). These categories differ significantly regarding research purpose, research questions, the precision of the hypotheses developed and the data collection methods used (Aaker *et al.* 2013:187). The following section discusses the three research design categories.

##### 3.2.1 Exploratory research

Burn and Groove (2001:374) define exploratory research as the research conducted to gain new information, discover new ideas and increase knowledge of a specific phenomenon. According to Keiter (2017:131), for exploratory research to be reliable, it should be conducted in a transparent, honest and self-reflexive way and follow the guidelines to ensure its reliability. Exploratory research assists when the researcher seeks insights into the variables relevant to the study, the nature of a problem and the possible decision alternatives (Burns and Grove (2003:313). Burns and Grove (2003:313) define exploratory research as research conducted to gain new insights, discover new ideas and increase knowledge of a phenomenon. Exploratory research is highly flexible, unstructured and qualitative in nature, with no firm preconceptions. The absence of structure permits a thorough pursuit of interesting ideas and clues concerned with problem situations (Malhotra 2010:106). Exploratory research hypotheses are vague, ill-defined or non-existent (Matima 2010:23). Qualitative research methods, such as in-depth interviews, projective

techniques and focus group discussions, may be used to conduct exploratory research (Burns & Bush 2010:57). Therefore, exploratory research helps determine the best research design and data collection method.

### **3.2.2 Descriptive research**

This type of research encompasses either finding out the characteristics of an observed phenomenon or discovering possible correlations among the variables. The research does not involve modifying or changing the situation under investigation, nor is it intended to find cause and effect relationships (Leedy & Ormros 2005:179). According to Polit and Hungler (2004:716), descriptive research describes a specific market characteristic and is also used to clearly state the research problem, specific research questions and detailed information needed. In marketing, the purpose of descriptive research is to provide a snapshot of a particular aspect of the market environment (Zikmund & Babin 2010:51). Descriptive research is known for hypotheses, although these are tentatively speculative. In general, the relationships studied will not be causal, although they may still have utility in prediction (Matima 2010:24).

### **3.2.3 Causal research**

Causal research answers the “why” questions while examining whether one variable causes or determines the value of another variable (Aaker, Kumar, Day & Leone 2011:304). The research design determines the cause and effect relationship between variables (Churchill & Lacobubucci 2005:74; Zikmund & Babin 2010:53). According to Burns and Bush (2010:57), causal research is experimental research because tests usually need to be done physically to determine the outcome. The goal of this kind of research is to develop a theory.

Generally, when selecting which research design to use for a study, researchers need to ensure that the research design relates to the objective and purpose of the study. Other factors that need to be considered include the resources available, the extent of previous research undertaken and the researcher's amount of control over the research study conducted (Welman, Kruger & Mitchell 2009:82). As this study is being undertaken to test proposed hypotheses, the study adopted a descriptive research design.

The following section discusses the sampling approach used in this study.

### **3.3 SAMPLING STRATEGY**

The sampling strategy is the researcher's plan to be confident that the sample used in the research study will represent the population from which the sample was drawn (Landreneau & Creek 2008:2). This study used a strategy suggested by Tustin, Ligthelm, Martins and Van Wyk (2005:3390) and identified the target population sampling method and sample size. The following section discusses the techniques used to arrive at the study sample.

#### **3.3.1 Target population**

A target population is a subset of a population from which data is collected (Vanderstoep & Johnston 2009:25) to assist researchers in concluding the entire population (Cooper & Schindler 2003:179). Therefore, a population is the entire group of individuals from whom researchers gather information. It also refers to the population of interest (Wiid & Diggines 2009:195). The target population for this study comprised of the following:

- Element: Full-time students, both male and female, between the ages of 18–26, enrolled at TVET colleges in Gauteng.
- Sampling unit: Five South African TVET colleges
- Extent: South Africa, Gauteng
- Time: 2018

#### **3.3.2 Sampling frame**

After defining the target population, the researcher must compile a list of all eligible sampling units, known as the sample frame (Martins, Loubser & Van Wyk 1996:253). A sample consists of a smaller and more manageable form of a larger group used in research. It is a subset that contains a population's features (Hoy & Hoy 2009:76). Samples are often employed in statistical testing if the sizes of the population are too big for the test to include every possible member.

The sampling frame comprised of a list of the 50 registered public South African TVET colleges (Elikplim, 2022). A non-probability convenience sample of five TVET colleges located in Gauteng was selected for the list of 50 registered public South African TVET colleges – three of which are based in residential towns and two in the locations. The reason Gauteng was chosen for this study is that it comprises the largest share of the South African population. The reason Gauteng was chosen for this study is that it comprises the largest share of the South African

population (Stats SA, 2021). The reason for selecting these TVET colleges is the high student enrolment figures.

### **3.3.3 Method of sampling**

The sampling method refers to selecting the sample units (Hair *et al.* 2008: 256). There are two basic sampling techniques, including probability and non-probability sampling (Burns & Bush 2006:121). Probability sampling refers to the possibility that each object in the target population could be selected and where each object has an equal chance of being selected (Blumberg, Cooper & Schindler 2014:221). In probability sampling techniques, researchers may choose either simple random sampling, systematic random sampling, stratified random sampling or cluster sampling (Sreejesh, Mohapatra & Anusree, 2014:19). On the other hand, non-probability sampling involves the use of population elements that are selected based on the availability of sample elements or on the researcher's judgement (Welman *et al.* 2009:56). According to Field (2013:42), non-probability sampling aims at obtaining a sample of convenient elements quickly and inexpensively, where the choice of elements is determined subjectively (Welman *et al.* 2009:59). Kumar (2000:224) concludes that non-probability sampling does not depend upon chance and therefore, researchers cannot correctly control who or what forms part of a sample.

In non-probability sampling, researchers may choose either convenience sampling, judgement sampling, referral or snowball sampling or quota sampling (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2016:217). Hall (2008:39) defines convenience sampling as a process based on the availability of subjects, units or individuals to be studied. Judgement sampling is the selection of a sample based on the researcher's knowledge of the study population and its characteristics, and the nature of the research (Babbie & Mouton 2003:166). According to Edwards and Holland (2013:5), a snowball occurs when researchers contact participants appropriate for the research. Participants recommend others with relevant characteristics for the research through the first participants.

A non-probability convenience sample was used in this study. The lecturers at each of the five TVET colleges were contacted, requesting them to ask their students to complete the questionnaire. The lecturers were informed that the questionnaire was to be completed voluntarily only and that no student was to be coerced into completing the questionnaire. Once permission was granted, a hand delivered, self-administered questionnaire was distributed to the full-time undergraduate students during class time at each of the five TVET colleges between 2018 and 2019.



### **3.3.4 Sample size**

Saunders *et al.* (2016:221) define a sample size as a subgroup of the population selected for participation in the study. Malhotra (2004:318) states that it is challenging to decide the ideal size. In other instances, variances in variables observed within the population of interest and the desired reliability and accuracy of the results determine the sample size (Bryman & Bell 2011:307). Based on previous studies (Fransen & Lodder, 2010:802; Chiou & Shen, 2008:20; Zehir *et al.*, 2011:1222) focused on Generation Y students, this study has a sample size of 500 respondents across each institution. The sample size of 500 full-time Generation Y students was considered adequate for testing the hypothesis, especially in view of the use of structural equation modelling in this study. The number of responses needed to conduct structural equation modelling is generally 200.

## **3.4 DATA COLLECTION METHOD**

According to Burns and Bush (2003:233), data collection is gathering and recording information on useful variables in an established and systematic manner that facilitates answering the research questions. A survey is a primary data collection strategy using communicating with a representative sample (Dillman 2007:29). Surveys allow researchers to ask questions concerning variables of interest (Maholtra 2010:173).

The survey approach involves using structured questionnaires to extract specific data from respondents (Arleck & Settle 2007:181). The survey technique gathers information on a population in a timely, cost-effective, efficient and accurate manner (Tustin *et al.* 2005:139).

Since this study uses a quantitative approach, a survey is the most appropriate method for data collection. As a result, the study's data was collected using a survey. The following section discusses the questionnaire design.

### **3.4.1 Questionnaire design**

De Wet (2000:41) defines a questionnaire as obtaining specific information about a defined problem and includes questions that the respondents can answer without difficulty. Questionnaires are one of the most regularly utilised means of gathering information (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2012:417). The current study employed a structured questionnaire as the research tool. Polit and Hungler (2004:193) assert that the advantages of a structured questionnaire are brevity and preciseness that contribute to its credibility. According to Boone and Boone (2012:2), a structured questionnaire allows the researcher to collect data fast and is

inexpensive.

When developing a questionnaire, the type of questions to be included and the questionnaire's sequence and format are critical (Hair, Black, Babin & Anderson 2010:38). The range of questions on the questionnaire covered the research objectives as outlined in Chapter 1 of this study. In addition, the questionnaire was clearly and concisely framed so that the research participants had no difficulty responding to the questions.

There was a use of structured undisguised questions throughout the questionnaire. Section A of the questionnaire contained demographical questions, while Sections B, C, D and E contained study questions covering the research objectives. Sections B, C, D and E, used the Likert scale to measure brand loyalty and restricted the answers to specific questions, requiring the respondents to indicate a degree of agreement or disagreement to a series of statements (Boone & Boone, 2012:2). The research used a six-point Likert scale, with 1 indicating strongly disagree, 2 indicating disagree, 3 indicating somewhat disagree, 4 indicating slightly agree, 5 indicating agree and 6 indicating strongly agree because it is simple to construct and understand and for respondents to answer (Zikmund 2000:113). The questionnaire was accompanied by a cover letter that explained the research participants' informed consent and the study's goal and objective.

### **3.4.2 Questionnaire content**

The study variables were developed using a measuring scale adopted from prior studies. The questionnaire comprised five sections, namely Section A, B, C, D and Section E. Section A was used to gather demographic data and included multiple-choice and dichotomous questions. Section B consisted of questions on students' perception of brand communication undertaken by a TVET college, with six items adapted from Zehir *et al.* (2011:1222). Section C comprised questions on service quality, with ten items adapted from Zehir *et al.* (2011:1222). Section D consisted of questions on brand selection, with six items adapted from Senel (2011:146). Section E consisted of questions on brand loyalty, with five items adopted from Senel (2011:146). All the scale items were rephrased to fit the current context of the study.

**Table 3.1: Items answering the empirical research objectives**

| <b>EMPIRICAL RESEARCH OBJECTIVES</b>   | <b>ITEMS</b> | <b>SOURCES</b>                  |
|--|--------------|---------------------------------|
| To measure students' perceptions of brand communication undertaken by TVET colleges. | B1 – B6      | Zehir <i>et al.</i> (2011:1222) |
| To examine students' perceptions of service quality within TVET colleges.            | C1 – C8      | Zehir <i>et al.</i> (2011:1222) |
| To investigate students' level of brand satisfaction associated with TVET colleges.  | D1 – D6      | Senel (2011:146)                |
| To investigate students' level of brand loyalty towards TVET colleges.               | E1 – E5      | Senel (2011:146)                |

The following section discusses the pilot testing of the questionnaires.

### **3.4.3 Pilot testing of the questionnaire**

Lewis, Jeynes, Anstey and Way (2009:35-37) describe pilot testing as surveys using a limited number of respondents and often employing less rigorous sampling techniques than those employed in large quantitative studies. A pilot study helps to identify weaknesses in the methodology used before use on a larger scale, encouraging the researcher to think about aspects such as clarity of the instructions or the questions, wording confusion, the time it took to complete the questionnaire and respondents' comments in general (Dhurup, Mofoka & Surujlal 2010:481). Therefore, a pilot test can strengthen reliability and content validity (Catane 2002:69). Besides the pilot study, a pretest is also crucial as it helps to identify the problems with the instrument used for the study. The main difference between a pilot study and a pretest is that a pilot study involves the actual study, while the pretest is done after the questionnaire's design. Mitchell (2015:242) says a pretest ensures that the questionnaire meets the researcher's expectations regarding the information obtained. According to Malhotra and Birks (2004:345), a pretest highlights problems or matters that may exist that need to be modified before conducting the main study. Therefore, a questionnaire pretest reduces the possibility of failure (McDaniel & Gates 2002:57).

Before conducting the pilot test for this study, two experienced researchers in the relevant field examined the questionnaire to search for any evident errors or potential problems to ascertain the face validity of the instrument. Before the pilot study was undertaken, a pretest using the

debriefing approach was conducted to ensure that each questionnaire item was decoded in the intended manner. Two chosen staff members and four students participated in the debriefing pretest. Debriefing entails the presentation of a questionnaire to the respondent in the same way that the final questionnaire would be presented to the respondent (McMillan & Schumacher 2010:195). To get information from respondents after they had finished the questionnaire, it was necessary to ask them about their thinking processes while completing the questionnaire and any issues or mistakes they had encountered (McDaniel & Gates 2010:486). To guarantee that the questionnaire was simple to interpret by both English and non-English speaking respondents, a preliminary test was conducted. This is particularly important in South Africa, considering the country's multilingualism.

Once required revisions and improvements were completed, the questionnaire was subjected to pilot testing. As part of this research, a convenience sample of 50 full-time Generation Y students from Ekurhuleni East TVET college, who were not included in the main sample, were allowed to complete the questionnaire. The results of the pilot study are presented in Chapter 4.

### **3.5 ADMINISTRATION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE**

The questionnaire was distributed to a sample of 500 full-time Generation Y students enrolled in five publicly registered TVET colleges in Gauteng, South Africa. Furthermore, lecturers at each of the five TVET colleges selected for this research were contacted and asked whether they would consent to enabling their students to complete the questionnaire during scheduled classes.

### **3.6 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY**

This section discusses reliability and validity.

#### **3.6.1 Reliability**

According to Mohajan (2017:144), reliability is the degree to which a scale generates consistent findings when researchers perform repeated measurements. McDaniel and Gates (2010:251) note that reliability is the degree to which a measure is free from random error and provides consistent data. In addition, reliability is the extent to which data collection methods or analytical techniques will yield consistent findings (Mohajan, 2017:144). Tavakol and Dennick (2011:53) described Cronbach's alpha as an instrument used to measure the internal consistency of a test or a scale. They added that internal consistency describes the extent to which all the items measure the same thing. According to McDaniel and Gates (2013:294), Cronbach's alpha values vary from 0 to 1, with 0.6 suggesting poor internal consistency reliability, 0.70 to 0.80 indicating moderate

reliability and 0.80 to 0.95 indicating robust reliability. Consequently, for the purpose of testing reliability in this study, the Cronbach alpha values will be calculated and reported on.

### **3.6.2 Validity**

According to Chakraborty (2019:143), validity is the degree to which a concept, conclusion or measurement is well-founded and precisely matches the situation's reality. Adding to this definition is Saunders *et al.* (2012:429), who state that the validity of measurement is the degree to which a tool measures what it is claimed to measure. Validity includes content validity, construct validity and discriminant validity.

Content validity is non-statistical and involves a systematic review of test questions to determine whether they cover the behaviour domain evaluated (Anastasi & Urbina 1997:114). Shiu *et al.* (2009:282) suggest that content validity is established when a scale's content logically reflects what it intended to measure. Content validity uses simple, direct and non-technical terms to formulate the questions (McDaniel & Gates 2010:318). In this study, the content validity measurement questions in the questionnaire provide adequate coverage of the subject studied (Saunders *et al.* 2012:429). That is, measuring the right things and using a suitable sample. The pilot test undertaken in this study will be used to ascertain content validity.

Zikmund (1999:217) refers to construct validity as the extent to which operationalisations of a construct measure the presence of those constructs intended to measure. The evidence of construct validity includes both empirical and theoretical support for understanding the measured concept (Ketchen, Boyd & Bergh 2008:7). Construct validity makes such a determination when attempting to assess how well a measuring instrument works and why it performs well (De Wet 2000:74). In this study, construct validity was calculated for the main study results and was assessed by calculating a confirmatory factor analysis based on the criteria established by Fornell and Lacker (Ab-Hamid, Sami & Sidek, 2017:3). Section 4.10.3 discusses the results of the construct validity analysis in more detail.

Convergent, discriminant, and nomological validity are all types of construct validity (Malhotra 2010:321). Convergent validity measures how well a scale corresponds with other measures of the same concept (Shiu *et al.* 2009:282). McDaniel and Gates (2002:304) state that convergent validity is the degree to which two measures of constructs are theoretically related. Discriminant validity involves demonstrating a lack of correlation among differing constructs (De Wet 2000:74). Ketchen *et al.* (2008:64) postulate that discriminant validity measures the extent to which a measure does not correlate with a construct from which it is supposed to differ.

Nomological validity assesses the relationship between theoretical constructs (Malhotra 2010:321). De Coster (2000:7) asserts that nomological validity seeks to confirm significant correlations between constructs as predicted by theory. Consequently, the Pearson-moment correlation coefficients between each pair of constructs will be examined to assess nomological validity for this study.

### **3.7 STATISTICAL ANALYSIS**

The SPSS Version 28. and SmartPLS 4.0, were used to analyse the captured data. The following section describes the statistical methods applied to the empirical data sets.

#### **3.7.1 Frequency distribution**

According to Zikmund and Babin (2007:437), the frequency distribution is one of the most common ways to summarise a data set to construct a frequency table. Hair *et al.* (2010:39) highlight that frequency is a set of data organised by summarising the number of times a particular value of a variable occurs. The frequency distribution indicates how popular the different values of the variables were among the units of analysis (Tustin *et al.* 2005:523). The frequency distribution provided valuable information about the sample and the composition of the data. Statistical tables and pie charts will be used to present the frequency distributions of the variables in this study.

#### **3.7.2 Descriptive statistics**

Kothari (2004:35) describes descriptive statistics as the foundation of almost any quantitative data analysis. Integration of three commonly used descriptive statistics was used in this study, including a measure of location (means), a measure of variability (standard deviations) and a measure of shape (skewness and kurtosis). In this study, descriptive statistics will be calculated with the means and standard deviations of the factors in this study.

##### **3.7.2.1 Measures of location**

Measures of location tend to describe the distribution centre (Malhotra 2010:486). The three most effective measures of location are mean, median and mode (Churchill, Brown, & Suter 2010:429). For this study, the mean measured location. According to Kent (1999:175), the mean is used as a measure of central tendency, calculated using the sum of all the observations and dividing the total by the number of observations involved. Therefore, the mean is the average value within a distribution (Hair *et al.* 2008:246).

### **3.7.2.2 Measures of variability**

Kent (1999:176) defines measures of variability as a "statistical ratio", which describes the variability of the observations. Standard deviation measures the summary of the amount by which each value in a specific set of data deviates from the mean of that same data set (Zikmund & Babin 2007:437). Therefore, standard deviation shows how tightly or loosely the values in the data set are spread around the mean value (Welman *et al.* 2009:230). Essentially, the standard deviation is a widely used measure of variability as it considers all variables in a data set (Tustin *et al.* 2005:523). Based on the way the values in the data are distributed, Zikmund and Babin (2007:437) claim that the standard deviation is either very high or small in size. In most circumstances, the standard deviation is reported together with the average (Matima 2010:77). The standard deviation measures variability and the mean average values of the data set. Therefore, the standard deviation was used to measure variability within this study.

### **3.7.2.3 Measures of shape**

An important task in several statistical analyses is to portray a data set's variability and location (Shui *et al.* 2009:515). Zhang and Lu (2004:2) add that another characterisation of shape measures includes skewness and kurtosis of the distribution. Doane and Seward (2011:6) indicate that skewness is a measure of asymmetry or the lack of asymmetry. A distribution or data set is asymmetric if it looks the same to the left and right of the centre point (Wiid & Diggines 2009:243). Mehtre, Kankankalli and Lee (1997:322) add that if skewness is positive, the data are skewed to the right. If skewness is negative, the data are skewed to the left.

Belongie, Malik and Puzicha (2002:509) suggest that kurtosis describes the shape of a random variable's probability distribution. According to Harding, Tremblay and Cousineau (2014:118), kurtosis is a statistical measure of either peak or flat data compared to a normal distribution of the same data. Depending on how many individuals responded, it may be determined how high and sharp the peak is concerning the remainder of the data (Gill, Woods, Malafia & Vvdensky 2011:109). The data sets with a high kurtosis seem to have a sharp peak close to the mean and have a heavy tail (Weiers 2010:63). In contrast, data sets with low kurtosis tend to have fewer peaks and shorter tails (Watier, Lamontagne & Chartier 2010:55).

### **3.7.3 Correlation analysis**

According to Jupp (2006:45), correlation analysis is a statistical assessment approach that determines the strength of a link between two numerically measured continuous variables. The

association level depicts relationships between the independent and dependent variables of interest (Hair, Bush & Ortinau 2000:56). When there is a high degree of correlation between two variables, there is a systematic change in one variable and when correlations are low, there is little relation between variables (Aaker *et al.* 2011:442). Pearson's product-moment coefficient measures the correlation and the values range between +1.00 and -1.00 (Abedniya & Mahmoudi 2010:142). A correlation value of +1.00 indicates the strongest positive correlation possible, while -1.00 indicates the strongest negative correlation possible (Davis, Golicic & Marquardt 2008:316). Therefore, the closer the coefficient is to either of these numbers, the stronger the correlation of the data it represents (Kothari & Garg 2015:363). Conversely, a zero value indicates no correlation. Hence values closer to zero highlight a weaker or poorer correlation than those closer to +1.00/-1.00 (Pallant 2010:128). A Pearson Product-Moment correlation coefficient analysis between each pair of constructs will be conducted to assess the strength of the relationship.

#### **3.7.4 Structural equation modelling**

McDonald and Ho (2002:67) assert that structural equation modelling (SEM) is a very general statistical modelling technique widely used in Behavioural Sciences. Suhr (2001:1) states that SEM is a methodology for representing, estimating and testing a network of relationships between variables, including measured variables and latent constructs. In the context of statistical analysis, SEM offers a comprehensive and accessible framework that covers various basic multivariate methods that are often used (Gerbing & Anderson 1993:133). Specifically, Schumacker and Lomax (2004:3) propose the purpose of SEM analysis as the identification of the degree to which sample data supports a theoretical model.

Structural equation models build regression models, relating the dependent variable to one or more independent variables (Aaker *et al.* 2011:446). McDonald and Ho (2002:67) maintain that SEM describes, predicts and controls the interest-based variable on the independent variables. Fox (2006:466) argues that SEM shares the objectives of factor analysis to extract latent factors and express relationships among observed (measured) and unobserved (latent) variables as a whole and allows theory testing, even when experiments are not possible.

Kline (2005:143) suggests that SEM uses various models to predict relationships among observed variables, with the fundamental goal of providing a quantitative test of a theoretical model hypothesised by a researcher. The first model is a measurement that Albright (2008:2) argues links a set of observed variables to a usually smaller set of latent variables. The second model is



a structural model. Again, Albright (2008:2) believes this model links the latent variables through a series of recursive and non-recursive relationships.

Validation of the measurement model in SEM is performed by using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). According to Kline (2005:140), CFA is a specific factor analysis most typically employed in social research. It determines whether measurements of a construct are compatible with a researcher's knowledge of the nature of that construct (or factor). Consistent with this goal, confirmatory component analysis determines whether the data conforms to a hypothesised measurement model. Prudon (2013:1) highlights that CFA indicates the degree of linear relationships in the measurement scale for specific variables. Therefore, CFA can place substantively meaningful constraints on the factor model, such as setting the effect of one latent variable to equal zero on a subset of the observed variables (Kline 2011:232). The advantage of CFA is that it allows for testing hypotheses about a particular factor structure (Suhr 2001:6). SEM takes a confirmatory approach to the multivariate analysis of a structural theory, one that stipulates causal relations among multiple variables (Brown 2006:82). Model-data fit assesses the consistency of the model, which reveals the degree to which the postulated network of relationships among variables is feasible (Ullman 2006:37).

Structural modelling is a multivariate statistical analysis technique used to analyse structural relationships. The technique involves factor analysis and multiple regression analysis, and it analyses the structural relationship between latent constructs and measured variables (Brown 2006:82).

The following section discusses the five steps of structural equation modelling (SEM).

#### **3.7.4.1 Step 1: Specify individual construct**

According to Crockett (2012:34), the step of specifying individual construct involves the specification of a theoretical model that utilises applicable, related theory and determining all latent and observed variables of interest and the relationship among variables. Babin and Anderson (2010:653) highlight that a detailed analysis of the theory for the study is needed as a set of observed variables can specify several diverse latent variables used in the measurement model.

#### **3.7.4.2 Step 2: Develop and specify the measurement model**

According to Schumacker and Lomax (2010:198), the measurement model contains a graphical illustration of the constructs to be measured and items for measuring each construct. Crockett

(2012:36) argues that a measurement model helps to determine whether the specified model can produce actual results estimated in SEM. Factor analysis is classified into two broad categories: CFA and exploratory factor analysis (EFA). CFA is the more common type of factor analysis (Pallant 2010:6). According to Byrne (2001:55), EFA is used when the relationships between the observable and latent variables are ambiguous or undefined. The exploratory factor analysis employed in this research investigates how and to what degree the observed variables are connected to their underlying factors. Ultimately, this research must identify the fewest possible factors causing covariation between observed variables (Schumacker & Lomax 2010:197). Therefore, when using EFA, the researcher should explore the number of factors, check if the factors are correlated, and finally, which observed variables seem to be the best measure of each factor.

The second type of model is a path model or a path analysis, which involves drawing causal inferences from correlational data (Streiner 2005:115). According to Suhr (2006:1), path analysis can examine the pattern of correlations that exist among variables. In addition, path analysis may be used to analyse every path or set of pathways to the overall fit of a specific structural model and can aid in identifying the causes of suppressor effects (Hox & Bechger 1999:359). The overall goal of path analysis is to assess how well the model accounts for the data in terms of observed correlations or covariances (Skrondal & Rabe-Hesketh 2007:720). Path analysis is more advantageous than simpler models because it estimates direct and indirect causal effects.

Latent variable models are the third type of model to consider. The latent variable model explains simple interactions between more variables based on an unobservable structure that underpins the complicated relationships. As Byrne (2001:879) described, the model consists of structural and measurement models. There is a substantial preference for unstandardised estimates over standardised estimates (Kline 2005:143). There is a belief that the primary reason for this is because the estimate techniques which are most often employed presume the study of unstandardised data, as Morgan (2011:265) explains. Even more so, there are certain situations in which standardised estimations may not be the most acceptable choice. In this category are cases when the initial measures of the variables are meaningful rather than arbitrary. According to Malhotra (2010:734), important information may be lost in every situation when standardised variables are utilised.

It is necessary to assess model fit data, such as composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE), to determine the measurement model's reliability and validity. The reliability of a composite system is estimated using the formula:

$$[(F_{11} + F_{12} + F_{13} + \dots)^2 / (F_{11}^2 + F_{12}^2 + F_{13}^2 + \dots) + (err_1 + err_2 + err_3 + \dots)]$$

The CR threshold value for acceptable reliability is 0.70 (Dean, Fahsing, Gottschalk & Solli-Saether 2008:10). The AVE measures reflect the overall variance in the indicator accounted for by the latent construct (Dean *et al.* 2008:11). Fornel and Larcker (1981:41) suggest that the AVE value should exceed 0.50, which is an acceptable value. The formula that calculates AVE is:

$$[(F_{11}^2 + F_{12}^2 + F_{13}^2 + \dots) / (F_{11}^2 + F_{12}^2 + F_{13}^2 + \dots) + err_1 + err_2 + err_3 + \dots]$$

### 3.7.4.3 Step 3: Design a study to predict empirical results

According to Karakaya-Ozyer and Aksu-Dunya (2018:285), SEM analysis used an iterative procedure to generate the theoretical covariance matrix and observed covariance matrix. In this step, the research design or type of data needed, sample size, model estimation technique and software should be known. In addition, Crocket (2012:38) highlights that the iterative procedure improves preliminary parameter estimates with subsequent calculation cycles.

SEM is useful for examining covariances or correlations between variables often used in exploratory studies (Lei & Wu 2007:34). Weston and Gore (2006:734) highlight that SEM can be used after exploratory analysis to confirm the factor structure with new data. Accordingly, the decision regarding research design should be taken into account. In addition, to perform SEM analysis, a large sample size should be generally used to have stable results when the data is normally distributed (Bollen & Noble 2011:15641). Larger models with more model parameters require a larger sample size (Lei & Wu 2007:36). For this study, applying SEM is appropriate as the sample size is 500.

### 3.7.4.4 Step 4: Develop the structural model

During this step, SEM allows for the simultaneous analysis of direct and indirect relationships between latent and observed variables (Crockett 2012:38). According to Hair *et al.* (2010:673), developing a structural model involves appointing relationship constructs based upon hypothesised or measurement models. Weston and Gore (2006:741) argue that directional estimations between a series of dependent and independent variables could be included as indirect effects when building the structural model. Then, the structural model is assessed directly to accept or reject the hypothesis of interest (Lei & Wu 2007:36). Ho (2006:284) defines hypotheses as a declaration of something that should be observable in the actual world if the theory is correct.

### **3.7.4.5 Step 5: Assess model validity**

In this step, assessing model validity is employed to find a model that better fits the data (Schumaker & Lomax 2010:74). According to Crockett (2012:43), assessing the model validity or fit determines how well the structural model fits the sample data to find a statistical and practical significance model.

#### **3.7.4.5.1 Convergent validity**

The convergent validity of a scale is determined by its correlation with other scales and the strong association between constructs (Hair Jr, Howard & Nitzl 2020:104). The convergent validity of a construct is determined by its correlation with another measure of a related concept (Hair, Risher, Sarsted & Ringle 2019:9). In this study, AVE was used to determine convergent validity. AVE is calculated by squaring the loading of each indicator for a construct and calculating the mean. A value of 0.50 or higher is considered acceptable (Ringle, Sarstedt, Mitchel & Gudergan 2020:1626). Detailed results on convergent validity can be found in Chapter 4, Section 4.7.

#### **3.7.4.5.2 Discriminant validity**

Discriminant validity analysis was conducted using Fornell-Larcker's test. For an instrument to be considered discriminant valid, the Fornell-Larcker criterion must be less than 0.70 (Hair *et al.*, 2019:2). Chapter 4 reports on the results of the discriminant validity test.

A detailed description and interpretation of the structural equation model (SEM) used in this study can be found in Chapter 4.

## **3.8. CONCLUSION**

The current research evaluated the relationship between Generation Y students' perceptions of brand communication, service quality and brand satisfaction and their likelihood to remain loyal to a brand in TVET colleges in Gauteng.

The descriptive research approach was chosen because of the nature of the investigation. As a result, the study's sample frame consisted of the 50 publicly registered TVET colleges in South Africa, which was a large number. Therefore, the initial sampling frame used judgement sampling to include five TVET colleges, three based in residential towns and two in informal settlements. After that, a non-probability sample of 500 students, 100 per TVET college was used.

The necessary information was gathered via a self-administered questionnaire composed of scales

selected from previously published research, with responses assessed on a six-point Likert scale. In addition, the questionnaire included items aimed at capturing demographic information. The next chapter shows and examines the key conclusions that emerged from the statistical analysis of the data gathered in the study. The data analysis was performed with SPSS version 28 and SmartPLS 4. The study looked at frequency distributions, descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, reliability and validity and SEM. The next chapter, Chapter 4, presents and discusses the main findings from the statistical analysis of the captured data.

## CHAPTER 4

### ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION OF EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

#### 4.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter reports and interprets the empirical findings of the study. The chapter includes an overview of the pilot test results in Section 4.2 and a description of the data gathering process in Section 4.3. Section 4.4 presents the preliminary data analysis and Section 4.5 presents the demographic data. In Section 4.6, the study reviews the EFA. Section 4.7 highlights the reliability and validity analysis, while Section 4.8 discusses the descriptive statistics. Section 4.9 reports on the correlation analysis, while Section 4.10 addresses hypotheses testing. In addition, Section 4.11 reports on the SEM. Finally, Section 4.12 concludes the discussion of the empirical findings.

The following section discusses the data analysis procedures involved in the pilot phase.

#### 4.2 PILOT STUDY

A pilot study was conducted among a convenient sample of 50 respondents from one TVET college in Gauteng, which did not form part of the main study. The main purpose of pilot testing the questionnaire was to assess reliability.

The reliability was obtained by computing the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for Section B (perception of brand communication), Section C (perception of service quality), Section D (perception of brand satisfaction) and Section E (perceptions of brand loyalty). The results obtained gave a satisfactory indication of the reliability of the instrument. For Section B a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.824 was achieved, followed by Section C with a value of 0.850, Section D with a value of 0.873 and Section E with a value of 0.881, indicating reliability. According to Malhotra (2010:319), Cronbach's alpha must be between 0.6 and 1 to achieve satisfactory reliability, with an alpha value closer to one indicating higher reliability. In this study, Cronbach's alpha reliability was achieved. When measuring the validity, the inter-item correlations were calculated. Clark and Watson (1995:316) recommend an inter-item correlation value between 0.15 and 0.60. In addition, the inter-item correlations were within Clark and Watson's recommended ranges, confirming the study's validity. Therefore, no changes were made to the questionnaire used in the main survey.

The results obtained in the pilot testing are presented in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1 Summary of pilot test results**

| <b>Items</b> | <b>Number of variables</b> | <b>Mean</b> | <b>Standard deviation</b> | <b>N</b> | <b>Cronbach's alpha</b> | <b>Average inter-item correlation</b> |
|--------------|----------------------------|-------------|---------------------------|----------|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| B1–B6        | 6                          | 4.1522      | .98559                    | 46       | 0.824                   | 0.438                                 |
| C1–C8        | 8                          | 3.2853      | 1.03201                   | 46       | 0.850                   | 0.414                                 |
| D1–D6        | 6                          | 3.7101      | 1.06888                   | 46       | 0.873                   | 0.533                                 |
| E1–E5        | 5                          | 3.5696      | 1.27190                   | 46       | 0.881                   | 0.598                                 |

### **4.3 DATA GATHERING PROCESS**

This study used self-administered questionnaires to gather the required information from Generation Y students in a sample of 500 enrolled at five registered TVET colleges in Gauteng, South Africa. Letters to request permission to distribute questionnaires to students during lectures were sent to respective TVET colleges. After the permission had been given, questionnaires were distributed to the students and students were also informed that participation is voluntary and will remain confidential. A combination of NCV and NATED programme students were used in this study.

### **4.4 PRELIMINARY DATA ANALYSIS**

According to Malhotra (2010:453), the data analysis plan is decided in advance before collecting the data. Kothari and Garg (2015:114) express that the data analysis plan guides preparation. Furthermore, the data preparation process involved checking the data for accuracy before entering it into the computer to transform it (Matima 2010:73). De Wet (2000:67) highlights the basic steps of data preparation applied in this study, namely editing, coding and tabulation. The following section discusses the methods employed.

#### **4.4.1 Coding of data**

Kothari and Garg (2015:115) defines coding as a process of assigning numerals or other symbols to answers so that responses can be put into a limited number of categories or classes. For this

purpose, all variables were assigned names and coded for computer entry. Once the response values are entered into a computer file, a statistical software programme generates diagnostic information. However, before the performance of the data analysis, the data were checked for errors that may have come from the data entry process. Once the data were free from errors, statistical adjustments were made.

Furthermore, frequencies for each variable were checked to detect values out of range. Values entered greater than 5 were rectified after reconciling with the questionnaires. The following table presents the variable codes and assigned values.

**Table 4.2 Coding information**

**Section A: Demographical data**

| <b>Question</b> | <b>Code</b> | <b>Construct measured</b> | <b>Value assign to responses</b>  |
|-----------------|-------------|---------------------------|---|
| Question 1      | A1          | Name of institution       | South West Gauteng TVET College (1), Western TVET College (2), Central Johannesburg TVET College (3), Sedibeng TVET College (4), Ekurhuleni TVET College(5) |
| Question 2      | A2          | Year of study             | 1 <sup>st</sup> year (1), 2 <sup>nd</sup> year (2), 3 <sup>rd</sup> year (3), post (4)  |
| Question 3      | A3          | Gender                    | Male (1), Female (2)  |
| Question 4      | A4          | Programme registered      | NCV (1), NATED (2)  |
| Question 5      | A5          | Ethnic group              | Black/African (1), Coloured (2), Indian (3), White (4)  |
| Question 6      | A6          | Age group                 | 18–20 (1), 21–22 (2), 23  |
| Question 7      | A7          | Province                  | Eastern Cape (1), Free State (2), Gauteng (3), KwaZulu-Natal (4), Limpopo (5), Mpumalanga (6), Northern Cape (7), North West (8), Western Cape (9)          |
| Question 8      | A8          | Mother tongue language    | Afrikaans (1), English (2), IsiNdebele (3), IsiXhosa (4), IsiZulu (5), Sepedi (6), Sesotho (7), Setswana (8), SiSwati (9), Tshivenda (10), Xitsonga (11)    |



**Section B: Perceptions of brand communication**

| <b>Item</b> | <b>Code</b> | <b>Construed measure</b>          | <b>Value assigned to responses</b> |
|-------------|-------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Item 1      | B1          | Perception of brand communication | Strongly disagree (1),             |
| Item 2      | B2          |                                   | Disagree (2), Slightly             |
| Item 3      | B3          |                                   | disagree(3), Slightly agree        |
| Item 4      | B4          |                                   | (4), Agree                         |
| Item 5      | B5          |                                   | (5), Strongly agree                |
| Item 6      | B6          |                                   | (6)                                |

**Section C: Perception of service quality provided by the TVET college attended**

| <b>Item</b> | <b>Code</b> | <b>Construed measure</b>      | <b>Value assigned to responses</b> |
|-------------|-------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Item 1      | C1          | Perception of service quality | Strongly disagree (1),             |
| Item 2      | C2          |                               | Disagree (2), Slightly disagree    |
| Item 3      | C3          |                               | (3), Slightly agree(4), Agree      |
|             |             |                               | (5), Strongly agree (6)            |
| Item 4      | C4          |                               |                                    |
| Item 5      | C5          |                               |                                    |
| Item 6      | C6          |                               |                                    |
| Item 7      | C7          |                               |                                    |
| Item 8      | C8          |                               |                                    |

**Section D: Brand satisfaction associated with TVET college you attend**

| <b>Item</b> | <b>Code</b> | <b>Construed measure</b>                    | <b>Value assigned to responses</b>   |
|-------------|-------------|---|--------------------------------------|
| Item 1      | D1          | Brand satisfaction association TVET college | Strongly disagree (1), Disagree (2), |
| Item 2      | D2          |   | Slightly disagree (3), Slightly      |
| Item 3      | D3          |   | agree (4), Agree (5), Strongly       |
| Item 4      | D4          |   | agree (6)                            |
| Item 5      | D4          |   |                                      |
| Item 6      | D6          |   |                                      |

**Section E: Brand loyalty towards the TVET college**

| <b>Item</b> | <b>Code</b> | <b>Construed measure</b>           | <b>Value assigned to responses</b>   |
|-------------|-------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Item 1      | E1          | Brand loyalty towards TVET college | Strongly disagree (1), Disagree (2), |
| Item 2      | E2          |                                    | Slightly disagree (3), Slightly      |
| Item 3      | E3          |                                    | agree (4), Agree (5), Strongly       |
| Item 4      | E4          |                                    | agree (6)                            |
| Item 5      | E5          |                                    |                                      |

#### **4.4.2 Data cleaning**

Data cleaning ensures that the data is consistent, correct and useable by identifying errors in the data and removing invalid points. The goal of data cleaning is to ensure data quality. Some visualisation techniques that are the mean, range and standard deviation, were used to detect unexpected errors in the data. In addition, the data were checked for duplication and missing values prior to actual data analysis.

#### **4.4.3 Tabulation**

Hair *et al.* (2008:233) highlight that tabulation involves calculating the number of responses in each predetermined category to ensure that the data is easily understandable. Table 4.3 presents the frequency table for Generation Y students' perceptions of brand communication, service quality and brand satisfaction on brand loyalty in TVET colleges in Gauteng.

**Table 4.3 Frequency table of response**

| <b>Scale</b> | <b>Strongly disagree</b> | <b>Disagree</b> | <b>Slightly disagree</b> | <b>Slightly agree</b> | <b>Agree</b> | <b>Strongly agree</b> |
|--------------|--------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|--------------|-----------------------|
|              | <b>1</b>                 | <b>2</b>        | <b>3</b>                 | <b>4</b>              | <b>5</b>     | <b>6</b>              |
| B1           | 40                       | 35              | 78                       | 118                   | 156          | 39                    |
| B2           | 13                       | 40              | 70                       | 169                   | 169          | 36                    |
| B3           | 21                       | 32              | 83                       | 140                   | 179          | 43                    |
| B4           | 16                       | 36              | 73                       | 147                   | 173          | 53                    |
| B5           | 17                       | 36              | 80                       | 137                   | 180          | 50                    |
| B6           | 21                       | 30              | 69                       | 158                   | 159          | 59                    |
| C1           | 42                       | 49              | 69                       | 158                   | 142          | 37                    |
| C2           | 38                       | 46              | 79                       | 156                   | 124          | 53                    |
| C3           | 26                       | 35              | 87                       | 163                   | 143          | 42                    |
| C4           | 32                       | 22              | 86                       | 137                   | 165          | 53                    |
| C5           | 32                       | 37              | 81                       | 135                   | 168          | 44                    |
| C6           | 32                       | 41              | 101                      | 143                   | 148          | 35                    |
| C7           | 56                       | 45              | 88                       | 142                   | 128          | 39                    |
| C8           | 60                       | 53              | 81                       | 142                   | 127          | 35                    |
| D1           | 34                       | 50              | 67                       | 140                   | 161          | 48                    |
| D2           | 30                       | 25              | 61                       | 125                   | 167          | 88                    |
| D3           | 24                       | 37              | 82                       | 124                   | 152          | 80                    |
| D4           | 33                       | 43              | 86                       | 135                   | 142          | 59                    |
| D5           | 40                       | 48              | 92                       | 139                   | 125          | 56                    |
| D6           | 37                       | 50              | 73                       | 161                   | 133          | 44                    |
| E1           | 55                       | 36              | 75                       | 136                   | 141          | 56                    |
| E2           | 38                       | 49              | 73                       | 127                   | 140          | 73                    |
| E3           | 41                       | 43              | 87                       | 131                   | 136          | 60                    |
| E4           | 38                       | 59              | 89                       | 118                   | 142          | 54                    |
| E5           | 70                       | 60              | 88                       | 126                   | 119          | 37                    |

The results presented in Table 4.3 were further summarised into two broad classes, constituting disagree (strongly agree plus disagree plus slightly disagree) and agree (strongly agree, agree and slightly agree). Combining the Likert responses was for a simple interpretation of the statistics.

**Brand communication:** Using the criteria outlined above, it can be deduced that the majority of the students (77.2%) agree that they react favourably to the advertising and promotional activities used by TVET colleges. Generally, the students (74.8%) feel positive about the advertising and promotional activities used. Moreover, students (71.6%) support that the advertising and promotional activities used are good. The perception that advertising and promotional activities used do a good job was supported by many students (74.6%). The students expressed that they were happy with the advertising and promotional activities used (73.4%). Finally, respondents testified that they liked the advertising and promotional activities used by TVET colleges.

**Service quality:** The summary statistics indicated that TVET colleges provide superior service (67.4%). Concerning the services offered by TVET colleges, most of the students (66.6%) agreed to the assertion of good quality. Moreover, 69.6 percent of the respondents agreed that they have always had an excellent experience in their interactions and associations with TVET colleges. In general, the students felt good about what their TVET college offers to its students (71%). Overall, the service quality experienced by students' interaction with the TVET colleges' employees was excellent (69.4%). The service quality experienced during students' interaction with the employees of the TVET colleges has been high (65.2%). Moreover, 61.8 percent of the students agreed that TVET colleges have a fair system for handling complaints. Finally, the majority of the students (60.8%) testified that TVET colleges deal with customer complaints efficiently

**Brand satisfaction:** The majority of the Generation Y students (69.8%) agreed that TVET colleges live up to their expectations. The majority of the students (76%) testified that they made the right decision to use a specific TVET college. Furthermore, 71.2 percent were happy with a specific TVET college and 65 percent were satisfied with the commercial standing of TVET colleges. Moreover, 64 percent were satisfied with the service offered by TVET colleges, while 67.6 percent were satisfied with the service quality of TVET colleges.

**Brand loyalty:** Most of the respondents (66.6%) affirmed that they would not enrol at another TVET college as they value the TVET college that they are at now. Most Generation Y students (68%) also testified that they would recommend their TVET college to their friends. Furthermore, the summary statistics showed that 65.4 percent would not enrol at another TVET college as their current TVET college has the subjects they want. Furthermore, 62.8 percent revealed that they

would be loyal to their current TVET college, even if other TVET colleges offered the same courses. Finally, most of the students (56.4%) agreed that they would still enrol at their TVET college, even if it is more expensive than other TVET colleges with the same characteristics. The following section describes the demographics of the participants.

#### 4.5 DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

Respondents were requested to provide personal information such as their institution's name, year of study, gender, programme, age, province and language. Five hundred questionnaires were handed out for this study and only 462 were useable.

**Figure 4.1 Name of TVET college**

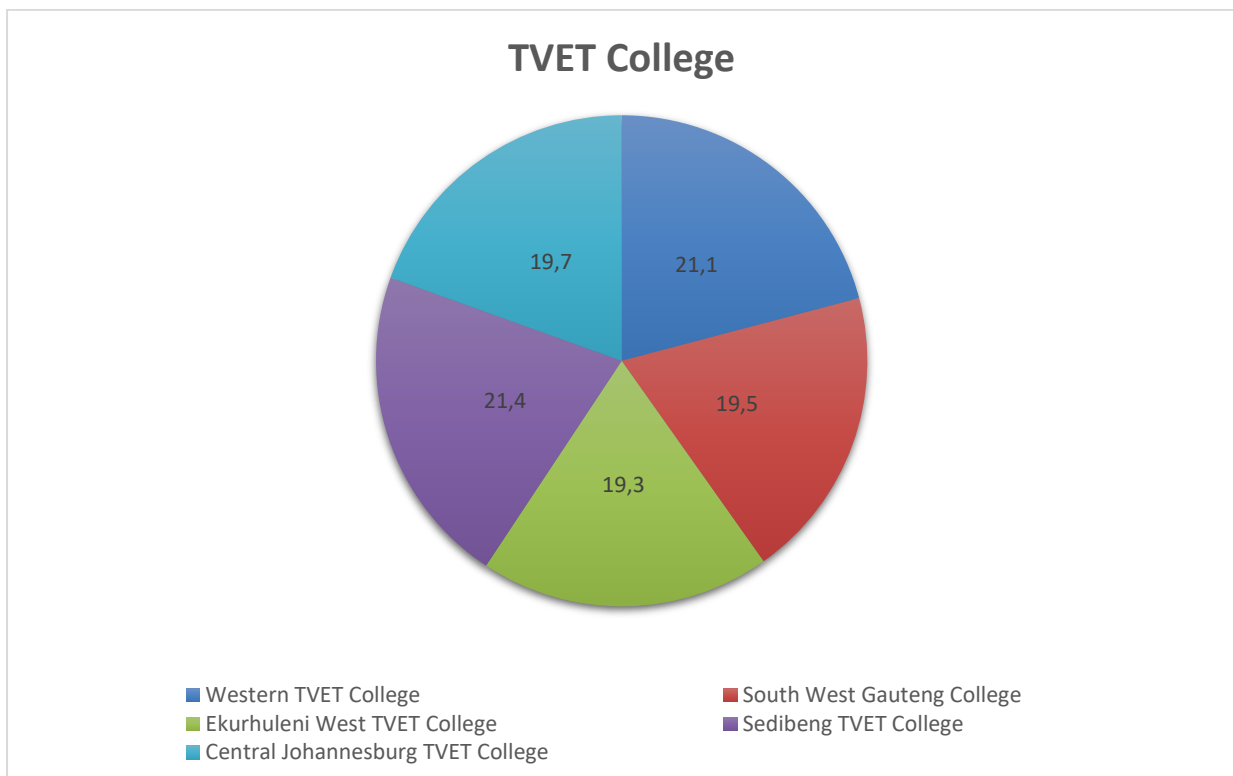


Figure 4.1 illustrates that 19.5 percent were from the South West Gauteng TVET college, 19.2 percent were from the Ekurhuleni TVET College, 19.7 percent were from the Central Johannesburg TVET College, 21.4 percent were from the Sedibeng TVET College and 20.1 percent were from the Western TVET College.

**Figure 4.2 Year of study**

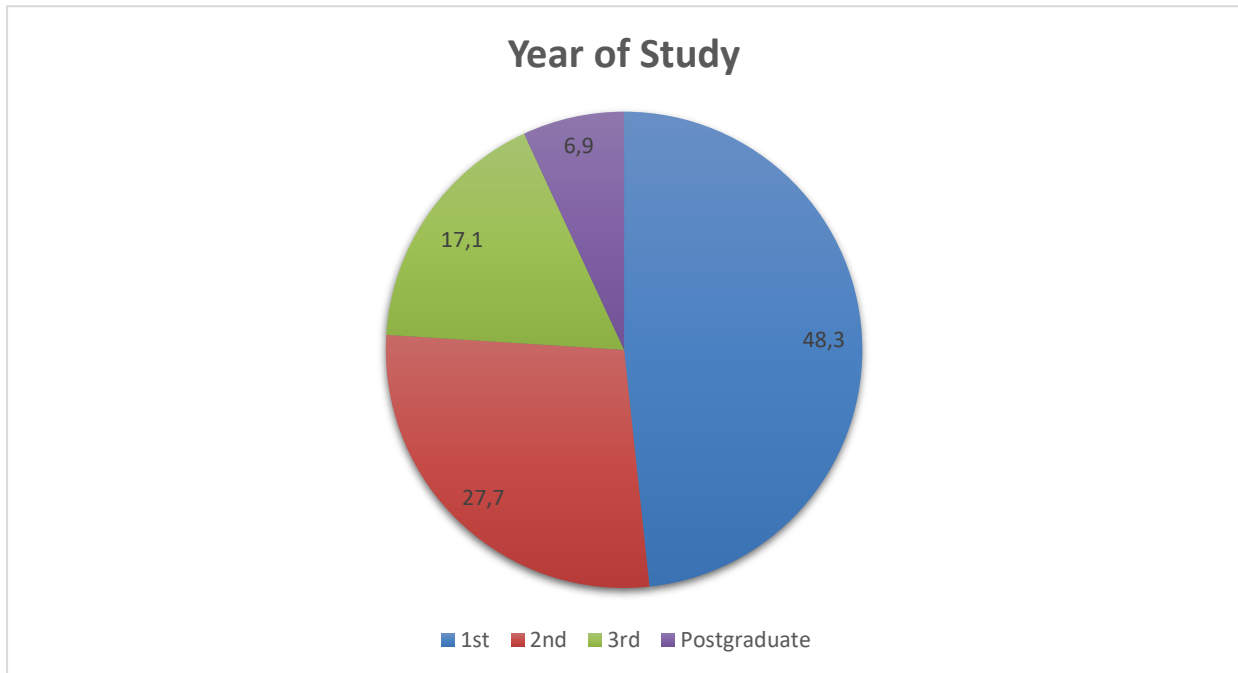


Figure 4.2 indicate that 48.3 percent of the respondents indicated their year of study to be 1<sup>st</sup> year, whereas 27.7 percent of the respondents were 2<sup>nd</sup> years students, 17.1 percent of the respondents were 3<sup>rd</sup> years students, and only 6.9 percent were postgraduate certificate students.

**Figure 4.3 Gender distribution**

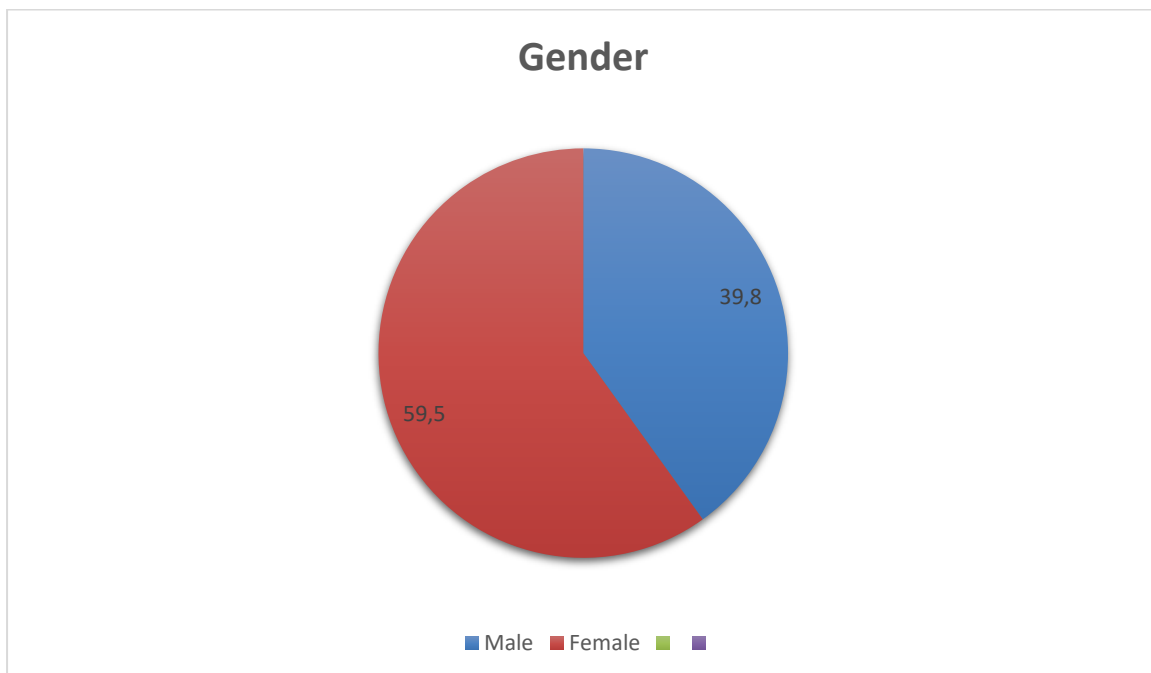


Figure 4.3 provides an overview of the sample's gender composition. The profile of sampled respondents in the survey comprised 185 males (39.8%) and 277 females (59.5%).

**Figure 4.4 Programme registered**

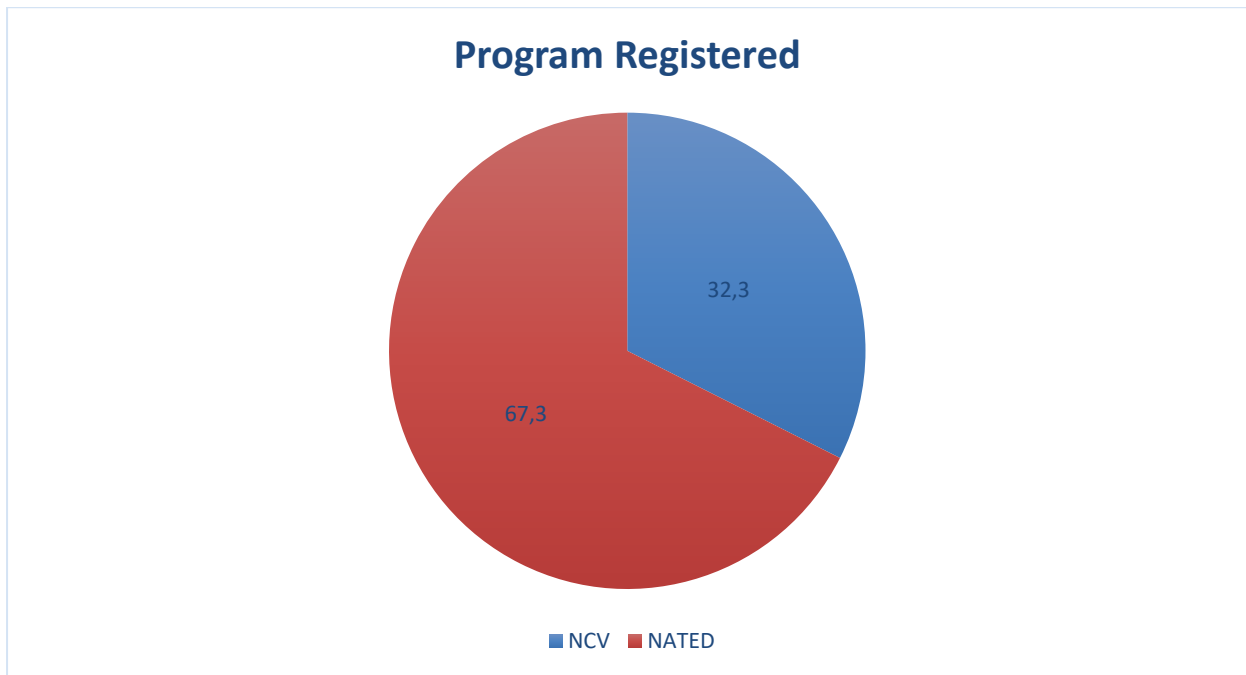


Figure 4.4 indicates that 32.3 percent of the respondents indicated NCV as their programme of study, while 67.3 percent of the respondents were studying the NATED programme and 0.6 percent of the respondents did not specify the programme of study.

**Figure 4.5 Ethnic Group**

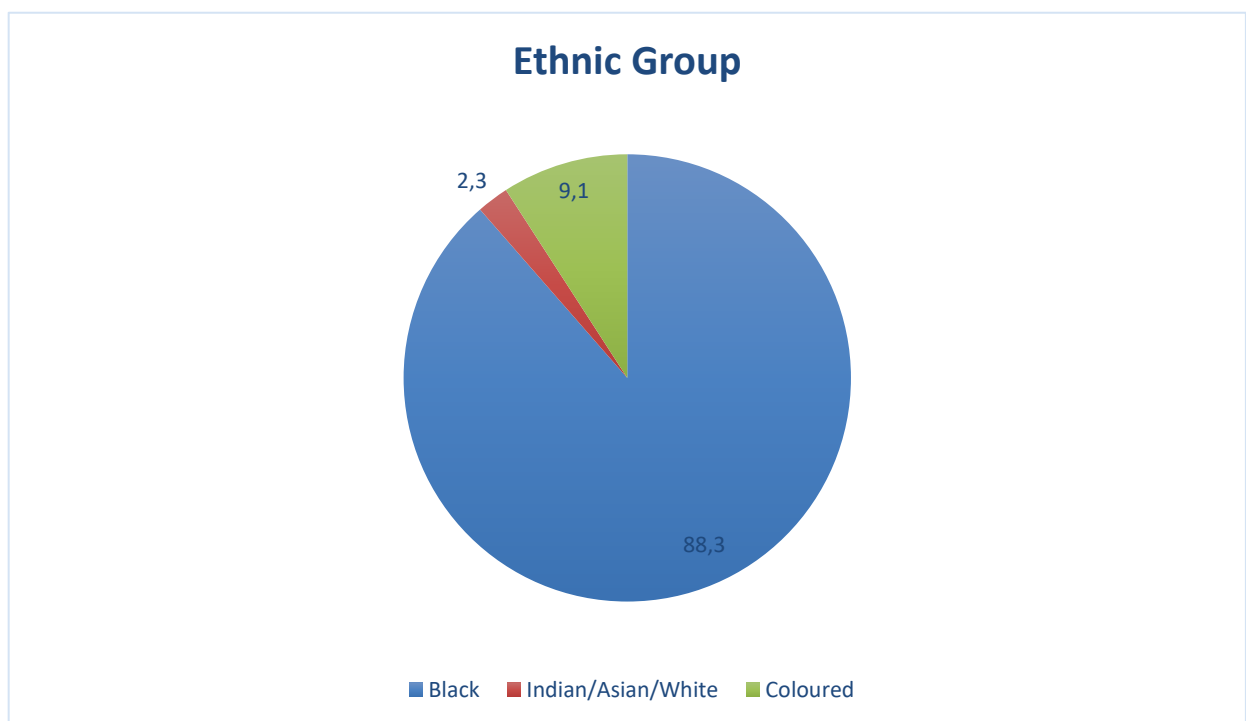


Figure 4.5 shows that 88.3 percent of the respondents were black. The Coloured ethnic group with

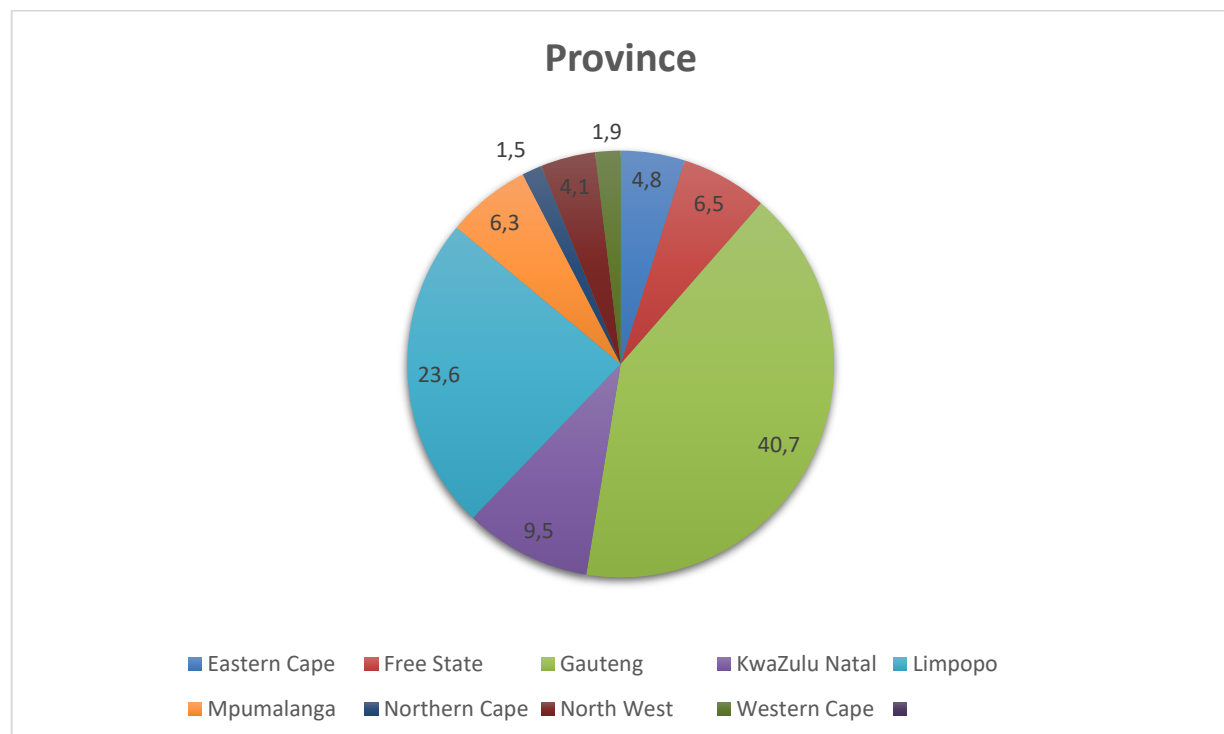
9.1 percent followed them, while the other 2.3 percent consisted of Indian/Asian and white respondents.

**Table 4.4 Age**

| Category     | Frequency  | Percent      |
|--------------|------------|--------------|
| 18           | 34         | 7.4          |
| 19-23        | 285        | 61.7         |
| 24-28        | 109        | 23.6         |
| 29-33        | 31         | 6.7          |
| 34-38        | 2          | .4           |
| 39-43        | 1          | .2           |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>462</b> | <b>100.0</b> |

The data in Table 4.4 shows that the majority (61.7%) of the respondents were between 19 and 23 years, followed by those aged between 24 and 28 years (43.6%). The number of respondents who were 18 years old accounted for 7.5% while respondents between 29 and 33 years old accounted for 6.7%. Very few (2) respondents were between 34 and 38 years old, and only one was between 39 and 43.

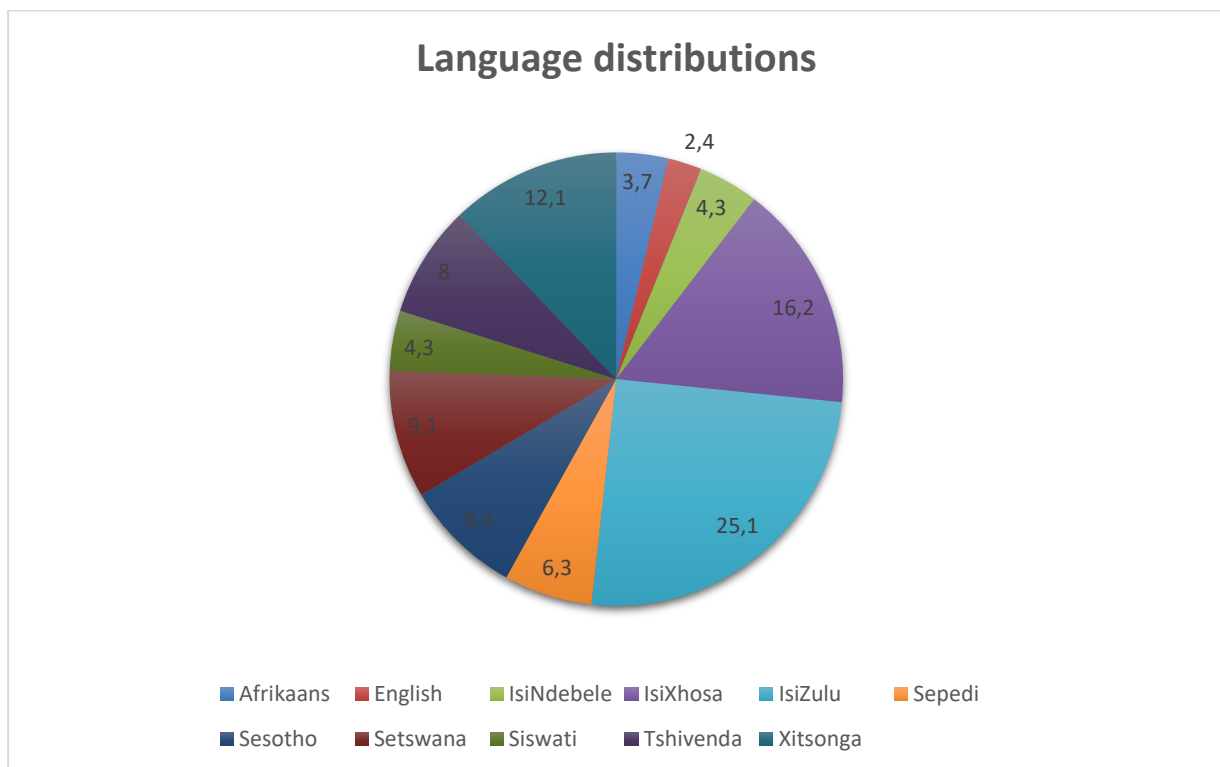
**Figure 4.6 Province distribution**





As highlighted in Figure 4.7 below, the population from Gauteng, which were about 40.7 percent, dominates the sample group. That may be because the TVET colleges used were in Gauteng. Limpopo followed Gauteng with 23.6 percent, KwaZulu-Natal with 9.5 percent, Free State with 6.5 percent, Mpumalanga with 6.3 percent, Eastern Cape with 4.8 percent, North West with 4.1 percent, Western Cape with 1.9 percent and lastly, Northern Cape with 1.5 percent. In addition, only four respondents did not specify the province.

**Figure 4.7 Language distributions**



In Figure 4.8, the mother tongue was taken into consideration. The largest group of respondents was IsiZulu speaking, with 25.1 percent. That was followed by IsiXhosa speaking respondents with about 16.2 percent. Xitsonga prevailed as one of the dominant languages among respondents, accounting for 12.1 percent of the population sample and Setswana dominated respondents accounting for 9.1 percent. The other 37.7 percent was consisting of Afrikaans, English, IsiNdebele, Sepedi, Sesotho and Tshivenda. The distribution of language reflects inputs from all the 11 official languages of South Africa.

## 4.6 EXPLORATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS

The EFA was conducted on the construct-related items. The principal component analysis was used. The rotated factors are presented in Table 4.5.

**Table 4.5 Rotated factors**

| Variable            | Items | Factors |       |       |       |
|---------------------|-------|---------|-------|-------|-------|
|                     |       | 1       | 2     | 3     | 4     |
| Brand communication | B1    | 0.714   |       |       |       |
|                     | B2    | 0.760   |       |       |       |
|                     | B3    | 0.837   |       |       |       |
|                     | B4    | 0.810   |       |       |       |
|                     | B5    | 0.775   |       |       |       |
|                     | B6    | 0.385   |       |       |       |
| Service quality     | C1    |         |       |       | 0.802 |
|                     | C2    |         |       |       | 0.831 |
|                     | C3    |         |       |       | 0.825 |
|                     | C4    |         |       |       | 0.763 |
|                     | C5    |         |       |       | 0.782 |
|                     | C6    |         |       |       | 0.773 |
|                     | C7    |         |       |       | 0.744 |
|                     | C8    |         |       |       | 0.620 |
| Brand satisfaction  | D1    |         | 0.705 |       |       |
|                     | D2    |         | 0.443 |       |       |
|                     | D3    |         | 0.837 |       |       |
|                     | D4    |         | 0.860 |       |       |
|                     | D5    |         | 0.837 |       |       |
|                     | D6    |         | 0.567 |       |       |
| Brand loyalty       | E1    |         |       | 0.794 |       |
|                     | E2    |         |       | 0.831 |       |
|                     | E3    |         |       | 0.845 |       |
|                     | E4    |         |       | 0.843 |       |
|                     | E5    |         |       | 0.726 |       |

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin's measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity were used to determine the data's factorability. Malhotra (2010:641) indicated that the values above 0.5 for the KMO test and a significant Bartlett's test of sphericity value less than .05 indicate the suitability of EFA on the data set. The following illustrate the results of the test.

**Table 4.6 KMO and Bartlett's test of sphericity results**

| Factor Analysis     | Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy | Bartlett's test of sphericity |    |      |
|---------------------|---|-------------------------------|----|------|
|                     |   | Approx. chi-square            | Df | Sig. |
| Brand communication | 0.840   | 1042.810                      | 15 | .000 |
| Service quality     | 0.882   | 2217.563                      | 28 | .000 |
| Brand satisfaction  | 0.830   | 1069.939                      | 15 | .000 |
| Brand loyalty       | 0.853   | 1178.477                      | 10 | .000 |

The results of the KMO and Bartlett's test of sphericity results showed that all the latent variables, namely brand communication ( $\chi^2 (15) = 1042.810, p < 0.000$ ), service quality ( $\chi^2 (28) = 2217.563, p < 0.000$ ), brand satisfaction ( $\chi^2 (15) = 1069.939, p < 0.001$ ) and brand loyalty ( $\chi^2 (10) = 1178.477, p < 0.001$ ) were suitable for factor analysis. The results of the KMO indicated that factor analysis is suitable for the data set (Williams, Onsman & Brown 2010:5).

### **Brand communication**

Six items measured brand communication and were all found to have factor values greater than 0.3. This indicates that the items are statistically significant for constructing the summative variable brand communication. B3 showed the highest factor loading of 0.837, while B6 the least factor loading of 0.385. The analysis revealed a single factor that accounted for 66.062 percent of the explained variance.

**Table 4.7 Component matrix for brand communication**

| <b>Items</b>  | <b>Factor 1</b> |
|---|-----------------|
| B1 I react favourably to the advertising and promotional activities used.   | 0.714           |
| B2 I feel positive towards the advertising and promotional activities used. | 0.760           |
| B3 The advertising and promotional activities used are good.                | 0.837           |
| B4 The advertising and promotional activities used do a good job.           | 0.810           |
| B5 I am happy with the advertising and promotional activities used.         | 0.775           |
| B6 I like the advertising and promotional activities used.                  | 0.385           |

Extraction method: Principal component analysis

### **Service quality**

Eight items measured service quality and were all found to have factor values greater than 0.3. The factor loadings ranged from 0.620 to 0.831. This indicates that the items are statistically significant for building models. C2 showed the highest factor loading, while C8 the least factor loading. The analysis revealed a factor that accounted for 52.971 percent of the explained variance.

**Table 4.8 Component matrix for service quality**

| <b>Items</b>  | <b>Factor 1</b> |
|---|-----------------|
| C1 This TVET college provides superior service.   | 0.802           |
| C2 This TVET college offers excellent service.  | 0.831           |
| C3 I have always had an excellent experience in all my interactions and associations with this TVET college.                  | 0.825           |
| C4 I feel good about what this TVET college offers to its students.   | 0.763           |
| C5 Overall, the service quality experienced during my interaction with the employees of this TVET college has been excellent. | 0.782           |
| C6 Overall, the service quality experienced during my interaction with the employees of this TVET college has been high.      | 0.773           |
| C7 This TVET college has a fair system for handling complaints.   | 0.744           |
| C8 This TVET college deals with customer complaints efficiently.  | 0.620           |

Extraction method: Principal component analysis

## Brand satisfaction

Brand satisfaction was measured using six items. The factor loadings for the items range between 0.443 and 0.860. The highest factor loading was observed at D4, while the least at D2. Consequently, all the items were acceptable. The factor accounted for 52.971 percent of the explained variance.

**Table 4.9 Component matrix for brand satisfaction**

| Items   | Factor 1 |
|---|----------|
| D1 This TVET college lives up to my expectations of it.               | 0.705    |
| D2 I made the right decision when I decided to use this TVET college. | 0.443    |
| D3 I am happy with this TVET college.                                 | 0.837    |
| D4 I am satisfied with the commercial standing of this TVET college.  | 0.860    |
| D5 I am satisfied with the service offered by this TVET college.      | 0.837    |
| D6 I am satisfied with the service quality of this TVET college.      | 0.567    |

Extraction method: Principal component analysis

## Brand loyalty

Brand loyalty was measured using five items. The factor loadings for the items ranged from 0.726 to 0.845. E3 has got the highest factor loading, while E5 has the lowest loading. Consequently, all the items were acceptable. The factor accounted for 66.062 percent of the explained variance.

**Table 4.10 Component matrix for brand loyalty**

| Items  | Factor 1 |
|--|----------|
| E1 I would not enrol at another TVET college as I value the TVET college I am at now.  | 0.794    |
| E2 I would recommend this TVET college to my friends.  | 0.831    |
| E3 I would not enrol at another TVET college as this TVET college has the standards I want.                                      | 0.845    |
| E4 I would be loyal to this TVET college even if other TVET colleges offered the same courses.                                   | 0.843    |
| E5 I would still enrol at this TVET college even if it is more expensive than other TVET colleges with the same characteristics. | 0.726    |

#### 4.7 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY ANALYSIS

As highlighted in Chapter 3, Cronbach's alpha value was used to measure the reliability. Malhotra (2010:319) highlights that Cronbach's alpha values above 0.6 show sufficient internal consistency reliability. Table 4.11 provides an overview of the reliability value for the four aspects of perception towards brand communication, service quality and brand satisfaction on brand loyalty. This indicates good internal reliability. As a measure of validity, a convergent validity test was conducted. A more detailed discussion of the validity findings is provided in Section 4.9.2.

**Table 4.11 Results of validity tests**

|                     | <b>Cronbach's<br/>alpha</b> | <b>Composite<br/>reliability (rho_a)</b> | <b>The average<br/>variance<br/>extracted<br/>(AVE)</b> |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|--|---|
| Brand communication | 0.800                       | 0.801                                    | 0.626   |
| Brand loyalty       | 0.867                       | 0.872                                    | 0.654   |
| Brand satisfaction  | 0.842                       | 0.851                                    | 0.682   |
| Service quality     | 0.901                       | 0.905                                    | 0.629   |

The Cronbach's alpha for brand communication, consisting of six items, measures students' perceptions of brand communication in TVET colleges at 0.80. For the service quality, consisting of eight items, a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.901 was calculated. Additionally, Cronbach's alpha value for brand satisfaction was 0.842. Lastly, Cronbach's Alpha value for brand loyalty, which consists of five items, was 0.867.

#### 4.8 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Hair *et al.* (2008:235) indicate that descriptive statistics provide researchers with a tool to summarise and describe the basic characteristics of a large data set from a sample of respondents more efficiently. In Chapter 3, descriptive statistics include a measure of location, variability and shape (Churchill *et al.* 2010:429). For this study, a six-point Likert scale was used to measure the scaled responses, ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 6 = strongly agree. Moreover, higher mean values are associated with the greater agreement.

In this study, the descriptive statistics of the sample Generation Y students are highlighted in Table 4.12.

**Table 4.12 Descriptive statistics**

| <b>Construct</b>           | <b>Valid N</b> | <b>Mean</b> | <b>Standard deviation</b> |
|----------------------------|----------------|-------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Brand communication</b> | 462            | 4.1373      | 1.01774                   |
| <b>Service quality</b>     | 462            | 3.8842      | 1.04267                   |
| <b>Brand satisfaction</b>  | 462            | 4.0664      | 1.20457                   |
| <b>Brand loyalty</b>       | 462            | 3.8506      | 1.17632                   |

The data may be classified as normally distributed since none of the skewness scores fall outside the -2 or +2 range. Brand communication was ranked the highest (M = 4.1373, SD = 1.01774), followed by brand satisfaction (M = 4.0664, SD = 1.20457), followed by service quality (M = 3.8842, SD = 1.04267) and lastly, brand loyalty (M = 3.8506, SD = 1.17632).

#### **4.9 CORRELATION ANALYSIS**

Hair *et al.* (2010:710) highlight that constructing a matrix of construct correlation helps assess the nomological validity of a proposed measurement model. The Pearson-moment correlation coefficients between each pair of constructs were examined to assess nomological validity. Table 4.13 reports on the correlation matrix

**Table 4.13 Correlation matrix**

|                     | <b>Brand communication</b> | <b>Brand satisfaction</b> | <b>Service quality</b> | <b>Brand loyalty</b> |
|---------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| Brand communication | 1                          |                           |                        |                      |
| Brand satisfaction  | 0.440**                    | 1                         |                        |                      |
| Service quality     | 0.476**                    | 0.655**                   | 1                      |                      |
| Brand loyalty       | 0.377**                    | 0.667**                   | 0.649**                | 1                    |

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The correlations for the variables of the study were analysed. The correlation between brand communication and brand loyalty was significant ( $r = 0.377$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). The correlation between service quality and brand loyalty ( $r = 0.649$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and brand satisfaction and service quality ( $r = 0.655$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) were also statistically significant. The correlation results for the possible combinations of exogenous variables indicate no evidence of multicollinearity.

#### **4.10 STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODELLING**

SEM was used to evaluate causal relationships among latent variables, namely brand communication, service quality, brand satisfaction and brand loyalty. This procedure of SEM includes path analysis and multiple regression analysis to model relationships among latent variables. SEM employed in this study was intended to confirm the model fit and to test the hypotheses outlined in this study. The first step was to test the measurement model, which led to the structural model analysis.

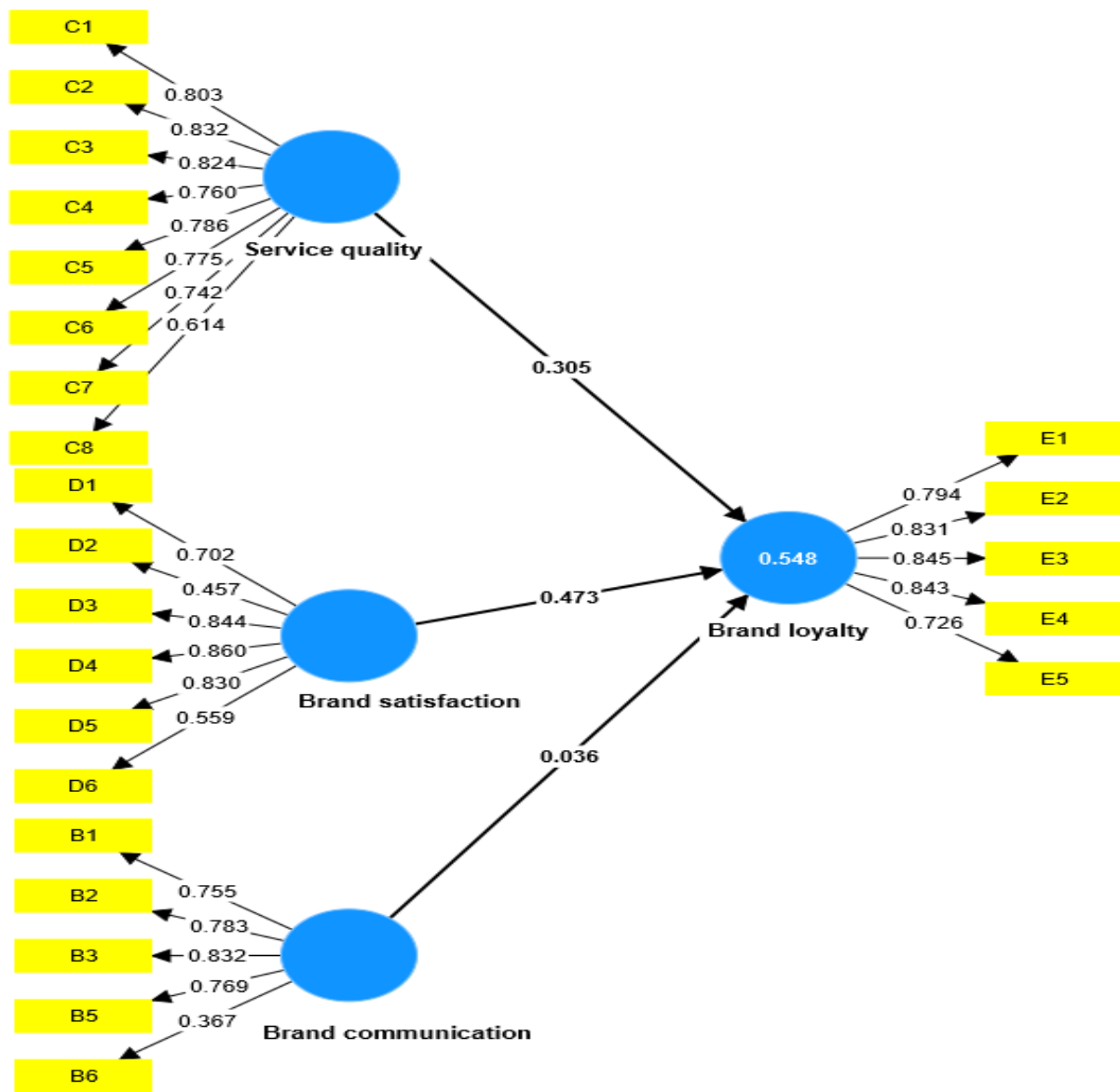
The next section highlights the process undertaken to conduct SEM.

##### **4.10.1 Measurement model specification**

The measurement model describes relationships, specifically between the variables and the constructs. The latent variables are described as theoretical constructs that are not measured directly or unobservable. First, a CFA was performed with the hypothesised measurement model before estimating the path coefficient for the hypothesised structural model. The purpose of this CFA was to test the factorial structure of the hypothesised measurement model (Figure 4.13).

Figure 4.13 shows the results of the confirmatory factor analysis.





**Figure 4.13: Confirmatory factor analysis results**

A confirmatory factor analysis revealed that items C8, D2, DD6 and B6 did not load above 0.70 and were therefore removed. After modification of the model, all constructs exceeded the recommended cut-off values, indicating the establishment of construct validity. The modified model was tested for validity and reliability and used to test the paths of a structural model.

#### 4.10.2 Reliability and validity tests for the measurement model

To test scale validity, a confirmatory factor analysis was again conducted to determine how well the measures reflected the constructs that were intended to be measured. As indicated in Chapter 3, Section 3.7.4, CR and AVE values were used to determine the model's discriminant and convergent validity. There are several ways to assess discriminant validity, namely, AVE and the

HTMT test. To determine discriminant validity, the AVE analysis is performed. This test determines whether the square root of each AVE value in relation to each latent construct is significantly greater than the correlation between any two latent constructs. A common method for assessing discriminant validity in studies is to use Larcker's (1981) criterion. Therefore, the same approach was followed in this study. A general rule of thumb is that an AVE value of 0.7 and above is acceptable (Hair *et al.*, 2019:2). Table 4.14 presents the discriminant validity results.

**Table 4.14 Measurement model: construct reliability and average variance extracted**

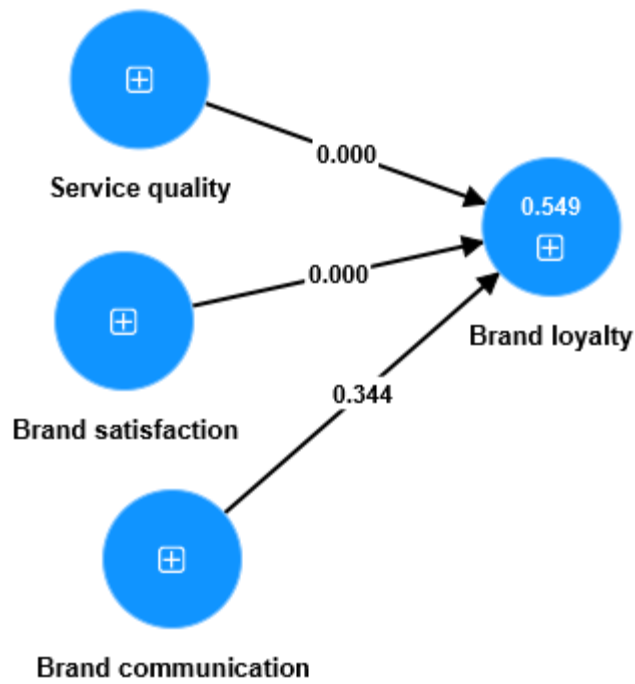
|                     | <b>Brand<br/>communication</b> | <b>Brand<br/>loyalty</b> | <b>Brand<br/>satisfaction</b> | <b>Service<br/>quality</b> |
|---------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Brand communication | <b>0.791</b>                   |                          |                               |                            |
| Brand loyalty       | 0.416                          | <b>0.809</b>             |                               |                            |
| Brand satisfaction  | 0.462                          | 0.701                    | <b>0.826</b>                  |                            |
| Service quality     | 0.516                          | 0.658                    | 0.698                         | <b>0.793</b>               |

\*Fornell and Lacker (Ab-Hamid, Sami & Sidek, 2017:3)

As illustrated in Table 4.14, all the related constructs had correlations smaller than the square root of the AVE, indicating discriminant validity. The values in bold in the table above represent the AVE values.

### 4.10.3 Structural model

Path coefficients, which indicate the relationship between dependent and independent variables, and R<sup>2</sup>, which measures the amount of variance explained by independent variables, were used to assess the structural model. Furthermore, SmartPLS was used to estimate the relationships between the paths. The arrows in Figure 4.9 indicate which endogenous variables are loaded into which exogenous variables and in which direction each endogenous variable is positioned. Figure 4.9 displays the structural equation model diagram.



**Figure 4.9 Structural model with path coefficients**

The model includes four latent factors, namely brand communication (six indicators), brand satisfaction (five indicators), brand loyalty (five indicators) and service quality (eight indicators). Figure 4.9 shows arrows indicating path coefficients.

#### **4.11 HYPOTHESES TESTING**

The significance level was set at the conventional  $\alpha = 0.05$  level in hypotheses testing. As part of the hypothesis testing stage, the path coefficients were assessed for significance, and the results can be found in Table 4.15. In addition, the table indicates the proposed hypotheses relationship, hypothesis, factor loadings, p-value and acceptance or rejection of the specific hypothesis. Finally, Table 4.15 shows the results of the hypotheses results.

**Table 4.15 Hypotheses analysis results**

|                                      |       |       |       |               |
|--------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|---------------|
| Brand communication -> Brand loyalty | 0.040 | 0.947 | 0.344 | Not supported |
| Brand satisfaction -> Brand loyalty  | 0.464 | 8.860 | 0.000 | Supported     |
| Service quality -> Brand loyalty     | 0.314 | 5.417 | 0.000 | Supported     |

**H1-Brand communication and brand loyalty:** Based on the Table 4.15, it is evident that there is no statistically significant relationship between brand communication and brand loyalty ( $\beta = 0.040$ ,  $t = 0.947$ ,  $p = 0.344$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ). According to the results, brand communication does not promote positive brand loyalty, as claimed by Schivinski and Dabrowski (2015:7). A possible explanation for this result could be that the respondents' opinions on brand communication were only slightly influenced by the advertising and sales promotion component used. However, previous research buttresses the role of advertising as a method of persuading and reaching geographically dispersed stakeholders (Baeva, 2011:53). Therefore, contrary to the findings of prior studies, it is possible that brand communication may not always result in brand loyalty, as seen in this study.

**H2-Service quality and brand loyalty:** As seen from the table, it is also clear that service quality influences brand loyalty ( $\beta = 0.314$ ,  $t = 5.417$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Thus, the findings of this study suggest that service quality plays an important role in driving brand loyalty. The study supports the view of Hossein (2012:22), that many organisations have recognised the importance of investing in service quality to improve brand loyalty, enhance competence, improve organisational performance and develop their capabilities. Furthermore, this study confirms that brand loyalty is influenced by brand service quality, as suggested by Kazemi *et al.* (2013:424).

**H3-Brand satisfaction and brand loyalty:** In terms of brand satisfaction and brand loyalty, the results of the study showed that there was also a significant relationship ( $\beta = 0.464$ ,  $t = 8.860$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) between both variables. Marist *et al.* (2014:58) found a relationship between brand satisfaction and brand loyalty, which is confirmed by the results of this study. Most respondents would be satisfied if the TVET college met their expectations and needs, as they feel this would fulfil their needs. According to Rahman (2012:57), customer satisfaction can be one of the most important factors in building long-term, profitable relationships between a brand and its customers. Consequently, the respondents would still recommend these colleges to their friends regardless of the cost or the fact that they offer the same courses as other TVET colleges. Their loyalty to these institutions is evident. The argument presented in this study is supported by the

hypothesis of Russell-Bennett *et al.* (2007), which hypothesised that brand satisfaction is an antecedent of brand loyalty because it is a measure of customer satisfaction.

#### **4.12 CONCLUSION**

This chapter reported on the study's empirical findings. It provided a discussion concerning the outcomes of the pilot study, including the reliability and validity, which indicated that the scale used was reliable and valid. The preliminary data analysis, which involves coding, data cleaning and tabulation, was then discussed. To assess the factorability of the data, EFA, specifically principal component analysis was employed. The data were then tested for reliability and validity. Descriptive statistics, were calculated to summarise the sample data description, including mean, standard deviation and frequency distributions, correlation analysis was conducted to determine if the relationships between the hypothesised student's perception of brand communication and service performance on brand satisfaction and loyalty were significant. Hypotheses were formulated and tested using SEM and path analysis from the relationships observed in the correlation analysis. Among the three hypotheses of the study, two were accepted and supported. The supported hypotheses indicated the relationships between service quality and brand loyalty and brand satisfaction and brand loyalty, which were all statistically significant.

Chapter 5 provides a discussion of the empirical findings. Furthermore, research questions and objectives are re-examined to determine whether they have been answered. In addition, the conclusion and final recommendations of the study are specified and discussed.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

A need was identified to empirically test the influence of brand communication, quality of services and brand satisfaction on brand loyalty. However, research studies regarding the influence of brand communication, quality of services and brand satisfaction on brand loyalty have been done in different organisations. A gap was found in a study that investigates the determinants of brand loyalty in TVET. A lack of published research on this type of study focusedration Y perceptions within the South African context.

The previous chapter reported the study's empirical findings and analysis. This chapter aims to evaluate the major findings concerning the research objectives to highlight some key conclusions. This final and last chapter of this research study also provides an overview of the study, contribution, recommendations, limitations, implications for future research and conclusion.

#### 5.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES, MAIN FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The following objectives were presented in Chapter 1.

##### 5.2.1 Primary objective

To investigate the influence of students' perceptions of brand communication, service quality and brand satisfaction on brand loyalty.

##### 5.2.2 Theoretical objectives

- To review the literature on brand communication.
- To review the literature on service quality.
- To review the literature on brand satisfaction.
- To review the literature on brand loyalty.
- To review the literature on the influence of brand communication, service quality and brand satisfaction on brand loyalty.

Through a literature review on brand loyalty, communication, customer satisfaction and service

quality, the theoretical objectives of this study were met.

### **5.2.3 Empirical objectives**

This research aimed to investigate the factors that influence students' perceptions of brand communication, service quality and brand satisfaction on brand loyalty in TVET colleges in Gauteng. The empirical objectives given below were derived from the major purpose of this study and were directly translated towards the construction of the research model and, ultimately, the testing of hypotheses. The research model was constructed utilising prior research, and after identifying the determinants in the adoption of brand loyalty, there was a development of different hypotheses, which were then tested.

The following section describes whether or not the study's objectives were met.

- To measure students' perceptions of brand communication, service quality and brand satisfaction with TVETs.

The findings presented in Table 4.3 indicate that the majority of the respondents (77.2%) agree that they react favourably to the advertising and promotional activities used by TVET colleges. They (76%) also indicated that they made the right decision to use a specific TVET college. These respondents also pointed out that they felt good about what their TVET college offers to its students (71%). Some (68%) of them indicated that they would recommend the TVET college to their friends.

- To investigate the influence of students' perceptions of brand communication undertaken by TVETs on students' brand loyalty towards TVET colleges.

One of the empirical objectives set out in Chapter 1 was to examine the influence of students' perceptions of brand communication undertaken by TVETs on students' brand loyalty towards TVET colleges. A number of tests were performed to ascertain this empirical objective. One of those was correlation analysis. The study found a non-significant relationship between brand communication and brand loyalty ( $\beta = 0.040$ ,  $t = 0.947$ ,  $p = 0.344$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ). One of the implications that may be derived from this research is that, despite the relevance of brand communication in maintaining loyalty, there may be alternative means of assuring loyalty among these respondents. Therefore, South African marketers are recommended to examine what communication tactics are more relevant to this demographic.

- To investigate the influence of students' perception of service quality within TVETs on

students' brand loyalty towards TVET colleges.

The present study established a relationship between service quality and brand loyalty ( $\beta = 0.314$ ,  $t = 5.417$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) resulting to the acceptance of Hypothesis 2. This suggests that students who had a positive experience in their contacts and relationships with TVET colleges and those who generally felt good about what these colleges deliver to their students, would undoubtedly produce loyal inclinations towards these colleges.

- To investigate the influence of students' perceptions of brand satisfaction with TVETs on students' brand loyalty towards TVET colleges.

This empirical objective examined the relationship between brand satisfaction and brand loyalty. According to the evidence presented in this study, there is a positive and statistically significant relationship between the two variables. The relationship between the variables can be demonstrated statistically ( $\beta = 0.464$ ,  $t = 8.860$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Therefore, it can be concluded that brand satisfaction contributes to brand loyalty, just as previously expected (Marist *et al.* 2014:58). The study also conducted a descriptive analysis of the empirical dataset (section 4.8). In this study, mean scores above 4.0 indicate that respondents believe that brand satisfaction is a key factor in brand loyalty.

### **5.3 CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY**

This study contributed to the body of knowledge by empirically testing a model of factors influencing brand loyalty among Generation Y students. The study results showed that brand communication, quality of services and brand satisfaction are significant factors influencing brand loyalty.

### **5.4 MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The recommendations are classified according to the objectives of the study.

#### **5.4.1 The influence of students' perceptions of brand communication undertaken by TVETs on students' brand loyalty towards TVET colleges.**

The TVET colleges should:

Devise strategies to raise awareness of the brand. This may be accomplished by maintaining open lines of communication with the different stakeholders, such as the lecturers and the students. In addition, TVET colleges are strongly encouraged to implement image-promoting activities based



on the target audience, scope, communication medium and programme needs to establish a positive social image. Therefore, TVET colleges have to work to improve their reputation by promoting themselves using a variety of advertising platforms, including social media, traditional media and the media online and offline.

#### **5.4.2 The influence of students' perception of service quality within TVETs on students' brand loyalty towards TVET colleges.**

The TVET colleges should:

- Regularly collect feedback on different customer groups' perceptions, such as satisfaction among students and the world of work. This is because the performance of a specific set of academic, administrative and support related activities can impact the students' perception of the quality of the service provided. Therefore, the administrative personnel are urged to play an important role in appropriately responding to student inquiries resulting in a rise in student enrolment due to student satisfaction. Such an approach is desirable because it may encourage students to promote their institution to others, pursue postgraduate studies and keep positive relations with their college.

#### **5.4.3 The influence of students' perceptions of brand satisfaction with TVETs on students' brand loyalty towards TVET colleges.**

The TVET colleges should:

- Consistently enhance their educational products to foster a generation of competitive students. TVET colleges are urged to focus on the lecturing staff's role in assuring general satisfaction with the quality of the programmes. As such, it is believed that the quality of lecturers' teaching and academic assistance and advising are essential tools for higher education institutions to help students succeed and be satisfied with their experience at such colleges. Overall, it is suggested that the TVET sector pay greater attention to brand satisfaction to increase institutional loyalty.

### **5.5 LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH**

Although the current study provides useful insights into the effect of brand loyalty, service quality and brand satisfaction on brand loyalty, it is susceptible to limitations that suggest opportunities for further research. The TVET colleges, such as Southwest Gauteng TVET college, Ekurhuleni

TVET College, Central Johannesburg TVET College, Sedibeng TVET College and Western TVET College, participated in the study were limited to those from the province in which the research was conducted. Future studies must be comprehensive to provide an accurate perspective of the TVET sector. Moreover, the conclusions of this research are limited to the TVET sector. As a result, this should motivate researchers to broaden the scope of their future research to include various types of higher education institutions. In this context, it will be essential for future researchers to conduct a comparative analysis of TVET colleges and other higher education institutions, such as universities and universities of technology. This may aid in a deeper understanding of the disparities in perceived brand loyalty across diverse higher education sectors.

In summary, the focus of this research was on three factors that impact customer loyalty to a brand. Although this was a step in the right direction towards a better understanding of the influence of students' perceptions of brand communication, service quality and brand satisfaction on brand loyalty, the factors included in this study were quite restricted. As a result, future studies should include adding brand functional benefits, consumer price consciousness, brand trust and brand symbolism.

## **5.6 FINAL REMARKS**

This research concludes that brand loyalty is mainly driven by service quality and brand satisfaction from students' viewpoints. Therefore, TVET colleges must be deeply aware of the aspects that influence student brand loyalty. Furthermore, understanding what motivates students to remain loyal to a TVET college is crucial for drawing big numbers of students.

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## APPENDIX A

### PILOT QUESTIONNAIRE



**VAAL UNIVERSITY  
OF TECHNOLOGY**

*Inspiring thought. Shaping talent.*

### **THE INFLUENCE OF GENERATION Y STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF BRAND COMMUNICATION, SERVICE QUALITY AND BRAND SATISFACTION ON BRAND LOYALTY IN TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION TRAINING COLLEGES IN GAUTENG**

Dear Student

I am a master's student at the Vaal University of Technology (Vanderbijlpark Campus) and my promoter is Dr Kirsty-Lee Sharp.

I am conducting a study on Generation Y students' perceptions of brand communication, service quality and brand satisfaction on brand loyalty in Technical and Vocational Education Training Colleges in Gauteng.

Please assist me by completing the attached questionnaire. It should not take you longer than 15 minutes to complete. All responses are confidential and the data will only be used for research purposes.

Please be advised that there are five sections to this questionnaire, namely Section A, B, C, D and E.

Thank you for your important contribution to this study.

Yours sincerely,

Itani Listen Ramuthivheli

Cell:084 294 8153

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**Section A: Demographic information**

Please mark the appropriate block using a cross (X)

|    |                             |  |                                    |  |                             |                            |         |
|----|-----------------------------|--|------------------------------------|--|-----------------------------|----------------------------|---------|
| A1 | Name of you institution     | South West<br>Gauteng<br>TVET<br>College | Ekurhuleni West<br>TVET<br>College | Central<br>Johannesburg<br>TVET<br>College | Sedibeng<br>TVET<br>College | Western<br>TVET<br>College |         |
| A2 | Year of study               | 1 <sup>st</sup> year                     | 2 <sup>nd</sup> year               | 3 <sup>rd</sup> year                       | Postgraduate<br>certificate |                            |         |
| A3 | Gender                      | Male                                     | Female                             |  |                             |                            |         |
| A4 | Programme registered for    | NCV                                      | NATED                              |  |                             |                            |         |
| A5 | Ethnic group                | Black                                    | Coloured                           | Indian/Asian                               | White                       |                            |         |
| A6 | Age at your last birthday   | Years Old                                |                                    |  |                             |                            |         |
| A7 | Province where you grew up  |  |                                    |  |                             |                            |         |
|    | Eastern Cape                | Free State                               | Gauteng                            | KwaZulu-Natal                              |                             | Limpopo                    |         |
|    | Mpumalanga                  | Northern Cape                            | North West                         | Western Cape                               |                             |                            |         |
| A8 | Your Mother Tongue language |  |                                    |  |                             |                            |         |
|    | Afrikaans                   | English                                  | IsiNdebele                         | IsiXhosa                                   | IsiZulu                     | Sepedi                     | Sesotho |
|    | Setswana                    | SiSwati                                  | Tshivenda                          | Xitsonga                                   | Other                       |                            |         |

**SECTION B:**

Concerning your perceptions of brand communication undertaken by the TVET college you attend, please indicate using a cross (X) the extent to which you agree/ disagree with the following:

|    |  | Strongly<br>disagree | Disagree | Slightly<br>disagree | Slightly<br>agree | Agree | Strongly<br>agree |
|----|--|----------------------|----------|----------------------|-------------------|-------|-------------------|
| B1 | I react favourably to the advertising and promotional activities used.   | 1                    | 2        | 3                    | 4                 | 5     | 6                 |
| B2 | I feel positive towards the advertising and promotional activities used. | 1                    | 2        | 3                    | 4                 | 5     | 6                 |
| B3 | The advertising and promotional activities used are good.                | 1                    | 2        | 3                    | 4                 | 5     | 6                 |
| B4 | The advertising and promotional activities used do a good job.           | 1                    | 2        | 3                    | 4                 | 5     | 6                 |
| B5 | I am happy with the advertising and promotional activities used.         | 1                    | 2        | 3                    | 4                 | 5     | 6                 |
| B6 | I like the advertising and promotional activities used.                  | 1                    | 2        | 3                    | 4                 | 5     | 6                 |



**SECTION C:**

Concerning your perceptions of service quality provided by the TVET college you attend, please indicate using a cross (X) the extent to which you agree/disagree with the following:

|    |  | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Slightly disagree | Slightly agree | Agree | Strongly agree |
|----|--|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|
| C1 | This TVET college provides superior service.   | 1                 | 2        | 3                 | 4              | 5     | 6              |
| C2 | This TVET college offers excellent service.  | 1                 | 2        | 3                 | 4              | 5     | 6              |
| C3 | I have always had an excellent experience in all my interactions and associations with this TVET college.                  | 1                 | 2        | 3                 | 4              | 5     | 6              |
| C4 | I feel good about what this TVET college offers to its students.   | 1                 | 2        | 3                 | 4              | 5     | 6              |
| C5 | Overall, the service quality experienced during my interaction with the employees of this TVET college has been excellent. | 1                 | 2        | 3                 | 4              | 5     | 6              |
| C6 | Overall, the service quality experienced during my interaction with the employees of this TVET college has been high.      | 1                 | 2        | 3                 | 4              | 5     | 6              |
| C7 | This TVET college has a fair system for handling complaints.   | 1                 | 2        | 3                 | 4              | 5     | 6              |
| C8 | This TVET college deals with customer complaints efficiently.  | 1                 | 2        | 3                 | 4              | 5     | 6              |

**SECTION D:**

Concerning your brand satisfaction associated with the TVET college you attend, please indicate using a cross (X) the extent to which you agree/disagree with the following:

|    |  | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Slightly disagree | Slightly agree | Agree | Strongly agree |
|----|--|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|
| D1 | This TVET college lives up to my expectations of it.               | 1                 | 2        | 3                 | 4              | 5     | 6              |
| D2 | I made the right decision when I decided to use this TVET college. | 1                 | 2        | 3                 | 4              | 5     | 6              |
| D3 | I am happy with this TVET college.                                 | 1                 | 2        | 3                 | 4              | 5     | 6              |
| D4 | I am satisfied with the commercial standing of this TVET college.  | 1                 | 2        | 3                 | 4              | 5     | 6              |
| D5 | I am satisfied with the service offered by this TVET college.      | 1                 | 2        | 3                 | 4              | 5     | 6              |
| D6 | I am satisfied with the service quality of this TVET college.      | 1                 | 2        | 3                 | 4              | 5     | 6              |

**SECTION E:**

Concerning your brand loyalty towards the TVET college you attend, please indicate using a cross (X) the extent to which you agree/disagree with the following:

|    |  | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Slightly disagree | Slightly agree | Agree | Strongly agree |
|----|--|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|
| E1 | I would not enroll at another TVET college as I value the TVET college I am at now.  | 1                 | 2        | 3                 | 4              | 5     | 6              |
| E2 | I would recommend this TVET college to my friends.   | 1                 | 2        | 3                 | 4              | 5     | 6              |
| E3 | I would not enroll at another TVET college as this TVET college has the standards I want.                                      | 1                 | 2        | 3                 | 4              | 5     | 6              |
| E4 | I would be loyal to this TVET college even if other TVET colleges offered the same courses.                                    | 1                 | 2        | 3                 | 4              | 5     | 6              |
| E5 | I would still enroll at this TVET college even if it is more expensive than other TVET colleges with the same characteristics. | 1                 | 2        | 3                 | 4              | 5     | 6              |

*Thank you for your valuable contribution*

## APPENDIX B

### FINAL QUESTIONNAIRE



**VAAL UNIVERSITY  
OF TECHNOLOGY**

*Inspiring thought. Shaping talent.*

### **THE INFLUENCE OF GENERATION Y STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF BRAND COMMUNICATION, SERVICE QUALITY AND BRAND SATISFACTION ON BRAND LOYALTY IN TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION TRAINING COLLEGES IN GAUTENG**

Dear Student

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I am conducting a study on Generation Y students' perceptions of brand communication, service quality and brand satisfaction on brand loyalty in Technical and Vocational Education Training Colleges in Gauteng.

Please assist me by completing the attached questionnaire. It should not take you longer than 15 minutes to complete. All responses are confidential and the data will only be used for research purposes.

Please be advised that there are five sections to this questionnaire, namely Section A, B, C, D and E.

Thank you for your important contribution to this study. Yours

sincerely,

Itani Listen Ramuthivheli

Cell:084 294 8153

**Section A: Demographic information**

Please mark the appropriate block using a cross (X)

|    |                             |  |                                    |  |                             |                            |         |
|----|-----------------------------|--|------------------------------------|--|-----------------------------|----------------------------|---------|
| A1 | Name of you institution     | South West<br>Gauteng<br>TVET<br>College | Ekurhuleni West<br>TVET<br>College | Central<br>Johannesburg<br>TVET<br>College | Sedibeng<br>TVET<br>College | Western<br>TVET<br>College |         |
| A2 | Year of study               | 1 <sup>st</sup> year                     | 2 <sup>nd</sup> year               | 3 <sup>rd</sup> year                       | Postgraduate<br>certificate |                            |         |
| A3 | Gender                      | Male                                     | Female                             |  |                             |                            |         |
| A4 | Programme registered for    | NCV                                      | NATED                              |  |                             |                            |         |
| A5 | Ethnic group                | Black                                    | Coloured                           | Indian/Asian                               | White                       |                            |         |
| A6 | Age at your last birthday   | Years old                                |                                    |  |                             |                            |         |
| A7 | Province where you grew up  |  |                                    |  |                             |                            |         |
|    | Eastern Cape                | Free State                               | Gauteng                            | KwaZulu-Natal                              | Limpopo                     |                            |         |
|    | Mpumalanga                  | Northern Cape                            | North West                         | Western Cape                               |                             |                            |         |
| A8 | Your mother tongue language |  |                                    |  |                             |                            |         |
|    | Afrikaans                   | English                                  | IsiNdebele                         | IsiXhosa                                   | IsiZulu                     | Sepedi                     | Sesotho |
|    | Setswana                    | SiSwati                                  | Tshivenda                          | Xitsonga                                   | Other                       |                            |         |

**SECTION B:**

Concerning your perceptions of brand communication undertaken by the TVET college you attend, please indicate using a cross (X) the extent to which you agree/disagree with the following:

|    |  | Strongly<br>disagree | Disagree | Slightly<br>disagree | Slightly<br>agree | Agree | Strongly<br>agree |
|----|--|----------------------|----------|----------------------|-------------------|-------|-------------------|
| B1 | I react favourably to the advertising and promotional activities used.   | 1                    | 2        | 3                    | 4                 | 5     | 6                 |
| B2 | I feel positive towards the advertising and promotional activities used. | 1                    | 2        | 3                    | 4                 | 5     | 6                 |
| B3 | The advertising and promotional activities used are good.                | 1                    | 2        | 3                    | 4                 | 5     | 6                 |
| B4 | The advertising and promotional activities used do a good job.           | 1                    | 2        | 3                    | 4                 | 5     | 6                 |
| B5 | I am happy with the advertising and promotional activities used.         | 1                    | 2        | 3                    | 4                 | 5     | 6                 |
| B6 | I like the advertising and promotional activities used.                  | 1                    | 2        | 3                    | 4                 | 5     | 6                 |

**SECTION C:**

Concerning your perceptions of service quality provided by the TVET college you attend, please indicate using a cross (X) the extent to which you agree/disagree with the following:

|    |  | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Slightly disagree | Slightly agree | Agree | Strongly agree |
|----|--|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|
| C1 | This TVET college provides superior service.   | 1                 | 2        | 3                 | 4              | 5     | 6              |
| C2 | This TVET college offers excellent service.  | 1                 | 2        | 3                 | 4              | 5     | 6              |
| C3 | I have always had an excellent experience in all my interactions and associations with this TVET college.                  | 1                 | 2        | 3                 | 4              | 5     | 6              |
| C4 | I feel good about what this TVET college offers to its students.   | 1                 | 2        | 3                 | 4              | 5     | 6              |
| C5 | Overall, the service quality experienced during my interaction with the employees of this TVET college has been excellent. | 1                 | 2        | 3                 | 4              | 5     | 6              |
| C6 | Overall, the service quality experienced during my interaction with the employees of this TVET college has been high.      | 1                 | 2        | 3                 | 4              | 5     | 6              |
| C7 | This TVET college has a fair system for handling complaints.   | 1                 | 2        | 3                 | 4              | 5     | 6              |
| C8 | This TVET college deals with customer complaints efficiently.  | 1                 | 2        | 3                 | 4              | 5     | 6              |

**SECTION D:**

Concerning your brand satisfaction associated with the TVET college you attend, please indicate using a cross (X) the extent to which you agree/disagree with the following:

|    |  | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Slightly disagree | Slightly agree | Agree | Strongly agree |
|----|--|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|
| D1 | This TVET college lives up to my expectations of it.               | 1                 | 2        | 3                 | 4              | 5     | 6              |
| D2 | I made the right decision when I decided to use this TVET college. | 1                 | 2        | 3                 | 4              | 5     | 6              |
| D3 | I am happy with this TVET college.                                 | 1                 | 2        | 3                 | 4              | 5     | 6              |
| D4 | I am satisfied with the commercial standing of this TVET college.  | 1                 | 2        | 3                 | 4              | 5     | 6              |
| D5 | I am satisfied with the service offered by this TVET college.      | 1                 | 2        | 3                 | 4              | 5     | 6              |
| D6 | I am satisfied with the service quality of this TVET college.      | 1                 | 2        | 3                 | 4              | 5     | 6              |

**SECTION E:**

Concerning your brand loyalty towards the TVET college you attend, please indicate using a cross (X) the extent to which you agree/disagree with the following:

|    |  | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Slightly disagree | Slightly agree | Agree | Strongly agree |
|----|--|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|
| E1 | I would not enroll at another TVET college as I value the TVET college I am at now.  | 1                 | 2        | 3                 | 4              | 5     | 6              |
| E2 | I would recommend this TVET college to my friends.   | 1                 | 2        | 3                 | 4              | 5     | 6              |
| E3 | I would not enroll at another TVET college as this TVET college has the standards I want.                                      | 1                 | 2        | 3                 | 4              | 5     | 6              |
| E4 | I would be loyal to this TVET college even if other TVET colleges offered the same courses.                                    | 1                 | 2        | 3                 | 4              | 5     | 6              |
| E5 | I would still enroll at this TVET college even if it is more expensive than other TVET colleges with the same characteristics. | 1                 | 2        | 3                 | 4              | 5     | 6              |

*Thank you for your valuable contribution*

## APPENDIX C

### Structural model

