

# Exploring the relationship between organisational culture, brand, and word-of-mouth referral.

By Garret Farmer-Brent

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Name: GARRET FARMER-BRENT

Student Number: FRMGAR001

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# Key words

Organisational culture; internal branding; brand image; brand advocacy; organisational performance; word-of-mouth marketing; brand personality.

# Abstract

The culture within an organisation affects organisational performance in a myriad of ways, but the existing research was found by this paper to only examine organisational culture's effect on profitability. This narrow view creates a gap between culture as a starting point for performance, and profitability as an ultimate endpoint. What about everything in between that culture has an effect on? Rather than examining organisational culture in terms of how it influences profitability, this study looks at how organisational culture influences an aspect organisational performance, specifically: its effect on brand image or on word-of-mouth referral. To do so, this paper unpacks a causal chain of influences in four chapters. The research here shows how that employees situated within the culture influences customers to promise to refer the organisation to their social connections. The literature shows that organisational culture is a context that influences most facets of business, and this context is used as a filter by employees to understand how they should behave and what they should value. This paper proposes that employees receive internal brand communications within the context of the culture. Then, they conduct their service actions according to what is expected of them within this context. Customers who interact with these employees are then coming into contact with the organisational by the proxy of customer-facing employees. These interactions between customers and employees are what causes the customer to enjoy the service experience or not. The theory shows that when a service experience is enjoyed, there is likelihood of positive word-of-mouth referral. This paper correlates that and proposes that when there is a strong degree of alignment in organisational culture, employees receive internal brand communications and conduct their service actions in strong alignment of what is expected of them. This leads to customers perceiving the organisation in a way that is favourable and causes a significant number of customers to promise to recommend the organisation.

# Hypothesis

A customer will likely recommend a brand to their friends and family is directly and proportionately influenced by the culture by their interactions with employees. Customers of an organisation in the service industry develop their own view of the brand partly as a result of interactions with customer-facing employees. These employees are situated within the context of the organisational culture, which significantly influences how the employees perform the service to customers. In short, the organisational culture causes customers to want to recommend the organisation to their social connections. This leads to increased interest by other non-customers to enlist the organisation's services.

## Research focus

The main research question of this study is how organisational culture influences the likelihood that a customer will recommend the organisation by means of word-of-mouth. This question is framed alongside key arguments around organisational culture and word-of-mouth practices (Laloux, 2014; Kotter and Heskett, 1992; Keller, 1993; Hatch and Schultz, 1997; Punjaisri and Wilson, 2007; Kowalczyk and Pawlish, 2002; Buttle, 2011). In the chapters that follow, each of these sub-questions is answered:

- The organisational culture within the central office of the global organisation (study subject) and how it is communicated so as to show alignment with that culture in satellite bases in other countries (Chapter 1)
- How the organisational brand is received and internalised by employees, and then communicated to the customers at satellites bases (Chapter 2)
- How the brand is received by customers from the communication and service of the satellites in a way that creates the desired brand image (Chapter 3)
- How this brand communication and reception leads to the likelihood that customers will recommend the organisation to their social connections (Chapter 4)

### Context and subject of study

The subject of this study is Global Vision International (GVI). GVI is an organisation that classifies itself as a social enterprise in the sustainable tourism industry (Global Vision International, 2018). The organisation is headquartered in Cape Town, South Africa, and has satellite branches (called 'bases') in 21 locations around the world in seven different

continental regions; including South and North America, Africa, and Asia (Global Vision International, 2018).

Each satellite base partners with local community organisations. These include non-governmental organisations, governmental bodies, schools and other international non-governmental organisations (e.g. Save The Children, World Wildlife Fund, etc.). GVI supplies manpower to these partners in the form of international, mostly Western, volunteers and interns. Volunteers and interns travel abroad to the base of their choice to participate in various developmental and research projects. The local and international organisations, or bodies, are considered GVI's partners; these could range from local schools where volunteers teach, to the World Wildlife Fund to whom interns submit their data. The volunteers and interns, who pay GVI to participate in various programs, are the customers. These programs are considered GVI's products. Volunteers choose the product they want to purchase and pay a program fee. This fee includes a full start to finish support service by customer-facing staff in the headquarters; training and mentoring; and management services by the customer-facing staff in each of GVI's bases.

The majority of GVI's customers live in the United Kingdom and the United States of America and potential customers (leads) are generated through various direct and digital marketing channels. When a prospective customer submits an application form via the website, they then begin interacting with sales staff called 'Enrolment Managers'. Once the customer has paid a deposit for their program, they then begin to interact with support staff called 'Support Coordinators'. These initial three stages of communication are conducted via digital and telephonic communication channels. The staff managing the customer prospecting, enrolment, and support service are all located in the central offices, also called the organisation's headquarters, in Cape Town, South Africa.

Once a participant is 'in the field' – i.e. they have arrived at their chosen satellite base and have begun participating in the program - they are managed, trained, and cared for by field staff (customer-facing employees) at the location-specific level. The service responsibilities of these staff include:

- hospitality-related services such as accommodation and food management, daily agenda-setting, scheduling, and logistics;
- any necessary training, such as teaching English in a foreign language certifications or program-specific data collection training;
- participant health and safety monitoring and policy implementation;
- local community and partner relationship development and maintenance;

Customers first come into face-to-face contact with GVI employees when they arrive at a satellite base. This is when participants and the organisation, via customer-facing staff, interact for the most considerable amount of time and involvement.

After a participant has concluded their program, they are automatically enrolled in GVI's Alumni Program, which seeks to stay connected with and re-engage customers. These alumni members will either become brand fans or brand detractors depending on post-experience. At this stage, communications largely return to digital modes, unless an alumni member wants to become an ambassador, in which case they will become incentivised advocates and may interact face-to-face with various GVI staff.

The focus of this study is on the latter two stages of the customers' participation in the programs (products) and the services attached to them. That is, this study focuses on the context of customers being in the field, and when they have concluded their experience to become post-purchase customers.

## **About the researcher**

I am currently full-time employed (since July 2017) as Brand Strategist for GVI. I have an instrumental role in the strategic brand communications of the organisation and make key decisions in the formation and perpetuation of the brand identity and personality. This insider knowledge is applied throughout

## **Chapter outline**

Chapter One looks at whether there is an alignment organisational culture between headquarters and individual bases using mainly the works of Kotter and Heskett (1992), Bremer (2012) Hatch and Schultz (1997) and Punjaisri and Wilson (2011) for their insights on how organisational culture, internal branding, and external communications intertwine. Chapter Two focuses on the reception of the internal communications by customer-facing employees in the field as a whole, their perception of the brand, and their communication of it to customers through the brand service. This chapter draws on the insights of Punjaisri and Wilson (2011) as well as a few other theories on employer and internal branding (Moroko and Uncles, 2008; Foster, Punjaisri, and Cheng, 2010). Chapter Three focuses on the customers' perceptions of the brand (brand image) and whether that brand image is aligned with the strategic goal of the organisation using several theorists' insights on brand image, corporate reputation, and brand equity (Zhang, 2015; Zimmer, 1994; Keller, 1997; Argenti and Druckenmiller, 2004; Ivens and Valta, 2012; Phipps, Prieto, and Ndinguri, 2013). Chapter Four focuses on whether the customers of the organisation say that they will

recommend the brand to their social connections or not, using word-of-mouth marketing theory and insight from several studies into the field (Buttle, 2011; Hogan, Lemon, & Libai, 2004; Villanueva, Yoo, and Hanssens, 2008; Sweeney, Soutar, Mazzarol, 2008).

Conclusions are then drawn about the link between organisational culture and customer recommendation.

## Literature review

When considering organisational culture and its influence on various business dimensions such as brand communications, employee-customer relations, customer service, and business performance indicators, it may seem intuitive that a positive or strong organisational culture will cause employees to convey brand promises in such a way as to create a positive brand image held by customers. This should in turn cause these customers to positively advocate the organisation through word-of-mouth referral. Further, this advocacy should lead to increased positive organisational performance. However, I did not come across qualitative or quantitative confirmation of these links between organisational culture to employee brand service to brand image to word-of-mouth referral (also called customer recommendation), which would then lead to increased organisational performance. To arrive at a conceptual understanding of this chain of cause and effect, the literature review encompasses the fields of organisational culture and its link to organisational performance; internal branding; organisational (corporate) brand identity, personality, and image; and word-of-mouth marketing (Kotter and Heskett, 1992; Bremer, 2012; Laloux, 2014; Hatch and Schultz, 1997); Punjaisri and Wilson, 2011; Moroko and Uncles, 2008; Foster, Punjaisri, and Cheng, 2010; Zhang, 2015; Zimmer, 1994; Keller, 1997; Argenti and Druckenmiller, 2004; Ivens and Valta, 2012; Phipps, Prieto, and Ndinguri, 2013; Buttle, 2011; Hogan, Lemon, & Libai, 2004; Villanueva, Yoo, and Hanssens, 2008; Sweeney, Soutar, Mazzarol, 2008).

## Organisational culture and performance

### *Organisational culture*

This section unpacks what organisational culture is in the way that it will be used in this study. That is, what an organisational culture comprises of and how it influences the members that create and perpetuate it. While there are nuanced differences, the terms 'organisational culture', 'corporate culture', 'organisation culture', and 'workplace culture'

can and often are used interchangeably and synonymously. For the purposes of this paper, I am using Frederic Laloux's use of organisational culture in his book *Reinventing Organisations*, used as he does in an understanding of organisations as situated within and influenced by broader social, economic, and political contexts (2014). He also uses the term 'organisational culture' as a concept inherently containing the notion of collaboration between people. Organisations are, in a highly simplified sense, people who work together towards the same overarching organisational objectives or within the same structure, and organisational culture is a result of this collaboration (Laloux, 2014).

This study looks at the links in between organisational culture and performance and here the work of Kotter and Heskett's (1992) is relevant. *Corporate Culture and Performance* (1992) is their seminal work in the study of organisational culture and its effects on organisational performance. It is still widely relevant today, almost 30 years after initial publication due to its groundbreaking work in analysing different theoretical frameworks of organisational culture. Kotter and Heskett argues that the concept has two levels that influence each other (1992:4). These levels are as follows. At a deeper, less visible level, culture is a set of values shared by people in a group and tend to persist over time despite individual group membership changes (Kotter and Heskett, 1992:5). At a more visible level, culture represents the behaviour patterns of an organisation that new employees are encouraged to follow by other employees, called 'group behaviour norms' (Kotter and Heskett, 1992:5). Shared values strongly influence the behaviour patterns of individuals within a group as well as group behaviours and decisions as a whole (Kotter and Heskett, 1992).

Marcella Bremer's book *Organisational Culture Change* (2012) suggests that organisational culture has two main components: shared values and shared behaviours within a group. Bremer simplifies the concept by stating that, "It's how we do things here"; "How we think about things around here"; and "How we think and feel about what we're doing here" (2012, pp. 31-32). The strength of her definition lies in its simplicity and its elucidation of how organisational culture is regulated between members — existing or new — within an organisation. A culture is perpetuated, protected, and stabilised because people copy, correct, and coach each other on the correct behaviours required to properly assimilate into an organisation (Bremer, 2012:36). This cycle of copy, correction, and coach ensures that new employees are effectively inculcated into an organisation's system of values and behaviours (Bremer, 2012:37; Kotter and Heskett, 1992). An employee can sometimes begin to exhibit beliefs or behave in a way that is out of line with the accepted culture, the dissident employee is corrected by their peer colleagues or coached by their superiors until they either fit back into the norm or leave the organisation (Bremer, 2012). Everyone who is

a part of the culture perpetuates the culture through a mostly tacit cyclical process of teaching and learning (Bremer, 2012).

Further, Bremer examines the functions cultures serve within an organisation. Amongst other factors, organisational culture determines social hierarchy, provides a shared identity and familiarity, and gives a vision of the future of the organisation (Bremer, 2012:37). The organisational culture also provides a set of filters which employees use to mediate and construct meaning within the organisation, which are in alignment with everyone else's in the organisation (Bremer, 2012; Hatch and Schultz, 1997; Kotter and Heskett, 1992).

Both Kotter and Heskett's, and Bremer's definitions form this thesis' working understanding of organisational culture. Namely the understanding that an organisational culture is an unspoken, internalised set of rules that determine group and individual values and behaviours, and which are regulated tacitly between members of the culture. It is the means by which employees assimilate information within the context of the workplace and translate that information into decisions and actions.

### ***The relationship between culture and performance***

To begin to understand if organisational culture could be one of the causes of customer recommendation, which could then lead to positive business results, we need to examine whether and how an organisational culture affects organisational performance in general. The below examines a noteworthy foundational work (Kotter and Heskett, 1992) and more recent works to establish that there a link made between organisational culture and business performance.

Kotter and Heskett's research found that a strong culture does not necessarily correlate directly with strong organisational performance (1992). This is because the existence of a strong organisational culture does not mean that the organisation has a business strategy that is successful for the market environment in which it is currently situated (Kotter and Heskett, 1992). A strong culture also does not automatically mean that an organisation has the ability to respond to shifting market forces effectively (Kotter and Heskett, 1992:21). The culture can become a hindrance more than an aide, no matter its strength or cohesion, under certain circumstances. If an organisational culture is not geared towards the context within which the organisation is situated, then this can become a hindrance. Another hindrance occurs if that culture does not have a degree of willingness towards flexibility or responsiveness incorporated into its cultural make-up.

Kotter and Heskett apply three different organisational theories to their research results to analyse the validity of each. The first is known as the 'Strong Cultures Theory', which holds that the strength of an organisation's culture is directly and positively proportional to its performance (Kotter and Heskett, 1992:17). The authors disproved the theory, finding that organisational culture can have an impact on an organisation's long-term economic performance in multiple ways, but the relationship is not proportional in terms of strength to positive performance or vice versa (Kotter and Heskett, 1992). Some of the organisations in their study, which had strong cultures, still performed poorly or averagely. This was because these cultures weren't aligned with the business strategies that would lead to positive performance.

The Cultural Content or 'good fit' theory is Kotter and Heskett's (1992) second theory. The correlation between cultural strength and increased performance relies on the context and strategic soundness of an organisation (Kotter and Heskett, 1992:29). If an organisation's culture is suited for its market environment and the business strategy, then it performs well (Kotter and Heskett, 1992).

The third theory, the Adaptive Cultures theory, posits that 'only cultures that can help organisations anticipate and adapt to environmental change will be associated with superior performance over long periods of time' (Kotter and Heskett, 1992:43).

Non-adaptive cultures are reactive, risk averse, and uncreative (Kotter and Heskett, 1992:44). Adaptive cultures respond to shifting internal and external forces with flexibility and creativity in order to sustain effectively (Kotter and Heskett, 1992).

Kotter and Heskett conclude that the strength of a culture alone does not necessarily equal positive growth and neither does fitting into the current strategic context (1992). What is needed is a culture that is inherently adaptable and willing to change strategic direction in response to shifting and evolving contexts (Kotter and Heskett, 1992). At an individual level, employees would encourage each other to be flexible and shift their daily tasks towards the needs of the new strategy or context (Bremer, 2012).

The definition of performance in Kotter and Heskett's research and analysis was limited to economic success or failure. It didn't take into account other success metrics such as employee longevity or turnover rate, or cost efficiency versus productivity. Yes, these latter factors could be boiled down to their effect on the financial success of the organisation. However, when examining an organisation's culture, it seems highly reduced to avoid examining which factors for the success of the organisation's bottom line are affected by strong or weak cultures. With such a narrow view it isn't possible to identify which facet of

the organisational culture is improving what factor of performance that leads to a stronger or weaker profit margin.

Similarly, the authors touch only very briefly on subunits of culture — or, subcultures — within the organisational culture and only in the context of satellite offices - not within the situation of one office itself. This is a flaw in the research, because it does not take into account whether one subculture adapts effectively but another does not, and how this may affect performance. The effects of an organisation's market context would need to be examined on each of the organisations subcultures to determine which subculture responds well to which variable, and how that response affects the performance of the organisation as a whole.

According to Bremer, culture directly influences organisational performance through facets such as recruitment and hiring, employee retention, employee motivation and engagement, and productivity (2012:31). With this assertion, Bremer briefly answers the shortcomings of Kotter and Heskett mentioned earlier. Though she does not provide any qualitative or quantitative backing, her position is clear - culture affects performance. Kotter and Heskett's earlier work confirms this (1992). Neither confirm beyond doubt that the strength or functionality of an organisation's culture is proportional to its positive or negative performance. This paper attempts to measure one way in which the link between organisational culture and performance might show such a causal, proportional relationship. This way is through examining culture's potential influence on brand advocacy.

Frederic Laloux's work *Reinventing Organisations* (2014) examines organisations through an anthropological and developmental lens, as they have evolved in function, form, and thought over several decades. This is in comparison to the previous waves which were defined as societal 'consciousnesses', or ideological ways of thinking (Laloux, 2014:8). Laloux studies organisations that have structured themselves using forward thinking and revolutionary techniques that pay much more attention to 'softer' aspects of business, such as organisational culture. The insights provided are highly relevant to understanding how internal functions, structures, and contexts affects organisational performance

Laloux details the various evolutionary stages that human consciousness has gone through and is currently going through. Laloux's extensive literature research proffers that this evolution of human consciousness has been categorised into six waves or paradigms (though these evolutions are not exclusive of one another and are occurring at different rates across different sectors of society, within organisations, and also within people) (Laloux, 2014:5). Laloux first focuses on the shift from the fading paradigm, which is labelled as Achievement/Orange Paradigm (which is based on modernist theory) to the

current dominant paradigm called Pluralistic/Green Paradigm (based on postmodern theory) (Laloux, 2014). He then turns his attention to the study of organisations operating within the emerging paradigm, which he calls the Evolutionary/Teal Paradigm (Laloux, 2014). He frames his discussion of organisational within the context of emergent Teal Organisations.

Laloux states that in any organisation a 'strong, shared culture is the glue that keeps empowered organisations from falling apart' (Laloux, 2014:33). He references Kotter and Heskett in stating that it has been proven that 'values-driven organisations can outperform their peers by wide margins' (Laloux, 2014:33). To bolster this statement, he refers to the work of Raf Sisodia, Jagh Sheth, and David Wolfe in their book *Firms of Endearment*, which corroborates Kotter and Heskett's findings (Laloux, 2014:335). However, similarly to my own reservations, he notices that there is a bias in the selection of what outcomes are chosen to represent positive or negative performance (Laloux, 2014:335). It is a methodological curiosity that only profitability or shareholder return were chosen as gauges for success when analysing the link between organisational culture and performance.

Phipps, Prieto, and Ndinguri (2013) make a link between organisational culture and organisational productivity, answering in part the previously identified curiosity. Employee involvement is an important contributing and proportional factor to organisational productivity (Phipps, Prieto, and Ndinguri, 2013). A culture of involvement may be seen to arise when an organisation shows explicitly through human resource management practices and internal communication that the organisation values the employee. More specifically, that the organisation values their capacity to: self-govern; participate in decision making processes; gain ready access to required information; and earn rewards that are linked to good performance — all of which lead to increased organisational performance (Phipps, Prieto, and Ndinguri, 2013). This type of culture can be said to contribute directly to organisational productivity through increased employee involvement, commitment, and participation (Phipps, Prieto, and Ndinguri, 2013). A culture of increased employee involvement is one means of augmenting organisational productivity, because '(o)rganisational culture plays an important role in the growth and development of an organisation, and can substantially impact organisational performance' (Phipps, Prieto, and Ndinguri, 2013:107). The authors have found evidence to suggest that desirable performance outcomes are the result of an organisation's culture of participation and involvement (Phipps, Prieto, and Ndinguri, 2013).

By using the term 'organisational productivity', Phipps, Prieto, and Ndinguri (2013) include within the scope of organisational performance more contributing factors to success or

failure than just profitability. This begins to address the issue highlighted around the work of Kotter and Heskett by Laloux, because Phipps, Prieto, and Ndinguri (2013) used a different performance factor other than profit to begin gauge the influence of organisational culture within an organisation. This is an important contribution to the aims of this paper to identify another such factor, which is word-of-mouth referral.

The question of organisational culture and its link to increased or decreased organisational performance needs to be situated conceptually and methodologically in a wider ambit of what the culture might influence positively or negatively. This is in agreement with Laloux (2014). If organisational culture is only studied in terms of how it influences profitability directly and solely, which is Kotter and Heskett's viewpoint (1992), it becomes challenging to prove soundly. But, if we look at how organisational culture influences a myriad of factors that owe to increased or decreased organisational performance, we can begin to construct a research methodology for gaining a fuller, more in depth understanding, such as that of Phipps, Prieto, and Ndinguri (2013). This could be an understanding of where culture fits in; how it's different levels and factions within an organisation influence different performance indicators; how a culture itself can be influenced effectively to increase organisational productivity; etc. The scope widens so that the link is no longer all or nothing, which has been the problem with this field of study to date, as pointed out by Laloux (2014).

Upon all the extant research above, this section has proposes that organisational culture does influence performance. This paper seeks to add to this understanding by examining one such way in which organisational culture might affect performance through a positive effect on the likelihood that customers will refer the organisation to their social connections.

### ***Internal branding***

Organisational culture and internal branding are distinct concepts both in meaning and in extant research, but there exists a relationship between the two. Using the work of theorists like Foster, Punjaisri, and Cheng (2010) and Moroko, and Uncles, (2008), amongst others, this section aims to review internal communications and how they are used both within the context of organisational culture, and as a method for perpetuating it from a top-down perspective. This examination is important because the second link in understanding whether organisational culture causes customer recommendation focuses on the employees those customers interact with. Understanding how communications made to employees might theoretically influence their beliefs and behaviours links how they will interact with customers.

Organisational culture is a context within which business and personal decisions about multiple factors are made and received by both management and staff (Moroko and Uncles, 2008; Hatch and Schultz, 1997). This includes the organisational brand identity, the employer brand, and expected and actual behaviours. Internal branding, on the other hand, is the communications and other activities undertaken by an organisation to align employees actions with what with the organisational brand demands (Punjaisri and Wilson, 2011). Internal branding serves to create expectations of employees in the form of customer brand promises (Punjaisri and Wilson, 2011; Punjaisri and Wilson, 2007). These activities may take the form of internal marketing, training, office design, other human resources activities like team buildings, work social events, etc. The brand promises that are determined by the business and marketing strategy are promoted to employees through these activities, and the employees are expected to consume and/or participate in them. The culture also determines how employees behave within the organisation and communicate about the organisation. Punjaisri and Wilson's (2011) findings viewed together with Hatch and Schultz's (1997) and the literature reviewed here on organisational culture begin to build a concept of how organisational culture links to potential word-of-mouth referral and thus organisational performance. Employees use the material they are provided with by internal communications to help form culture expectations and employment expectations, and customers then come into indirect contact with those materials.

Internal branding attempts to ensure that the brand promises are 'transformed by employees into reality' to give customers the symbolic material they need to build a brand image and a set of expectations about a product or service (Punjaisri and Wilson, 2011:1523). This transformation by employees from words and rules into actions and behaviours occurs by filtering internal branding activities through several lenses to build their own (employee) perceptions and attitudes. Some of these lenses include employee job requirements, psychological contracts the employee holds with the organisation, and the organisational culture (Hatch and Schultz, 1997; Foster, Punjaisri, and Cheng, 2010). This paper argues that organisational culture is the most significant of these filters, because it bears the weight of values and expected behaviours by everyone with which the employee interacts. Furthermore, if an employee doesn't behave how the culture expects her or him to, a cycle of correction will ensue, which may include further internal branding communications.

Employer branding is another important concept when considering how employees come to interact with the organisational brand. An employer brand is the image that employees have of the organisation, and often it is comprised of many of the same elements that are used to help customers create their perception of the organisational brand. The employer brand is

the perception of the organisation held by potential, current, and past employees (Foster, Punjaisri, and Cheng, 2010). This perception is informed by things such as internal brand communications (Punjaisri and Wilson, 2007; Moroko and Uncles, 2008). Employer branding is the sum of an organisation's efforts to communicate to potential and current staff that it is a desirable place to work based on the package of functional, economic, and psychological benefits that would or do result from employment (Moroko and Uncles, 2008). Whilst the concept of 'employer branding' doesn't play much of a role in the rest of this paper, it is important to help understand that employees have perceptions of the organisation too. These perceptions need to be managed by the organisation for the same reason that customer perceptions need to be managed. This reason, I suggest very plainly, is to get employees to agree to willingly play their part in the organisation's strategy.

Moroko and Uncles suggest that an organisation's culture is part of what serves to attract potential employees to an organisation and help to retain them as current employees (2008). It plays a part in the employer brand. We know from Bremer (2012) that culture serves to inculcate new employees into established behavioural and value norms within an organisation and regulate the behaviours of current employees. Internal branding is another source of inculcation because it provides some of the symbolic and artefactual material needed by current employees to develop and maintain a perception of the employer brand by existing employees (Moroko and Uncles, 2008). This latter source is more formalised and in direct control of the business strategy, because it is decided on by a section of management. However, the way employees receive and perceive internal branding is not in the direct control of the strategy (Moroko and Uncles, 2008). The organisational culture can take an ugly turn, because, similarly to the image customers have about an organisational brand, this employee perception is informed by many factors that are often outside of the scope of the organisation's direct influence (Moroko and Uncles, 2008). The perception can be aligned or misaligned to a varying degree with how the organisation would wish employees to perceive the organisational brand (Moroko and Uncles, 2008). It will inform in a significant way, the behaviours and attitudes of employees towards the organisation, their interactions with it, the way they talk about the organisation to personal connections, and their interactions with customers whilst serving them (Punjaisri and Wilson, 2007; Moroko and Uncles, 2008). Understanding this alignment is key to understanding whether organisational culture causes word-of-mouth referral. This is because it needs to be considered whether employees who are misaligned will still do their job well enough to serve the organisational strategy.

Whilst internal branding focuses on ensuring that existing employees align themselves with the organisational brand to deliver on brand promises, a limitation in the internal branding

literature is the concept's inability to address how an organisation can recruit those candidates whose values fit with the organisation in the first place (Foster, Punjaisri, and Cheng, 2010). Organisations have begun to realise the importance of recruiting and retaining employees whose values align with an organisation's brand and organisational culture (Foster, Punjaisri, and Cheng, 2010). Extant research suggests that recruiting the right people is critical, particularly for organisations that rely on employees to represent brand values and deliver brand promises to customers through brand service (Foster, Punjaisri, and Cheng, 2010). Halbesleben and Buckley (2004 cited in Foster, Punjaisri, and Cheng, 2010) suggest that hiring patterns affect the organisation's culture, service standards, and reputation, which in turn affects the success of corporate branding (Foster, Punjaisri, and Cheng, 2010). This is why this paper is looking at whether there is cultural alignment and how employees perceive the organisation. If there is no alignment, and there is poor perception, then can there be customer recommendation? This paper argues not.

Punjaisri and Wilson (2000) examine the role internal branding plays in the communication of brand messaging and delivery of brand promises from employee to customer. The successful positioning of a service organisation's brand is dependent on the employees' behaviours in producing and delivering the service (Punjaisri and Wilson, 2000). The role of internal branding "has emerged as a key process to align the behaviours of employees with the brand values" (Punjaisri and Wilson, 2000:59). In chapter 1 of the analysis below, this paper examines the cultural alignment between a central office and satellite bases in order to provide a stable context for the proceeding Chapter 2. The latter examines precisely what Punjaisri and Wilson (2000) posit – this is, whether employees are conducting their service actions in a way that is conducive to the organisation's strategic goals.

Customer-facing employees are at the interface of the internal and the external world of the brand and thus exert a certain degree of influence on customers' and other stakeholders' perceptions about the brand (Punjaisri and Wilson, 2000). They need to be behaving in alignment with the organisation's objectives, or at least in a way that is constructive for the organisation, because this plays a noteworthy role in the success of brand positioning (Punjaisri and Wilson, 2000). Internal branding helps to ensure that employees behave in ways that support the strategic brand personality that marketing management seeks to achieve (Punjaisri and Wilson, 2000). Customer-facing employees are considered as a marketing channel similarly to social media or advertising, and this paper argues that they behave in a constructive or conducive manner in large part because of the organisational culture they both imbibe and perpetuate. Due to this, the objective of internal branding is to ensure that employees deliver brand messages through their service in such a way as to

create the desired perceptions in customers and other stakeholders (Punjaisri and Wilson, 2000).

The authors identified that the two strongest internal branding methods for ensuring employee-brand identity alignment that resulted in effective communication and delivery of brand promises were internal communications and employee training (Punjaisri and Wilson, 2011). It was found that employees in the study recognise their importance in delivering the brand, and that “when employees identify themselves with and are committed to the brand, they will behave in ways that support the brand” (Punjaisri and Wilson, 2000:63).

Organisational branding is about multiple stakeholders interacting with the organisation’s employees (amongst other communication channels) (Punjaisri and Wilson, 2007). This paper suggests that a brand’s success largely relies on employees’ attitudes and behaviours in delivering the brand promise to external stakeholders. Because they are at the interface of the internal and the external world of the brand, the behaviours and values of customer-facing employees exert a degree of influence on customers’ and other stakeholders’ brand image (Punjaisri and Wilson, 2007).

The relationship between organisational culture and internal branding is in the way both serve to align employees with expected behaviours by communicating these expectations to them, whether tacitly or directly. Employees who identify themselves with and are committed to the brand will behave in ways that support the brand strategy (Punjaisri and Wilson, 2011). The behaviour of customer-facing employees in particular plays a significant role in shaping customer perceptions of the organisational brand, and this behaviour is informed in large part by employees’ perception of the organisational brand as filtered through the organisational culture (Foster, Punjaisri, and Cheng, 2010; Moroko and Uncles, 2008; Punjaisri and Wilson, 2007). This section created the understanding that communications made to employees influence their beliefs and behaviours and how they will interact with customers.

### ***Organisational culture and brand***

This paper is working in two distinct realms of theory – organisational theory and brand theory – and the follow section helps qualify this marriage. This will help with understanding the links in between organisational culture, employee-to-customer communications, and customer recommendation. Hatch and Schultz (1997) were the first to combine the concepts of organisational culture and brand communications. Their view of the interrelatedness of the concepts of organisational culture and organisational identity and image is situated within a context of collapsing internal-external boundaries within

contemporary organisations (noted in more recent research done by Punjaisri and Wilson, 2007 and Moroko and Uncles, 2008). Hatch and Schultz's paper is the closest link this paper has found to make the proportional connection between internal culture and external brand perceptions, which may or may not lead to increased brand advocacy and thus increased organisational performance in one indicator.

Organisational culture creates the brand identity and brand personality in as much as the business strategy does (Hatch and Schultz, 1997). The brand identity that is constructed by the business strategy and by internal corporate communications is delivered (in the service sector) to customers by those that embody this identity, which are an organisation's employees. The brand identity is interpreted and mediated by these employees through the cultural lens of the workplace (Hatch and Schultz, 1997).

Organisational functions that have historically operated as distinctly internal with no effect on brand reputation and consumer brand perception (HR, accounting, production, etc.) are now understood to influence the way an organisation is perceived and thus interacted with and spoken about by external stakeholders (customers, the media, suppliers, partnerships, etc.) (Hatch and Schultz, 1997). The perception-wall between internal functioning and external stakeholder relationships and management has broken down almost completely (Laloux, 2014; Hatch and Schultz, 1997). This paper suggests that employees in a service context, as the main link between internal and external worlds of an organisation, determine in large part whether customers will like the brand of the organisation and thus the organisation itself.

Hatch and Schultz argue that organisational culture should not be seen as a variable to be measured, accounted for, and controlled. Rather, it is a context within which interpretations of organisational identity are formed and intentions to influence brand image perceptions are formulated (1997). This serves as a basis for merging theories of organisational culture and various brand theories and concept. The above shows the interconnectedness between organisational culture and the formation of various brand facets, such as identity and personality.

## **Brand identity, personality, and image**

The literature on organisational culture generally shows that the culture does affect the performance of an organisation (Kotter and Heskett, 1992; Laloux, 2014; Bremer, 2012).

However, more factors such as brand perceptions, external stakeholder relationships, organisational productivity, etc., need to be considered when examining what this effect might be. This paper attempts to reach an understanding of whether an organisational culture's causes customer referral or not. As seen from the previous section, internal brand communications play a big role in how employees will communicate the organisation's brand to customers. These next sections look at brand theory in terms of how organisations construct their brands within the context of the organisational culture, and then use that construction to influence customer perceptions. These customer perceptions are a large part of what will cause customers to recommend the brand.

### ***Brand identity and personality***

Organisational identity is defined broadly by Hatch and Schultz as what members within an organisation perceive, feel, and think about an organisation (1997). It is "a collective, commonly-shared understanding of the organisation's distinctive values and characteristics" (Hatch and Schultz, 1997:357). The marketing definition of identity defines it as the way in which management communicates a constructed identity through products, behaviour, and environment. Organisational theory holds that an organisation's identity is created through the interactions between employees and the organisation (Hatch and Schultz, 1997). Top management decides on and communicates the symbols they wish to be used in the construction of brand identity both internally and externally, but these symbols are interpreted and acted out by organisational members through filters that include the cultural patterns of the organisation, work experiences, and various influences from external relations with the environment (Hatch and Schultz, 1997).

Brand identity is an internally decided and mediated concept of the organisation's brand (Nandan, 2005; Hatch and Schultz, 1997). Brand identity and brand personality, while two separate concepts originating from different research and academics, can be viewed as complementary in as much as they share the same basis. They are both formed through strategic marketing management to be communicated to stakeholders to provide the material needed to build a perception of the organisation and its brand (Nandan, 2005). However, whilst brand identity leans more towards the symbols and artefacts that are communicated, brand personality focuses more on the relational aspect between organisation and stakeholder (Ivens and Valta, 2012; Nandan, 2005).

The thinking is that when presented with a brand presenting personality traits with which an individual resonates — at least in certain contexts — it will incline this individual to develop a relationship with the brand and form a positive brand image. When this brand image (elaborated on below) is consistent with the way an individual or a group perceives

themselves, they would give preference to the brand image and thus the product or service to which it is attached (Zhang, 2014).

Identity and personality cannot be separated, but they should not be considered as synonymous. Brand personality is a constellation of various human-like patterns of thinking, feeling, and behaving. Brand identity is a set of assets, occurrences, stories and symbols (Ivens and Valta, 2012; Hatch and Schultz, 1997). Both are facets of creating a holistic brand construction. In this paper, brand personality is the focus because of its inter-relational quality. Organisational culture is necessarily inter-relational, as is the interaction between employees and customers in the services industry. This inter-relational quality is important for of Chapter 4 below, because brand advocacy — which stems from customers who are inclined to recommend a product or serve — bears the same need for relations between people.

### ***Brand image***

As this literature review has shown so far, employees' communications to customers are a large part of what they will use to govern their interactions with the organisation. This is because these interactions help shape the customer's brand image.

Kevin Lane Keller (1993) describes brand image as a set of perceptual beliefs about a brand's attributes, benefits, and associations (Keller, 1993). These three factors are often seen as the foundation for an evaluation of the brand (Keller, 1993). Faircloth, Capella, and Alford state that, "By controlling the brand associations a consumer processes via the marketing mix, the marketer has the best opportunity to create the desired brand image", or in other words, the best opportunity to influence the perceptions of the customer (2001:63). An organisation defines and communicates its brand strategically, but its image results from stakeholder impressions of an organisation's behaviour, which aren't as easily controlled as the organisational communications themselves (Argenti and Druckemiller, 2004).

"With the proliferation of brands in the market, consumers make their purchase decisions largely depending on the brand image rather than the product itself" (Zhang, 2014:60), and it is because of this that customer perceptions need to be managed effectively. Brand image is the perception held by external audiences about an organisation that is constructed over time through various direct or indirect interactions with the brand and are out of the organisation's direct control. These interactions occur largely through employee-to-customer, strategic personality-based, identity-based marketing, and other brand communications (Zimmer, Zhinkan, and Kapferer, 1994; Zhang, 2014; Hatch and Schultz, 1997; Ivens and Valta, 2012; Punjaisri and Wilson, 2000). Chapter 3 of this paper

examines a corpus of customer data to unpack how customers perceive the organisation under study.

### ***Culture's influence on brand identity and image***

An organisational culture is composed in large part by material aspects central to the marketing-based concept of brand identity and personality, including an organisation's name, products, buildings, logos and other symbols, top managers, and personality constellation (Hatch and Schultz, 1997). According to Hatch and Schultz, an organisational identity is an internally constructed product of the dynamic processes of organisational culture (1997). It is culturally embedded and provides the symbolic material used to construct and communicate the brand internally (Hatch and Schultz, 1997). Brand messages are then communicated externally and in turn absorbed back into the cultural system of meaning by being used to infer identity: "who we are is reflected in what we are doing and how others interpret who we are and what we are doing" (Hatch and Schultz, 1997:361).

Brand image is the end result of a chain of meaning-making processes, starting with a business strategy that is situated within the context of an organisational culture (Hatch and Schultz, 1997). The business strategy dictates the desired brand personality, which is then communicated to and absorbed by internal stakeholders through the filter of the organisational culture, creating an internal image (Hatch and Schultz, 1997; Kowalczyk and Pawlish, 2000). The brand is also communicated externally by, but not limited to, strategic, identity-based external communications, and through direct customer experience and interaction with the organisation's customer-facing employees (Hatch and Schultz, 1997; Punjaisri and Wilson, 2000). These communications and experiences are then used to form brand images by external stakeholders, and if the job has been done successfully, these brand images are mostly aligned with what the business strategy intended (Hatch and Schultz, 1997). Notice the link that is made between the brand image of an organisation held by employees and its influence on the interaction these employees have with customers, who use those interactions as a part of the brand image construction process. The brand image of an organisation held by employees, constructed by filtering the brand identity in large part through the lens of the organisational culture, comes into direct contact with customers.

Kowalczyk and Pawlish (2000) make a tentative connection between an organisation's reputation and external stakeholders' perceptions of its organisational culture. Their work draws heavily on the work of Hatch and Schultz cited here previously. Reputation as a concept can be considered similar to brand image as defined previously: "Reputation is a

perceptual judgement of an organisation's past actions that is developed over time." (Kowalczyk and Pawlish, 2000:161). Though reputation is comprised of various economic and non-economic factors, Kowalczyk and Pawlish have researched specifically how the perception of an organisation's culture by external stakeholders influences the reputation of the organisation. To this end, their study was largely inconclusive, but empirical results did suggest that a pattern exists between external perception of culture and brand reputation. The takeout for this paper is that

## **Brand advocacy and word-of-mouth**

Word-of-mouth (WOM) as a marketing channel has a plethora of research literature that dates back to 1967 when the phrase was first defined by Johan Arndt as a spoken, person-to-person communication between a receiver and a sender whom the receiver perceives as non-commercial, about a brand, product or service (in Buttle, 2011). Throughout the literature, the same body of early research is cited as the basis for conducting more recent studies. Word-of-mouth is an act of communication committed by one person and received by one or more other persons. Between these people there exists a strong or weak relationship. The communication is about an organisation, brand, product, or service where the communicator is independent of the organisation and has previous knowledge and experience with the organisation, brand, product, or service (Buttle, 2011; Villanueva, Yoo, and Hanssens, 2008; Hogan, Lemon, and Libai, 2004; Sweeney, Soutar, and Mazarol, 2008). Seeking and giving WOM referral about a product or service "has been shown to influence a variety of conditions: awareness, expectations, perceptions, attitudes, behavioural intentions, and behaviour" (Buttle, 2011:242).

Buttle's paper (2011) discusses various characteristics of WOM (valence, focus, timing, solicitation, and intervention); its usage in different market sectors; its applicability, productivity, and usage throughout the purchase journey; and different types of WOM. The most applicable of these definitions is the distinction between input WOM and output WOM. Input WOM occurs before the purchase when a prospective customer seeks advice or opinion based on previous from someone who has previous experience (Buttle, 2011). Output WOM occurs after the purchase when advice or opinion based on previous experience is expressed by someone to someone else or to a group of others, whether it is solicited or not (Buttle, 2011).

Word-of-mouth is more important in the service industry than in product-based industries because of the intangibility of a service, which makes it more difficult to evaluate prior to purchase and consumption, giving it a higher perceived risk (Buttle, 2011; Hogan, Lemon,

and Libai, 2004). "WOM is seen as a highly credible information source as the sender is usually independent of the organisation providing the service and is not seen to gain directly from advocating the service", and service consumers prefer to seek information from trusted sources such as family, friends and peers rather than sponsored promotional sources (Hogan, Lemon, and Libai, 2004:345; Sweeney, Soutar, and Mazarol, 2008). Word-of-mouth has been referenced as a risk reduction strategy from input seekers which can do much to reduce or eliminate the uncomfortable feeling of risk exposure (Buttle, 2011).

Sweeney, Soutar, and Mazarol (2008) examine the impact of WOM on the receiver of the action to fill a gap in existing research that has historically only focused on the sender of WOM. They summarize this impact into a succinct model that encompasses their own research findings and extant research as being a sender and receiver model consisting of interpersonal relationships and contextual factors (Sweeney, Soutar, and Mazarol, 2008).

Villanueva, Yoo, and Hanssens (2008) and Hogan, Lemon, and Libai (2004) used empirical studies to examine WOM within the context of other organisation-owned marketing channels, in comparative effectiveness and in integrated marketing mixes respectively. The former assesses empirically the lifetime value of a customer who is acquired through broadcast and direct marketing efforts as compared to acquisition through WOM (2008). The authors state that while direct marketing efforts acquire customers faster, the cost of acquisition is higher, and the value is more short-term (Villanueva, Yoo, and Hanssens, 2008). Customers acquired through WOM take longer to yield results but add more lifetime value for stronger long-term results (Villanueva, Yoo, and Hanssens, 2008). The latter research by Hogan, Lemon, and Libai (2004) sought to situate WOM within the context of a marketing mix and a communication funnel, focusing solely on how advertising might be a significant cause for a person to begin seeking input WOM, both of which work together to achieve a positive decision to purchase.

What causes the communicator to conduct the act of communication that is WOM is an ongoing area of study that is of great interest to marketers. Extant research has found consistently that WOM is more effective and productive than organisation-owned or -influenced marketing channels in achieving positive decisions to purchase (Buttle, 2011). The production of output WOM is considered to be an outcome of customer experiences with a product or service (Buttle, 2011). The spread of WOM is largely driven by the customer's satisfaction with the product, and satisfaction is believed to motivate positive WOM (Buttle, 2011; Hogan, Lemon, and Libai, 2004). Whereas seeking input WOM is a risk reduction strategy to help rationalise a purchase, "customer-initiated referrals originate from

current or former customers who have been satisfied or delighted with their experiences” (Buttle, 2011:245). This causes them to act as unpaid advocates for the brand, product, or service.

Word-of-mouth referral has been found to be more important in the final stages of the purchase process because it reassures consumers and serves to reduce perception of risk as well as post-purchase uncertainty. In earlier stages of the buying cycle, customers are more likely to rely on impersonal communications such as broadcast, direct marketing, or advertising (Martilla, 1976, cited in Hogan, Lemon, and Libai, 2004). Evidence suggests that customers who perceive that they are offered social support in a service encounter are more prepared to advocate the brand, product, or service (Buttle, 2011). This perception of social support is present when service providers’ verbal or non-verbal communication increases the customer’s sense of control by reducing their uncertainty through various different strategies, and also when they can seek advice from strong or weak social connections (Buttle, 2011; Sweeney, Soutar, and Mazarol, 2008).

In a service interaction between customer-facing employees of an organisation and a customer, there is causation to advocate a brand or service post-interaction when the customer is satisfied, which results from being made to feel supported and socially connected. Buttle states that "WOM is also the primary form of action in which organisational culture is expressed and reconstituted, therefore having a considerable impact on the behaviour of employees" (2011:244). As mentioned earlier when examining Hutch and Schultz and Punjaisri and Wilson’s work, employees are both consumers of an organisational brand and communicators of it. They are also at the interface of internal and external. It is becoming conceptually clearer at this point that that client satisfaction, which has been found to lead to advocacy, is caused by good employee service. This employee service is situated within the context of an organisational culture.

A limitation highlighted in of the studies done by both Villanueva, Yoo, and Hanssens (2008) and Hogan, Lemon, and Libai (2004) is that much of the extant research on brand advocacy only compares or integrates it within a marketing context with a single other type of marketing channel, and that other smaller or less obvious communications are under-studied. The intersection between customer-facing employees who deliver a service, the customer who seeks the service, and how this interaction creates the propensity in the customer to positively advocate a brand is a key focus of this paper.

## **Literature summary and conceptual framework**

Organisational culture influences the construction of brand identity and acts as a filter through which employees of an organisation consume internal branding to understand and interact with that brand identity. Through this understanding and interaction, employees may come to embody the brand in as much as it is a part of the culture, and customer-facing employees will necessarily communicate the brand to customers through their service actions. Customers will use these interactions as one way of developing a perception of the brand image, which plays a part in whether they will advocate for the brand or not. Whether customers do or do not advocate the brand, this will have an effect on multiple performance factors within an organisation. The brand personality that is received by customers in a services context through the channel of customer-facing employees is thus mediated by the organisational culture. These are the conceptual links between organisational culture, brand image, and brand advocacy, and potentially with organisational performance. It remains to be seen how these links cause or influence each other positively or negatively.

## **Theoretical framework**

Hatch and Schultz state that organisational culture, brand identity, and brand image form three related parts of a system of meaning-making that give an organisation's various stakeholders the material needed to shape their perceptions of the organisation (1997). There exist dynamic and mutually influential relationships between organisational culture, brand identity, and brand image - each affects the other, potentially in ways that have very real business implications. This suggested for Hatch and Schultz (1997) the need for a new interdisciplinary field of study combining organisation theory, branding theory, strategy, and marketing. The proposed purpose for this field of study is to promote understanding of the symbolic processes that flow around an organisation and cross the boundary between the organisation and its environment. In 1997, the authors recognised that each discipline has been restricted by the definitions of its field that emphasize the boundary separating the organisation from its context (Hatch and Schultz, 1997). This literature review found little other research addressing this restriction, and so this paper considers this paper to be a seminal work in explicitly addressing the link between organisational culture and brand. An interdisciplinary study of the relationships between culture, identity and image begins to challenge and work toward erasing these arbitrary and outworn distinctions (Hatch and Schultz, 1997). It's hoped that this research contributes towards this.

Organisations as they exist and function are situated within the contexts of both evolutions in human thought paradigms and within market environments (Laloux, 2014; Kotter and Heskett, 1992). Organisational cultures dictate the ability of organisations to effectively respond to these contexts, because culture itself is a context within which everything in an organisation is situated or in some way influenced - from strategic direction, to external brand perceptions, to profitability (Hatch and Schultz, 1997; Kowalczyk and Pawlish, 2002; Kotter and Heskett, 1992). A theoretical framework for understanding how and why culture interacts with various different business functions would have real academic and managerial benefits for future research, but to date such an interdisciplinary field of study remains in its infancy (Hatch and Schultz, 1997).

# Chapter 1: Cultural alignment between central support office and satellite bases

## Introduction

In an organisational context, culture informs everything from business strategy decisions made by senior management about brand development, to the response of an organisation to market environment forces, to how individual employees behave within the context of the organisation. The organisational culture is perpetuated through interactions between co-workers, between staff and managers, and through internal communications and contracts, both legal and psychological (Punjaisri and Willson, 2007; Moroko and Uncles, 2008). These interactions and communications serve to align employees with what is expected of them by the organisation and its brand (Bremer, 2012; Punjaisri and Willson, 2007; Moroko and Uncles, 2008). This chapter examines the cultural and perceptual alignment of staff with strategic objectives through the context of organisational culture and the communication channel of internal branding. This aforementioned alignment is discussed in the context of a central office and multiple satellite bases, and whether these bases are aligned with the culture, which originates in the central support office. Satellite bases are looked at as a whole, and not for the individuals that work within each of those bases. In so doing, this chapter views the organisation from a macro-perspective, treating satellite bases as whole entities, their subcultures resulting from a sum of individual members.

This chapter's study objective aims to examine how organisational culture within the headquarters of the global organisation is communicated via internal branding so as to create cultural alignment within satellite offices. The goal is to find out whether or not the organisational culture is aligned between central support, where the culture originates as a 'baseline' for comparative purposes, and individual bases. The employees in the individual bases are far removed from the majority of senior management that create and perpetuate the overarching organisational culture. Acts of communication between headquarters and satellite bases is the origination of the culture in the satellite bases. This origination is presumed to be perpetuated and adapted according to acceptable behaviours and values in satellite bases, but this can't be taken for granted. Alignment needs to be proved,

because if there is no alignment, then there can be no causal link between the overarching organisational culture and the likelihood of customer advocacy.

While the organisational brand does inform the thinking for this chapter, it is elaborated on in detail in the following chapters in the form of brand communication via the channel of customer-facing employees in the field.

## **Data and methodology**

To establish alignment, first the organisational culture in its original form needs to be established in order to draw comparisons. A quantitative survey method called the Organisational Culture Profile (O'Reilly, Chatman, and Caldwell, 1991) is used to determine the baseline profile of the culture as it exists in the perceptions of the senior leadership of the organisation. The same quantitative survey method was then conducted on a sample of satellite field bases to determine their culture profile. The results of the survey were analysed using a factor analysis to establish the baseline profile and the individual base's profiles. These profiles were then examined comparatively to uncover similarities and differences. A factor analysis is a method used to analyse latent interdependencies with data to reveal the existence of underlying common factors (Jung & Lee, 2011).

The Organisational Culture Profile (OCP) is an instrument that was developed by O'Reilly, Chatman, and Caldwell (1991) to determine person-organisation fit using a set of 54 value statements sorted into nine weighted categories (see Appendix A). In developing the instrument, the authors sought to determine a baseline organisational culture by surveying leadership in various organisations (O'Reilly, Chatman, and Caldwell, 1991). Then, they conducted the same survey using the same value-set on individuals who had just entered the organisation, except these surveys were framed towards personal preference for an organisational culture (O'Reilly, Chatman, and Caldwell, 1991). The baseline profile and the preference profiles were then compared to determine quantitatively the alignment between the organisational culture and the individual personal preference (O'Reilly, Chatman, and Caldwell, 1991).

For this paper, the OCP method of research and analysis is applied using framing that is specific to the research objectives, and this framing will be elaborated on in due course. A factor analysis was conducted using the same set of 54 values sorted into nine weighted categories. A baseline culture profile for the organisation was conducted by surveying senior management. Then, cultures within a sample of satellite field bases were established using the same survey, but with a change of framing. The difference in framing was as

follows. Senior management was asked how characteristic each of the value items is for the organisation as a whole on a scale of 1 to 9 (1 = least characteristic and 9 = most characteristic); individuals within satellite bases were asked how characteristic each value was of the culture of their own base. The purpose for this reframing was to get different perspectives of the organisational culture. This would make it possible to analyse distinctions and similarities between the culture of the organisation as a whole and the culture within individual base, which is the objective of this chapter.

## Respondents

To establish the baseline culture to which the subcultures were correlated, nine senior management and senior field staff were chosen. They were selected either according to their influence within the organisation, looking at the number of people they lead or otherwise influence directly or indirectly; or according to their length of service; or both. In the majority of the respondents for the baseline culture, these two criteria were both present. This sample group was asked to complete the OCP survey with a specific definition of organisational culture in mind: “An organisational culture is defined as the shared values, beliefs, and ways of doing things amongst a group of people that work together in an organisation towards the same goals.” They also received specific framing that was intended to gear them towards responding to the survey by viewing the organisation as a global whole, and not as a sum of its parts. See Table 1.1 below.

<b>Name and title of leadership member</b>	<b>Criteria satisfied</b>	<b>Name and title of leadership member</b>	<b>Criteria satisfied</b>
Steve Gwenin, Chief Executive Office	1. Number of people they led or influenced  2. Length of service	Cheryl Martin, Regional Director for Nepal and India	1. Number of people they led or influenced  2. Length of service
Alice Hawkes, Director of Marketing and Alumni Services	1. Number of people they led or influenced  2. Length of service	Jill Walker, Deputy Director of Field	1. Number of people they led or influenced  2. Length of service

Nadine Muller, Director or Enrolment and Business Development	1. Number of people they led or influenced  2. Length of service	Cynthia Arrochi-Mendejas, Regional Director for Latin America	1. Number of people they led or influenced  2. Length of service
Molly Plexico, Regional Director for Southeast Asia	1. Number of people they led or influenced  2. Length of service	Chris Mason-Parker, Regional Director for Seychelles and Greece	1. Number of people they led or influenced  2. Length of service
Dianne Nxumalo-Kohler, People Development Manager	1. Number of people they led or influenced		

*Table 1.1 – Criterion-based sample of senior management*

Initially, in attempt to establish variance or correlation within the organisation amongst individual bases, a sample of 6 bases out of a total of 20 were chosen to take the alternatively framed survey. The sample bases were chosen through a set of criteria that would gain a cross-section of the global organisation. One base from six different sub-regions were selected, each with their own individual senior field staff reporting lines. The length of each base's existence within the organisation was considered, as was the number of paid staff working at that base.

Only paid staff were asked to take the survey, because unpaid staff are contracted differently, both legally and culturally, in a temporary capacity of three to nine months. The definition of organisational culture that was given to the respondents was: "A workplace culture is defined as the shared values, beliefs, and ways of doing things amongst a group of people that work together in the same space." In addition to this slight reframing of the definition, the staff within individual bases were asked to, as much as possible, consider their base as a distinct entity. It was acknowledged that the organisation's values as a whole would have influence on the responses, but this influence was to be ignored in favour of the nuances and individualised characteristics of the base's culture. Each base had a varying number of respondents, ranging from three to six respondents per base. In total, of the six samples, 26 initial responses were submitted. Of the six samples, five bases had

four to five respondents to the survey. The sixth base that was surveyed only had two respondents who were able to sufficiently understand and complete the survey. The rest of the employees in this base were local members of that country, with English as a second language. Because of their beginner levels of English, they were unable to complete the survey, and the sixth sample had to be abandoned, resulting in a total sample of five sample bases with a total respondent count of 24.

<b>Base location and Sub-region</b>	<b>Number of respondents</b>	<b>Included or excluded</b>
Luang Prabang, Laos, Southeast Asia	5	Included
Pokhara, Nepal, Nepal and Pokhara	2	Excluded
Cap Ternay, Seychelles, Seychelles and Greece	4	Excluded
Limpopo, South Africa, Africa	4	Excluded
Jalova, Costa Rica, Latin America	4	Excluded
Phang Nga, Thailand	4	Included
<i>Chiang Mai, Thailand</i>	4	Included

*Table 1.2 – Satellite bases and number of respondents surveyed*

In Table 1.2 above, seven bases are listed, and four of those seven are detailed as excluded. This will be elaborated in the next section.

## **Analysis**

The same analysis conducted on O'Reilly, Chatman, and Caldwell's results (1991) – and Exploratory Factor Analysis was used on the results of this paper's data collected in using the OCP survey instrument. The data loaded in the same number of factors (eight in total) and in the same manner as that of O'Reilly, Chatman, and Caldwell's analysis. Because of this, it was possible to attribute the same factor classifications to the resultant data as O'Reilly, Chatman, and Caldwell. These factors are: innovation and risk taking (factor 1), attention to detail (factor 2), orientation toward outcomes or results (factor 3), aggressiveness and competitiveness (factor 4), supportive- ness (factor 5), emphasis on growth and rewards (factor 6), a collaborative and team orientation (factor 7), and decisiveness (factor 8).

To start, the data collected from the surveys of leadership (control sample) and the individual bases (variable sample) were tabulated according to the 54 value items. The value items, weighted from one to nine by each respondent, were given value labels: 1 - Least characteristic; 2 - Very uncharacteristic; 3 - Somewhat uncharacteristic; 4 - Slightly uncharacteristic; 5 - Neutral; 6 - Slightly characteristic; 7 - Somewhat characteristic; 8 - Very characteristic; and 9 - Most characteristic. These same value labels applied to both the control sample and the variable sample. The data was input into SPSS, and a principal components analysis was employed, using a correlation matrix and displayed using an unrotated factor solution (O'Reilly, Chatman, and Caldwell, 1991). The data was extracted using an eigenvalue greater than one, and was rotated using a varimax rotation, displaying with a rotated solution and a plot loading, using a coefficient display format. The data was analyzed using a correlation matrix.

A limitation of this study could be the small sample sizes of the baseline culture dataset as well as the individual bases' datasets. Traditionally, EFA has struggled to produce salient data for small data sizes. The extant research has advocated for sample sizes of over 200 in order to produce high quality factor analysis solutions (Jung & Lee, 2011). Small sample sizes cause a near singular covariance matrix, which leads to parameter estimates that are far from the true parameters of the underlying factors (Jung & Lee, 2011).

Hence, when the exploratory factor analysis was executed on the individual base samples ( $n = 4$  or  $5$ ), the analysis noted fewer than two cases, with at least one of the variables arriving at a zero variance. While there is considerable research devoted to studying the effectiveness of EFA for small sample sizes, none confirm beyond reasonable doubt that small sample sizes can yield valuable and high quality results (Jung and Lee, 2011; De Winter, Dodou, & Wieringa, 2009). De Winter, Dodou, & Wieringa (2009) conducted a subsampling study in order to provide a comprehensive understanding of the conditions

required for an EFA to yield good quality results for small sample sizes. These authors found that when factors are well defined, as is the case in this paper, small sample sizes in EFA can yield reliable solutions (De Winter, Dodou, & Wieringa, 2009). Thus, a small sample size should not be the sole criterion for rejecting EFA and subjecting a small sample to EFA can be worthwhile and may possibly reveal valuable underlying constructs (De Winter, Dodou, & Wieringa, 2009).

In my paper I employed several tactics found in existing research on EFA for small datasets to account for this zero variance (Jung & Lee, 2011). The first was that the sample size of the individual bases' survey was increased. I had to get one additional individual base to take the survey, and then combine three individual base datasets into one regional dataset. The organisation has several Regional Directors who are in charge of managing and leading the various regions wherein the organisation has situated two or more bases. In total, the organisation considers itself based in six regions, and each region is comprised of several individual bases. To increase the sample size, the survey results from the Southeast Asia sub-region, consisting of two existing datasets and the newly conducted survey dataset, were combined into one dataset. Though this negated the individuality of workplace cultures within single field satellite bases, each of the bases within the selected sub-region fall within the same regional leadership. Leadership is one of the main influences of the development and perpetuation of organisational culture, meaning that the region, though comprised of separate bases, will have a sub-culture of its own stemming from its regional leadership.

For the analysis of both the dataset of the baseline culture profile of the organisation and for the new regional culture dataset, the analysis suppressed coefficients with an absolute value below .70. In their study, O'Reilly, Chatman, and Caldwell suppressed coefficients with an absolute value below .40 (1991), but due to the small sample sizes used here, there was much less overall variance in the respondent's weightings. To account for this, a higher threshold for factor loadings needed to be used to surface applicability (Yong & Pearce, 2013). In suppressing value items which loaded less into each of the eight factors, this served to remove values of less relevance to the baseline culture and the regional subculture as perceived by the respondents, and included only highly relevant items to the baseline culture and regional subculture (Yong & Pearce, 2013).

I collected a small number of original surveys using the existing OCP method. O'Reilly, Chatman, and Caldwell also made use of a small sample size when conducting the OCP survey and analysis on leadership to determine the profile for an organisation. However, no mention was made of the difficulties the current study faced in producing quality results

from small sample sizes. Similarly, another failing of O'Reilly, Chatman, and Caldwell's paper is that it proposes to offer a method for assessing organisational fit on the individual level, but the chosen method of analysis cannot support analyses on singular respondents. While they conducted their research on a large scale, looking at numerous individuals within a select population, the overall design — to determine if a particular person fits an organisation's culture — is near to impossible using either a confirmatory or exploratory factor analysis.

## **Data interpretation**

### **Organisation as a whole**

The results of the analysis of all 54 items for the baseline culture (organisation as a whole) revealed 37 items overall with loadings of greater than .70 on a single factor (see Table 1.3 on the next page).

	Collaboration and Team Orientation	Emphasis on growth and rewards	Orientation toward outcomes or results	Innovation and risk taking	Supportiveness	Aggressiveness and competitiveness	Decisiveness	Attention to detail
Respect for individual	0.97	0.02	0.18	0.06	-0.08	0.10	0.05	-0.01
Decisiveness	0.94	0.19	0.15	0.03	0.07	0.06	0.20	0.13
Tolerance	0.92	-0.11	0.01	-0.08	0.31	0.16	-0.01	-0.14
Work friendships	0.91	-0.16	0.14	-0.07	0.13	0.25	0.20	0.10
Action orientation	0.87	-0.07	0.25	0.27	-0.15	0.08	-0.02	0.27
Info sharing	0.85	0.24	0.24	-0.18	0.35	0.10	0.06	0.08
Organisational collaboration	0.84	0.20	0.01	-0.05	-0.04	-0.01	0.47	0.18
Being highly organized	0.82	0.22	-0.15	0.13	0.15	0.30	-0.27	0.22
Detail focus	0.75	0.01	0.24	0.34	0.37	0.32	-0.16	0.04
Being innovative	0.70	-0.24	0.24	0.38	0.49	0.08	-0.10	-0.01
Fitting in	0.66	-0.57	0.09	-0.16	0.16	0.08	0.40	-0.12
Being calm	0.66	0.55	-0.03	-0.41	-0.07	-0.14	0.17	0.20
Risk taking	0.62	0.19	0.14	0.31	0.53	0.19	0.35	0.13
Confronting conflict	0.62	0.19	-0.01	0.17	0.60	0.40	-0.18	-0.02
Quality emphasis	0.54	0.18	0.41	-0.45	0.04	-0.09	0.11	0.53
Autonomy	0.00	-0.97	0.08	-0.11	-0.17	-0.05	0.06	0.00
Being careful	0.01	0.93	0.15	0.21	0.15	-0.13	-0.14	-0.10
Growth opportunities	-0.03	0.88	0.35	-0.16	-0.19	0.01	-0.22	-0.06
Predictability	-0.07	0.79	-0.02	-0.48	-0.14	-0.32	0.14	0.02
Achievement orientation	0.14	0.77	-0.04	-0.41	-0.11	-0.06	-0.05	0.44
Recognition	0.32	0.67	0.21	0.04	0.14	0.02	0.27	0.55

Stability	0.24	0.62	0.29	-0.26	0.32	0.42	-0.34	0.08
Good reputation	-0.15	0.06	0.87	-0.01	-0.03	0.43	0.02	-0.19
Being supportive	0.39	0.20	0.86	-0.02	0.01	-0.23	0.06	0.13
Taking initiative	0.23	0.07	0.85	0.19	-0.23	0.10	-0.24	0.25
Being aggressive	-0.20	-0.35	-0.84	0.05	0.10	0.25	-0.12	-0.21
Individual responsibility	-0.14	0.07	0.81	0.18	0.16	-0.08	-0.45	-0.24
High performance expectations	0.38	-0.01	0.79	0.03	0.36	0.01	-0.16	-0.29
Socially responsible	0.07	-0.25	0.77	-0.04	0.15	0.36	0.01	0.44
Job enthusiasm	0.40	-0.16	0.74	0.01	0.13	0.48	0.12	-0.10
Team orientation	0.14	0.52	0.73	-0.14	-0.24	-0.30	0.02	0.13
Flexibility	-0.14	0.05	0.27	0.88	0.29	0.02	-0.24	-0.03
Adaptability	0.04	0.39	0.27	0.86	0.12	-0.05	-0.01	-0.16
Experimentation	0.31	-0.31	-0.16	0.82	0.20	-0.06	-0.14	-0.21
Taking advantage	0.62	-0.17	-0.24	0.70	0.01	-0.10	-0.08	0.18
Singular culture	-0.12	0.20	-0.04	-0.58	-0.57	-0.17	0.43	-0.26
Being analytical	0.53	-0.30	0.01	0.54	0.14	0.41	-0.31	-0.23
Low conflict level	0.16	0.07	-0.22	0.16	0.93	0.03	0.19	-0.02
Precision	0.48	-0.11	0.11	0.13	0.80	0.25	-0.17	-0.01
Being reflective	-0.01	0.54	-0.07	0.22	0.76	-0.13	-0.27	-0.03
Employment security	0.42	-0.08	0.32	0.23	0.64	0.35	0.02	0.36
Individual distinctiveness	-0.21	0.06	0.38	-0.06	0.59	0.42	0.48	-0.23
Being competitive	0.26	0.06	0.01	0.31	0.19	0.89	0.13	0.00
Results oriented	0.47	-0.27	0.14	-0.04	-0.06	0.79	0.00	0.24
Being demanding	0.48	-0.23	-0.03	-0.26	0.25	0.75	0.02	-0.14
Fairness	0.16	0.13	0.21	-0.63	-0.04	-0.71	0.03	-0.14

Table 1.3 - Factor analysis results for organisation as a whole - raw output

In factors 2, 3, and 6, there are significant item loadings with negative value, indicating these items received the lowest scores in the baseline OCP survey. These negative value loadings seen in Table 1.4 below influence the interpretation of the meaning of the relevant

factor. In descending order, these items were: ‘autonomy’; ‘being aggressive’; and ‘fairness’.

	Collaboration and Team Orientation	Emphasis on growth and rewards	Orientation toward outcomes or results	Innovation and risk taking	Supportiveness	Aggressiveness and competitiveness
Respect for individual	0.97					
Decisiveness	0.94					
Tolerance	0.92					
Work friendships	0.91					
Action orientation	0.87					
Info sharing	0.85					
Organisational collaboration	0.84					
Being highly organized	0.82					
Detail focus	0.75					
Autonomy		-0.97				
Being careful		0.93				
Growth opportunities		0.88				
Predictability		0.79				
Achievement orientation		0.77				
Good reputation			0.87			
Being supportive			0.86			
Taking initiative			0.85			
Being aggressive			-0.84			
Individual responsibility			0.81			
High performance expectations			0.79			
Socially responsible			0.77			
Job enthusiasm			0.74			
Team orientation			0.73			
Flexibility				0.88		
Adaptability				0.86		
Experimentation				0.82		
Low conflict level					0.93	
Precision					0.80	
Being reflective					0.76	
Being competitive						0.89
Results oriented						0.79
Being demanding						0.75
Fairness						-0.71

Table 1.4 - Factor analysis results for organisation as a whole - refined data

The results demonstrate a baseline culture that is oriented towards collaboration, growth, and results. The Organisational Culture Profile (OCP) for the organisation as a whole shows the organisation with an intrinsic achievement ethos that values teamwork with the middling presence of competitiveness. The organisation’s culture is somewhat risk averse, and only somewhat values individual initiative, instead having a larger focus on ‘running with the pack’. There is a low value for supportiveness coupled with low loadings for innovation and risk taking. These are situated in context high loadings for collaboration, emphasis on growth, and an orientation towards outcomes. When looked at in conjunction, it reinforces the cultural value of making decisions and taking actions that are only in the best interests of the organisation as a whole, and not for personal gain or improvement. This emphasis on the value of group thinking likely makes for swift induction into the organisational culture of new hirees. Within the same parameters as mentioned in the previous statement, the organisation appears to value agility, and executes on this ability to be agile by emphasising

decision making that serves the betterment of all as one, as opposed to serving individual motives. Failure to think in terms of the group is likely to be a non-option, with growth occurring through careful thinking and testing within secure parameters as opposed to fast movement and quick learning. Slow, considered growth is valued over swift adaptations.

## Regional subculture

The results here revealed 40 items overall with loadings of greater than .70 on a single factor (see Table 1.5). A fixed number of eight factors was chosen during scoring for the EFA for the sub-regional sub-culture. Without the delimiter of .70, a total of nine factors surfaced, but the analysis was run again with a predefined number of factors, causing the analysis to minimise the number of possible item loadings into the same number of factors found in the analysis results for the baseline culture. The purpose of this was to increase validity of the factor loadings because the number of factors and the nature of the factors was well-known from the start of the study.

	Collaboration and Team Orientation	Orientation toward outcomes or results	Decisiveness	Innovation and risk taking	Attention to detail	Emphasis on growth and rewards	Supportiveness	Aggressiveness and competitiveness
Flexibility	0.443	0.183	0.073	0.716	0.215	-0.065	0.322	0.256
Adaptability	0.535	0.201	-0.074	0.091	-0.03	-0.035	0.754	0.227
Stability	0.729	0.198	-0.328	0.243	0.023	0.107	0.462	-0.008
Predictability	0.73	0.372	-0.13	0.468	-0.247	0.154	0.064	0.053
Being innovative	0.032	0.311	0.03	0.778	0.16	0.065	0.019	0.432
Being quick to take advantage of opportunities	0.178	0.695	0.022	0.649	-0.171	-0.052	0.128	-0.118
A willingness to experiment	0.528	-0.153	-0.27	0.193	0.528	0.444	-0.189	0.018
Risk taking	-0.21	-0.732	0.433	0.097	0.002	0.359	0.218	-0.082
Being careful	-0.179	0.045	0.848	-0.013	-0.44	-0.15	-0.072	-0.153
Autonomy	0.14	0.039	0.894	0.209	-0.179	-0.287	0.02	-0.115
Being rule oriented	-0.347	-0.091	0.838	-0.036	0.258	-0.103	-0.183	0.21
Being analytical	0.131	0.335	-0.023	0.134	0.706	-0.001	-0.107	0.295
Paying attention to detail	0.019	0.801	0.086	0.344	0.346	0.026	0.019	0.069
Being precise	-0.224	-0.129	0.945	0.069	-0.054	-0.038	-0.116	0.037
Being team oriented	0.836	-0.077	-0.087	0.074	0.137	0.169	0.147	0.401
Sharing information freely	0.837	-0.135	0.088	0.231	0.377	0.133	0.116	-0.195
Emphasizing a single culture	-0.073	-0.051	0.937	0.176	0.108	0.04	-0.09	-0.243
Being people oriented	0.439	-0.173	-0.297	0.09	0.644	-0.3	0.34	0.098
Fairness	0.787	0.216	-0.038	0.279	0.352	-0.281	0.075	0.197

*Continued on next page*

Respect for the individual's right	0.445	-0.26	-0.041	0.758	0.137	0.007	0.069	-0.06
Tolerance	0.413	0.306	-0.12	-0.179	0.029	0.233	0.156	0.726
Informality	0.226	-0.608	0.349	0.021	-0.491	0.125	0.428	0.096
Being easy going	0.985	0.048	0.011	-0.013	-0.05	0.078	0.031	-0.074
Being calm	0.865	-0.018	-0.054	0.196	0.211	0.211	0.126	0.135
Being supportive	0.523	-0.024	-0.011	0.411	0.119	-0.229	0.209	0.635
Being aggressive	-0.147	-0.147	0.066	-0.392	0.308	0.163	-0.787	0.075
Decisiveness	0.076	0.893	-0.136	-0.102	-0.033	0.356	0.194	0.045
Action orientation	0.146	0.953	-0.134	0.037	0.022	0.067	0.117	0.069
Taking initiative	-0.08	0.424	-0.117	0.378	0.065	0.352	0.13	0.709
Being reflective	-0.125	0.872	-0.166	0.201	-0.139	-0.062	0.102	0.269
Achievement orientation	-0.132	0.626	0.079	0.634	0.129	0.18	-0.015	-0.312
Being demanding	0.09	0.268	-0.209	-0.018	0.128	0.875	-0.284	-0.04
Taking individual responsibility	0.359	0.33	0.086	0.556	0.37	0.365	0.015	0.311
Having high expectations for performance	-0.185	0.104	-0.068	0.512	0.283	0.601	0.025	0.152
Opportunities for professional growth	0.02	0.633	0.188	0.104	0.481	0.057	0.019	0.542
High pay for good performance	0.252	-0.117	-0.338	-0.046	0.263	0.817	-0.072	0.24
Security of employment	0.267	0.138	-0.386	-0.199	0.031	0.705	0.181	0.392
Offers praise for good performance	0.818	0.283	-0.06	0.062	0.134	-0.205	0.24	0.139
Low level of conflict	0.532	-0.141	-0.257	-0.004	-0.059	0.292	0.58	0.346
Confronting conflict directly	-0.209	-0.313	0.23	-0.42	0.182	-0.706	-0.166	-0.063
Developing friends at work	0.668	-0.33	-0.377	-0.068	-0.077	0.057	-0.06	-0.171
Fitting in	0.669	-0.321	-0.322	-0.036	-0.268	0.429	-0.082	0.023
Working in collaboration with others throughout the organization	0.103	0.066	-0.322	-0.144	0.232	-0.002	0.875	-0.098
Enthusiasm for the job	0.118	0.205	-0.109	-0.02	0.079	0.011	0.723	0.604
Working long hours	-0.175	-0.184	0.854	-0.25	-0.156	-0.194	-0.107	-0.206
Not being constrained by many rules	0.542	-0.024	0.224	-0.202	0.162	-0.212	0.323	-0.631
An emphasis on quality	0.038	0.183	-0.033	0.104	0.93	0.143	0.085	-0.095
Being distinctive-different from others	-0.039	-0.081	-0.845	-0.208	-0.035	0.052	0.376	-0.011
Having a good reputation	0.136	0.052	0.845	-0.318	0.195	-0.158	0.204	0.151
Being socially responsible	-0.095	0.756	0.293	0.166	0.345	0.068	0.053	0.261
Being results oriented	0.447	0.119	0.075	0.345	0.714	0.181	-0.107	-0.044
Having a clear guiding philosophy	-0.1	0.726	0.277	0.325	0.452	0.192	0.165	0.039
Being competitive	-0.098	-0.427	0.388	0.217	-0.273	0.596	0.269	-0.275
Being highly organized	0.266	0.292	0.216	0.84	0.234	0.039	-0.165	-0.022
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.								
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. <sup>a</sup>								
<sup>a</sup> Rotation converged in 14 iterations.								

Table 1.5 - Factor analysis results for sub-region - raw output

Of the eight factors, seven had more than two item loadings, and similarly to the thinking for the baseline culture, the factor with only two loadings was removed from consideration for the organisation's Southeast Asia sub-regional culture.

The emergent factors (see Table 1.6 below) with the highest number or item loadings were factor 1: 'collaboration' and team orientation with eight loadings; factor 2: 'orientation toward outcomes or results' with seven loadings; and factor 3: 'decisiveness' with eight loadings. In the mid-range, with four item loadings each, were factor 4: 'innovation and risk taking'; factor 6: 'emphasis on growth and rewards'; and factor 7: 'supportiveness'. The lowest ranking factor with three item loadings was factor 6: 'attention to details'.

	Collaboration and Team Orientation	Orientation toward outcomes or results	Decisiveness	Innovation and risk taking	Attention to detail	Emphasis on growth and rewards	Supportiveness
Stability	0.73						
Predictability	0.73						
Being team oriented	0.84						
Sharing information freely	0.84						
Being easy going	0.99						
Fairness	0.79						
Being calm	0.87						
Offers praise for good performance	0.82						
Risk taking		-0.73					
Paying attention to detail		0.80					
Decisiveness		0.89					
Action orientation		0.95					
Being reflective		0.87					
Being socially responsible		0.76					
Having a clear guiding philosophy		0.73					
Being careful			0.85				
Autonomy			0.89				
Being rule oriented			0.84				
Being precise			0.95				
Emphasizing a single culture			0.94				
Working long hours			0.85				
Being distinctive-different from others			-0.85				
Having a good reputation			0.85				
Flexibility				0.72			
Being innovative				0.78			
Respect for the individual's right				0.76			
Being highly organized				0.84			
Being analytical					0.71		
An emphasis on quality					0.93		
Being results oriented					0.71		
Being demanding						0.88	
High pay for good performance						0.82	
Confronting conflict directly						-0.71	
Security of employment						0.71	
Working in collaboration with others throughout the organization							0.88
Enthusiasm for the job							0.72
Adaptability							0.75
Being aggressive							-0.79

Table 1.6 - Factor analysis results for sub-region - refined data

In the emergent factors 2, 3, 6, and 7, there were item loadings with significant negative values. Negative values result due to the line items receiving comparably less responses at the primary research phase. Ranked in descending order, these items were: 'being distinctive/different from others'; 'being aggressive'; 'risk taking'; and 'confronting conflict directly'.

The sub-regional culture demonstrates significant strengths in working together to make decisions that will achieve outcomes and results. The OCP shows a mid-range value for paying attention to detail and taking risks whilst being supportive. An emphasis on growth is present, but needs to be looked at in conjunction with low value for risk taking, attention to detail, and supportiveness, situated alongside high values of collaboration, outcome orientation, and decisiveness. From this it can be taken that decision making processes are slow, with deep caution and consideration exercised throughout. However, with the latent factors of decisiveness and outcome orientation loading so highly, it's understood that taking action is valued significantly, and that doing so as a team is important. Whilst individuality is important, it does not take precedence over what is best for the whole. This insight leads to the fact that hearing every voice is prioritised, and coming to mutual agreement before proceeding is required. It might be that everyone must be happy with doing what is best for the group, which indicates the values of self-sacrifice and empathy are important. The sub-culture shows itself to be responsive, but not necessarily agile.

### **Comparison and insights**

A total of five factors appeared in both the baseline culture factor analysis results and the sub-regional factor analysis results. The latent factor of 'aggressiveness and competitiveness' is the only one that is present in the baseline culture of the organisation as a whole, but not present in the sub-regional subculture. The latent factors of 'attention to detail' and 'decisiveness' are present in the sub-regional OCP, but not in the baseline OCP. However, the item loadings for each factor are different and widely varied between the two OCPs, as are the individual items within each factor. For example, within factor 1: 'collaboration and team orientation' for the baseline culture, the item of 'work friendships' loads highly at .91. In factor 1 in the sub-regional OCP (Table 1.6), also 'collaboration and team orientation', the item of 'work friendships' doesn't load at all, but instead the item of 'being team oriented' loads at .84, but this item doesn't load in factor 1 in the baseline culture factor analysis results (Table 1.4). So while the factors in each OCP are similar and validly named in such similarity, each of the co-present factors are comprised differently.

What this reveals is that while both sets of results are saying the same thing, they are saying them in different ways, from two different perspectives. The alignment between the baseline culture and the sub-culture is significant, but the viewpoint is different. The values are the same, but it is likely that the attendant behaviours are different. The alignment is at the values level of culture in the organisation, but at the behaviours level, it is varied to a degree. Group mentality and growth mindset emerged as two themes which surfaced this alignment in value, but difference in behaviour.

### **Group mentality**

Both the factors of collaboration and outcome orientation loaded within the highest number of loadings for both the baseline and sub-regional OCP. Both OCPs show intrinsic values of action-orientation and group mentality at the expense of individuality - one-ness is valued over uniqueness. Both OCPs show a value for thinking slowly and deliberately when making decisions towards achieving results. However, while the baseline culture demonstrates a top-down behaviour of decision making that is in the best interests of the group, the sub-regional culture exercises a co-dependent behaviour in decision making. This can be seen in the presence of 'aggressiveness and competitiveness' in the baseline OCP that isn't present in the sub-regional OCP. It can be seen in the higher loading value for an 'emphasis on growth' in the baseline OCP. Lastly, it's seen in the different appraisal of items within the shared factors of 'collaboration' and 'outcome orientation'. Whilst group mentality in the baseline culture seems to be enforced, the same mentality in the subculture seems to be nurtured. Furthermore, at face value, negative value loadings are largely inconsistent between the baseline and sub-regional OCP, but upon investigation, they reveal a consistent cultural value for 'running with the pack'.

### **Growth mindset**

Both OCP profiles show a significant orientation towards growth, and a value for innovation and risk taking. Decisiveness loaded poorly in the baseline OCP, so much as to be excluded from interpretation, but loaded as one of the highest in the sub-regional OCP. This, coupled with a latent value of attention to detail, present in the sub-regional OCP but absent in the baseline OCP, indicates that decision making processes and behaviours are different between the two in terms of how growth and innovation are achieved. It is likely that the baseline OCP, whilst making considered and cautious decisions towards growth, moves ahead with results oriented decisions faster, and tend to vacillate in methods and objectives along the way towards those results. In opposition, the sub-regional subculture, whilst valuing growth, spends a lot more time on coming to the right decision that suits

everyone. However, once a decision is made, it is stuck to steadfastly and the course of action is likely unwavering.

## Conclusions

This chapter interrogates how organisational culture within the headquarters of the global organisation is effectively communicated so as to be aligned within satellite bases. Whilst difficulties with the small sample sizes foreclosed the ability to draw results at an individual base level, the analysis has surfaced positive findings between the organisation as a whole and a sub-region comprised of three different bases.

Overall, there is significant alignment between the baseline (organisation as a whole) and the sub-regional OCPs at a values level, but differences between the two at a behaviours level. For example, looking at decision-making processes, it's suggested that the senior management of the organisation only makes decision that result in the best for the group, but do not seek democratic agreement for those decisions to be made. When it comes to the sub-regional culture, similarly, only decisions that result in the best for the group are made, but dissimilarly, these decisions are reached by democratic, group consensus.

It is within the sub-region's individual bases that the customer-facing employees are situated. As previously noted, these employees within the satellite bases have the longest and most in depth interaction with customers. Their interactions with customers serve as a form of brand communication. These employees make up and perpetuate the sub-regional culture through their interactions with leadership; with each other; and with the communications they receive.

Proving that there is a degree of alignment between baseline culture and sub-regional culture serves as a starting point for attempting to prove if there is a causal relationship between organisational culture and the likelihood of customer recommendation. This is because these employees are in completely different countries to the majority of senior management, so it is necessary to start by proving if the culture in their workplaces is aligned to the culture that is conducive to the organisation's brand strategy.

In this chapter, this paper has proved the very first link in the chain – there is cultural alignment. If there is alignment in cultural values, then the employees might be more likely to conduct the service actions and communicate with customers in a way that aligns with organisational brand objectives, i.e., conducting themselves according to brand promises. This is what will be examined in the following chapter.

# Chapter 2: Employee perceptions and communications of the brand

## Introduction

The previous chapter established that there is significant cultural alignment at a values level between the satellite bases and the overarching organisational culture. This chapter aims to determine how the employees in the sub-region execute the brand service. It takes into account whether employees are aligned with the culture of the organisation or not, and what either situation implicates. This has to do with how they are conducting themselves according to what is expected of them.

The communicative relationship between customer-facing employees and the customer is structured and managed by the rules of service delivery, in other words, how employees are expected and mandated to behave (Punjaisri and Wilson, 2011:1526). These rules are informed by the core values of the organisational culture and promises the brand makes to customers (Punjaisri and Wilson, 2011:1522). Through the interactions between employee and customer in service industries, the brand is communicated and received in a more influential and tangible way than any other form of communication (Punjaisri and Wilson, 2011:1522). The service is structured according to the brand and the promises it makes to customers. The brand promises are communicated and instilled in current employees through internal branding activities and cultural inculcation, amongst other things (hiring, performance reviews, etc). These activities are filtered through the context of the organisational culture to form a perception by employees, and then translated into behaviours and attitudes towards customers.

This chapter explores how the organisational brand is received and internalised by customer-facing employees, and communicated to the customers at satellites bases. The goal is to understand how the brand is perceived by customer-facing employees in the field, as well as how they communicate the brand through their customer service. This chapter looks at internal branding, the organisation's brand personality, and the implementation and communication of the brand by customer-facing employees in the field.

Central support communicates messages about the business strategy, brand policy, expectations of service, etc. The message is received by the customer-facing employees within satellite bases. The employee then processes the message through meaning-making filters, and conducts their own communications and behaviours towards the customer based on the results of that process. The filters consist of many factors, for example, the context of the organisational culture. It is within this reception process that the customer-facing employees' perceptions of the organisation are built. This forms the focus of this chapter, because the perception will influence how the customer-facing employee will interact with the customer.

## **Data and methodology**

### **Performance Environment Survey**

Data from the organisation's biannual Performance Environment Survey (PES) is used to analyse the perception of the organisational brand by customer-facing employees in the field. The act of communicating the meaning of the organisational brand, through this channel of employee-to-customers is situated within the culture of the employees is a large part of what helps customers form a brand image. Understanding how customer-facing employees in the field perceive as well as communicate the organisational brand can lend to understanding how the brand personality is used as material by customers to create their own.

The PES is a survey conducted twice a fiscal year on every employee, paid or unpaid, in the organisation. It consists of 40 value statements that aim to measure the six categories that are deemed to create the employees' performance environment, which are: accessibility, alignment, stability, renewal, efficiency, and effectiveness. Employees are asked to rate each variable on a 10-point Likert scale, 1 = Strongly Disagree and 10 = Strongly Agree. The respondents (employees) remained anonymous, and were asked to complete the survey from their own personal viewpoint. It is unknown whether satellite teams around the world discuss their answers with each other prior to taking the survey or not. The results of the previous PES are then compared with the results of the current PES to gauge improvement at the levels of variables within a category, of category sections, at the item level for individual satellite bases and central departments such as marketing or customer service, and lastly, overall across the organisation. A basic analysis of drawing means at each variable level and for each satellite base and department provides the results that are used to determine improvement or deterioration from the previous survey.

## Data

Variable items that better suited the purpose of this chapter were selected (see Appendix B) from the survey question list and items that were not pertinent were disregarded. The items were regrouped and new categories were chosen. Of the original 40 value items, 26 were selected and their corresponding data was included. This selection was conducted according to the objective of this chapter. One objective was to understand employees' perceptions of the organisation's brand. Another was to understand their perception of their own part to play in the success of the organisation. Lastly, an objective was to understand how these perceptions influence the way employees conduct themselves and communicate with customers. Variables that owed to satisfying these objectives were selected and categorised so as to get the requisite insight out of the analysis.

Only the raw data from those bases that were used in the previous chapter was analysed, and this data was combined to create a dataset for the same sub-region of Southeast Asia. This was to provide continuity in order to prove a link between organisational culture and customer-facing employee perceptions. The total sample size amounted to 18 respondents ( $n = 18$ ). This sample size is larger than the sub-region sample size used in the previous chapter ( $n = 13$ ), because while this survey looks at all staff within the bases that comprise the sub-region, both paid and unpaid, the OCP survey only looked at paid staff in those bases.

The new dataset for the sub-region was categorised differently to the original PES. The four categories for the refined dataset were: internal communication; team dynamics; personal performance; and brand perception. The framing of the survey remains valid for the new interpretation of the raw data, because this chapter seeks to understand employee perceptions of the organisations functional features, mainly the organisation's brand personality. The four categories chosen for data segmentation are comprised of those variable items that focus specifically on employee performance as it is constructed by the internal communications of the organisation. Further, variable items were chosen for the categories that addressed employees' interaction with their team, factors that influence their own personal performance, and the way they perceive the brand in the form of the core values of the organisation, the organisation's mission, and the brand promises.

## **Brand personality**

The mission of GVI is: “to build a global network of people united by their passion to make a difference” (Global Vision International, 1998). This mission is communicated to customers, employees, and all other stakeholders as the core motivating factor for the organisation. The organisation’s strategy uses this mission as an orientation device to steer business planning, corporate structuring, market and sales strategy, human resource management, and all other organisational functions.

GVI has had long standing core values that are: respect and trust; passion and commitment; fun; family; inspire (Global Vision International, 2018). The core values are espoused by the organisation as the features that all employees should use to conduct everyday interactions with each other, with line managers, with customers, and with all other stakeholders.

The brand promises of the organisation to customers are as follows. The first is ‘make a difference’ - the organisation focuses on creating long term, sustainable impact in the lives of all stakeholders (Global Vision International, 2018). The second is ‘increase employability or access to higher education’ (Global Vision International, 2018). The nature of the products (impactful, structured volunteer or internship programs abroad) is geared towards upskilling customers in such a way as to improve their success in future academic enrolment or job interview opportunities (Global Vision International, 2018). The third brand promise is ‘360 degree support (Global Vision International, 2018). From the very beginning through to post-program engagement, the organisation professes to offer complete administrative and emotional support (Global Vision International, 2018). These brand promises set the expectations for service delivery, product development, communication intentions, employee behaviours, etc. While these brand promises are most actively communicated to customers in various ways during the buying, experience, and re-engagement journey, the organisation states that they apply to all stakeholders in various mutations, including employees (Gwenin, 2018). For employees, these brand promises provide the value framework for professional performance and career development. The effect of these promises influence both the way employees interact with customers, and the way they perceive and interact with the organisation (Punjaisri and Wilson, 2011). The brand promises were used in the development of the brand personality in the same way as the core values.

## Method

Descriptive statistical analyses were used to get a broad understanding of the sub-regional perceptions according to the data categories. Both measures of central tendency and measures of spread were calculated for each category using statistical analysis software called SPSS. Then, using the means for each variable within a category, the measures of central tendency and spread were calculated for the category as a whole. For the central tendencies, the mean, mode, and median were calculated. For the measures of spread, the range, variance, and standard deviation were calculated using the required SPSS functions.

Thereafter, the statistical method of one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to dig specifically into the perceptions of each particular field base within the sub-regional culture on specific variances between data categories.

A number of different one-way ANOVA analyses were conducted, and the hypotheses for these analyses were chosen from insights gleaned from the results of the descriptive analysis. The one-way ANOVA hypotheses were used to analyse relationships between various individual variables within the data. The aim was to surface variance between dependent factors and fixed factors to provide insight as to whether high scores in one variable could be causing variance in another. In all the ANOVA enquiries below, the individual bases as a sub-region were consistent as fixed factors, and these bases were used to group the results from the various analyses. The results for each hypothesis were tested against the null hypothesis and the results were used to determine the influence of one variable (value item) on another.

The hypotheses for the ANOVA analyses were grouped into two separate enquiries: (a) employees personal perceptions and how these lead to a feeling of motivation in their job roles; (b) employees perceptions of brand promises and mission statement, and those perceptions effects on customer service.

Enquiry (a) asked two questions, which were: (i) do higher scores in believing that the organisation's values are 'alive' (actively and frequently implemented) lead to higher scores in feeling able to contribute full potential; and (ii) do higher scores in seeing a clear link between personal work and the organisation's strategic objectives lead to higher scores in being motivated by purpose? The hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) for (a)(i) was: yes, higher scores in believing that the organisation's values are 'alive' do lead to higher scores in employees feeling like they are able to contribute their full potential in their work responsibilities. The

hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) for (a)(ii) was: yes, higher scores in employees seeing a clear link between their personal work and the organisation's strategic objectives do lead to higher scores in being motivated by the purpose of the organisation.

Enquiry (b) asked five questions, each with a different fixed factor, but with the same dependent factor, which was the variable of 'focus on customer needs'. The fixed factors for each were: (i) leadership effectively communicates organisational strategy; (ii) belief that the organisation upholds its mission; (iii) belief that the organisation is improving one's employability; (iv) belief that one is personally making a difference as an employee of the organisation; (v) a personal feeling of being supported by the organisation. The hypothesis ( $H_2$ ) for each of the five questions was: yes, high scores in the fixed factors for each question lead to high scores in the dependent factor of focusing on customer needs.

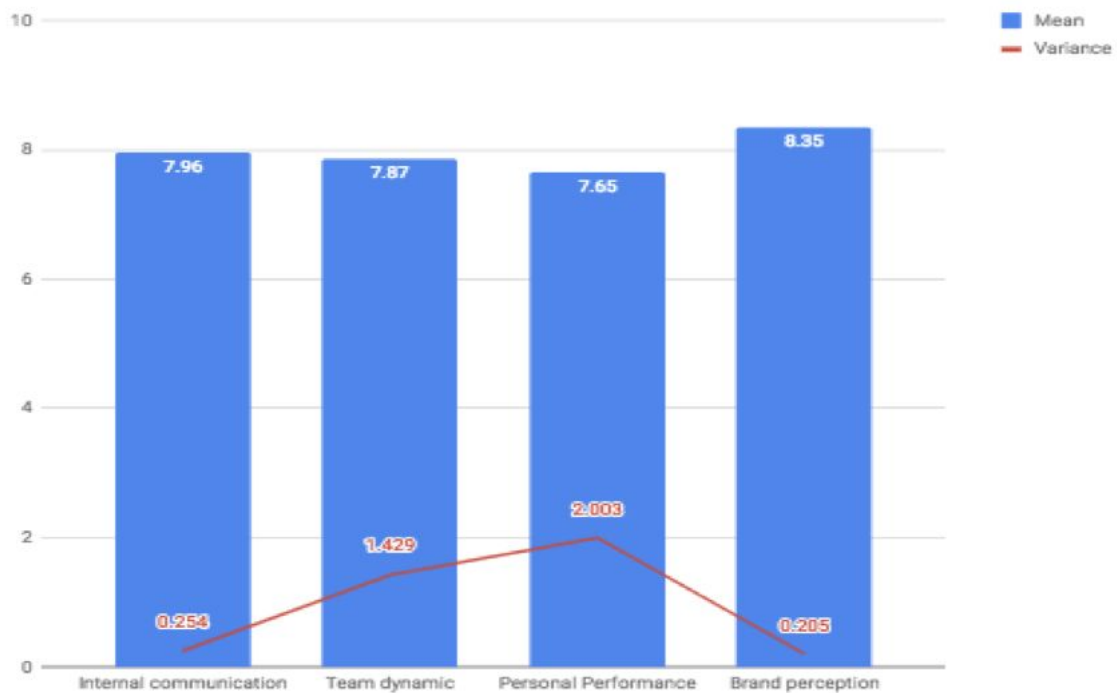
The one-way ANOVA analyses were conducted to verify or nullify a set of hypotheses about relationships between specific variables within the sub-regional dataset, and the significance ( $p$ ) between the dependent factor and the fixed factor other than the grouping fixed factor (see 'BASE' in below tables) used in the analyses.

## Research findings

### Descriptive analysis results

Findings from the descriptive analysis of the sub-regional dataset in the histogram below (see Figure 1) were as follows. The highest mean and low variance is found in the brand perception category ( $M = 8.35$ ;  $\sigma^2 = .205$ ); a high mean and low variance is found in the internal communications category ( $M = 7.96$ ;  $\sigma^2 = .254$ ); a lower mean and high variance is found in the team dynamics category ( $M = 7.87$ ;  $\sigma^2 = 1.429$ ); and the lowest mean and highest variance is found in the personal performance category ( $M = 7.65$ ;  $\sigma^2 = 2.003$ )

Brand perception is the strongest category with the highest mean and the lowest variance, which indicates that employees within the sub-region largely uniformly believe and adhere to the organisation's mission, core values, and brand promises. Employees within the sub-region are mostly inspired by the core purpose, values, and mission of the organisation, and they can see a clear link between the work that they do, their team's priorities, and the organisation's strategic objectives. They believe that each of the three brand promises apply to them and that the values of the organisation are 'alive'.



*Figure 2 - Histogram of sub-regional data descriptive statistics*

The second strongest category is internal communications, which similarly shows a high mean with a low variance. This indicates that the prevalence of employee perception that there is strong or ample internal communication. Most employees within the sub-region agree that leadership effectively communicates the organization's strategy, results, and changing environment. Reporting lines within the organisation are perceived to ensure great clarity around employees' responsibility. Employees within the sub-region feel that performance management processes are fair and accurate; policies are implemented fairly; difficult conversations happen when they need to and are handled well; and the organisation is not undermined by internal politics.

Both the categories of team dynamics and personal performance show the lowest mean values, with higher variance scores. In the team dynamics category, this would indicate a measure of ambivalence in attitude towards variables such as the new employee onboarding process, the level and blend of skills within the team, and the team's focus on the needs of the customers. In the personal performance category, with the lowest mean and the highest variance, attitudes towards personal motivations, goals, and intentions range from strongly agreed to neutral or somewhat disagreed, indicating a noticeable ambivalence in feelings towards individual performance within the sub-region. However, while the means for both categories are the lowest, they are by no means worryingly low - each remaining above 7.00. The variance scores are similarly not that high. There is

ambivalence in perceptions within the sub-region when it comes to team dynamics and personal performance, but it errs towards positivity.

### One-way ANOVA results

For enquiry (a), question (i), the hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is that yes, higher scores in believing that the values of the organisation are 'alive' leads to higher scores in employees feeling like they can contribute their full potential at work. The ANOVA results are shown in Table 2.1 below.

Dependent Variable: Contribute_full_potential					
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	69.250a	9	7.694	4.397	0.043
Intercept	601.762	1	601.762	343.864	0
BASE	17.936	2	8.968	5.125	0.05
Living_values	29.301	4	7.325	4.186	0.059
BASE * Living_values	21.073	3	7.024	4.014	0.07
Error	10.5	6	1.75		
Total	1136	16			
Corrected Total	79.75	15			
a R Squared = .868 (Adjusted R Squared = .671)					

Table 2.1 - One way ANOVA results for enquiry (a), question (i), hypothesis ( $H_0$ )

Table 2.1 indicates that there was no statistically significant difference between 'living values' and 'contribute full potential' as determined by one-way ANOVA ( $F(4.397) = 4.186, p = .059$ ). The significant difference between the two variables is greater than .05. The null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is confirmed,  $H_0$  is disproved - the belief that the values of the organisation are alive does not relate to an employee's belief that they can contribute their full potential whilst at work. The two variables are unrelated, though the significance in variance reported between the two variance scores quite close to the threshold between statistical significance or not. Similarly, there is no significant difference between each of the three bases within the sub-regional dataset and the dependent variable, meaning that the base of a respondent did not affect their belief in their ability to contribute their full potential.

The second question of enquiry (a), question (ii), hypothesised ( $H_1$ ) that higher scores in the ability for employees to see clearly the link between their own work and the organisation's strategic objectives is related to increased scores in employees being motivated by the purpose of the organisation. See Table 2.2 below.

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects					
Dependent Variable: Motivated_by_purpose					
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	25.271a	9	2.808	0.508	0.827
Intercept	804.903	1	804.903	145.611	0
BASE	1.618	2	0.809	0.146	0.867
Link_between_work_and_strategy	19.186	5	3.837	0.694	0.647
BASE * Link_between_work_and_strategy	1.055	2	0.527	0.095	0.91
Error	33.167	6	5.528		

Total	1301	16			
Corrected Total	58.438	15			
a R Squared = .432 (Adjusted R Squared = -.419)					

Table 2. 2 - One way ANOVA results for enquiry (a), question (ii), hypothesis (H<sub>1</sub>)

In the above Table 2.2 it is seen that the above hypothesis is wholly disproved, there is no statistically significance difference between the variables 'link between work and strategy' and 'motivated by purpose' as determined by one-way ANOVA ( $F(0.508) = 0.694$ ,  $p = 0.647$ ). The null hypothesis (H<sub>a</sub>) is confirmed, and H<sub>1</sub> is disproved - seeing a clear link between personal work and strategic objectives does not relate to being motivated by the organisation's purpose. Similarly, there is no significant difference between each of the three bases within the sub-regional dataset and the dependent variable, meaning that the base of a respondent did not affect them being motivated by the purpose of the organisation.

The first question of enquiry (b), question (i) asked whether leadership effectively higher scores in perceptions that leadership effectively communicates the organization's strategy is related to higher scores in teams focusing on customer needs and best interests. See Table 2.3 below.

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects					
Dependent Variable: Focus_on_customer_needs					
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	27.938a	12	2.328	0.822	0.654
Intercept	1017.749	1	1017.749	359.206	0
BASE	5.821	2	2.911	1.027	0.457

Leadership_communicates_strategy	22.844	6	3.807	1.344	0.436
BASE * Leadership_communicates_strategy	2.78	4	0.695	0.245	0.896
Error	8.5	3	2.833		
Total	1279	16			
Corrected Total	36.438	15			
a R Squared = .767 (Adjusted R Squared = -.166)					

Table 2.3 - One way ANOVA results for enquiry (b), question (i), hypothesis (H<sub>2</sub>)

Table 2.3 shows that there is no statistically significant difference between the variables 'leadership communicates strategy' and 'focus on customer needs' as determined by one-way ANOVA ( $F(0.822) = 1.344, p = 0.436$ ). The null hypothesis (H<sub>a</sub>) is confirmed, and H<sub>2</sub> is disproved - the fact that leadership communicates the organisations strategy effectively has no relation to the focus that employees put on the customers' needs and best interests. Similarly, there is no significant difference between each of the three bases within the sub-regional dataset and the dependent variable, meaning that the base of a respondent did not affect them being motivated by the purpose of the organisation.

Enquiry (b), question (ii) asked whether (H<sub>3</sub>) higher scores in believing that the organisation upholds its mission is related to higher scores in focussing on customers' needs.

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects					
Dependent Variable: Focus_on_customer_needs					
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	34.771a	9	3.863	13.908	0.002

Intercept	689.317	1	689.317	2481.54	0
BASE	2.138	2	1.069	3.849	0.084
Upholding_mission	30.592	5	6.118	22.026	0.001
BASE * Upholding_mission	0.262	2	0.131	0.472	0.645
Error	1.667	6	0.278		
Total	1279	16			
Corrected Total	36.438	15			
a R Squared = .954 (Adjusted R Squared = .886)					

Table 2.4 - One way ANOVA results for enquiry (b), question (ii), hypothesis (H<sub>3</sub>)

Table 2.4 shows that there is a significant statistical difference as determined by one-way ANOVA of the variables 'upholding mission' and 'focus on customer needs' ( $F(13.908) = 22.026, p = 0.001$ ). This proves H<sub>3</sub> to be positive - the perception that the organisation upholds its mission is related to a focus on customer needs. The amount of difference between the .05 and .001 is noteworthy, and the null hypothesis (H<sub>a</sub>) is disproved. As with all previous questions, however, the individual bases within the one-way ANOVA display no significant difference, meaning that the base had no relational effect on the team's focus on customer needs.

The following three questions look at any potential relationship in the data between employee perceptions of the organisation's brand promises as these promises apply to them, and their own focus on customer needs. Enquiry (b), question (iii) hypothesised (H<sub>4</sub>) that higher scores in believing that the organisation is improving personal employability leads to higher scores in focusing on customer needs.

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects					
Dependent Variable: Focus_on_customer_needs					
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	29.188a	8	3.648	3.523	0.057
Intercept	722.423	1	722.423	697.512	0
BASE	2.602	2	1.301	1.256	0.342
Improving_personal_employability	23.907	3	7.969	7.694	0.013
BASE * Improving_personal_employability	0.62	3	0.207	0.199	0.894
Error	7.25	7	1.036		
Total	1279	16			
Corrected Total	36.438	15			

a R Squared = .801 (Adjusted R Squared = .574)

Table 2.5 - One way ANOVA results for enquiry (b), question (iii) hypothesis ( $H_4$ )

Table 2.5 shows that a statistically significant difference is found between the dependent variable 'focus on customer needs' and the fixed variable 'improving employability' ( $F(3.523) = 7.694$ ,  $p = 0.013$ ). The null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is disproved, and  $H_4$  is positive - there is a statistical relationship showing that higher scores in the belief that the organisation improves employees' person employability is related to higher scores in employees

focusing on the customers' needs. This relationship is not applicable to the base, as the null hypothesis is proved for the fixed variable of the base, meaning that there is no significant difference and the base does not influence focussing on customers needs scores.

To recap the research question, these one-way ANOVA enquiries are seeking to uncover how employees perceive the organisational brand and use it to conduct their service actions and interactions with customers. They are analysing employee responses to questions about, for example the way they perceive brand promises, and the part they feel they have to play in executing towards the organisation's objectives.

Enquiry (b), question (iv), hypothesis ( $H_5$ ) states is that higher scores in the belief that an employee personally makes a difference through the work that they do leads to higher scores in focusing on customers' needs and best interests. See Table 2.6 below.

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects					
Dependent Variable: Focus_on_customer_needs					
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	33.104a	9	3.678	6.621	0.016
Intercept	731.955	1	731.955	1317.519	0
BASE	0.643	2	0.321	0.579	0.589
Personall_making_a_difference	26.957	5	5.391	9.704	0.008
BASE * Personall_making_a_difference	2.657	2	1.329	2.392	0.172
Error	3.333	6	0.556		
Total	1279	16			

Corrected Total	36.438	15			
a R Squared = .909 (Adjusted R Squared = .771)					

Table 2.6 - One way ANOVA results for enquiry (b), question (iv), hypothesis (H<sub>5</sub>)

Table 2.6 shows that there is a significant statistical difference as determined by one-way ANOVA of the variables 'personally making a difference' and 'focus on customer needs' ( $F(6.621) = 9.704$ ,  $p = 0.008$ ). The null hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>) is disproved, and H<sub>5</sub> is positive - higher scores in believing that personal employability is being improved relates to higher scores in focusing on customer needs. As with all questions before, the base has no influence on the dependent factor ( $p = 0.589 > 0.05$ ).

The final question for enquiry (b), question (v), hypothesised (H<sub>6</sub>) that higher scores in personally feeling supported by the organisation do lead to higher scores in focusing on customer needs. See Table 2.7 below.

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects					
Dependent Variable: Focus_on_customer_needs					
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	22.438a	10	2.244	0.801	0.643
Intercept	952.492	1	952.492	340.176	0
BASE	6.772	2	3.386	1.209	0.373
Personal_feeling_of_support	17.535	5	3.507	1.253	0.405

BASE *	1.604	3	0.535	0.191	0.898
Personal_feeling_of_support					
Error	14	5	2.8		
Total	1279	16			
Corrected Total	36.438	15			
a R Squared = .616 (Adjusted R Squared = -.153)					

Table 2.7 - One way ANOVA results for enquiry (b), question (v), hypothesis ( $H_6$ )

For this final brand promise, Table 2.7 shows that there is no statistically significant difference, and the null hypothesis is proven ( $F(0.801) = 1.253$ ,  $p = 0.405$ ). There is no relation between the variables 'personal feeling of support' and 'focus on customer needs', and  $H_6$  is disproved - higher scores in personally feeling supported by the organisation does not lead to higher scores in focusing on customer needs. The base has no influence on the dependent variable either.

### Summary

Two enquiries with a total of seven questions were put through one-way ANOVA using variables taken from the PES edited dataset for the Southeast Asia sub-region of the organisation. Of the seven hypotheses, three were proved positive, and four were found negative. The fixed variable of the base groupings were consistently at null, in not one case was the base seen to affect the dependent variable. The three hypotheses that were found to have similar and related variance were all in enquiry (b), which looked at brand promises and the organisation's mission and held as its dependent factor for all questions a 'focus on customer needs'. The fixed factors that were found to have a significant statistical effect on this dependent factor were 'personally making a difference'; 'improving employability'; and 'upholding mission'. Each of these variables were in the brand perception category in the descriptive statistics analysis. The two hypotheses of enquiry (a) were disproved ('living values' = 'contribute full potential'; 'link between work and strategy' = 'motivated by purpose'), and two from enquiry (b) were disproved ('leadership communicates strategy'; 'personal feeling of support').

## Conclusions

This chapter explored using internal survey data how the organisational brand is received and internalised by employees, and then communicated to the customers at satellite bases. The analyses show that perceptions of customer-facing employees in satellite bases are — on the whole — positively aligned with the organisational brand. Employees perceive the internal communications of the organisation to be effective and clear, and their perceptions within the Southeast Asia sub-region of the brand show a noteworthy degree of uniformity and adherence to the mission, core values, and brand promises of the organisation.

There is some correlation between perceiving that the brand applies and is upheld by themselves as employees and how much they believe their teams focus on the needs of the customer. Employees who believe that they uphold the organisation's mission; feel like their own employability is being improved (one of the brand promises); and feel like they are supported (another one of the brand promises); will also tend to believe that they and their team put strong focus on the needs of the customer. We can take it from the descriptive analyses that it is likely that employees who embody this correlation number in the high majority, based on the high alignment of employees' brand perceptions.

These correlations do not fully confirm that the positive brand perception of the employees is the main cause for them giving good customer service. However, it can be confirmed from the analyses that the organisational brand is effectively received and internalised by employees, and that the majority of customer-facing employees perceive the brand the way the organisation wants them to.

The aforementioned reception, internalisation, and alignment likely occurs through internal brand communications and through imbibing the organisational cultural values and expected behaviours. What other factors are involved in the employees giving good service in terms of the brand promises are outside of this study's ambit. The brand is being effectively received by employees within satellite bases and is being positively used in interactions and communications to customers.

This positive alignment in brand perception stems from the alignment of cultural values between the overarching organisational culture and sub-regional cultures. The existing research has confirmed that the culture of an organisation is a context and employees use it as a filter to internalise brand communications aimed at them (Hatch and Schultz, 1997; Punjaisri and Wilson, 2011). If there was no cultural alignment, there would likely be a

misaligned employee perception of the brand (however, this is a postulation). These two links are confirmed: (1) there is alignment between the organisation's overarch culture and the sub-regional culture; and (2) there is an alignment between the organisational brand and customer-facing employees' perceptions of that brand. This means that customers are coming into contact with the organisational culture via their interactions with customer-facing employees. Chapter 3 will be examining this contact in the form of customer brand image.

# Chapter 3: Customer brand image perception and alignment

## Introduction

This chapter seeks to establish if there is an alignment between the strategic brand personality that's communicated via customer-facing employees and the perception of the brand (image) that's held by customers. This chapter explores how the brand is received by customers from the communication and service of the satellite bases in a way that creates the desired brand image. Do customers use the channel of communications and interactions with customer-facing employees to build their own perceptions of the organisation's brand, thus creating the brand image? The question seeks to establish whether the brand image is aligned more or less with the brand personality.

Brand image is constructed by customers and other external stakeholders using, in large part, the marketing communications made by the organisation. However, the brand image is not within the direct control of the organisation. There are other influences on the brand image that aren't owned by the organisation, such as media representations, current customer word-of-mouth discussions, third-party reviews, competitor brand strategies, and other market forces such as political upheaval. These external influences also provide material to customers to use in brand image building about the organisation, which interplay with the material provided by the organisation. For organisations, influencing customer brand image to be in alignment with the desired brand personality is of key strategic importance for multiple performance indicators (Keller, 1993; Faircloth, Capella, and Alford, 2001; Nandan, 2005; Zhang, 2015).

The brand personality is constructed in order to cause current and potential customers to hold the organisation's brand in a positive light (Punjaisri and Wilson, 2007; Keller, 1993). Furthermore, a positive brand perception may often sway customer intention to buy the organisation's product or service (Zhang, 2015). When a potential customer holds a brand image that is the same or akin to the organisation's objectives, then this potential customer is assumed to want to pay to use the product or service (Zhang, 2015; Punjaisri and Wilson, 2007; Keller, 1993). Measuring the alignment between constructed personality and earned image then becomes in itself a performance indicator. If there is a misalignment, this will

have a negative impact on the number of potential customers who have a high likelihood of making a positive purchase decision in the future (Zhang, 2015; Buttle, 2011).

## **Data and methodology**

### **Data**

The organisation has an existing set of quantitative and qualitative survey data collected from every participant that has been on a program. Standardised surveys are given to every customer during the final few days of their program with GVI. The survey is designed to measure a metric called a Net Promoter Score (Reichheld, 2003). The Net Promoter Score metric seeks to determine the loyalty that customers feel towards an organisation whose products or services they have purchased (Reichheld, 2003). It measures those customers that will actively promote the organisation, those that will remain neutral, or those that will actively demote the organisation (Reichheld, 2003). The survey goes further than what was envisioned by Reichheld and seeks to measure the success of the organisation's brand promises.

The quantitative questions and responses relating to the brand promises and other service-related questions were isolated out from the qualitative answers of the survey (see Annexure C). Specifically, there were questions about the brand promises, and other questions relating to various service factors, which were chosen for this analysis to determine customer perceptions. These are analysed in relation to each other in order to draw the necessary conclusions about the customers' brand image. The related hypothesis is that the service provided, and the way customers are communicated to is largely as a result of the manner in which the customer-facing employees align with the brand service delivery that is expected of them. And, we know from Chapter 2 that this is in significant alignment.

The aforementioned data is collected once the customer has close to completed the paid service with the organisation. Each customer has interacted with the customer-facing employee at the satellite bases staff during a period between one to twelve weeks.

The overall quantitative dataset for this analysis is derived from a survey conducted near to post-purchase using a set of 23 questions with a population size of 4195 respondents over a period of three years (2015 to 2018). The questions are varied in their type between multiple choice, yes or no, and qualitative responses. The survey is a longitudinal cohort

survey, but for the purposes of this research, data collected within the timeframe of 20 April to 15 August 2018 will be looked at cross-sectionally to draw general insights.

This timeframe was selected because four new questions were inserted into the post-purchase survey in the beginning of April 2018, and so there is no existing data for these questions before that. These four questions are about an organisational brand promise, and are important for this study, and so the dataset must be limited to include them and their responses. The timeframe relates closely to the timeframe of the PES survey data from the Southeast Asia sub-region analysed in Chapter 2, which helps to further validate a potential correlation between the two datasets.

The total population size of respondents who participated in a program in the sub-region within the timeframe for this analysis amounts to 186 respondents ( $n = 186$ ). The response rate to the survey within the timeframe is 100%, however, the completion rate per question varies considerably. This leads to considerations of the nonresponse bias for those questions that weren't responded in the majority. This is taken into account below in the research considerations.

## **Method**

A descriptive statistical analysis was conducted to ascertain how many respondents (customers) within the sub-region felt the brand promises and service was effectively delivered; how many felt that they weren't; how many remained neutral; and how many didn't respond.

Both measures of central tendency and measure of dispersion were conducted. The mean and variance were the key measures analysed for each category of questions separately to determine the statistical descriptives. Missing responses were excluded listwise in the analysis. In addition to the mean and variance, the percentiles, range, and outliers were pulled from the data for further description.

## **Research findings**

The main question of The NPS survey, which is compulsory, is shown below in Table 3.1 along with descriptive results ( $n = 186$ ). For this question, respondents were asked to respond on a scale from one to 10 (1= definitely not; 5 = neutral; 10 = definitely). Whilst the mean for the population is high ( $M = 9.559$ ), the variance is also comparatively high ( $\sigma^2 = .594$ ), indicating that the general inclination is towards the positive, with noteworthy

attitudes toward neutral or negative. Based on the data, the majority of post-program customers would indeed recommend the organisation.

Advocacy	Mean	Variance
How likely is it that you would recommend GVI to a friend or colleague?	9.5591	0.594

*Table 3.1 - Descriptive results for likelihood of advocacy*

The next three categories of questions were about the organisation’s brand promises, and these questions were ‘yes’ or ‘no’ responses. Responses of ‘yes’ were coded as 1, and responses at ‘no’ were coded as 0 for the purposes of analysis. For the brand promise of ‘make a difference’, there were three questions. For the brand promise of ‘360 degree support’, there were five questions; and for the brand promise of ‘increase employability’, there were three questions. For deeper detail, refer to Appendix C.

The descriptive analysis results for the ‘make a difference’ category can be seen below in Table 3.2. On the whole, post-purchase customers can be described as strongly aligned with the brand promise in question, but perhaps more so after their purchase experience than before.

Make a difference	Mean	Variance
Do you feel more aware of global issues?	0.99	0.006
Did you choose to go on a GVI program to primarily make a difference?	0.85	0.127
Do you feel you made a difference?	0.9	0.088

*Table 3.2 - Descriptive results for brand promise: make a difference*

The second question in the category, ‘Did you choose to go on a GVI program to primarily make a difference?’ asks post-purchase customers about pre-purchase perception, and here there is a mean of 0.85 (n=176) and a variance of 0.127. Compared to the other two questions in this brand promise category, this demonstrates a shift in perception from pre-purchase to post-purchase, which would have occurred whilst participating in their program under the supervision of customer-facing employees.

For the category of ‘360 degree support’, consisting of five questions, the results can be seen below in Table 3.3.

360 degree support	Mean	Variance
Did you find our information on our website to be accurate	0.87	0.114
Were you provided with enough accurate information by our recruitment team	0.97	0.033
Were you provided enough accurate information before your trip by our pre departure support team.	0.84	0.138
Did you feel adequately supported by our field staff during your stay with us	0.99	0.007
Did you feel supported throughout your GVI experience?	0.99	0.011

*Table 3.3 - Descriptive results for brand promise: 360 degree support*

Table 3.3 shows that post-purchase customers seem to be mostly aligned with this brand promise, perceiving it to be present in business-to-customer service relations. Interesting to note for this category, the response rate was the lowest out of all the brand promise categories, with a response rate of 78.50%. It can only be speculated that this might be because this category relates most directly to customer service, and many may have abstained from completing the responses within this category rather than rate it lowly — but this cannot be conclusively determined. The lower response rate must be taken into account when drawing conclusions, however.

The first three questions involve the work of three departments that are situated in the central headquarters - the marketing, enrolment (sales), and support (customer care) teams, of which the latter two are customer-facing. The fourth question relates to the customer-facing staff in the field, with whom customers would definitively have the most in-depth and personal contact with. The fifth serves to evaluate the entire experience.

In the first three questions, there is a varying range of higher versus lower scores. Whilst the means for all three are still relatively high, the questions ‘Did you find our information on our

website to be accurate' ( $M = .87$ ;  $\sigma^2 = .114$ ) and 'Were you provided enough accurate information before your trip by our pre departure support team' ( $M = .84$ ;  $\sigma^2 = .138$ ) were the least positive, with the lowest means and the highest variance. However, the customer-facing staff in the field received the highest mean with lowest variance ( $M = .99$ ;  $\sigma^2 = .007$ ), higher than for the enrolment team ( $M = .97$ ;  $\sigma^2 = .033$ ). And overall, respondents felt supported in general throughout their experience with the organisation. Taking into account that this survey is completed in the final stages of the program or post-program, it should be interpreted that customers were treated excellently by the customer-facing staff in general, demonstrating what is highly likely to be a positive perception of the brand, at least within the brand promise under question here.

For the third category, relating to the brand promise of 'employability', there were three questions, two of which address pre-purchase perceptions and the other addresses post-program perception. This category showed the lowest alignment. Prior to joining their program, less than half of customers perceive the organisation to be able to improve their professional employability or increase their likelihood of acceptance into tertiary education.

Employability	Mean	Variance
Did you choose to go on a GVI program to improve your career or employability?	0.48	0.251
Do you feel your GVI experience improved your career or employability?	0.88	0.107
Did you use this programme to receive university/school credit or work benefits?	0.1	0.05

*Table 3.4 - Descriptive results for brand promise: employability*

The low mean and high variance for the first question, 'Did you choose to go on a GVI program to improve your career or employability?' ( $M = .48$ ;  $\sigma^2 = .251$ ) indicates that there is a range of customers who did choose the organisation's service to improve their career or employability, but not enough to convince that there is a general perception pre-purchase that improving career or employability is what attracts customers to the organisation or that it is what they expect to be delivered to them by the staff. Even more so, this can be seen in the question 'Did you use this programme to receive university/school credit or work

benefits?' ( $M = .1$ ;  $\sigma^2 = .05$ ), which lends definitively to the conclusion that this brand promise is not strongly perceived, it is low in alignment.

however, that post-program, the perception, or alignment with the brand promise, takes a sharp upturn ( $M = .88$ ;  $\sigma^2 = .107$ ). Whilst the variance is still noteworthy, it indicates that something shifted whilst the customers were participating in their programs at the satellite bases, under the supervision and whilst interacting with the customer-facing staff. It is not possible to state conclusively that it was the staff that caused this upturn in perception around this brand promise, but it needs be taken into account the significant increase in mean and the decrease in variance from pre- to post-program perceptions.

The final category for analysis and interpretation is a set of seven questions relating to service aspects, five of which relate directly or indirectly to specific aspects of service delivered by the customer-facing staff in the field: 'How was your pick up and initial orientation / welcome meeting'; 'How would you rate GVI's safety standards'; 'How was the standard of training'; 'How well do you understand the long term objectives of the programme'; 'How well do you feel you contributed to the objectives'. The other two questions are not related to the field staff at all, and have to do with budget allocations from the central headquarters of the organisation; nonetheless they must considered within the category to interpret perceptions of service.

Service	Mean	Variance
How well do you understand the long term objectives of the programme	9.7742	0.416
How was the standard of training	9.6559	0.511
How well do you feel you contributed to the objectives	9.65	0.666
How would you rate GVI's safety standards	9.5161	0.926
How was your pick up and initial orientation / welcome meeting	9.4624	1.708
How would you rate the base? (please take into consideration the location and needs)	9.2581	1.715

How was the standard of programme equipment	9.0753	1.549
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*Table 3.5 - Descriptive results for service related variables*

The perception of service seems largely positive, with high means, but also significant variance for all variables. However, for this category of questions, the response rate was lowest at 50% response (n = 93) of the total population size (N = 186). This makes the data for this category difficult to interpret. The low response rate can be for a multitude of reasons that will remain unknown, but influences the validity of the results in Table 3.5 above.

## Conclusions

This chapter seeks to establish how the brand is received by customers from the communication and service of the employees, and whether this happens in a way that creates the goal brand image. Or in other words, is the brand image is aligned more or less with the brand personality?

The brand personality here consists of the brand promises and the mission of the organisation. Two out of the three brand promises prove to have customer perceptions that are aligned with the organisation's strategic objectives. They are 'make a difference' and '360 degree support'.

What is noteworthy is the responses to questions around the brand promise of 'employability'. The perceptions pre-program were low, highly unaligned, but took a stark up-turn in alignment once the customers were nearing the end of their program. This up-turn viewed in conjunction with the positive alignments of the organisation's mission and the other two brand promises can confirm that customer perceptions are indeed aligned more than less with the strategic brand personality.

This chapter has shown that customers, to a high degree, perceive the brand in the way that the organisation wants them to perceive it. This is in large part due to their interactions with customer-facing employees. We know that these employees work within a cultural context that is aligned with the organisation's overarching culture, We also know that these employees perceive the organisation in a way that is aligned with how the organisation wants to be perceived by these employees.

There is a chain of alignment happening here, and each link is interrelated. We can see thus far that the organisational culture is causing aligned employee brand perception, is causing aligned customer brand perception. The next a final step is to determine whether this aligned customer brand perception is creating the likelihood that customers will recommend the organisation to their friends and family.

# Chapter 4: Production of customer recommendation

## Introduction

The final chapter uses a section of existing theory and research on word-of-mouth marketing and specific, different data from the aforementioned NPS survey to examine the likelihood of customer recommendation. More specifically, this chapter explores how the brand communications conducted by customer-facing employees (as it exists) and the aligned reception thereof (brand image) leads to the likelihood that customers will recommend the organisation to their social connections.

When a customer conducts an act of word-of-mouth (WOM) referral, they can only do this after they have come into contact with the culture via the channel of customer-facing employees (in the service industry). This, then, becomes a reconstitution of the organisational culture by a customer (Buttle, 2011:244). In other words, when a current or former customer conducts WOM, they are reproducing the experience they have had with the organisation for others - an experience that is shaped in large part by their interaction with customer-facing employees (Buttle, 2011; Villanueva, Yoo, and Hanssens, 2008; Punjaisri and Wilson, 2007). These acts of reproduction is an act of communication to others can be positive or negative, actively initiated or responsively given.

These communications are themselves characterised by a host of other factors such as the relationship between sender and receiver and the context and mode of the act of communication (Buttle, 2011; Sweeney, Soutar, and Mazzarol, 2008). This reproduction relies on the brand image that is formed by the customer who is doing the talking (Sweeney, Soutar, and Mazzarol, 2008). If it is a negative brand image resulting from negative experience, then the act of reproducing the experience through communication to others will probably be detractive from the brand. Conversely, if the experience was positive, then is it likely that This chapter focuses on just that: initiative output of positive/advocative WOM referral.

# Data and methodology

## Data

The aforementioned Net Promoter Score survey contains not only the quantitative questions that we used in Chapter 3. It also comprise of qualitative questions. Some of these were open-ended requests for reviews of the staff; the experience of the program; suggested improvements; and the best and worst part of the experience. Three variables of qualitative responses were coded and analysed, and these can be seen in Appendix D. They were selected because they were angled towards discovering the attitudes, feelings, or perceptions of the customers towards variables that are relevant to the research objective for this chapter: staff, experience, and advocacy.

The dataset shares the time frame and population size ( $n = 186$ ) of the Chapter 3's data, and derives directly from the same framing and context of the NPS survey. The variables under analysis here were: "Do you have any feedback about our staff team comment"; and "Please leave an overall review of your experience", of which the qualitative responses were combined with the variable, "Please leave a short review of your experience with GVI". These latter two requests for review are worded similarly enough and they are contained within the same framing. So, because of this, they were condensed into one dataset, as opposed to being treated as two separate datasets. All responses from both variables were combined into one larger dataset, which enabled a view of thematic trends. Any duplicate responses per respondent were identified and removed.

In analysis of the second dataset on experience reviews, it was taken into account that there may be multiple nodes generated by the same respondent. A further note on the second dataset was that neither variable question asked specifically if the respondent would recommend the organisation or the organisation's services to their social connections. Any mention of recommendation or otherwise advocacy, therefore, will be taken as a genuine response and given high subjective and contextual value.

The responses to each variable in the two separate datasets all come from the same respondents, which provided an opportunity to analyse the responses in the two datasets' causal relationship. A third dataset was constructed, and it was massively reduced, removing non-responses from the staff review variable, and removing non-responses from the experience review variables, as well as responses that did not code into either of the themes generated for  $H_2$  or  $H_3$  (explained below). This resulted in a total population size of 34 ( $n = 34$ ), which included negative staff reviews, positive staff reviews, and references for

both nodes within the Advocacy theme (returns and recommendations), inclusively per case. Further, the negative staff reviews were distinguished within the population as a sub-population of six ( $n_1 = 6$ ), making the positive staff reviews aligned with responses coded with advocacy nodes at 28 ( $n_2 = 28$ ).

## Method

The method used to analyse both datasets was a qualitative thematic analysis of the qualitative reviews section of the survey responses, using a deductive approach. Because the context as well as the analysis objectives for this chapter were well established, it was unnecessary to do much of an initial exploration of the data. Instead, specific themes were devised for analysis of the data to verify their presence in each dataset, and key terms for text searches and word frequencies were established upfront. These themes were derived from the enquiries that are detailed below.

For the first dataset containing staff reviews ( $n = 186$ ), one enquiry was conducted according to the hypothesis ( $H_1$ ): the general sentiment of participants towards staff is highly positive. Positive and affirming words in relation to staff were coded through the dataset to draw insights on a common theme of 'Sentiment' (or bold?), encapsulating positive or negative feelings of customers towards customer-facing employees.

For the second dataset, the corpus of experience reviews resulting from the collation of two variables ( $n = 186$ ), the first hypothesis ( $H_2$ ) was: there will be a high number of recommendations in the form of outright statement to recommend to friends and family. What was searched for in the data was mention of recommendation (including its root and stem words), in a positive context. The second hypothesis ( $H_3$ ) was that there would be a noteworthy number of customers who would wish to return to purchase another product again. These two hypotheses resulted in queries of the data to find insights towards a theme that is called 'Advocacy'.

For the third dataset, the link between the sentiment and advocacy themes were explored to establish the follow-on between staff review and experience review. The hypothesis for this enquiry ( $H_4$ ) was that a positive staff review leads to an advocative experience review, whether in terms of  $H_2$  or  $H_3$ . This was conducted by combining the above two datasets and looking at links between references per respondent, and whether there was significant linkage. Both positive sentiment and negative sentiment were analysed for causal tendencies.

# Research findings

## Sentiment

The hypothesis (H<sub>1</sub>) that the general sentiment of participants towards staff is highly positive can be confirmed through coded analysis of the dataset of staff reviews. The positive sentiment is significant both in numbers and in context. In the data, 101 references of positive sentiment were coded, which results in 54% of respondents who state positive feelings and experiences with the staff they interacted with at any of the sub-region's individual bases. In many of the reviews, specific staff members were mentioned and reviewed, as requested by the variable's question. This still indicates a general positive sentiment, as these staff members were likely the ones the respondent interacted with most. This means that this customer-staff interaction was where most of the brand service was occurring. An example of positive sentiment is:

*Respondent 112: Vanessa was a wonderful and consistent staff person and is so kind and fun to be around. Caroline was amazing and such a put together and helpful person.*

There were some instances of negative sentiment towards staff members. There was a total of six references in the corpus, which amounted to 3% of respondents expressing negative feelings towards or experiences with staff members. This is negligible in the full view, but remains relevant for understanding a causal link between staff review and experience review further on.

## Advocacy

The first hypothesis (H<sub>2</sub>): there will be a high number of recommendations in the form of outright statement to recommend to friends and family, can be confirmed from the thematic analysis. Within the dataset, 35 references were coded under the sub-node 'recommendation'. Within the data, there were two overlaps of this node between variables from one respondent, which, while both are still counted subjectively towards the strength of the theme, will not be double counted. This brings the total number of respondents who stated they would recommend the organisation or its services to 33 out of 186 respondents. This is a percentage of 18% who use various forms of the word 'recommendation'. An example of these nodes is:

Respondent 75: *I am recommending this trip to anyone who wants to do some sort of volunteering as I believe everyone should have an experience like I have*

In general, the context of the reference for this node were situated positively, with only one reference showing a slightly negative context within the text:

Respondent 97: *Would recommend to others but would suggest gvi try not to treat the volunteers as children*

This instance is too insignificant to mean much, counted as less than 0.1% of total responses and with a textual coverage of 0.14% within the corpus. But, it is of interest to note that the recommendation is still present, but attached to it is feedback for the organisation. For the overwhelming majority, the node is situated within the context of very passionate and positive language, which helps to confirm H<sub>2</sub>: yes, there is high number of recommendations in the form of outright statement to recommend to friends and family.

The second hypothesis for the second dataset (H<sub>3</sub>) was that there would be a noteworthy number of customers who would wish to return to participate in the organisation's product and service again. Looking at the numbers, this shows significant response to the positive, with 23 references coded under the sub-node 'returns'. There are three instances where references belonged to the same respondent but were in the two separate variables, which brings the total of respondents who stated desire or intent to return at 20 respondents. This amounts to 11% percent of the total population.

Looking at the context of the references, it shows a more or less even split between a hope or consideration to return (12 references, 52% of total references), and a firm intention or decision to return (11 references, 47% of total references). An example of hope or consideration are:

Respondent 89 *I have loved my time and am strongly considering taking part in another gvi program next year*

An example of firm decision are:

Respondent 57: *I look forward to coming back with GVI next year on another programme*

What this tells us is that these respondents will be thinking about or making plans and decisions to participate in another program, and will be seen to be doing so by their social connections, whether their family or friends. We know this because the booking process for the organisation is highly involved and complex, and takes a significant amount of time and

energy. This can be seen as a form of tacit advocacy, where the previous sub-node can be considered explicit advocacy. Both are output word-of-mouth, but the former involves passive actions while the latter involves active vocalisation (or at least the intention thereof, in both cases).

Looking at these two sub-nodes jointly, it can be taken that the theme of Advocacy is highly within the dataset and contextually strong.

### **Sentiment leading to advocacy**

The final hypothesis (H<sub>4</sub>) was that a positive staff review leads to an advocative experience review, whether in terms of themes derived in H<sub>2</sub> or H<sub>3</sub>, inclusive of each other. When looking at the third, adjusted dataset, of the 6 negative staff reviews, only three (50%) were accompanied by negative experience reviews. The other three, which were accompanied by positive experience reviews, whilst contextually not intensely negative, were still critical and deconstructive. Though this sub-population within the dataset is way too small to make any valid conclusions, it can be taken that a negative feeling toward or experience with staff might not necessarily always lead to a negative experience. An example of a negative staff review accompanied with a positive experience review is as follows.

Respondent 154's staff review was somewhat negative :

*I think there should be a consistent approach from all of the mentors. This should not differ between individuals-the success of the classes are dependant on the planning. If the volunteers are prepared to put in a 100% then all mentors should do the same and recognise if the volunteers need more support.*

The same respondent's experience review (one of two) was positive:

*My GVI experience exceeded my expectations in several ways. The accessibility and connection with the students, particularly with the novice monks, made it a unique and very privileged experience for me. The feeling of being part of an ongoing project that is making a difference to people's lives was also special. [...]*

It's important to note that there was no presence of the Advocacy present in any of the responses for the six respondents within this sub-population. Whether they were within the 50% that gave negative staff reviews and negative experience reviews, or the other 50%, none of the experience reviews indicated any intention or hope to return, nor the likelihood of recommendation.

To expand on the above consideration of ambivalent feedback, when looking at the sub-population of positive staff reviews and their correlating experience reviews (n = 28), 100% of the staff reviews correlated to positive experience reviews. There was not one positive staff review within the dataset that did not link with either an intention or hope to return or the likelihood of recommendation, or both. The 'returns' sub-node was present at ; the 'recommendation' sub-node was present at ; and both were present at .

## Conclusions

This chapter explored customer survey data in search of how brand communications conducted by customer-facing employees might lead to the likelihood that customers will recommend the organisation. Chapter 3 established that there is strong alignment between strategic brand positioning and the brand image held by customers. In the NPS quantitative variables, when asked directly, the large majority of customers stated they would promote the organisation to their social connections. In this chapter, advocacy was found to be highly prevalent and contextually strong even when no question of likelihood of recommendation or potential for repeat purchase was asked. What this shows is that a significant percentage of customers would recommend the organisation out of their own volition. This is core to the organisational benefit of WOM (Buttle, 2011), and it is shown to be present within the customer sentiment for GVI.

This proof towards the likelihood of advocacy is the last link in the chain. The likelihood that a significant number of customers will recommend the organisation (without incentive) is established.

# Thesis conclusions

My thesis is that the likelihood of a customer recommending an organisational brand to their social connections is directly and proportionately influenced by the organisational culture via the channel of customer-facing employees. In summary, this paper has established that the organisational culture of GVI is well-aligned between central and satellite offices. Both employees and customers view the organisation in a way that is aligned with internal and external strategic brand communications. These three factors, viewed as a causal chain of influence, leads to a strong likelihood that customers will recommend the organisation to their social connections.

Chapter 1 confirmed that within GVI there is a strong cultural alignment between the organisation as a whole and the subregional subculture within the organisation at a values level. Chapter 2 found that there is a strong alignment between the organisational brand and how customer-facing employees perceive that brand. In Chapter 3, there is significant evidence to show that customers hold a brand image that is in concordance with the strategic brand positioning. Chapter 4 shows there is evidence of a strong degree of intention in customers to recommend the organisation. The data finds that the propensity to recommend the organisation to social connections is linked to the experience customers had with the employees providing the service to them.

Working backwards through the chapter conclusions gives a better understanding of the chain of links proven by this research . A customer recommends GVI, and it's known that a significant number of customers do exactly that (proved in Chapter 4). The customer makes their recommendation because they had a positive experience with GVI, and they have an aligned perception of the brand (proved in Chapter 3). This customer's aligned perception originates in large part because of their interactions with the staff at the satellite base they attended; and we know that these staff perceive the organisation's brand in a way that is also aligned with what the organisation intends (proved in Chapter 2). The employees' perception – which also contributes to the way they interact with the customer in question – is significantly influenced by their (professional) existence within a culture that is aligned with what the organisation intends (proved in Chapter 1). Thus, because of the proxy of culturally and brand-aligned employees, the customer in question who recommends GVI does so because the organisational culture is one that performs well.

From the research conducted in this paper, it is clear that staff directly contribute to the likelihood that the customers they interact with will recommend the organisation's services

to their social connections. This is seen in the significant number of customers who reported unsolicited willingness to make recommendations. This is particularly due to the findings of cultural alignment between central headquarters and the satellite sub-region studied here, and the effect this has on employee perceptions, customer perceptions, and employee-to-customer communications. This has led to further consideration of the organisational culture by the organisation itself, based on these findings, because an initial link has been made visible between cultural alignment and the potential for customer recommendation. This link discovered here has potential for improving organisational proven up wider study for applicability.

This study started by asking how organisational culture influences an aspect organisational performance, contributing to the literature by examining culture's effect on one aspect of performance: word-of-mouth referral. The research here successfully shows that organisational culture and employees situated within this culture influence customers to promise to refer the organisation to their social connections.

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# Appendixes

## Appendix A

Organisational Culture Profile value item list (O'Reilly, Chatman, and Caldwell, 1991:516)

Variables

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| 1. Being aggressive                        | 14. Taking individual responsibility      | 28. A willingness to experiment              |
| 2. Being distinctive-different from others | 15. Being calm                            | 29. Risk taking                              |
| 3. Being socially responsible              | 16. Opportunities for professional growth | 30. Being careful                            |
| 4. Being competitive                       | 17. High pay for good performance         | 31. Security of employment                   |
| 5. Being demanding                         | 18. Fitting in                            | 32. Decisiveness                             |
| 6. Being rule oriented                     | 19. An emphasis on quality                | 33. Action orientation                       |
| 7. Being analytical                        | 20. Being reflective                      | 34. Achievement orientation                  |
| 8. Paying attention to detail              | 21. Taking initiative                     | 35. Enthusiasm for the job                   |
| 9. Being precise                           | 22. Flexibility                           | 36. Having high expectations for performance |
| 10. Being highly organized                 | 23. Adaptability                          | 37. Being results oriented                   |
| 11. Low level of conflict                  | 24. Stability                             | 38. Having a good reputation                 |
| 12. Confronting conflict directly          | 25. Predictability                        | 39. Sharing information freely               |
| 13. Not being constrained by many rules    | 26. Being innovative                      | 40. Being supportive                         |
|  | 27. Being quick to take advantage of      |  |

- |  |                                  |  |
|--|----------------------------------|--|
| 41. Offers praise for good performance                               | 45. Working long hours           | 51. Respect for the individual's right |
| 42. Developing friends at work                                       | 46. Autonomy                     | 52. Tolerance                          |
| 43. Working in collaboration with others throughout the organization | 47. Being team oriented          | 53. Informality                        |
| 44. Having a clear guiding philosophy                                | 48. Emphasizing a single culture | 54. Being easy going                   |
|  | 49. Being people oriented        |  |
|  | 50. Fairness                     |  |

## Appendix B

Performance Environment Survey - selected variables for analysis

Variables	Code
Leadership effectively communicates the organization's strategy, results and changing environment - irrespective of whether the news is good or bad	Leadership communicates strategy
The company's reporting lines ensure great clarity of responsibilities and accountability for decision-making.	Reporting lines ensure clarity
Our formal performance management process (e.g. start of contract assessments, 360 reviews, setting objectives, etc.) provides a truly fair and accurate reflection of my performance.	Performance reviews are fair
Difficult conversations happen (e.g. poor performance, behavioural issues) and are handled very sensibly.	Difficult conversations happen

Our policies are implemented fairly (e.g. disciplinary, breaks, travel policy, phone usage, internet access, annual leave).	Fair policy implementation
The company is not undermined by its internal politics (backstabbing, self-serving behaviour, unwillingness to support others, negative gossip, hiding mistakes etc).	Low internal politics
New people are quickly brought up to speed about the companies: structure, objectives, policies and culture.	Speedy onboarding
We are able to hire great talent timeously so we can deliver on our targets.	Hiring great talent
In our team we have an excellent blend of people who can provide both analytical and creative solutions.	Excellent blend of skills
In our team, we have the right technical skills to excel.	Team's technical skills
We are highly focused on our participants'/customers' needs and best interests.	Focus on customer needs
There is a very healthy level of constructive conflict in my team.	Healthy constructive conflict
The mission, values and purpose of the company truly motivates me.	Motivated by purpose
I clearly understand where my career is going within the company, and there is someone who genuinely encourages that progression.	Clear, encouraged career trajectory

The responsibilities and goals of my role have been made very clear to me.	Clear responsibilities and goals
At work, I can contribute my full potential.	Can contribute full potential
The levels of stress associated with my job are in the healthy, manageable range.	Healthy levels of stress
I would definitely not consider leaving our company in the next 12 months.	Intention to stay
Do you believe our values are “alive”?	Living values
Do you believe that we uphold our mission?	Upholding mission
Does GVI’s core purpose inspire you to work with enthusiasm and commitment?	Inspired by core purpose
Do you feel that we are working towards our mission?	Working towards mission
I can see a clear linkage between my work, my team’s priorities and the organisation’s strategic objectives.	Link between work and strategy
Do you believe that your role within GVI is improving your employability?	Improving personal employability
Do you believe that you are able to make a difference within your current role?	Personally making a difference

Do you feel supported as a GVI employee?

Personal feeling of support

## Appendix C

Net Promoter Score survey - selected and categorised variables for analysis

Category	Variables	Code
Likelihood of advocacy	How likely is it that you would recommend GVI to a friend or colleague?	likelihood_of_advocacy
Make a Difference	Do you feel more aware of global issues?	global_issue_awareness
	Did you choose to go on a GVI program to primarily make a difference?	chose_make_difference
	Do you feel you made a difference?	did_make_difference
360 Support	Did you find our information on our website to be accurate	website_was_accurate
	Were you provided with enough accurate information by our recruitment team	recruitment_team_info
	Were you provided enough accurate information before your trip by our pre departure support team.	support_team_info
	Did you feel adequately supported by our field staff during your stay with us	adequately_supported_field_staff

	Did you feel supported throughout your GVI experience?	whole_experience_support
Employability	Did you choose to go on a GVI program to improve your career or employability?	chose_improve_employability
	Do you feel your GVI experience improved your career or employability?	did_improve_employability
	Did you use this programme to receive university/school credit or work benefits?	chose_receive_credits
Service	How was your pick up and initial orientation / welcome meeting	pick_up_orientation
	How would you rate the base? (please take into consideration the location and needs)	rate_the_base
	How was the standard of programme equipment	program_equipment
	How would you rate GVI's safety standards	safety_standards
	How was the standard of training	training_standards
	How well do you understand the long term objectives of the programme	understand_objectives
	How well do you feel you contributed to the objectives	contributed_objectives

## Appendix D

<b>Question</b>	<b>Variable Code</b>
Do you have any feedback about our staff team (please be objective and constructive ). Please add staff names relevant to each comment	Feedback on staff
Please leave an overall review of your experience, to be shared with future participants. It can be brief or as extensive as you wish! AND Please leave a short review of your experience with GVI	Experience review 1
Please leave a short review of your experience with GVI	Experience review 2