The Relationship Between Internal Branding and Affective Commitment

Author(s): Daniel Almgren
Marketing Programme

Peter Ek
Marketing Programme

Oliver Göransson
Marketing Programme

Tutor: Michaela Sandell

Examiner: Dr. Pejvak Oghazi

Subject: Business Administration

Level and semester: Bachelor thesis Spring 2012
Abstract
Service firms increasingly need to rely on other attributes than traditional quality and performance of their service employees to become and stay truly competitive. Strong brands are essential for differentiation in today’s marketplace and it becomes naturally important to align the customer contact employees with the company brand to ensure consistency in all communication externally. For a service firm employee to fully enact the brand and display on brand behavior outwards it is pivotal to make them truly committed to the brand and organization. Internal branding processes have been shown to be an enabler of employee commitment to the organizational brand. While internal branding is stated to have a connection to commitment, the concept as such is according to Meyer & Allen (1991) constituted by three dimensions, normative, affective and continuance commitment. The bulk of the existing research has so far focused on internal branding and commitment as a single construct and not these dimensions. Much of this research is in addition limited to a few service sectors.

The aim of this study was to determine the components of internal branding in order to clarify the relationship between internal branding and brand commitment of customer contact employees. The empirical investigation was conducted in the retail sector from the perspective of the customer contact employee by the use of a self-completion questionnaire measuring the affective commitment of the employees and the presence of the internal branding activities. The conceptual model for the study shows hypothesized positive relationships between the four internal branding activities and affective commitment. However, while all internal branding activities were significantly present, only three of these were found to have a significant positive relationship to affective commitment, excluding internal communication.

The conclusions of this study gives managers of customer contact employee’s insights about how to enable affective commitment through the use of internal branding. Our results show that brand oriented training, recruitment and leadership all have a significant impact on affective commitment of customer contact employees. Although they had similar Beta values, brand oriented leadership showed a slightly higher predicting power indicating that leadership can play a greater role regarding the affective commitment of customer contact employees.
Acknowledgements
We would like to express our gratitude to the people that have contributed, supported and in other ways helped us during the writing of this thesis.

First of all we would like to thank our supervisor, Michaela Sandell, for constant support and advise throughout the process of writing this thesis.

We would also like to thank Magnus Hultman, Associate Professor of Marketing at Leeds University for assisting us with the methodological procedure.

Further we would also like to thank Rana Mostaghel, Assistant Professor at Linnaeus University for taking the time to assist us during the analysis of data.

Finally we would like to thank Pejvak Oghazi, Associate Dean at Linnaeus University and Vinit Parida, Assistant Professor at Luleå Tekniska Universitet for feedback and support during the examinations of this thesis.

Linnaeus University, 2012-05-23

Daniel Almgren
Peter Ek
Oliver Göransson
# Table of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .......................................................... 2

LIST OF MODELS AND TABLES ............................................. 5

1 INTRODUCTION ............................................................... 6

1.2 PROBLEM DISCUSSION .................................................. 8
1.3 AIM OF THE STUDY ...................................................... 9

1 LITERATURE REVIEW ..................................................... 10

2.1 INTERNAL BRANDINGS ROLE IN FORMING EMPLOYEE BRAND COMMITMENT .............................. 10
2.1.1 INTERNAL COMMUNICATION TO CREATE EMPLOYEE BRAND COMMITMENT ......................... 11
2.1.2 BRAND ORIENTED TRAINING TO CREATE EMPLOYEE BRAND COMMITMENT .................... 12
2.1.3 BRAND ORIENTED RECRUITMENT TO CREATE EMPLOYEE BRAND COMMITMENT ............ 13
2.1.4 BRAND ORIENTED LEADERSHIP TO CREATE EMPLOYEE BRAND COMMITMENT .............. 13
2.2 BRAND COMMITMENT AND ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT ........................................... 16
2.3 THREE DIMENSIONS OF COMMITMENT ............................................................................. 16
2.4 AFFECTIVE COMMITMENT ......................................................................................... 18
2.4.1 IDENTIFICATION ................................................................................................. 19
2.4.2 INVOLVEMENT .................................................................................................. 19
2.4.3 EMOTIONAL ATTACHMENT .............................................................................. 19

3 CONCEPTUALIZATION ....................................................... 20

3.1 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INTERNAL COMMUNICATION AND AFFECTIVE COMMITMENT .... 20
3.2 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BRAND ORIENTED TRAINING AND AFFECTIVE COMMITMENT .... 20
3.3 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BRAND ORIENTED RECRUITMENT AND AFFECTIVE COMMITMENT 21
3.4 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BRAND ORIENTED LEADERSHIP AND AFFECTIVE COMMITMENT 21

4 METHODOLOGY ................................................................. 23

4.1 RESEARCH APPROACH .................................................. 23
4.1.1 INDUCTIVE VS. DEDUCTIVE RESEARCH ......................................................................... 23
4.1.2 QUALITATIVE VS. QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH .................................................................. 23
4.2 RESEARCH DESIGN ....................................................................................................... 24
4.3 DATA SOURCES ........................................................................................................... 26
4.4 RESEARCH STRATEGY ................................................................................................. 26
4.5 DATA COLLECTION METHOD .................................................................................... 28
4.6 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT .............................................................................. 29
4.6.1 OPERATIONALIZATION AND MEASUREMENT OF VARIABLES ....................................... 29
4.6.2 INTERVIEW GUIDE/QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN ................................................................ 34
4.6.3 PRETESTING ............................................................................................................. 37
4.7 SAMPLING .................................................................................................................. 37
4.7.1 SAMPLING FRAME ................................................................................................... 38
4.7.2 SAMPLE SELECTION AND DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE ........................................ 38
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.8 DATA ANALYSIS METHOD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.8.1 DATA CODING AND DATA ENTRY</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.8.2 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.8.3 CORRELATION ANALYSIS</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.8.4 ONE-SAMPLE T TEST</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.8.5 REGRESSION ANALYSIS</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.9 QUALITY CRITERIA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.9.1 VALIDITY</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.9.2 CONTENT VALIDITY</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.9.3 CONSTRUCT VALIDITY</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.9.4 CRITERION VALIDITY</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.9.5 RELIABILITY</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.10 SUMMARY</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 DATA ANALYSIS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2 RELIABILITY &amp; VALIDITY</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3 T TEST</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4 REGRESSION ANALYSIS</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS &amp; IMPLICATIONS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1 DISCUSSION</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2 CONCLUSIONS</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3 MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4 ACADEMIC IMPLICATIONS</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1 LIMITATIONS</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2 FUTURE RESEARCH</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REFERENCE LIST</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LITERATURE</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELECTRONIC</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX 1: QUESTIONNAIRE ENGLISH VERSION</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX 2: QUESTIONNAIRE SWEDISH VERSION</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX 3: COVERING LETTER SWEDISH VERSION</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX 4: COVERING LETTER ENGLISH VERSION</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
List of Models and Tables

Model 1: The relationship between Internal branding and Brand commitment .................................................. 15
Model 2: The relationship between Internal branding and the three dimensions of commitment ....................... 18
Model 3: The hypothesized relationship between Internal branding and Affective commitment ...................... 22
Model 4: The methodological procedure applied ................................................................................................. 45
Model 5: The supported relationship between Internal branding and Affective commitment .......................... 50
Table I: Research strategy options ...................................................................................................................... 27
Table II: Affective commitment constructs, indicators and questionnaire items ............................................... 31
Table III: Internal communications constructs, indicators and questionnaire items ....................................... 32
Table IV: Brand oriented training constructs, indicators and questionnaire items ............................................ 32
Table V: Brand oriented recruitment constructs, indicators and questionnaire items .................................... 33
Table VI: Brand oriented leadership constructs, indicators and questionnaire items ....................................... 33
Table VII: Descriptive statistics .......................................................................................................................... 46
Table VIII: Reliability test ..................................................................................................................................... 47
Table IX: Correlations and test of discriminant validity ...................................................................................... 47
Table X: One-sample statistics ............................................................................................................................ 48
Table XI: One-sample T test .................................................................................................................................... 48
Table XII: Regression analysis .............................................................................................................................. 49
Table XIII: Summary of hypotheses .................................................................................................................. 49
Introduction

In this chapter relevant background to the research area is presented, followed by a discussion concerning the importance of frontline employees acting in accordance with the brand, and the proposed remedy internal branding. Finally the aim of the study is presented to give the research a distinct direction.

As more and more companies are offering similar products with ranging quality, it has become one of the major objectives for brands today to act as tools for differentiation on markets as well as risk-reducers for customers regarding the purchase decision (Balmer & Gray 2003; Kapferer 2008). The objective of risk-reducing has become especially important in situations where the customer cannot inspect the product before purchase, a situation that is argued to be frequent within the service industry (Grönroos 2007). With this in mind, it is becoming all the more important to build and manage a strong and reliable brand, a task that in the past has been conducted mainly through external branding activities (Burmann et al. 2009) but is increasingly being recognized as a task also for internal branding activities (Burmann & Zeplin 2005).

In the past, traditional product branding formulas have been applied to brand building within the service industry. However more recently it has been proposed that this is not an adequate way to deal with service brands as the consumption of services and goods are essentially different (Berry 2000; de Chernatony & Segal-Horn 2001; Kimpakorn & Tocquer 2009). Grönroos (2007) gives the following definition of a service: “(...) a process consisting of a series of more or less intangible activities that normally, but not necessarily always, take place in interactions between the customer and service employees and/or physical resources or goods and/or systems of the service provider, which are provided as solutions to customer problems” (p.52). In recent years it has been argued that companies should regard services as an individual discipline in terms of branding, as services are argued to differ significantly from products (de Chernatony & Segal Horn 2001). It is further argued that the intangible nature of services increases the perceived risk for the customer since they are unable to inspect the service before purchase (Grönroos 2007). Consequently, in service industries much emphasis is put on the employee, since they are the mediating link between the brand and the customer (Balmer & Gray 2003; Punjaisri et al. 2008; Kimpakorn & Tocquer 2010) and can also be said to be the physical representation of the brand in the eyes of the customer (Punjaisri et al. 2009a).
As the customer contact employee meets the customer in the service delivery, a concept known as the *moment-of-truth* emerges. This notion is argued to be a critical touch point between customers and employees as this is where the firm has the chance to prove its colors (Grönroos 2007; King & Grace 2008; Lovelock & Wirtz 2011). Considering this, the moment-of-truth is one of the most important factors in service brand building as the role of the customer contact employee is pivotal (Grönroos 2007; Henkel et al. 2007; Morhart et al. 2009).

As a firm communicates through advertising and other channels, customer expectations are created and the brand is said to make a promise towards customers; a brand promise (Morhart et al. 2009; Punjaisri et al. 2009a). In a service context, these brand promises are then to be delivered in the moment-of-truth. It is thus of great importance that the behavior of customer contact employees in the interaction with customers is aligned with the external communication, otherwise customers will receive inconsistent impressions of the brand, one from external communication, and one from the employee (Kimpakorn & Tocquer 2009; Punjaisri et al. 2009a; King 2010). This is not only expected to harm the brand (Burmann & Zeplin 2005; de Chernatony et al. 2006; Boyd & Sutherland 2006), but also make the time, effort and money spent on external communication seem like a waste of resources (King & Grace 2008). However the task of aligning customer contact employee behavior with the brand is not easy (Aurand et al. 2005). As Boone (2000) puts it; “it is one thing to tell customers who you are and a quite another to show them who you are” (p.36). It is therefore important to manage employees so that they can communicate and act consistently with the brand and its values in the moment-of-truth (Henkel et al. 2007; Punjaisri et al. 2009a; Morhart et al. 2009; Kimpakorn & Tocquer 2009). In this context internal branding, defined as “the activities undertaken by an organization to ensure that the brand promise reflecting the espoused brand values that set customers’ expectations is enacted and delivered by employees.” (Punjaisri & Wilson 2011 p. 1523), has grown as a concept that can help organizations to make their employees act in accordance with their brand and its values, i.e. manage the on-brand behavior of customer contact employees (Punjaisri et al. 2008; de Chernatony et al. 2006; Kimpakorn & Tocquer 2009; Morhart et al. 2009; Punjaisri et al. 2009a; Lin et al. 2011), which will lead to increased brand performance (Henkel et al. 2007; Kimpakorn & Tocquer 2010).
1.2 Problem discussion

As the customer contact employee's vital role in a service company's brand performance and brand communication becomes evident, implications for service firms arise. As it is no longer enough for customer contact employees just to be nice and helpful in the service encounter, more specific brand-oriented behavior of employees is needed to create a more consistent and distinguished brand communication in the service industry (Henkel et al. 2007). Internal branding processes are stated to produce results that remedy a lack of on-brand behavior among employees (Punjaisri et al. 2009a; Foster et al. 2010; Punjaisri & Wilson 2011). It is however not always easy to implement as successful internal branding processes may prove to be both complex and costly. Furthermore, it requires support from several departments in the organization as internal branding processes should stem from a holistic standpoint and cannot me managed successfully solely in a decentralized manner (de Chernatony et al. 2003; Aurand et al. 2005; de Chernatony & Cottam 2006; Mahnert & Torres 2007). Thus, descriptive information about company values is not necessarily going to carry the company's brand effort all the way, rather it is argued to be of critical importance that managers make sure customer contact employees are both aware of and understand the brand and the values it incorporates (Thomson et al 1999).

This is however but a first step (Burmann & Zeplin 2005), as it is one thing to inform and make employees understand the brand values and quite another make them act in accordance with them. In fact, it has been proposed that after the brand values have been initially communicated to and understood by the employees, they must finally be become committed to the brand (Thomson et al 1999; de Chernatony et al. 2006; Burmann et al. 2009) in order to display on-brand behavior (Burmann & Zeplin 2005). If the employee does not know how, or lacks the commitment to act in accordance with the brand values, these become hollow and the brand promise that has been communicated to customers may not be fulfilled (Boone 2000; Khan 2009). This pivotal brand commitment is described as a personal identification with, and psychological attachment to the brand (Burmann & Zeplin 2005; Punjaisri et al. 2009a;).

Brand commitment is however not a phenomenon that emerges on its own (Burmann & Zeplin 2005). In fact it is argued that the enabling of brand commitment among employees is a challenging task for many managers (Burmann & Zeplin 2005), making the implementation of internal branding particularly important as a enabler of brand commitment (de Chernatony & Segal-Horn 2001; Punjaisri & Wilson 2007; Punjaisri et al. 2009a).
As the employees' brand commitment is a prerequisite to on-brand behavior (Thomson et al 1999; Burmann & Zeplin 2005; Kimpakorn & Tocquer 2009), it becomes the key to enactment of the brand and in extension delivery of the brand promise, posing a challenging but rewarding task for any service firm. It is however, important to understand what constitutes the concept of internal branding and how it is related to the commitment of customer contact employees, therefore the following aim of the study is stated.

1.3 Aim of the study
The aim of this study is to determine the components of internal branding in order to clarify the relationship between internal branding and brand commitment of customer contact employees.
2 Literature review
The previous chapter covered the relevant background to the research area of this thesis; it identified internal branding as a remedy to create commitment in frontline employees in order for them to display on-brand behavior. This chapter provides a deeper theoretical framework of internal branding and commitment which will give an indication of what gaps exists in previous research. The content of this chapter will also provide a foundation for the conceptual framework which in turn will be the basis for the hypotheses.

2.1 Internal brandings role in forming employee brand commitment

Internal branding has been stated to be a facilitator of brand commitment (de Chernatony & Segal-Horn 2001; Punjaisri & Wilson 2007; Punjaisri et al. 2009a) and furthermore, employee brand commitment is stated to be a prerequisite to employees’ on-brand behavior (Thomson et al. 1999; Burmann & Zeplin 2005; Kimpakorn & Tocquer 2009).

Thomson et al. (1999) argue that when employees are fully aware of and understand the brand values they become more committed to the brand and to practice on-brand behavior. It is thus of interest to examine what the literature states about how internal branding should be implemented to create commitment and what mechanisms and tools constitute the internal branding process.


Much literature stress the importance of seeing internal branding as a cross-functional process involving the marketing department and the Human Resources (HR) department (Rafiq & Ahmed 2000; Aurand et al. 2005; de Chernatony & Cottam 2005; Punjaisri et al. 2009a; Punjaisri et al. 2009b; Burmann et al. 2009). The co-operation between the two departments should exist as the HR department is considered to have more skills in handling employees
but less regarding branding activities, and that the market department is considered to have better skills regarding communicating the brand externally but less when it comes to the internal branding process (Aurand et al. 2005; de Chernatony and Cottam 2006). Aurand et al. (2005) further state that another important aspect of HRs involvement in internal branding is that internal branding is constituted of more than just communicating the brand values to employees; it also includes the recruiting, training and motivation to make employees committed to deliver the brand values. The cooperation between HR and marketing department should exist to reinforce the communication of brand values to employees (Mahnert & Torres 2007; Punjaisri 2009b). Punjaisri et al. (2009a) also state that in order for internal communication and training programs to be effective and on-brand behavior of employees are to be upheld, continuous reminders and training is needed which is also supported by the findings of de Chernatony et al. (2006). Burmann et al. (2009) argue however, that leadership is also an important ingredient in internal branding and that the implementation of brand related leadership alongside internal communication and training programs should be seen as a long term process that leads to employee commitment and on-brand behavior.

King (2010) also states that if on-brand behavior and commitment of CCEs are to be upheld, managers need to acknowledge the contribution of the employees on a regular basis, meaning that employees that are recognized and get credit for their contribution will become more committed. Punjaisri & Wilson (2011) further state that the longer employees are staying with a brand, the more crucial it is to implement internal branding to reinforce their commitment to the brand; otherwise employees might become tired with the brand and start doubting its relevance for them.

### 2.1.1 Internal communication to create employee brand commitment

In order to make employees committed to the brand the information process from managers to employees have to evolve from giving information on just the technical details of the job (i.e. how to carry out the tasks) to more brand related information (King & Grace 2008; King 2010). This is when employees can become committed to the brand, help the organization to continual success and build a strong brand (King & Grace 2008).

A recurring theme among authors is that the brand and its values must be made comprehensible to employees for them to be able to understand them so that they can be committed to project the values to customers through on-brand behavior (de Chernatony et al. 2006).
2006; de Chernatony & Cottam 2006; Henkel et al. 2007). One example is the use of stories as a tool for internal communication. de Chernatony et al. (2006) argue that storytelling is a way of making brand values, and what they mean, more comprehensible for employees, a view supported by Henkel et al. (2007) who also state that brand values become less abstract when communicated in stories. de Chernatony and Cottam (2006) also suggest that managers should communicate stories of on-brand behavior of co-workers in order to facilitate for employees to practice on-brand behavior. Punjaisri & Wilson (2007) also agree with this and further suggest the transformation of brand values into daily activities of employees to further increase the comprehensible nature of the values. Burmann & Zeplin (2005) further argue that storytelling makes the information of the brand more convincing for employees if they are communicated among peers.

Another example is by Burmann & Zeplin (2005) argued to be the use of a brand value statement as a good foundation for the internal communication of brand values. They further argue that this statement must be short and precise in order for employees to remember it. de Chernatony et al. (2006) state that communicating the brand values to staff by simply just telling them about them, it is not enough for creating understanding and commitment. Instead they argue that interactive processes, like brand workshops, are more likely to increase knowledge of values, brand commitment and on-brand behavior. de Chernatony & Cottam (2006) suggest that internal brand workshops with employees will increase awareness of, understanding of and commitment to the brand and its values. In these workshops employees should also be informed of how the brand acts as a risk reducer within their industry and that it is important that customers interact with the brand when they interact with the employees (de Chernatony & Cottam 2006).

The findings of Punjaisri et al. (2009a) also indicate that the internal communication to employees should present a clear description of what role the employee play in the delivery of the brand promise as this will increase their commitment and motivation, which is also supported by King (2010). Further, the findings of Punjaisri et al. (2009a) also indicate that internal communication has a stronger impact on commitment and on-brand behavior of customer contact employees than training programs have.

2.1.2 Brand oriented training to create employee brand commitment
de Chernatony et al. (2006) argue that HR plays a vital role in the internal branding process regarding recruitment and training of employees. It is therefore important that also HR is
aware of and understand the brand values in order for them to spread them to customer contact employees (Aurand et al. 2005). Using training programs as a tool for internal branding is also considered the most effective by employees (King & Grace 2008). Such training programs can consist of how to carry out their specific roles (i.e. how to carry out the work) (King & Grace 2008), how to treat customers (de Chernatony & Cottam 2006) and how to be customer focused (King & Grace 2006; Lings et al. 2008). Punjaisri (et al. 2009b) also suggest that training programs can enhance general skills to carry out the daily work as well as brand-specific skills in order to improve employees’ ability to deliver the brand promise. In addition, training also increases brand identification and commitment (Punjaisri et al. 2009b). However the findings of Henkel et al. (2007) suggests that employees must be trained also to express behaviors that can project the brand, otherwise the behavior will be generic.

2.1.3 Brand oriented recruitment to create employee brand commitment
Burmann & Zeplin (2005) argue for the importance of recruiting the right employees as recruits with a high congruency between personal values and brand values are more likely to be committed to the brand. This is also recognized by Punjaisri et al. (2009b) although they also note that the task of finding the right employees in this aspect is not easy. Thus, there is a high risk of hiring less suitable employees, therefore Punjaisri & Wilson (2007) stress the importance of using training programs early after the recruitment to make employees committed. To reduce the possibility of recruiting less suitable employees, Burmann & Zeplin (2005) argue that HR should use brand oriented evaluation systems when assessing new recruitment. Burmann & Zeplin (2005) further argue that the activities of HR should be on both formal and informal nature as the initial training of new employees together with follow up should constitute the formal process while mentorship and social events can be seen as informal activities that further strengthens the fit between employees and the brand. Informal training through socialization with colleagues is also argued to be a way of ensuring on-brand behavior as colleagues known for displaying appropriate on-brand behavior can be teamed with new recruits (Burmann & Zeplin 2005; de Chernatony et al. 2006).

2.1.4 Brand oriented leadership to create employee brand commitment
2.1.4.1 Leadership in terms of role modeling
Wallace et al. (2011) argue that great leadership is crucial for all service firms in order to achieve on-brand behavior. They further argue that there is consensus among authors that management should act as role models to create brand commitment of customer contact employees and that it is vital that the behavior and communication of managers is brand
congruent, otherwise it might have a negative impact on customer contact employees commitment to the brand (Burmann & Zeplin 2005; Vallaster & de Chernatony 2005; de Chernatony et al. 2006; de Chernatony & Cottam 2006; King & Grace 2006; Henkel et al. 2007; King 2010). It is also suggested by (Henkel et al. 2007) that top management should display their brand commitment by working side by side with customer contact employees on a regular basis. Lings et al. (2008) further argue that implicit communication such as how managers act have a greater impact than explicit communication such as training and direction, on employee’s willingness to adopt on-behavior. King (2010) argues that management should be held accountable for the delivery of the brand promise by customer contact employees and that measuring systems should be implemented regarding how well employees reflect the brand values and/or practice on-brand behavior.

2.1.4.2 Leadership in terms of reward systems
According to Morhart et al. (2009), to increase commitment of customer contact employees, managers should implement a leadership role that puts less emphasis on rewards based on behavior of employees and instead focus on acting as role models and coaching employees in their delivery of brand values. In contrast to Morhart et al. (2009) and Aurand et al. (2005) argue that management by reward systems is a good tool to motivate employees to present on-brand behavior. This is also argued by Burmann & Zeplin (2005) however they state that the sort of commitment that is achieved through this transactional leadership is only based on compliance. The findings of Punjaisri & Wilson (2007) also indicate that although managers find reward systems as an important factor for motivating employees to practice on brand behavior, reward systems are not seen as important by employees to create commitment to the brand. Mahnert & Torres (2007) suggest that if reward systems are implemented they must be designed so that no internal competition arises between employees as this. They suggest non-monetary rewards such as brand seminars at attractive locations or internal award ceremonies as appropriate as they give opportunity for further fostering employees on the brand. It is also vital that the reward systems are connected to appropriate measurement systems so that employees do not feel that rewards are handed out randomly or to favored employees as it might lead to frustration and be counterproductive in the internal branding process.

2.1.4.3 Leadership in terms of empowerment
Another leadership aspect argued is the empowerment of employees (Burmann & Zeplin 2005; Henkel et al. 2007). Burmann & Zeplin (2005) argue that this type of transformational leadership will be more likely to increase employee commitment based on identification with
the brand rather than compliance requirements. Henkel et al. (2007) suggest that employees should be motivated and committed to display on-brand behavior if management implement a system of formal and informal control systems where high employee empowerment is emphasized. The findings of de Chernatony and Cottam (2006) also support this and further argue that managers should review how organizational policies might restrain potential brand value and promise delivery and employees who display coherence with the brand should be empowered. Burmann & Zeplin (2005) also argue that leaders that express charisma and inspiration are more successful in the internal branding process as they are more likely to make employees fall in line.

The literature presents the picture that internal branding is constituted mainly by four parts, Internal communication, Training, Recruitment and Leadership. These four components should be managed as a cross-functional process involving mainly the marketing and human resource departments. It is derived from the literature review that the four components of internal branding relate positively to brand commitment (i.e. strengthens brand commitment) which in turn has been argued to be the key that opens the door to on-brand behavior. As such Model 1 presents the relationship between internal branding and brand commitment.

Model 1: The relationship between internal branding and brand commitment
2.2 Brand commitment and organizational commitment
The concept of employees’ organizational commitment, as it is currently seen, can be traced back to the early 1970s (Porter et al. 1974). However, in recent years authors have started to use the terms organizational commitment and brand commitment interchangeably (Kimpakorn & Tocquer 2009; 2010; Wallace et al. 2011). This becomes evident when Kimpakorn & Tocquer (2010) applies the British Organizational Commitment Scale (BOCS) in the context of brand commitment. Different authors draw upon the literature of commitment that employee brand commitment has, as near as makes no difference, the same definition as organizational commitment (Burmann & Zeplin 2005; Kimpakorn & Tocquer 2009), this can be exemplified by Burmann & Zeplin (2005), who states that: “the brand commitment construct as the authors understand it is synonymous with organizational commitment, which is generally defined as a psychological bond between the employee and the organization” (p.284). This is also supported by the statement of Mathews & Shepherd (2002) regarding employee commitment: “(...) committed employees have a strong belief in and acceptance of the organizations goals and values (...)” (p.369), in combination with the postulation of Wallace (et al. 2011) that organizational values are the same as (core) brand values.

2.3 Three dimensions of commitment
The findings of Meyer et al (1990) suggest that desirable outcomes such as increased organizational job performance of employees are dependent not only on commitment as such, but also the nature of the commitment.

Allen and Meyer (1990) argue for an approach to organizational commitment that is composed by three dimensions present in their three component framework (Meyer & Allen 1991; Meyer & Allen 1993; Meyer et al. 2002). Meyer and Allen (1991) state that in the three component model the concept of commitment is “a psychological state that (a) characterizes the employees relationship with the organization, and (b) has implications for the decision to continue or discontinue membership in the organization” (p.67). This approach to organizational commitment has been extensively recognized in the literature (Shore & Wayne 1993; Hackett et al 1994; Gundlach et al. 1995; Somers 1995; Ashforth & Saks 1996; Gruen et al 2000; Rhoades et al 2001; Zhao et al 2007; Solinger et al. 2008).

The affective, continuance and normative components are stated to constitute organizational commitment. The components are argued to be based on varying underlying factors (Allen &
Meyer 1990, Meyer & Allen 1991). *Normative commitment* is, as the term implies, closely related to company and social norms as perceived by the employee (Allen & Meyer 1990, Meyer & Allen 1991). Commitment is here seen as a result of the employee's perceived need to abide by rules and social conduct that is in line with the company goals. *Continuance commitment* refers to the effect of perceived costs of leaving the organization and the perceived profit of staying with the organization (Allen & Meyer 1990, Meyer & Allen 1991; Cohen 1999). In other words, commitment to the organization is driven by the perceptions that it is more profitable for the employee to stay committed and participate in the organization than switching organizations entirely. Based on this, the continuance dimension of commitment is argued to be the least strong of the three (Meyer et al. 2002; Wallace et al. 2011). The third dimension, *Affective commitment*, is forged through emotional attachment to the company which in turn is constituted by the employee identifying with and being involved in the organization (Allen & Meyer 1990, Meyer & Allen 1991, Kimpakorn & Tocquer 2009, Burmann et al. 2009, Wallace et al. 2011). The three dimensions of commitment are not necessarily mutually exclusive and especially affective and normative commitment have been found to have a tendency to overlap and are strongly correlated (Allen & Meyer 1990; Meyer et al. 2002). The three components should, however, be seen as distinct items (Meyer et al. 1990; Meyer et al. 2002) and in addition have been suggested to have different effects on employees’ commitment to the brand and its values (Wallace et al. 2011).

As Model 1 showed the positive relationship between the internal branding activities and brand commitment, no distinction was made regarding the three dimensions of commitment in the context of internal branding. After examining the literature on the three dimensions of commitment, it is stated that continuance commitment, is the least strong of the types (Meyer et al. 2002; Wallace et al. 2011). Normative commitment is a result of employee's perceived need to abide to rules and social conduct in line with company goals (Allen & Meyer 1990, Meyer & Allen 1991). However, the research of Wallace et al. (2011) found that even though normative commitment might affect employees’ feelings towards the brand values, it does not ensure on-brand behavior. Affective commitment is constituted by the employees’ emotional attachment to identification with and involved in the organization (Allen & Meyer 1990, Kimpakorn & Tocquer 2009, Burmann et al. 2009, Wallace et al. 2011).
In the light of this no research was found on the distinct connection between internal branding and its relation to the three dimensions of commitment. Thus, we posit Model 2 to show a potential gap in the research of internal branding and dimensions of commitment.

Model 2: The relationship between internal branding and the three dimensions of commitment

Wallace et al. (2011) indicate that normative commitment is weaker than affective commitment regarding the extent and reach of the commitment, meaning that normative commitment may not be sufficient long-term. However, affective commitment has been found to be closely connected to overall job satisfaction (Meyer et al 2002), employee performance (Meyer et al 1990; Cohen 1999) and to be an indicator of on-brand behavior (King 2010). It is stated by several authors that affective commitment is the strongest and most relevant dimension of commitment when it comes to organizational outcomes (Meyer et al. 2002). As such, the focus of this study will be on the affective dimension of commitment.

2.4 Affective commitment
As stated above, affective commitment is forged through emotional attachment to the company which in turn is constituted by the employee identifying with and being involved in the organization (Allen & Meyer 1990; Meyer & Allen 1991; Kimpakorn & Tocquer 2009; Burmann et al. 2009; Wallace et al. 2011). The individual's identification and involvement with (Porter et al. 1974) and emotional attachment to the organization can therefore be said to constitute the concept affective commitment (Meyer & Allen 1990; Meyer & Allen 2002).
2.4.1 Identification
The findings of Punjaisri & Wilson (2007) and Punjaisri et al. (2009b) indicate that brand identification leads to brand commitment. This is also supported by Burmann & Zeplin (2005) who state that brand commitment is driven by identification with, internalization of and compliance to the brand. Meyer & Allen (1990) divide commitment into the three aforementioned dimensions. Burmann & Zeplin (2005) further argue that identification with the brand means that the employee feels belongingness to the brand to such an extent that when the brand performs badly, the employee experiences it as a personal failure. In addition, the brand identity should be seen as a group identity in order for the employee to feel a desire to belong to the group. A strong identification with the brand is then argued to be achieved if the employee feels a personal responsibility to the brand. (Burmann & Zeplin 2005). A recent study by Flynn and Shaumberg (2012) found that employees who feel guilt because of perceived lack of contribution to the work group or organization will have an increased level of affective commitment as they essentially feel they need to work harder.

2.4.2 Involvement
Zaichkowsky (1985) defines the construct involvement as: "person’s perceived relevance of the object based on inherent needs, values, and interests”, and claims that this definition is not connected to a specific context, consequently, it is here used in the context of brand commitment.

2.4.3 Emotional attachment
Emotional attachment in turn, is by Kimpakorn & Tocquer (2010) argued to influence the behavior and extent to which the employee exceeds basic expectations in order to achieve organizational objectives.
3 Conceptualization

The previous chapter formed the theoretical foundation on which the conceptual framework can be built. It is the conceptual framework that this chapter will treat, meaning that the gaps of interest in the reviewed theory will be presented along with related hypotheses that cover the aim of the study.

3.1 The relationship between internal communication and affective commitment

It was necessary to initially confirm that the customer contact employees received a significant amount of internal communication; therefore the following hypothesis was stated:

\( H_{1a} \) Customer contact employees receive a significant amount of internal communication.

When going through the literature regarding the relationship between internal communication and commitment, no consideration has been taken regarding how internal communication relates to the three dimensions of commitment. As the literature states that internal communication relates positively to brand commitment as such, we state the following hypothesis:

\( H_{1b} \) Internal communication has a positive relationship to affective commitment.

3.2 The relationship between brand oriented training and affective commitment

It was necessary to initially confirm that the customer contact employees received a significant amount of brand oriented training; therefore the following hypothesis was stated:

\( H_{2a} \) Customer contact employees receive a significant amount of brand oriented training.

When going through the literature regarding the relationship between brand oriented training and commitment, no consideration has been taken regarding how training relates to the three dimensions of commitment. As the literature states that the brand oriented training relate positively to brand commitment as such, we state the following hypothesis:

\( H_{2b} \) Brand oriented training has a positive relationship to affective commitment.
3.3 The relationship between brand oriented recruitment and affective commitment

It was necessary to initially confirm that the customer contact employees were recruited with a significant amount of company/personal value congruence therefore the following hypothesis was stated:

\( H_{3a} \) Customer contact employees are recruited with a significant amount of company/personal value congruence.

When going through the literature regarding the relationship between brand oriented recruitment processes and commitment, no consideration has been taken regarding how the recruitment process relates to the three dimensions of commitment. As the literature states that the brand oriented recruitment processes relate positively to brand commitment as such, we stated the following hypothesis:

\( H_{3b} \) Brand oriented recruitment has a positive relationship to affective commitment.

3.4 The relationship between brand oriented leadership and affective commitment

It was necessary to initially confirm that the customer contact employees received a significant amount of brand oriented leadership; therefore the following hypothesis was stated:

\( H_{4a} \) Customer contact employees receive a significant amount of brand oriented leadership.

When going through the literature regarding the relationship between brand oriented recruitment processes and commitment, no consideration has been taken regarding how the recruitment process relates to the three dimensions of commitment. As the literature states that the brand oriented recruitment processes relate positively to brand commitment as such, we state the following hypothesis:

\( H_{4b} \) Brand oriented leadership has a positive relationship to affective commitment.

The four hypotheses regarding the presence of internal branding activities (\( H_{1a}, H_{2a}, H_{3a}, H_{4a} \)) were not part of the conceptual model, and were tested separately to ensure the relevance of the conceptual model.
The four hypotheses regarding the relationship between internal branding activities and affective commitment (H_{1b}, H_{2b}, H_{3b}, H_{4b}) formed the conceptual model (Model 3) that was used in this study. In the model, affective commitment was the dependent variable and the independent variables were internal communication, brand oriented training, brand oriented recruitment and brand oriented leadership.

Model 3: The hypothesized relationship between internal branding and affective commitment, the conceptual model for the study
Methodology
The previous chapter presented the hypotheses that the following part of this study aims to assess. This chapter provides the necessary tools in order to answer the stated hypotheses. The chapter will present a series of methodological choices that were made for this thesis.

4.1 Research approach
4.1.1 Inductive vs. Deductive research
There are two main approaches in business research, deductive and inductive research (Chambliss & Schutt 2010; Zikmund et al. 2010; Bryman & Bell 2011). Starting with the inductive viewpoint is that theory should be the outcome of research (Chambliss & Schutt 2010; Zikmund et al. 2010; Bryman & Bell 2011). This means that the research process starts with observations, the findings are then in the final step used to make a generalizable inference i.e. form a theory (Zikmund et al. 2010; Bryman & Bell 2011). In contrast, the deductive stance is the process in which the researcher initially looks into the current literature and deduces a hypothesis based on theory that is later tested empirically (Bryman 1989; Chambliss & Schutt 2010; Zikmund et al. 2010; Bryman & Bell 2011). The final stage of deduction concerns the potential revision of the existing theory, depending on the outcome of the hypothesis testing (Bryman & Bell 2011). This is the approach that is most common among researchers (Bryman & Bell 2011). As the research was grounded in existing theory from which hypotheses was created, the study has a strong tendency towards a deductive research approach.

4.1.2 Qualitative vs. Quantitative research
There are two additional considerations that divide social research approaches (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias 2007), qualitative and quantitative, both are academically accepted and frequently used (Bryman 1989; Zikmund et al. 2010; Bryman & Bell 2011). The qualitative research strategy is generally characterized by the inductive view on the relationship between theory and research, (Bryman & Bell 2011; Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias 2007). Other characteristics are that many variables and few respondents are being investigated, providing a well elaborated investigation of the subject and there is a great depth in the information (Zikmund et al. 2010). Due to few respondents the results are seldom generalized and the objective is rather to gain deeper understanding of a research problem (Holme & Solvang 1991; Zikmund et al. 2010).
In contrast, one of the major objectives of quantitative research is testing of theories, which entails a deductive view on research (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias 2007; Bryman & Bell 2011). A key criterion for quantitative research is that the results must be measurable and presentable numerically and statistically (Holme & Solvang 1991; Zikmund et al. 2010).

To be able to get more generalizable and in addition more objective results, the quantitative research approach was deemed the most suitable for the study. It is also the most relevant approach regarding the nature of the purpose of this thesis. The desire was not to gain deeper knowledge about the variables that were to be investigated but rather to assess the relationship between them.

4.2 Research design

The research design is the plan in implicit or explicit form needed to conduct a research study (Yin 2003; Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias 2007; Zikmund et al. 2010) and doing so in a valid, objective, accurate and economical way (Kumar 2005). It connects the research problem to the concluding notions of the research and thus gives the framework for how the study will be carried out (Yin 2003). There are several types of research designs (Yin 2003; Zikmund et al. 2010; Bryman & Bell 2011) however the common categorizations of research design within marketing research are Exploratory design, Descriptive design and Causal design (Zikmund et al. 2010) and this is the categorization used here.

Exploratory research design is argued to be a design used at early stages of research in order to further clarify the research problem and determine the direction of the research (Zikmund et al. 2010). This research design can be used to create a foundation on which following research can build upon and in addition, it can help clarify uncertain situations and identify potential business opportunities. (Zikmund et al. 2010)

Causal research design is used when the researcher want to gain knowledge to what causes variable(s) to alter (Zikmund et al. 2010), thus this design explains the cause-and-effect relationship between variables. However, the implementation of causal research requires the researcher to have great control over the variables in order to establish causal relationships. Further, this design is implemented when the researcher have enough knowledge about a phenomena to make predictions about the results when altering the variables. Casual design, much like exploratory design is often complicated and requires a lot of time and resources during implementation (Zikmund et al. 2010).
Descriptive research design is used to describe the objects being studied (Zikmund et al. 2010). This research design is applicable when questions regarding, for example, customer, market, or competitor traits are to be answered. Hence descriptive research is said to answer the *who, when, what, where* and *how* questions in order to describe a situation (Zikmund et al. 2010). Two types of descriptive design were considered, *cross-sectional* and *longitudinal*. Cross-sectional is a design where the researcher collects data from multiple cases at a single point in time (Bryman 1989; Kumar 2005; Zikmund et al. 2010; Bryman & Bell 2011). This design is used to see the relationship between different variables (at least two) and the data collected is examined in order for the researcher to distinguish relevant patterns to be reported (Bryman & Bell 2011). This design is furthermore characterized by the collection of empirical data on all variables being conducted at the same time. The examination of data shows potential relations of variables and patterns, but is also limited to this, leading to a major weakness of this research design as it leaves no room for causal inferences (Bryman & Bell 2011). Longitudinal design is used mainly to depict change in variables over a (long) period of time (Kumar 2005; Zikmund et al. 2010; Chambliss & Schutt 2010; Bryman & Bell 2011). This design requires the researcher to make observations on at least two occasions in order to make inferences about the change of variables over time. The use of longitudinal design requires high costs regarding time and resources as the study duration is long. (Bryman & Bell 2011)

When determining the appropriate research design for this study, the characteristics of each of the three designs where evaluated in order to find the best fit for the study in regard to the relevance, usefulness of the results and resource and time consumption. In this study, the research problem and direction had been determined, therefore exploratory research was excluded. To be able to implement a causal study, the independent variables (Internal communication, Brand oriented recruitment, Brand oriented training and Brand oriented leadership) needed to be controlled. As this was not possible under the circumstances of the research, a causal design was excluded. The study aimed to describe the relationship between internal branding activities and affective commitment, this describing nature of the research aim in addition to the fact that the particular area of research was sufficiently narrow to argue for a descriptive design (Zikmund et al. 2010) formed the basis for the choice of descriptive research being the most appropriate design for this study in order to solve the research problem.
The study was concerned with the relations between certain variables, in line with the characteristics of a cross-sectional design, but was not concerned with examining any changes over time. Thus, a longitudinal design was excluded in favor for the adoption of a cross-sectional design.

4.3 Data sources
There are two types of sources from which data can be derived; these are known as *primary data* and *secondary data* (Zikmund et al. 2010). Primary data are those collected specifically for the research project at hand. This type of data source is advantageous as it gives the researcher up-to-date, tailor-made specific information that is relevant for the study. However, the use of primary data is very costly regarding time and resources and there is a risk of non-response during the study. However, as the information is collected first hand, the relevance and quality of the data in relation to the project at hand is high.

Secondary data is data collected by others prior to, and for other purposes than the study at hand. Secondary data is advantageous in the sense that it is less costly to collect in regard to time and resources (Zikmund et al. 2010). This type of data is not used primarily to solve specific research problems but rather to support and give relevance to the study (Zikmund et al. 2010). With this in mind researchers should be cautious when using secondary data as it may not always be relevant for the study (Zikmund et al. 2010).

The research aim could not be pursued using only secondary data and thus primary data had to be collected that provided more specific and relevant data, in addition, no available secondary data was found that would have been appropriate to help solve the research problem other than the statistical data used in the sampling section of this paper.

4.4 Research strategy
Yin (2003) state five main researchers strategies to be taken into consideration for the business researcher; (1) the experiment strategy is carried out mainly to find causal relationships between variables, where one more variables are altered to achieve differing effects (Zikmund et al. 2010; Bryman & Bell 2011). (2) The survey research is a quantitative strategy that entails the collection of data from one or more cases. The data is then put in the context of two or more variables which are then studied to detect patterns of association (Zikmund et al. 2010; Bryman & Bell 2011). (3) The Archival analysis strategy encompasses the gathering and accumulation of documents and archives of a specific unit for further analysis (Saunders et al. 2003; Nolan & Heinzen 2008; Bryman & Bell 2011), whereas (4) the
history strategy involves the searching for data in historical documents, this includes among other things, correspondence, financial reports and records of meetings (Bryman & Bell 2011). Finally there is the (5) case study strategy which entails an intensive analysis of a single unit, it is very helpful when dealing with a complex or a very specific problem (Bryman & Bell 2011).

When evaluating which strategy that is most suitable for the purpose at hand, one needs to take three conditions in consideration (Yin 2003). According to Yin (2003) these conditions are the nature of the stated research question, the extent of control an investigator has over actual behavioral events and whether the focus should be on contemporary or historical empirics.

Table I: Research strategy options

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research strategy</th>
<th>Form of research question</th>
<th>Requires control over behavioral events</th>
<th>Focus on contemporary events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>How, Why</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>Who, what, where, when, how many, how much</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archival Analysis</td>
<td>Who, what where, when, how many, how much</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>How, why</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Study</td>
<td>How, why</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Yin (2003 p. 5)

All the above mentioned strategies are viable, each one of them have different characteristics, both advantages and disadvantage. However, since this thesis is focused on current events, the historical strategy was instantaneously ruled out. It was also not useful to look at secondary data for the empirical investigation; hence, archival analysis was excluded. For the purpose of this study it was also not necessary, nor plausible to control behavioral events, here in terms of the variables under investigation; therefore was experiment not a viable strategy for this specific thesis. The two remaining strategies were thus the survey and the case study. The case study was ruled out and survey was chosen as strategy since it offers adequate means of gathering quantitative data and is superior in the sense of amounting quantifiable data, which is stated to be a requirement in order to do a hypothesis test (Bryman & Bell 2011)
4.5 Data collection method

Categorization of quantitative data collection methods can be made into three types concerning primary data which were considered for this research, namely experiments (Creswell 2009), structured observations and surveys (Saunders et al. 2003). Survey research can additionally be divided into interviews and questionnaires.

As an experimental method requires control over at least one variable (Creswell 2009; Zikmund et al. 2010), this method was not applicable for the current study due to the nature of the study as it was not possible to alter variables.

Several types of observations exist (Zikmund 2010; Bryman & Bell 2011), the structured observation method, where behavior of participants or objects is observed and recorded from for a specified amount of time and from an observation schedule, was deemed the most appropriate as its outcomes are closest connected to quantitative research (Bryman & Bell 2011). However, this method is argued to have innate issues of reliability and validity (Bryman & Bell 2011) and the nature of the aim of the current study and the considerable time this data collection method would require to amount to adequate levels of data, structured observations were not deemed applicable due to time and resource constraints.

Survey research will provide the researcher with results of behavior, beliefs, values, norms (Zikmund 2010; Bryman & Bell 2011), as well as attitudes, opinions and trends (Creswell 2009; Bryman & Bell 2011).

The interview in business research will take on many different forms and levels of structure, ranging from the structure to unstructured and in-depth interview (Bryman 1989; Bryman & Bell 2011). Interviews were considered in this paper in the context of quantitative research but the method is viewed to be valid for both quantitative and qualitative studies (Bryman 1989; Bryman & Bell 2011). Due to this, the structured interview was the type considered as it has been stated to be the form closest connected to quantitative research (Bryman & Bell 2011). The structured interview seeks standardization of questions asked and of answers given (Bryman 1989; Bryman & Bell 2011). In practice this means the outcomes of a structured interview method and self-completion questionnaire will be similar (Bryman & Bell 2011). Due to the fact that self-completion questionnaires are more easily distributed in larger amounts and that a higher number of respondents was preferable to get generalizable results, self-completion questionnaires was considered more suitable than structured interviews which, consequently, was ruled out.
4.6 Data collection instrument

4.6.1 Operationalization and measurement of variables

The theoretical concepts used in this study needed to be operationalized into measureable items as they could not be assessed empirically in their conceptual forms. The process of operationalization involves the transformation of concepts into measures (Bryman 1989; Nolan & Heinzen 2008; Zikmund et al. 2010; Bryman & Bell 2011). When concepts are not quantifiable, researchers can use indicators to measure concepts. Indicators will represent the concept when doing the empirical measure and thus the result can be treated quantitatively. As indicators themselves cannot be quantified, they have to be coded in order to be measured (Bryman 1989; Bryman & Bell 2011). This can be achieved with the use of a Likert scale which measures attitudes by allowing respondents to answer the intensity of how much they agree with statements they are given. This is often applied as scales from 1-5, but also 1-7 or 1-9, where 1 represents that the respondent strongly disagrees, and 5 (or 7 or 9) represents that the respondents strongly agrees. (Bryman 1989; Zikmund et al. 2010; Bryman & Bell 2011)

The use of existing measurement scales (i.e. measurement scales that have been developed and used in previous research) is a good method for developing appropriate measures as the scales can either be used as they are, to assess a similar research problem, or act as guidelines when developing own questions (Chambliss & Schutt 2010; Bryman & Bell 2011). When using existing scales, researchers have to consider the extent of validity and reliability of the measures to determine the quality of the measurement scales (Bryman & Bell 2011).

In order to develop appropriate measures for affective commitment the literature on organizational commitment was revisited. Mowday et al. (1979) developed an instrument for measuring organizational commitment known as the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) which has been highly recognized in organizational commitment research (Harold & Perry 1981; Reichers 1985; O’Reilly & Chatman 1986; Ashforth & Mael 1989; Allen & Meyer 1990; Meyer & Allen 1991; Morgan & Hunt 1994) The OCQ, is a 15 item scale that measures what Mowday et al. (1979) called the three factors of organizational commitment. These are a strong belief in and acceptance of the organization’s goals and values, a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization and a strong desire to maintain membership in the organization (Mowday et al. 1979). Even though the recognition of the instrument has been high among researchers, Allen & Meyer (1990) recognized that it did not take into account the later developed three dimensions of
commitment. Based on the OCQ, Allen & Meyer (1990) therefore developed the Affective, Normative and Continuance Commitment Scales (ACS, NCS and CCS) in order to distinguish between the three dimensions of commitment when doing empirical studies. The ACS, NCS and CCS have all been highly adopted by researchers within the organizational commitment field (Shore & Wayne 1993; Wolfe Morrisson 1994; Bycio et al. 1995; Gundlach et al. 1995; Gruen et al. 2000; Griffeth et al. 2000; Judge & Bono 2000) As this study focused on the affective dimension of commitment the ACS was adopted in order to measure the concept of affective commitment. The ACS is a scale with eight indicators of affective commitment which in the past have been implemented on a seven-point Likert scale (Allen & Meyer 1990).

No existing measures of the different internal branding concepts that would serve our purposes of identifying the presence and extent of the different internal branding activities described in the literature review could be found. Therefore all of the indicators used for measuring the internal branding concepts had to be constructed for this particular study in close connection with the literature on internal branding activities. The indicators to be used when measuring affective commitment and internal branding activities are presented in the tables below.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theoretical Construct</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Type of measurement</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Item on questionnaire</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Affective commitment</td>
<td>Emotional attachment</td>
<td>Seven point Likert scale 1=Strongly Disagree; 4=Neutral; 7=Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Allen &amp; Meyer (1990)</td>
<td>I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective commitment</td>
<td>Involvement</td>
<td>Seven point Likert scale 1=Strongly Disagree; 4=Neutral; 7=Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Allen &amp; Meyer (1990)</td>
<td>I enjoy discussing my organization with people outside it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective commitment</td>
<td>Identification</td>
<td>Seven point Likert scale 1=Strongly Disagree; 4=Neutral; 7=Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Allen &amp; Meyer (1990)</td>
<td>I really feel as if this organization’s problems are my own</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective commitment</td>
<td>Emotional attachment</td>
<td>Seven point Likert scale 1=Strongly Disagree; 4=Neutral; 7=Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Allen &amp; Meyer (1990)</td>
<td>I think that I could easily become as attached to another organization as I am to this one (R)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective commitment</td>
<td>Identification</td>
<td>Seven point Likert scale 1=Strongly Disagree; 4=Neutral; 7=Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Allen &amp; Meyer (1990)</td>
<td>I do not feel like ‘part of the family’ at my organization (R)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective commitment</td>
<td>Emotional attachment</td>
<td>Seven point Likert scale 1=Strongly Disagree; 4=Neutral; 7=Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Allen &amp; Meyer (1990)</td>
<td>I do not feel ‘emotionally attached’ to this organization (R)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective commitment</td>
<td>Identification</td>
<td>Seven point Likert scale 1=Strongly Disagree; 4=Neutral; 7=Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Allen &amp; Meyer (1990)</td>
<td>This organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective commitment</td>
<td>Involvement</td>
<td>Seven point Likert scale 1=Strongly Disagree; 4=Neutral; 7=Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Allen &amp; Meyer (1990)</td>
<td>I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to my organization (R)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table III: Internal communication constructs, indicators and questionnaire items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theoretical Construct</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Type of measurement</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Item on questionnaire</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Internal communication</td>
<td>Formal brand related information</td>
<td>Seven point Likert scale</td>
<td>King &amp; Grace (2008); King (2010)</td>
<td>The organization I work in is communicating formal brand related material to me and my colleagues (brochures, booklets, e-mail etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal communication</td>
<td>Brand values</td>
<td>Seven point Likert scale</td>
<td>de Chernatony et al. (2006); de Chernatony &amp; Cottam (2006); Henkel et al. (2007); Punjaisri &amp; Wilson (2007) King &amp; Grace (2008); King (2010)</td>
<td>The organization I work in informs me what our organizations brand stands for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal communication</td>
<td>Employees’ role in the organization</td>
<td>Seven point Likert scale</td>
<td>Punjaisri et al. (2009a); King (2010)</td>
<td>The organization I work in informs me of my role in the organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal communication</td>
<td>Transformation of brand values into daily activities</td>
<td>Seven point Likert scale</td>
<td>Punjaisri &amp; Wilson (2011)</td>
<td>What my organization’s brand stands for is reflected in my daily work</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table IV: Brand oriented training constructs, indicators and questionnaire items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theoretical Construct</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Type of measurement</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Item on questionnaire</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brand oriented training</td>
<td>Work-role related training</td>
<td>Seven point Likert scale</td>
<td>King &amp; Grace (2008)</td>
<td>I have received training/instructions about how I should carry out my work role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand oriented training</td>
<td>Customer treatment</td>
<td>Seven point Likert scale</td>
<td>de Chernatony &amp; Cottam (2006)</td>
<td>I have received training/instructions about how I should treat customers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand oriented training</td>
<td>Customer focus</td>
<td>Seven point Likert scale</td>
<td>King &amp; Grace (2006); Lings et al. (2008)</td>
<td>I have received training/instructions about how to be customer focused</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table V: Brand oriented recruitment constructs, indicators and questionnaire items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theoretical Construct</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Type of measurement</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Item on questionnaire</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brand oriented recruitment</td>
<td>Personal and organizational</td>
<td>Seven point Likert scale 1=To a small extent; 4=Neutral; 7=To a large extent</td>
<td>Burmann &amp; Zeplin (2005); Punjaisri et al. (2009b)</td>
<td>When I first started working here the company’s values matched my own values well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>value congruence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table VI: Brand oriented leadership constructs, indicators and questionnaire items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theoretical Construct</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Type of measurement</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Item on questionnaire</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brand oriented leadership</td>
<td>Role models</td>
<td>Seven point Likert scale 1=To a small extent; 4=Neutral; 7=To a large extent</td>
<td>Burmann &amp; Zeplin (2005); Vallaster &amp; de Chernatony (2005); de Chernatony et al. (2006); de Chernatony &amp; Cottam (2006); King &amp; Grace (2006); Henkel et al. (2007); King (2010)</td>
<td>My manager(s) regularly work side by side with me and my colleagues in the daily work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand oriented leadership</td>
<td>Role models</td>
<td>Seven point Likert scale 1=To a small extent; 4=Neutral; 7=To a large extent</td>
<td>Burmann &amp; Zeplin (2005); Vallaster &amp; de Chernatony (2005); de Chernatony et al. (2006); de Chernatony &amp; Cottam (2006); King &amp; Grace (2006); Henkel et al. (2007); King (2010)</td>
<td>My manager(s) act as a role model in my daily work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand oriented leadership</td>
<td>Reward systems</td>
<td>Seven point Likert scale 1=To a small extent; 4=Neutral; 7=To a large extent</td>
<td>Aurand et al. (2005); Punjaisri &amp; Wilson (2007)</td>
<td>I get rewarded when I act as my manager wants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand oriented leadership</td>
<td>Empowerment</td>
<td>Seven point Likert scale 1=To a small extent; 4=Neutral; 7=To a large extent</td>
<td>Burmann &amp; Zeplin (2005); Henkel et al. (2007)</td>
<td>I am allowed a high degree of own initiative when taking care of customers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand oriented leadership</td>
<td>Empowerment</td>
<td>Seven point Likert scale 1=To a small extent; 4=Neutral; 7=To a large extent</td>
<td>Burmann &amp; Zeplin (2005); Henkel et al. (2007)</td>
<td>I am encouraged by my managers to make own decisions regarding the daily work</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.6.2 Interview guide/questionnaire design

4.6.2.1 Administration of self-completion questionnaire
The next step was to address the design of the questionnaire. In order to do that, a decision concerning the administrative nature of the questionnaire had to be made as the administration of questionnaires can take on several forms such as telephone, postal or be web-based (Creswell 2009; Zikmund 2010; Bryman & Bell 2011). Performing telephone based questionnaires was considered but not deemed applicable due to time and resource constraints. A web-based questionnaire was also considered but due to the low level of control of who is answering the questionnaire (Bryman & Bell 2011) as well as the higher response rate of its physical counterpart (Shih & Fan 2009) this option was also excluded.

Postal questionnaires entails the questionnaire being sent out to the respondent by post (Saunders et al 2003; Chambliss & Schutt 2010; Zikmund et al. 2010; Bryman & Bell 2011). The respondent must then re-send the completed questionnaire which generally leads to lower response rates and a great amount of time before the filled out questionnaires get back (Bryman 1989; Zikmund et al. 2010; Bryman & Bell 2011) and may require follow-ups (Saunders et al 2003). Therefore, due to time constraints the postal questionnaire was ruled out. Instead, a similar type of questionnaire was considered, a delivery and collection questionnaire which requires the researcher both to deliver the questionnaire and collect it in person (Saunders 2003; Chambliss & Schutt 2010). The advantage with this type is that it does not require a follow-up and generally entails a high response rates (Saunders 2003). Consequently, a delivery and collection self-completion questionnaire was chosen with regard to the stated considerations.

4.6.2.2 The questionnaire
The self-completion questionnaire design holds several advantages, it is relatively time and cost efficient to distribute and convenient for the respondent (Bryman 1989; Zikmund et al. 2010; Bryman & Bell 2011). The self-completion questionnaire also diminishes the risk of social desirability bias and interviewer variability as no researcher needs to be present (Bryman 1989; Bryman & Bell 2011). However, as the respondents answer the questions on their own; this method has an inherent disadvantage as there is no possibility to ask the researcher for clarification (Bryman & Bell 2011), consequently the questions was designed to be comprehensible and easy to understand for the respondent.
The self-completion questionnaire holds a risk of non-response (Bryman 1989; Zikmund et al. 2010; Bryman & Bell 2011) whether it is distributed by e-mail or face-to-face (delivery and collection). However there are means to improve the response rates, one particular that is common in the context of self-completion questionnaires is the provision or minor financial compensation (Zikmund 2010; Bryman & Bell 2011). This feature was adopted, and the respondents received a lottery ticket upon the completion of the questionnaire. Another way of increasing the response rate is to enclose a covering letter that explains the reason for the survey and stresses the importance of the completion of the questionnaire as well as the perspective of the individual respondent (Bryman 1989; Saunders 2003; Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias 2007; Kumar 2005; Bryman & Bell 2011), this was also adopted for this study, (see Appendix 4 for Covering letter). It is also of importance to assure that the information gathered is confidential and will be handled with discretion (Bryman 1989; Bryman & Bell 2011).

When it comes to the design of the individual questions there are several issues to address. Firstly, a choice had to be done concerning if the questions should be open or closed. Where the former infer that the respondent can answer what he wants whereas the latter infer a fixed set of answers for the respondent to choose from (Bryman 1989; Kumar 2005; Zikmund et al. 2010; Bryman & Bell 2011). The narrow timeframe of the research was considered and closed questions were adopted for gender and in addition all items related to theoretical concepts since the process of quantifying and coding the data is simpler and therefore more reliable in terms of analyzing the results compared to the use of open questions. Open questions were however used for the descriptive data of age and time of employment at the respondent’s current organizations. The data collected from open questions was then clustered into categories. Four categories were created for age <20, 20-29, 30-39 and 40 years old or older and three categories were created for respondents time at current organization, <1, 1-5 and 5 or more years.

As mentioned above, a Likert scale was utilized. A one to seven point scale was used, ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree for the questions concerning affective commitment and from To a small extent to To a Large extent regarding the questions about the internal branding activities. The distinction in terming was made because of the nature of the two types of variables that formed the questions, affective commitment and internal branding activities.
Potential respondent fatigue was also taken into consideration. Respondents of self-completion questionnaires have a relatively high tendency to not fill out a questionnaire which is too extensive and or complex, rather, the length of each individual question needs to be kept short and precise (Saunders et al. 2003; Bryman & Bell 2011). Due to these concerns in combination with the fact that the questionnaires were intended to be distributed to the respondents during their working hours, the length of both the questionnaire and the individual questions were seriously taken into account.

In addition Bryman & Bell (2011 pp. 255-260) provides a series of rule of thumb issues that should be considered. These are:

- Avoid ambiguous terms
- Avoid long questions
- Avoid general questions
- Avoid Leading questions
- Avoid questions that are actually asking two questions
- Avoid questions that include negatives
- Avoid technical terms

These issues were taken into consideration when the questionnaire was designed. However, elaboration is needed concerning questions with negative phrasing. There is argument against the use of negative phrasing as it may lead to misconceptions (Chambliss & Schutt 2010; Bryman & Bell 2011). There are also arguments for the adoption of previously validated measures (Bryman 1989; Chambliss & Schutt 2010; Bryman & Bell 2011) and changing an adopted measure may have implications for the validity and reliability of the measure, thus negative phrasing of some questions was used.

Since the respondents were Swedish and the level of skill in the English language could not be assessed, the questionnaire was translated from English to Swedish. This was done systematically and after the translation was made, a person with expertise knowledge in the theoretical field was asked to back translate the Swedish version so the two versions could be examined and contrasted after which a minor revision of the questionnaire was made. The complete questionnaire can be found in Appendix 1.
4.6.3 Pretesting
A small scale pretest has the purpose of providing early indications of the outcomes of the main study with the current design, providing valuable input in designing the finalized study as it identifies potential problems and weaknesses of the design (Bryman 1989; Chambliss & Schutt 2010; Zikmund et al. 2010; Bryman & Bell 2011). Pretesting of a survey research can be conducted either with a group of potential respondents for the main empirical investigation or other individuals such as colleagues (Zikmund et al. 2010). For this research we conducted a pretest with a group of respondents (six individuals) matching our population with the primary objectives of assessing how well the questionnaire was understood, if there were any tendencies to skip questions and to detect other unforeseen problems with the design or layout of the questionnaire.

4.7 Sampling
The research on internal branding is relatively new and authors have expressed a need for more research to expand the literature on the subject (Punjaisri et al. 2008, Punjaisri et al. 2009a). Much literature today is based on studies conducted within specific fields within the service industry, mainly within the financial industry and more recently the hotel industry (Punjaisri et al. 2009a), which calls for further research within other fields and sectors. This study aimed to expand the literature of internal branding by conducting the study within the retail sector of the service industry, with the perspective of customer contact employees that are considered the main audience for internal branding activities (Punjaisri et al. 2009a). As such the service industry represented 61% of the total amount of companies in Sweden 2011 (www.ekonomifakta.se). Of these 61%, 12% are companies within the retail sector making the retail sector the second largest service industry sector after the collective sector representing services for Law, economics, science and technology (www.ekonomifakta.se).

As Swedish customer contact employees within the retail sector were regarded the population for this study, statistical information was used that amounted to a number of sales personnel within the retail sector in Sweden to approximately 105,000 individuals, where women represented 62% and men represented 38% (www.scb.se). When choosing the sample for the study, researchers have the choice between Census survey and Sample survey. Census data are those collected from every unit of a population (Zikmund et al. 2010; Chambliss & Schutt 2010; Bryman & Bell 2011). A study concerned with collecting census data would thus have to study every individual empirically, for the present study that would entail data collection from approximately 105,000 respondents. However it was not feasible to collect such quantity
of data due to time and resource constraints of this study. The norm in business research is to instead use a representative sample to make inferences about the population (Zikmund et al. 2010; Chambliss & Schutt 2010; Bryman & Bell 2011). Based on these considerations it was decided that a sample survey would be used for this study. Due to time and resource constraints, limitation had to be made geographically, therefore the data collection was conducted with employees in companies within the retail sector in the south and mid parts of Sweden.

4.7.1 Sampling frame
The sampling frame constitutes the list of units in the population, from where a representative sample can then be drawn (Bryman 1989; Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias 2007; Zikmund et al. 2010; Bryman & Bell 2011). Due to resource constraints of this study we were unsuccessful in obtaining a complete list of companies in the retail sector from where the sample could be drawn. Therefore two criteria for inclusion in the sample were created so that the individuals in the sample represented similar characteristics. Based on the previous discussions the sampling frame was set to customer contact employees in national retail firms in Sweden. Only chains with a national presence and brand were used for the sample. Since national retail chains hold similar characteristics in all stores, the geographical location of the stores were deemed a factor that did not influence the sample. Consequently, for inclusion in the sample the following criteria had to be fulfilled:

1. Respondent is employed at a national retail firm
2. Respondent is employed as sales-personnel

In order to gather as much responses as possible during the time frame for the study, the questionnaires were distributed and collected at retail stores in shopping malls. This approach was used as clusters of national retail chains could be found in shopping malls.

4.7.2 Sample selection and data collection procedure
Concerning the sample size, a larger sample is, as a rule, more preferable than a smaller since the sampling error will decrease the larger the sample, but significantly only to an extent (Kumar 2005; Zikmund et al. 2010; Bryman & Bell 2011). Business research may be limited by their disposal of time and resources and the sample size is prone to be affected by this (Bryman & Bell 2011).

Probability or random sampling is generally employed in order to ensure a representative sample is selected from the sample frame due to the process being random (Bryman 1989;
Saunders et al. 2003; Nolan & Heinzen 2008; Zikmund et al. 2010; Bryman & Bell 2011). This however requires that a full list of potential respondents is available in the sample frame. As has been stated earlier, no such list of employees was used and was not feasible to acquire. Thus a non-probability sample was used, where no random selection process is present as this type of sampling is based on choice and availability (Bryman 1989; Saunders et al. 2003; Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias 2007; Bryman & Bell 2011). This implies some inherent pitfalls, namely: the influence of human judgment on selection of respondents, non-response, sampling bias and potential limitation of generalizability (Zikmund et al. 2010; Bryman & Bell 2011). In addition it requires sound judgment from the researcher who also needs to have sufficient knowledge of the subject in order to minimize the impact of these pitfalls (Bryman & Bell 2011). A statistical approach is another way to determine sample size (Malhotra 2011). A statistical formula, presented by Malhotra (2011) was used to generate the statistically wanted sample of adequate size for the empirical investigation:

\[
n = \frac{2500 \times N \times Z^2}{[25 \times (N-1)] + [2500 \times Z^2]}
\]

n = Sample size
N = Population size
Z = Number of standard errors (1.96 for 95% confidence level)

This yielded a final sample size of 383 respondents to statistically represent the population.

4.8 Data analysis method

4.8.1 Data coding and data entry

When the questionnaires were distributed and collected, the task of data entry started. Firstly, variables that corresponded to each of the variables and questionnaire items were created in SPSS. The items concerning affective commitment were coded Aff1-8, internal communication IC1-4, brand oriented training Train1-3, brand oriented recruitment Recr1 and brand oriented leadership Lead1-5. After this was done the process of plotting the answers of the gathered questionnaires started. Missing values were treated in accordance with the guidelines of Nolan & Heinzen (2008), who state four circumstances when data should not be used at all due to missing information, if the loss of data is widespread, systematic, due to an experimental condition or if the loss of data is affected by few respondents but for a large part
of their data. For this study, none of these circumstances were present. The data loss was occasional and non-systematic, which can be addressed without excluding any respondent or variable by calculating the mode answer for the item and use that value to replace the missing data (Nolan & Heinzen, 2008). Before being able to carry out the various tests, the Likert scale answers of the reversed questions were inversed so that they would give the correct indication.

### 4.8.2 Descriptive statistics

Regarding the descriptive data, the included items were gender, age and time spent at current organization. The presentation of this data was due to the fact that descriptive statistics allows the researcher to summarize and arrange numerical data so that it becomes more comprehensible and becomes easier to analyze (Saunders et al. 2003; Zikmund et al. 2010). The distribution of data can be visualized in tables, charts, diagrams, graphs and other means for presenting the data. According to Saunders (et al. 2003) there are two main uses of descriptive statistics, the central tendency and the dispersion. Central tendency is commonly measured in three different ways: Median, Mode and Mean (Saunders et al. 2003; Nolan & Heinzen 2008). The Median points out the middle value after the data have been arranged in ascending order. This way of calculating the central tendency of data set is advantageous since it is not affected by extreme values, also called outliers (Saunders et al. 2003; Nolan & Heinzen 2008). The mode displays the most frequently occurring value and the mean calculates an average of the values, the mean can sometimes be misleading since it can be affected if there are one or several outliers in the data set (Saunders et al. 2003; Nolan & Heinzen 2008). The descriptive data was clustered in to different categories.

### 4.8.3 Correlation analysis

Within business research, it is argued to be important to be able to describe relationships between variables, this as the relationship between variables can help to make informed managerial decisions (Zikmund et al. 2010). For this study, the relationship between Internal branding activities (Internal communication Brand oriented recruitment, Brand oriented training and Brand oriented leadership) and affective commitment was assessed though correlation analysis and regression analysis.

Correlation analysis is used to assess relationships between variables; this is done by statistically calculating the correlation coefficient. It is argued to be an important measure of the strength of the linear relationship between variables (Ghauri & Gronhaug 2005; Zikmund
Ghauri & Gronhaug (2005) argue that the correlation between variables can span between -1 and 1 where -1 means that two variables are perfectly inversely related and 1 means that two variables perfectly covary positively. If the correlation is zero or close to zero the variables are unrelated. Important to note though is that the correlation analysis shows covariation between variables but cannot assess how they are causally related. Whether the correlation is substantial or not is determined by the size of the correlation coefficient. The correlation between the independent variables (i.e. the internal branding activities) should not be too high, otherwise they are undistinguishable (i.e. displays low discriminant validity) (Hair et al. 2009). However, in order to rely on the results of the test, the p-value must be within the accepted level of significance. The level that is most commonly employed in business research is 0.05 which was the accepted level of significance in this study (Zikmund et al. 2010; Bryman & Bell 2011).

For this study, correlation analysis was used to test the relationship between the independent variables (internal branding activities). This was statistically calculated with use of SPSS.

### 4.8.4 One-sample T test

A one-sample T test can be used in research to test whether mean values of measured items differ from the mid-point of a scale and to which extent the mean values differs (Zikmund et al. 2010). A conducted test will show the mean scores of the items along with the mean difference, giving the researcher the opportunity to interpret the mean values of an item in relation to the mid-point of a scale. In this study, where a seven point Likert scale was used, the score of four (4) represented the mid-point. Any positive mean difference in the t-test indicate a mean higher than four and thus the presence of the measured item is greater than the mid-point.

To be able to test the hypotheses regarding the presence of internal branding activities ($H_{1a}$, $H_{2a}$, $H_{3a}$, $H_{4a}$), a one-sample t test was conducted where four was the mid-point (or test value). With regard to this in order for the hypotheses to be supported the observed mean value had to be greater than the test value of four at a significance level of 0.05.

### 4.8.5 Regression analysis

When conducting a regression analysis, a dependent variable and an independent variable is assessed to determine the degree to which the independent variable explain the dependent variable (Saunders et al. 2003; Ghauri & Gronhaug 2005; Zikmund et al. 2010). This measures the linear relationship between the two variables (Zikmund et al. 2010).
Multiple regression analysis is argued by Zikmund et al (2010) to be an extension of the original regression analysis. The multiple regression analysis takes into account how multiple variables can explain a dependent variable and can therefore explain the relationship closer to the complicated reality (Zikmund et al 2010). According to Malhotra et al. (2003 p.519), multiple regression analysis is applied when researchers want to:

- Determine whether the independent variables explain a significant variation in the dependent variable: whether a relationship exists.
- To determine how much of the variation in the dependent variable can be explained by the independent variables: the strength of the relationship.
- To determine the structure or form of the relationship: the mathematical equation relating the independent and dependent variables.
- To predict the values of the dependent variable.
- To control for other independent variables when evaluating the contributions of a specific variable or set of variables.

In multiple regression analysis $R^2$ is used to determine the how much of the variance in the dependent variable is explained by the combination of all variables.

For this study multiple regression analysis was used to assess the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable as stated in the conceptual model presented in chapter 3. The stated hypotheses were tested with a multi regression in order to explain to what extent the internal branding activities could explain affective commitment of customer contact employees. This was conducted with the use of SPSS.

4.9 Quality Criteria
4.9.1 Validity
Validity in general terms refers to whether a measure actually measures the concept it relates to (Bryman 1989; Zikmund et al. 2010; Bryman & Bell 2011).

4.9.2 Content validity
Content validity is the simplest mean to test validity. Especially when a new measurement is developed, as was the case in this research, there is a need to establish content validity (Bryman 1989; Bryman & Bell 2011). This is done by examining the measure and the concept it is supposed to measure, and it is thus a subjective evaluation (Bryman 1989; Zikmund et al.
2010) and generally entails the use of experts or panel judges (Bryman 1989; Bryman & Bell 2011).

For the current study content validity was achieved by performing a small scale pretest where the respondents were also interviewed about the questionnaire questions concerning the formulations and wordings to avoid ambiguous questions and misunderstandings after which the questionnaire was subject to a minor revision.

4.9.3 Construct validity
Construct validity concerns whether the measure item actually measures the construct it is supposed to (Saunders et al. 2003; Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias 2007; Zikmund et al. 2010). Two aspects of validation were considered for this study, convergence and discriminant validity (Campbell & Fiske 1959; Bryman 1989).

Convergence validity refers to the extent to which a measure converges with other measures of the same construct (Campbell & Fiske 1959; Bryman 1989; Bryman & Bell 2011). In accordance with theory, positive relationships between different internal branding activities and affective commitment have been hypothesized. This is relevant in this context because a strong positive correlation between the independent variables and the dependent is an indicator of the convergence validity of the study as hypotheses are based in established theory using other measures than those for the current study.

Discriminant validity refers to the correlations between different measurement constructs (Campbell & Fiske 1959; Bryman 1989). For a study to have construct validity in this sense, the measurement constructs should have a low correlation and thus measure distinct concepts (Campbell & Fiske 1959; Bryman 1989). For the current study this implied that the independent variables should have a low correlation for the study to have construct validity.

4.9.4 Criterion validity
The criterion validity of a study can be assessed by employing concurrent and predictive validity (Bryman 1989; Bryman & Bell 2011).

Concurrent validity refers to the extent of which the test in question correlates with a different test measuring similar concepts, assuming the later has established validity (Bryman 1989; Bryman & Bell 2011). By using a second similar test it acts as a type of benchmarking and if the correlation is high, the new measure has criterion validity in this aspect.
Predictive validity shares similar characteristics with concurrent validity with one major difference in the time the test used as a criterion is conducted. Here, a future test measure correlating with the current study's test acts as the criterion, it should be noted that the correlation in predictive is normally substantially lower than concurrent validity (Bryman 1989; Bryman & Bell 2011).

Due to the time limit for this study the criterion validity could not be assessed.

4.9.5 Reliability

Bryman & Bell (2011) gives the following definition of reliability: “the consistency of a measure of a concept” (p. 158) According to Bryman & Bell (2011) there are two main factors concerning quantitative research to consider when establishing whether a measurement instrument is reliable. The first is the stability of the measure, which entails the consistency of the measure over time. This can be assessed by conducting the questionnaire again to see if the respondents answer fairly the same way, the correlation between the two questionnaires should be high (Zikmund et al. 2010; Bryman & Bell 2011). However, due to time limit for this study this assessment was not applied. The second way of establishing the reliability of a measurement instrument is to evaluate the internal reliability, i.e. how well questionnaire items correlates with the operationalized indicators of the concept they are supposed to measure. This can be assessed by calculating the Cronbach's alpha coefficient, the coefficient vary between 1 (indicating perfect internal reliability) and 0 (indicating no internal reliability).

In order for the internal reliability to be acceptable, the value of Cronbach's alpha should be 0.6 or higher (Zikmund et al. 2010). Zikmund et al. (2010) state that a coefficient alpha value between 0.6-0.7 is regarded as fair reliability, a value between 0.7-0.8 is regarded as good reliability and a value between 0.8-0.95 is regarded as very good reliability. For this thesis the lowest acceptable Chronbach alpha value accepted was 0.6 to ensure fair reliability.
4.10 Summary
Model 4 presents a summary of the methodological procedure that was carried out in this study.

Model 4: The methodological procedure applied

- **Method**
  - **Research Approach**
    - Inductive
    - Deductive
    - Quantitative
    - Qualitative
  
  - **Research Design**
    - Exploratory
    - Descriptive
    - Causal
  
  - **Research Strategy**
    - Survey
    - Case Study
  
  - **Data Collection Method**
    - Experiment
    - Survey
    - Struct. Observ.

- **Sampling**
  - Non-probability
  - Retail sector
  - Employee at retail firm
  - Employed as sales personnel

- **Data Analysis Method**
  - Descriptive statistics
  - Correlation analysis
  - Regression analysis

- **Quality Criteria**
  - Validity
  - Reliability

- Cronbach α

- Content validity
- Construct validity
Data Analysis

The previous chapter provided the necessary methodological tools to be used when carrying out the empirical investigation for this thesis. This chapter presents the gathered empirical data in a comprehensible way and also includes the results of the various tests that are needed for hypothesis testing.

5.1 Descriptive statistics

During the data collection a total of 253 individuals from the population were approached which resulted in 204 respondents, yielding a response rate of 80.6%. The questionnaires were collected from respondents at six shopping malls. Out of the 49 responses that were not collected, 36 individuals who were approached did not want to participate and 13 questionnaires were not returned after distribution.

Table VII: Descriptive statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>21.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>78.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;20</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-29</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>46.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>29.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;39</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>19.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TACO</strong>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;1 Year</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>16.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-5 Years</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>59.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;5 Years</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>24.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*n 204; *Time at current organization

Most respondents were female which represented 78.4% of the respondents. Males represented 21.6% of the respondents.

The age of the respondents were divided into four categories, where 4.4% of the respondents represented ages under 20 years, 46.1% represented ages between 20-29, 29.9% represented ages between 30-39 and 19.6% represented ages 39 and above.

The amount of time the respondents had been working at their current organization was divided into three categories where 16.2% of the respondents represented time less one year, 59.3% represented one to five years and 24.5% represented more than five years.
5.2 Reliability & Validity
To test the reliability for the items of each concept the Cronbach’s alpha coefficient was calculated for each variable. The reliability for each concept was Affective commitment; 0.823, Internal communication; 0.845, Brand oriented training; 0.907, Brand oriented leadership; 0.753. The reliability for the item representing Brand oriented recruitment could not be assessed since it was constituted by a single item. The assessed reliability for the concepts were all above the accepted level of 0.6 and three out of four concepts were also above 0.8 and therefore showed good a level of reliability. The results of the reliability test are presented in table VIII below.

Table VIII: Reliability test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Chronbach’s Alpha</th>
<th>Number of items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Affective commitment</td>
<td>0.823</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal communication</td>
<td>0.845</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand oriented training</td>
<td>0.907</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand oriented recruitment</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand oriented leadership</td>
<td>0.753</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>21</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All items representing theoretical concepts had a sufficiently low level of correlation where brand oriented training and internal communication held the highest correlation of 0.683. All correlations were significant at the 0.01 level. All correlations and their level of significance are shown in the table below.

Table IX: Correlations and test of discriminant validity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Internal com.</th>
<th>Training</th>
<th>Recruitment</th>
<th>Leadership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Internal com.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>0.683''</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment</td>
<td>0.446''</td>
<td>0.421''</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>0.382''</td>
<td>0.446''</td>
<td>0.350''</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n 204; ''p < 0.05; **p < 0.01

5.3 T test
All items had a mean of 5 or more on the 7 point Likert scale at the 0.01 level of significance, showing that all concepts measured where present, all results with a mean above the mid-point of 4 on the Likert scale indicates a strong presence of these concepts.
All items representing independent variables had a mean of more than 5.5 on the 7 point Likert scale, showing a strong presence of all internal branding activities studied. With a mean of 5.806 for internal communication H1a was supported. Likewise, with a mean of 5.979 for brand oriented training H2a was supported. Brand oriented recruitment had a mean of 5.647 and thus H3a was supported. Brand oriented leadership had a mean of 5.522 and H4a was also supported. In the table below, the T test conducted is presented.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Internal com.</td>
<td>5.81</td>
<td>1.063</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>5.98</td>
<td>1.233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment</td>
<td>5.65</td>
<td>1.288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>5.52</td>
<td>1.203</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table XI: One-Sample T test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p-value</th>
<th>Mean difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Internal com.</td>
<td>24.279</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>0.000&quot;</td>
<td>1.806</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>22.919</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>0.000&quot;</td>
<td>1.979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment</td>
<td>18.269</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>0.000&quot;</td>
<td>1.647</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>18.072</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>0.000&quot;</td>
<td>1.522</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.4 Regression analysis

The regression analysis resulted in an adjusted R² of 0.308 which gives the model a predicting power on Affective commitment of 30.8%. Three out of the four B-values of the independent variables showed a positive impact on affective commitment (0.168 for brand oriented training, 0.169 for brand oriented recruitment and 0.184 for brand oriented leadership). The p-value for internal communication, 0.190, does not fall within the accepted significance level of 0.05, thus H1b could not be supported. In contrast hypotheses H2b, H3b and H4b were all within the significance level of 0.05, there were even two variables, brand oriented recruitment and leadership that were within the 0.01 level of significance. The hypotheses H2b, H3b and H4b were all supported as can be seen in Table XIII. Since the F statistic measured up to 23.612 the whole prediction model was regarded as significant. Below is the result of the regression as well as a summary of the hypotheses.
Table XII: Regression analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>1.444</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal com.</td>
<td>0.104</td>
<td>0.190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>0.168</td>
<td>0.017*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment</td>
<td>0.169</td>
<td>0.003**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>0.184</td>
<td>0.001**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n \(204; R^2 = 0.322; Adjusted R^2 = 0.308; F\text{-statistic} = 23.612; ^*p < 0.05; ^{**}p < 0.01\)

\(H_{1a}\) Customer contact employees receive a significant amount of internal communication.

\(H_{2a}\) Internal communication has a positive relationship to affective commitment.

\(H_{2b}\) Brand oriented training has a positive relationship to affective commitment.

\(H_{3a}\) Customer contact employees are recruited with a significant amount of company/personal value congruence.

\(H_{3b}\) Brand oriented recruitment has a positive relationship to affective commitment.

\(H_{4a}\) Customer contact employees receive a significant amount of brand oriented leadership.

\(H_{4b}\) Brand oriented leadership has a positive relationship to affective commitment.

Table XIII: Summary of hypotheses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>Test</th>
<th>p-value</th>
<th>Supported</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(H_{1a}) Significant amount of Internal com.</td>
<td>One-Sample T test</td>
<td>0.000**</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(H_{2a}) Significant amount of Training</td>
<td>One-Sample T test</td>
<td>0.000**</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(H_{3a}) Significant amount of Recruitment.</td>
<td>One-Sample T test</td>
<td>0.000**</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(H_{4a}) Significant amount of Leadership.</td>
<td>One-Sample T test</td>
<td>0.000**</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(H_{1b}) Internal com. (\rightarrow) Affective com.</td>
<td>Regression analysis</td>
<td>0.190</td>
<td>Not supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(H_{2b}) Training(\rightarrow)Affective com.</td>
<td>Regression analysis</td>
<td>0.017*</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(H_{3b}) Recruitment(\rightarrow)Affective com.</td>
<td>Regression analysis</td>
<td>0.003**</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(H_{4b}) Leadership(\rightarrow)Affective com.</td>
<td>Regression analysis</td>
<td>0.001**</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n \(204; ^{*}p < 0.05; ^{**}p < 0.01\)
Model 5: The supported relationship between Internal branding and Affective commitment

Internal Branding

- Internal communication
- Brand oriented training
- Brand oriented recruitment
- Brand oriented leadership

Affective commitment

$H_{2a}(+) \rightarrow$ $\text{Adjusted } R^2 = 30.8\%$
Discussion, Conclusions & Implications

The previous chapter provided us with the data of which of the hypotheses that were supported and not supported. The aim of this study was to determine the components of internal branding in order to clarify the relationship between internal branding and brand commitment of customer contact employees and this chapter covers the reasoning and discussion of the results by revisiting the existing literature in the area and identifying patterns. Finally, the conclusions of this thesis are presented along with the managerial and academic implications.

6.1 Discussion

As the hypotheses regarding the presence of internal branding activities (H\textsubscript{1a}, H\textsubscript{2a}, H\textsubscript{3a} and H\textsubscript{4a}) could all be supported, this provided relevant context to the conceptual model (Model 3 p. 23). This meant that all individual internal branding activities that constituted the conceptual model were relevant for this study.

The results from the regression analysis show that 30.8% (with p-value 0.000) of the affective commitment of customer contact employees within the retail sector of the service industry can be explained by three of the four identified internal branding activities; brand oriented training, brand oriented recruitment and brand oriented leadership. This result shows that affective commitment of employees can in fact be managed by implementing certain internal branding activities. It also means that 68% of affective commitment is explained by other factors. When revisiting the literature we could see that previously stated antecedents of affective commitment were personal characteristics, job characteristics, work experience and structural characteristics (Allen & Meyer 1990). As the latter three can be directly connected to the employing organization to a large extent, personal characteristics can be regarded as a factor of high uncertainty regarding predictability and can therefore vary regarding degree of impact on affective commitment from case to case. This factor can therefore indeed be part of the explanation of affective commitment that is not included in the results of this study.

The beta values of the independent variables give us an indication of how influential they are in relation to the dependent variable. After comparing the values it can be said that there is a marginal difference between the internal branding activities. Brand oriented training, recruitment and leadership had values of 0.168, 0.169, 0.184 respectively, indicating a fairly equal influence on affective commitment. However as brand oriented leadership had a higher
beta value, the results indicate that this internal branding activity has the highest influence of the three on Affective commitment.

The hypotheses regarding the relationship between internal branding activities and affective commitment showed differing results. While the hypothesized positive relationships concerning brand oriented training $H_{2b}$, recruitment $H_{3b}$ and leadership $H_{4b}$ were all supported, internal communication, $H_{1b}$, was found to not have a significant positive relationship with affective commitment.

The positive relationships are explained by the current view held in the literature that internal branding activities facilitates commitment (de Chernatony & Segal-Horn 2001; Punjaisri & Wilson 2007; Punjaisri et al. 2009a). As the relationships between internal branding activities and individual dimensions of commitment are not extensively explored by the current literature, no explanation have been found to why internal communication was not found to have a positive relationship to affective commitment. However, there are some factors that may explain this result.

While the affective dimension of commitment was investigated in this study, the literature suggests that internal communication is positively related to commitment as a broader concept where all three dimensions, affective, normative and continuance commitment, are included (de Chernatony & Segal-Horn 2001; Punjaisri & Wilson 2007; Punjaisri et al. 2009a). This study has, however, not proven that internal communication does not lead to commitment to the brand or organization, it is limited only to showing that is does not significantly relate to the affective dimension of commitment. Internal communication may indeed lead to any or both of the other dimensions of commitment. This reasoning, like the last, may help to provide an understanding as to why internal communication was not found to have the hypothesized effect on affective commitment, but is an area that needs to be explored further and a future research direction may be to explore internal communications effects on, and relationship to, normative and continuance commitment.

When further examining the results of this study, there was an interesting tendency regarding internal branding activities. Out of the four internal branding activities three of them, brand oriented training, brand oriented recruitment and brand oriented leadership shared a certain similar characteristic in the involvement of social interaction between the employee and the organization. When examining internal communication in relation to the other internal branding activities that were measured it becomes clear that out of the four activities internal
communication may have the weakest connection to social interaction in the workplace. While internal communication does involve storytelling and brand stories (de Chernatony and Cottam 2006; Henkel et al. 2007), which involves and to an extent is built on social interaction, other parts of internal communication do not involve social interaction to the same extent as the other internal branding activities. Brand oriented training and recruitment both involves human resources (Aurand et al. 2005; de Chernatony et al. 2006) and training programs about behavior and brand-specific skills (King & Grace 2006; de Chernatony & Cottam 2006; Lings et al. 2008; Punjaisri et al. 2009b). Leadership involves role modeling (Burmann & Zeplin 2005; de Chernatony 2005; de Chernatony et al. 2006; Vallaster & de Chernatony & Cottam 2006; King & Grace 2006; Henkel et al. 2007; King 2010) and employee empowerment (Burmann & Zeplin 2005; Henkel et al. 2007). All these concepts are to their nature more or less grounded on social interaction between the employee and the organization on a level that is higher than the type of internal communication that was measured in this study. This implies that training, recruitment and leadership all tend to share a common feature in social interaction that is not shared by internal communication, at least not to the same extent. This in turn might imply that affective commitment can be strongly connected to social interactions between the employee and the accommodator of the internal branding activity. This line of thought is not far from the findings of Heffner & Rentsch (2001) who have concluded that social interaction between members of an organization is strongly related to affective commitment. This reasoning may provide an explanation as to why internal communication did not have a significant positive relationship to affective commitment. It should be noted however, that this line of thought is currently limited to reasoning derived from the literature and this study and there is a need of further investigation and future research regarding this.

6.2 Conclusions

To summarize the discussion about internal branding and affective commitment, we present our main conclusions below:

- Internal branding activities are significantly present among customer contact employees within the retail sector of the service industry.
- A significant part (30.8%) of affective commitment among customer contact employees can be explained by internal branding activities such as brand oriented training, brand oriented recruitment and brand oriented leadership.
• Internal communication has no significant positive relationship to affective commitment of customer contact employees within the retail sector of the service industry.

• Social interaction may be a key component of internal branding to create affective commitment in customer contact employees within the retail sector of the service industry.

6.3 Managerial implications
In this study it has been shown that the internal branding activities; brand oriented training, recruitment and leadership all have positive relationships to the affective commitment of customer contact employees within the retail sector of the service industry.

This gives implications for managers that want customer contact employees to identify with, be involved and emotionally attached to the employing company. The three internal branding activities mentioned above facilitates this if managed successfully, which in turn makes it possible for the customer contact employees to adequately display on brand behavior, a sought after achievement for service firms.

One does well however, not to forget the other two dimensions of commitment that this study did not measure. Although affective commitment is seen as the strongest dimension of the three, it has not been assessed in terms of complexity and ease of implementation in a service firm. Internal branding processes may be costly and not always an easy task, although every manager should naturally desire committed employees, return on investment for the internal branding activities proposed in this study must be assessed in every individual case.

As much as 30.8% of the affective commitment of customer contact employees can be explained by the internal branding activities presented in this study with the exception of internal communication. And although internal branding is often a complex process to execute, it should be in the best interest of every manager in charge of such matters to consider the implementation of brand oriented recruitment, brand oriented training and brand oriented leadership.

As the degree of influence on affective commitment was very similar among the supported internal branding activities there is likely no particular activity that yields a significantly higher degree of affective commitment than any other. As brand oriented leadership showed a slightly higher predicting power of affective commitment this gives some indications that
leadership can play a greater role regarding the affective commitment of customer contact employees than both brand oriented training and recruitment does. It has however been argued that internal branding processes should come from a holistic standpoint (de Chernatony et al. 2003; de Aurand et al. 2005; Chernatony & Cottam 2006; Mahnert & Torres 2007) and be cross-functional between departments (Rafiq & Ahmed 2000; Aurand et al. 2005; de Chernatony & Cottam 2005; Burmann et al. 2009; Punjaisri et al. 2009a; 2009b;) In light of this, we do not recommend a singular focus on one particular internal branding activity, rather, all three internal branding activities should be utilized in order to increase affective commitment which in turn yields on-brand behavior of customer contact employees.

6.4 Academic implications

Previous research within the field has investigated the relationship between internal branding and commitment as such. This study has contributed to the literature on the relationship between internal branding and brand commitment by also taking into account the affective dimension of the three-component conceptualization of organizational commitment developed by Meyer & Allen (1991). Based on their conceptualization of commitment it could, in this study, be concluded that internal branding has a significant impact on the affective dimension commitment of customer contact employees. However, one of the internal branding activities, internal communication, was found not to have a significant relationship with affective commitment. Though, one must consider that this study, to our knowledge, is the first in this specific field.

Further, the measurement instrument Affective Commitment Scale which was adapted from Allen & Meyer (1990), was further validated through a high Chronbach’s Alpha value (0.823).

Finally, as previous research within the field of internal branding has mainly been carried out within the financial and hospitality industries this study has also contributed by expanding the field of internal branding also to the retail sector of the service industry.
7 Limitations and future research
The previous chapter covered the reasoning that finally led to the conclusions and managerial implications for this thesis. This chapter will discuss the potential limitations of this study and also the implications for future research that are beyond the scope of this thesis.

7.1 Limitations
This study has been carried out within a relatively short timeframe which might have had an effect on the results of the study as a longer timeframe would have made it possible to collect data from a larger number of respondents to make the results more statistically reliable. The statistically calculated sample size of 384 respondents was not reached and instead the data of 204 respondents was used to yield the results of this study. Although a large sample is as a rule more desirable, a smaller sample also gives statistically significant results. Hogg and Tanis (2010) gives a general proposal of a minimum sample size of 30 individuals to make statistical inferences about a population. With this in mind the difference between the calculated and actual sample size should have very limited actual effects on the study results. A larger timeframe would also have allowed us to assess the criterion validity for the measurement instrument, which was not conducted in this study.

The timeframe also limited the choice and employment of measures as an additional type of measure would have improved the validity of the study. Furthermore, the independent variable, brand oriented recruitment, was represented by a single questionnaire item which made it impossible to assess the internal reliability for this concept. This questionnaire item was, as previously stated, developed specifically for this study and we could not find other relevant items that would have corresponded to the variable brand oriented recruitment, therefore a single item was used. The results from this particular measurement needs further validity from other measures and would also benefit from the development of additional items to measure brand oriented recruitment.

A related argument can be made concerning all measurements of the presence of internal branding activities. Developing and using new measures potentially limits the reliability of the results, and the ambition was to use existing and validated measures whenever possible. But as has been stated in the methodological chapter no measure was found that could be adopted. However, the conducted reliability test still showed sufficiently low levels of correlations, pointing toward the adequacy of the measures. Nevertheless, the fact that new measures were
developed and used should be taken into consideration when considering the results of this study.

7.2 Future research
The study was performed on the retail service industry and it has been argued in this paper that the result of the sample is generalizable to the population. It might not however be generalizable to the whole of the service industry. Investigations in other parts of the service industry would help remedy this and further validate the measurements of this study.

The items used to measure the presence of internal branding were not adopted from previous research and therefore had to be developed specifically for this study. The items would benefit from further validation from future research.

Social interaction has been proposed as a shared characteristic of the three internal branding activities that may explain why the fourth activity, internal communication, was not found to have a positive relationship with affective commitment. This characteristic might facilitate the choice of internal branding activities for managers. The notion however requires more thorough investigation regarding its role in internal branding and constitutes a future research direction that would further the understanding of internal branding processes in relation to affective commitment of customer contact employees.

Previous literature have stressed that internal branding should be a cross-functional process managed by the marketing department and human resources department (Aurand et al. 2005, de Chernatony et al. 2006; Punjaisri & Wilson 2007, Punjaisri et al. 2008, Punjaisri et al. 2009a, Punjaisri et al. 2009b,). With this in mind and considering that it is important for companies to have customer contact employees to who display on-brand behavior, the human resources department within the service industry should be an area in which internal branding should be further investigated as not enough research has been conducted in this field. Suggestions for aims of those future investigations could be to assess the extent to which human resource departments are aware of and working actively with the brand values? Are they implementing them? And if so how, is this adequate or is there a need for improvement that would be beneficial for service firms.
Reference list

Literature


O'Reilly III C., Chatman J. (1986) "Organizational Commitment and Psychological Attachment: The Effects of Compliance, Identification, and Internalization on Pro social


Electronic

www.ekonomifakta.se. Available
http://www.ekonomifakta.se/sv/Fakta/Foretagande/Naringslivet/Foretag-per-bransch/ 2012-03-02

www.scb.se. Available
Appendix 1: Questionnaire English version
Internal branding within retailing

Below you will find a number of statements relating to your experience of your company. Please read through every statement carefully and respond by marking the appropriate option that represents your opinion. There are no right or wrong answers, so just answer as honestly as you can.

How long have you been working for your current organization? _______ Years
Your age: _______ Your gender: ◯ Male ◯ Female

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PART 1</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization</td>
<td>[ ] 1 [ ] 2 [ ] 3 [ ] 4 [ ] 5 [ ] 6 [ ] 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I enjoy discussing my organization with people outside it</td>
<td>[ ] 1 [ ] 2 [ ] 3 [ ] 4 [ ] 5 [ ] 6 [ ] 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I really feel as if this organization’s problems are my own</td>
<td>[ ] 1 [ ] 2 [ ] 3 [ ] 4 [ ] 5 [ ] 6 [ ] 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I think that I could easily become as attached to another organization as I am to this one (R)</td>
<td>[ ] 1 [ ] 2 [ ] 3 [ ] 4 [ ] 5 [ ] 6 [ ] 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I do not feel like ‘part of the family’ at my organization (R)</td>
<td>[ ] 1 [ ] 2 [ ] 3 [ ] 4 [ ] 5 [ ] 6 [ ] 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I do not feel ‘emotionally attached’ to this organization (R)</td>
<td>[ ] 1 [ ] 2 [ ] 3 [ ] 4 [ ] 5 [ ] 6 [ ] 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. This organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me</td>
<td>[ ] 1 [ ] 2 [ ] 3 [ ] 4 [ ] 5 [ ] 6 [ ] 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to my organization (R)</td>
<td>[ ] 1 [ ] 2 [ ] 3 [ ] 4 [ ] 5 [ ] 6 [ ] 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PART 2</th>
<th>To a Small extent</th>
<th>To a Large extent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9. The organization I work in is communicating formal brand related material to me and my colleagues (brochures, booklets, e-mail etc.)</td>
<td>[ ] 1 [ ] 2 [ ] 3 [ ] 4 [ ] 5 [ ] 6 [ ] 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. The organization I work in informs me what our organization’s brand stands for</td>
<td>[ ] 1 [ ] 2 [ ] 3 [ ] 4 [ ] 5 [ ] 6 [ ] 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. The organization I work in informs me of my role in the organization</td>
<td>[ ] 1 [ ] 2 [ ] 3 [ ] 4 [ ] 5 [ ] 6 [ ] 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. What my organization’s brand stands for is reflected in my daily work</td>
<td>[ ] 1 [ ] 2 [ ] 3 [ ] 4 [ ] 5 [ ] 6 [ ] 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. I have received training/instructions about how I should carry out my work role</td>
<td>[ ] 1 [ ] 2 [ ] 3 [ ] 4 [ ] 5 [ ] 6 [ ] 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. I have received training/instructions about how to treat customers</td>
<td>[ ] 1 [ ] 2 [ ] 3 [ ] 4 [ ] 5 [ ] 6 [ ] 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. I have received training/instructions about how to be customer focused</td>
<td>[ ] 1 [ ] 2 [ ] 3 [ ] 4 [ ] 5 [ ] 6 [ ] 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. When I first started working here the company’s values matched my own values well</td>
<td>[ ] 1 [ ] 2 [ ] 3 [ ] 4 [ ] 5 [ ] 6 [ ] 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. My manager(s) regularly work side by side with me and my colleagues in the daily work</td>
<td>[ ] 1 [ ] 2 [ ] 3 [ ] 4 [ ] 5 [ ] 6 [ ] 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. My manager(s) act as a role-model in my daily work</td>
<td>[ ] 1 [ ] 2 [ ] 3 [ ] 4 [ ] 5 [ ] 6 [ ] 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. I get rewarded when I act as my manager wants</td>
<td>[ ] 1 [ ] 2 [ ] 3 [ ] 4 [ ] 5 [ ] 6 [ ] 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. I am allowed a high degree of own initiative when taking care of customers</td>
<td>[ ] 1 [ ] 2 [ ] 3 [ ] 4 [ ] 5 [ ] 6 [ ] 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. I am encouraged by my managers to make own decisions regarding the daily work</td>
<td>[ ] 1 [ ] 2 [ ] 3 [ ] 4 [ ] 5 [ ] 6 [ ] 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 2: Questionnaire Swedish version  
Internt varumärkesarbete inom detaljhandeln


Hur länge har du arbetat på din nuvarande arbetsplats? _______ År

Din ålder: _______  
Könn: O Man  O Kvinna

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PART 1</th>
<th>Jag håller inte alls med</th>
<th>Jag håller helt med</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Jag skulle glädja mig åt att min kollega arbetar hos det samma företaget</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Jag tycker att det är roligt att prata om mitt företag med folk utanför arbetsetat</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Jag hinner verkligen att företagens problem är mina problem</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Jag tror att jag skulle kunna bli lika lyckad i ett annat företag</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Jag känner mig inte som &quot;en i familjen&quot; på mitt företag</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Jag känner mig inte &quot;känslomässigt involverad&quot; i detta företag</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Det här företaget har stor personlig betydelse för mig</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Jag känner inte en stark samhörighet med mitt företag</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PART 2</th>
<th>I liten utsträckning</th>
<th>I stor utsträckning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9. Företaget jag arbetar för kommunicerar formellt med mig och mina kollegor (broschyrer, häften, mail eft.)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Företaget jag arbetar för informerar mig om vad företagets varumärke står för</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Företaget jag arbetar för informerar mig om min roll i företaget</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Vi märker det när företaget förstår att vi behöver stöd i vårt arbete</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Jag har fått träningsmaterial som hjälper mig att arbeta effektivare</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Jag har fått träningsmaterial som hjälper mig att arbeta effektivare</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Jag har fått träningsmaterial som hjälper mig att arbeta effektivare</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Vi märker det när företaget förstår att vi behöver stöd i vårt arbete</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Min chef har regelbundet talat med mig och mina kolleger i det dagliga arbetet</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Min chef fungerar som en förebild i mitt dagliga arbete</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Jag är glad om jag arbetar med min chef</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Jag tillåts ha hög grad av flexibilitet när jag tar hand om klienter</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Jag uppmuntras av mina chefer att ta egna beslut i det dagliga arbetet</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Hej,

Vi är tre studenter vid Linnéuniversitetet i Växjö som skriver kandidatuppsats i marknadsföring.

Vi behöver din hjälp i en enkätundersökning om internt varumärkesarbete i detaljhandeln.

Din medverkan kommer att bidra till en ökad förståelse för hur internt varumärkesarbete kan motivera butiksanställda i sitt dagliga arbete. Alla svar är viktiga för studien, därför är din medverkan betydelsefull!

Dina svar kommer att behandlas helt anonymt och kan inte kopplas till dig, så känn dig fri att svara så ärligt som möjligt.

Enkäten tar ca 5 minuter att fylla i.

Vi uppskattar din medverkan, tack!

Daniel Almgren, Peter Ek och Oliver Göransson
0708-579145 / 0707-105247 / 0768-103096

Linnéuniversitetet
Ekonomihögskolan
Marknadsföringsprogrammet
Växjö
Appendix 4: Covering Letter English version

Hello,

We are three students at Linnaeus University in Växjö, writing a bachelors thesis in marketing.

We need your help in a survey questionnaire regarding internal branding in the retail industry.

Your participation will contribute to an increased understanding of how internal branding can motivate retail employees in their daily work. All answers are essential for the study, so your participation is important!

Your answers will be treated anonymously and cannot be traced back to you, so feel free to answer as honestly as possible.

The questionnaire takes 5 minutes to complete.

We appreciate your participation, thank you!

Daniel Almgren, Peter Ek och Oliver Göransson
0708-579145 / 0707-105247 / 0768-103096

Linnaeus University
School of Economics
Marketing programme
Växjö
Linnaeus University – a firm focus on quality and competence

On 1 January 2010 Växjö University and the University of Kalmar merged to form Linnaeus University. This new university is the product of a will to improve the quality, enhance the appeal and boost the development potential of teaching and research, at the same time as it plays a prominent role in working closely together with local society. Linnaeus University offers an attractive knowledge environment characterised by high quality and a competitive portfolio of skills.

Linnaeus University is a modern, international university with the emphasis on the desire for knowledge, creative thinking and practical innovations. For us, the focus is on proximity to our students, but also on the world around us and the future ahead.

Lnu.se

Linnaeus University
SE-391 82 Kalmar/SE-351 95 Växjö
Telephone +46 772-28 80 00