



# **STUDENT PROTESTS AND THE BRAND IMAGE OF A UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY**

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

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## **DEDICATION**

I am proud that I eventually accomplished the goal in achieving this study. A special dedication of the study goes to my late dad who has always encouraged, motivated me and been proud of my achievements. A special gratitude to my mum for supporting me and motivating me to keep going until the I reach the end of the journey. A special thank you to my husband for taking on responsibilities, for motivating me and allowing me time to work on my studies. To my daughter who has been my ultimate motivation even without knowing.

## **ABSTRACT**

Over the past several years, student protest action has become an annual occurrence at the Durban University of Technology (DUT), located in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal. Unmet student demands related to registration fees; the National Student Financial Aid Scheme; accommodation; and book allowances, have led to the protests turning violent, which resulted in injuries to staff members and students and the destruction of property. These actions clearly have the potential to damage the university's brand and the students' views and opinions about the institution. As such, this study investigated the effects of student protests on the brand image of the institution.

A quantitative approach using a descriptive research design was adopted. The study administered a questionnaire to 402 students across the faculties of Management Sciences, Engineering and the Built Environment, Applied Sciences, Accounting and Informatics and Health Sciences at DUT. The participation in this study was entirely voluntary and participants were assured of confidentiality and their anonymity. The data was captured using the SPSS software. Descriptive analysis was conducted to analyse the survey responses. Cronbach's Alpha test was used to calculate the reliability of the questionnaire.

This study found that the student protest disrupts learning at DUT and affects the daily operations, such as the academic calendar being amended, delay in graduation and threat of non-completion of the syllabus. Significantly, it was established that the protest has a negative impact on the image of DUT, forcing students to deregister from courses due to the unsafe environment. This study recommends further research be conducted via a comparative analysis with other universities to ascertain the rate that other institutions are affected by student protests and the impact it has on their brand image. The results achieved from the statements on the brand image of DUT suggest that society believes that student protest negatively impacts on the brand of the university. Expanded research on other universities will broaden the knowledge based on this topic and provide insight and suggestions for other universities to cope with student protests. Further research at other universities may help understanding the impact and the importance of protest action on the brand image and reputation of universities.

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## **LIST OF ACRONYMS**

4IR	:	4 <sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution
CPUT	:	Cape Peninsula University of Technology
DUT	:	Durban University of Technology
EFF	:	Economic Freedom Fighters
FDI	:	Foreign Direct Investment
GDP	:	Gross Domestic Product
KZN	:	KwaZulu-Natal
NSFAS	:	National Student Financial Aid Scheme
SAPS	:	South African Police Service
SARS	:	South African Revenue Service
SPSS	:	Social Package for Social Science
SRC	:	Student Representative Council
UKZN	:	University of KwaZulu-Natal
US	:	United States
USA	:	United States of America
USAF	:	Universities of South Africa

# CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background of the study

Universities around the world are widely recognised as the source of intellectual advancement and the breeding ground for the future leaders of tomorrow. It succeeds when it is able to deliver knowledge and value. This, however, is jeopardised when it is unable to perform its functions, which results in failure to supply its most essential service - high-quality education. Protest action have been ongoing at the Durban University of Technology (DUT) since 2008, with the intensity increasing over the years.

Many higher educational institutions in South Africa, and particularly those located in Durban, have experienced student protests recently. These protests can be attributed to key challenges associated with students coming from impoverished backgrounds. According to Bar Beau (2010:1), the main causes of protests have been due to empty promises made by government officials of the country. As a result of these unmet demands, the student protests turned violent (Ismail 2022: 81). Some of the major concerns expressed by protesting students included the increase of registration fees; the National Student Financial Aid Scheme; funding; accommodation; and book allowances (Newman 2010: 4).

For many years, DUT has been faced with annual student protests which has become the norm. Students believe that if they take no action, then the university will not take their complaints seriously. The students' aim is to complete their qualifications and leave the university employable. DUT must live up to the brand image being promoted, by serving the community and building partnerships with community leaders, schools, industry and government. A way of betterment for poor students is to benefit from advancing technologies' demand for skills from a large high-quality university. These advantages are the consequences of academic development and higher education expansion, which can promote social mobility (Martono, Nurkhin, Pramusinto, Afsari, and Arham 2020: 1).

Brandt (2022: 1) reported that DUT has experienced major losses resulted from violent protests which affected damage to property and compromised the safety of students and staff. Some vehicles were burned in the car park which was caused by DUT

student leaders. Another attack on the four campuses, namely Steve Biko, ML Sultan, Ritson, and City campus, resulted in closure of the university. The DUT was seriously affected when students threw petrol bombs inside the campus after 10 pm on the 29<sup>th</sup> of March. Alan Khan, Senior Director of Corporate Affairs at DUT, reported that despite appeals made to the South African Police Service (SAPS), the protesters violated the COVID-19 regulations and traumatised staff in a way that they had to be counselled by the Employee Wellness officers at DUT (Thwala 2022: 2).

The Higher Education, Science and Innovation committee members met with DUT, the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) and the Universities South Africa (USAF) to discuss the status of protests occurring at the UKZN and DUT campuses. The absence of the DUT council at the meeting, which was noted by the chairperson, created a negative image of the institution. Mr. Maditsane Nkonoane, the DUT registrar informed the team of unresolved issues that are currently contributing to various protests. These were highlighted as follows: anecdotal accounts of collision between EFF students, and security forces, delayed NSFAS funding, and resistance to online registration. Furthermore, the unrest at DUT affected onsite operations as classes were disrupted and special exams were cancelled which affected students from finding employment. Only 16800 returning students had their funding confirmed while 4000 returning students' funding was still outstanding, despite the numerous follow-ups with NSFAS Parliamentary Monitory Group (2022: 1).

Many students at DUT felt that they could learn better face-to-face and therefore wished to return to campus. Furthermore, online-learning affected students' registration as many of the learners resided at rural areas and had poor connectivity. Data was another issue, as students were not provided with data as a result of not being registered for the year 2022. Some students also questioned of whether they should deregister from the course in fear of not being funded and as such, may not be able to attend the online classes. Students' disappointment increased further when they were informed that the SRC were not always invited to meet with management to discuss a way forward. This created the fear of being suspended, which called for concern according to Dr. Linda Meyer the USAS Director (Parliamentary Monitory Group 2022: 3). The chairperson Ms. N. Mkhathshana stated that the Higher Education Science and Innovation department would work on the funding issue that remains critical and must be resolved. The National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NFSAS) is

required to provide clarity on specific issues of student debt payment to the institutions. A further issue was NFSAS being reluctant to release funding without information regarding the shortfall of funding from treasury (Parliamentary Monitory Group 2022: 2).

Many of the students' documentation was incomplete and therefore their applications were not processed. Once complete documentation is received it is sent to SARS (South African revue service) for further verification, which creates more delay before funding is given to institutions. The chairperson encouraged team members to consistently engage to avoid such situations especially regarding fees (Parliamentary monitory group 2022: 6). The mentioned issues are recurring factors of student protest. Hence, this concerning problem requires further investigation and this was the ultimate motivation for the study due to these persistent issues that are not resolved on annual basis.

According to the DUT's new branding policy, DUT is committed to promote, re-establish and work on being people centric, in the case of ensuring safety of students and staff and ensuring continuity of the academic programme. Also, to produce graduates who are employable, entrepreneurial and creative and to cater for cultural diversity. The brand positions focus on superior academic and teaching purpose. All DUT property and communications must have visibly displayed the DUT logo The revised logo, which reflects the Envision 2030 strategy, focuses on guiding principles with DUT internal culture engagement with external stakeholders and the impact it has on improving lives.

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

According to newspaper headlines, student protest has become a trend at DUT (Bar Beau 2010: 1). As a result of unmet demands, the protests have become violent, with staff and students being injured in the process. Such activities undoubtedly could create a negative image of the institution and could negatively influence students' attitudes and beliefs towards the university. From the review of literature (see Chapter 2), it seems that there are unresolved issues between management and the SRC (Student Representative Council). The SRC wanted to meet on certain issues pertaining to the specific causes of the protest at DUT, these being the



accommodation issue, the fees factor and also deeper problems of an interdict against the SRC. Some of the frustrated students had been vacated from residence due to the poor living conditions. This was done after a health inspection was conducted. DUT management was expected to explain why the ongoing issues at DUT could not be resolved (Parliamentary Monitoring Group 2022: 7).

Hence, this study was worth exploring further. A negative image of the Department of Hospitality was observed in a master's thesis Pitso (2018: 23). Following discussions with DUT graduates and hospitality staff members, the study found that the brand image of DUT had been negatively influenced by reports of employees working long hours, low pay, and limited employment opportunities. This led to a negative perception and attitude toward the hospitality sector within the university. More so, many students stated that the staff was uninformed in the subject and lacked qualifications. Consequently, this impacted the reputation of DUT's hospitality department (Pitso 2018: 110).

Furthermore, given DUT's record of yearly protests, the Parliamentary Monitoring Group (2022: 8) recommended that the institution adopt a more proactive stance before the protests spiral out of control. Numerous studies have been conducted on student protests at DUT, but only one study on assessing the effects of inadequate human capital affecting the brand image of the Hospitality and Tourism industry at DUT (Pitso 2018: 26) looked at how they may have harmed DUT's reputation. Hence, there is a knowledge gap about the impact of protests and their potential adverse effects on the reputation of DUT as a brand. As such, this study explores the main reasons why students protest and provide recommendations on how the institution may respond in order to safeguard the DUT brand.

### **1.3 Aim and objectives of the study**

The aim of this study is to assess the effects of student protests on the brand image of DUT as perceived by its' students.

This study is centred on two areas of marketing that are connected to DUT, namely student behaviour, which is a form of consumer behaviour, and brand image (Bucha, Sukumolchan, Ketmuni and Chaloeypach 2022: 4507).

**Objectives of the study are:**

- I. To determine the causes of student protests at DUT.
- II. To determine whether student protests affect the brand image of DUT.
- III. To establish whether students' strikes affect service delivery at DUT.
- IV. To identify means as to how student protests can be averted.

**1.4 Overview of the research methodology**

This study applied a descriptive research design that took a quantitative approach, with the distribution of 400 questionnaires to obtain relevant data from participants of the study. Pre-arranged questions were used in the questionnaire making it easier to appraise the research data gathered. Analysis of the data in the sample was used to draw inferences about the population, using a set of analyses known as inferential statistics (Gingery, 2016: 1). Approximately 25 000 students were the target population in this study. A survey was done within the five faculties based at the ML Sultan, Steve Biko and Ritson campuses at DUT.

A non-probability sampling method was used. This sampling technique was a two-step sampling process. The first step was a quota sample representing the population of five of the six faculties, plus gender. The Faculty of Arts was excluded from the study as they were situated outside the central campuses of Steve Biko and ML Sultan where most protest activity takes place. A proportional sample (with a minimum of 80) from each faculty was selected to give a sample size of 400 (Sekaran and Bougie 2016: 3). Convenience sampling was used to select a sample size, questionnaires were administered to 80 second- and third-year students from each of the faculties. The sample consisted of 50% male and female respondents.

The research instrument used in the collection of data was a questionnaire developed from the literature review. The researcher administered the questionnaires personally with the assistance of a research assistant. The purpose of the study and its relevance was explained to the respondents to ensure a high response rate and to avoid biasness. These questionnaires were distributed during lecture time. Permission was requested from the lecturers in the departments at the five faculties to administer these

questionnaires during lecture periods. This sample selection process continued until the sample size was reached (Patton 2001: 3).

The quantitative data was analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) computer software, version 26. Relevant univariate and bivariate statistics, both descriptive and inferential, such as T-tests and ANOVA were conducted.

To ensure validity, the questionnaire was subjected to face validity and a pilot test was conducted. Cronbach's Alpha was used to assess the reliability of the questionnaire.

## **1.5 Delimitations and limitations**

### **1.5.1 Delimitations**

Dudovsky (2017: 1-2) stated that the research aims and objectives should be narrowed down to focus on the study. The sample population was restricted to the DUT campuses in Durban where the study is based. It included respondents from only the ML Sultan, Ritson, and Steve Biko campuses in Berea as these are predominantly where the protests have taken place. Since the study sample was small it was subject to limitations of a small sample study. The findings are not representative of all students at DUT. The study only included students from DUT and no other students from various other institutions in Durban. It was also convenient to gather information on these campuses as the researcher is on the campuses daily, however the data collection was delayed due to COVID 19 as students were not on campus. Furthermore, the sample was restricted to five of the six faculties, as the sixth which is the Faculty of Arts, is not located on these three campuses.

Finally, the study was delimited to the student protests and the brand image of DUT as perceived by its' students. The perceptions received or opinions of students were subjective rather than objective facts. These opinions and perceptions truly reflect only on DUT as an institution.

### **1.5.2 Limitations**

Limitations influence conditions that the researcher cannot control, which places restrictions on the methodology and conclusions (Limitations and Delimitations in Research 2017: 1). The following limitations potentially influenced the study:

The research instrument used in the collection of data was a questionnaire, which limits the depth of knowledge that can be gained. However, the questionnaire was an effective tool to identify opinions, attitudes, and descriptions, which is what the study objectives required. Furthermore, it is one of the most popular data collection methods in business studies (Ghauri and Gronhaug 2010: 56).

The researcher administered the questionnaires personally and was assisted by a research assistant. Although such personal administration could influence respondents and cause biased results, this was necessary so that the purpose of the study and its relevance could be explained. Furthermore, it ensured a higher response rate. Care was taken that the researcher did not influence and bias the responses.

### **1.6 Significance of the study**

It is vital for a university to uphold a good image and reputation in the public eye. This affects the attraction of potential future students to the university. It is concerning that at DUT we have annual continuous protests, and no resolution has been found to eliminate these protests. Therefore, it is important to understand students' backgrounds, why students protest and to further understand their reasons for it. The study intends to expand the research on student protest and broaden the understanding of the effect it has on the brand image of DUT. It also intends to educate universities about the importance of preserving a positive brand image and reputation, as well as develop strategies for dealing with protests at the institutions. Hence, there is a need for this research.

### **1.8 Definition of terms**

The following are definitions of the main concepts applicable in this study.

### **1.8.1 Product**

A product satisfies a customer's need and desire, it must be something valuable to be purchaser. DUT must fulfil the service of offering good education to the students (Cunningham 2018: 185).

### **1.8.2 Brand Image**

Image is created in the mind of consumers when they think about a brand (Andrews and Shimp 2017: 31).

### **1.8.3 Protest**

Protest is described as a disagreement or objection that is required to be expressed publicly that is based on inequality (Lofland 2017: 2).

## **1.9 Structure of the study**

This study comprises the following chapters:

**Chapter One:** This chapter highlights the background to the study, the statement of the problem, the aim and objectives of the study, an overview of the methodology, and the delimitations and limitations of the study.

**Chapter Two:** A review of literature is conducted to explore the reasons and causes of student protest and how violence impacts on the staff and students at a higher education institution. The impact of student protest and cultural values on the institution's environment and the influence of student behaviour are discussed. The brand concepts, brand equity, brand awareness, brand personality, brand associations, brand image on customer retention, brand reputation, and university branding are described in depth as this was one of the key aspects of the study. The DUT brand is explained as a corporate brand, as well as the institution's brand recognition and vision. The chapter further explains how DUT's service delivery and teaching and learning resources have been affected by protests.

**Chapter Three:** This chapter presents the research process, research design, population and sampling methods, the sample, and the inclusion and exclusion criteria of the study. It also highlights the sampling criteria, data collection, the instrument and collection methods, as well as the administration of the questionnaire, the data analysis, and the reliability and validity of the study.

**Chapter Four:** The analysis and interpretation of results are presented and discussed.

**Chapter Five:** The final chapter revisits the study objectives, along with a summary on how they were addressed. Recommendations of the study are presented to inform policy and practices at DUT.

## **1.9 Conclusion**

The background of the study, the problem statement, objectives of the study, an overview of methodology, delimitations, and limitation of the study as well the importance of the study were explained in this chapter. Key definitions and terms were outlined.

The next chapter will review the extant literature of relevance to the main concepts underpinning this study.

# CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

## 2.1 Introduction

History has shown that from the early years of Apartheid and beyond, education has remained a great factor of concern. The different challenges amongst ethnic groups affected human relationships and behaviour about domestic, economic, political, religious, and social factors in South Africa. More so, educational factors contributed to the segregation of education and people (Rakometsi 2008: 3). Many organisations around the world, particularly in Durban, have been involved in strikes and protests over the recent years. This reflects the country's dissatisfied consumers, who are frustrated that their salaries remain the same while the price of essentials keep rising. South Africa is known as the "*Protest Capital of the World*", a title rooted in the country's history and engrained in the collective psyche of many South African citizens.

Protest action is generally perceived as a significant add-on process in political demographics. It has always been a means for the disenfranchised to draw attention to a cause in order to influence political leaders. It is also described as the art of concern with questions of who, where and how to achieve what you want. Hence, such an environment is considered conclusive for civil society and is an important factor for protest occurrence (Lancaster 2016: 24). Protests are the vehicles that carry the legacy of past struggles and the aspirations of oppressed people who want to be heard and have their plights addressed in the context of political engagement and equal justice (Nwafor 2016: 79). Protests at many universities in South Africa were sparked by calls for free education, clearance of historic debt and an end to the outsourcing of allied workers.

One of the institutions in Durban that has become well-known throughout the years for its ongoing history of yearly protests is DUT. Violent protests have taken place as a result of the annual increases in registration fees, NFSAS funding, book allowances and student accommodation. The protest has undoubtedly disrupted the academic programme, compromised the safety of students and staff and contributed to a decrease in academic performance.

The aim of the study is to determine the causes of the annual protests. Furthermore, based on the results of this study, to determine if the protests have tarnished the university's brand, and to assess the most effective measures to end protests. This chapter examines the independent and dependent variables in depth and knowledge will be built upon these findings. The literature review further discusses the problem to determine the limitations, delimitations, and significance of the study. This next section views the impact of student protests on the brand image of DUT.

## **2.2 History of DUT**

DUT was made up of two institutions, known as the ML Sultan and Natal Technikon, during the apartheid era when it was founded by George Campbell with 382 students enrolled. Funds to build the technical college were distributed by Maluk Mohammad Lappa Sultan in 1941, which changed the face of the institution providing for non-white people. The Workers' Congress by Advocate Albert Christopher in 1928, marked the launch of a powerful forum, which consisted of the Indian community obtaining qualifications and skills in commerce. On 7 August 1956, ML Sultan Technical College was officially opened with a three-story building, a front of 90 yards standing on Centenary Road. After the historic elections of 1994, when democracy began to take hold, a decision was made in 2002 to combine the two institutions.

The Technikon Natal and ML Sultan merged into one university and was named the Durban Institute of Technology on 1 April 2002. Another change in the name of the institution occurred in March 2006, when it became known as Durban University of Technology (DUT). DUT is made up of five campuses in Durban: the ML Sultan, Steve Biko, Ritson, City campus, Brickfield Road campus and two campuses in Pietermaritzburg. The institution caters for students with impoverished backgrounds, and there are approximately 33 000 students currently enrolled annually. The mission statement focuses on Envision 2030, which encourages students to be creative, innovative, entrepreneurial, and adaptable as they contribute to the development of their region, country, and world, and the infrastructure will help to achieve the vision (DUT Corporate Affairs 2008: 1).



## 2.3 Causes of student protest

The key independent variables of a protest are worthiness, unity, numbers, commitment, and diversity (Wouters and Walgrave 2017: 369). Protest is an expression of an opinion which has methodological, substantive, and theatrical advantages. Protesters generally are the weapon of the weak, they lack access to policy-making processes, and they seek to make it challenging for elected officials. Therefore, they require support from society. Ultimately, they must determine what protests to stage, how the protesters behave, and the factors that influences the strength of the protest. This course influences how elected officials decide to think about the protest message (Wouters and Walgrave 2017: 362).

Protest action has been part of the political expression for decades. Student protest is classified as a form of collective action. Socio-economic, political, and cultural issues are common contributing factors of student protest. Other contributing factors are poor student service, delayed receipt of stipends and the termination of students' benefits. Hence, students continue to fight the struggle of liberation. Furthermore, in regions like Cameroon, Nigeria, Kenya, Egypt, Tunisia and Malaysia, social protests against authoritarian regimes have led to the death and imprisonment of many protesters, which then led to the Arab uprising in 2011 (Postma 2016: 1).

In a case study conducted on the Mbizana Municipality, it was stated that the contributing factors for the recurring protests in South Africa was due to poor service delivery, and the socio-economic and political changes in the country. Additionally, the Mbizana district's residents were dissatisfied with the attitude and the lack of feedback and respect displayed by the municipality's representatives toward members of the community. Community concerns included the dishonesty of councillors, empty political pledges made by government officials, and socio-economic conditions such as no access to water or electricity. It is therefore clear that the rise in protest action emanates from South Africa's impoverished areas and is a result of people's discontent with the government's failure to keep its promises (Nwafor 2016: 26).

The protest action by workers in 1994, served as a warning sign to the dominance of organisations and workers' movements that were linked to wage disputes, policy demands, reviews, and resource allocation. This was an act of disobedience

demonstrated by protesters (Marie- Eve 2012: 114). The majority of protests have been sparked by complaints about the quality-of-service delivery, the attitude of public employees, fraud, and corruption, all of which have a detrimental impact on citizens' perceptions of the government. This served as the impetus for the reasoning that the government had failed (Karakmako 2011: 12; Lancaster 2016: 1-20). Therefore, it is not surprising to witness protests when the government is unable to provide even the most basic of services. For much universities evidence indicated that the plans of the universities are not implemented into daily campus routine, this could be for reasons of change resistance, personal key reasons or not enough financial resources to update the systems (Moerschell and Novak 2020: 38). Thus, it is foreseeable that protests will occur when the government fails to provide the essential services. Protests are differently rated in certain areas. This places a burden not only on the economy but on the municipalities where protest occurs. Due to the Gauteng premier David Makhura's attention to the issue of service delivery and holding government officials accountable, there were not many protests in Gauteng in 2015. According to The Municipal IQ (2014: 1), municipalities hold a powerful position. However, given the subpar municipal services, this may not be a true reflection. This may explain the lack of response to the service delivery concerns that have motivated protest actions.

Political protests generally take various forms, which is a sign of community mobilisation for improved living conditions, access to basic services, and job-related income opportunities. Political protests often take place in a distinct manner, which serves as a marker for community mobilisation and the improvement of living conditions, basic services, and job-related income opportunities. In South Africa, there has been a rise in protest action due to the demands for land, housing, and service delivery. In addition, the latest wave of protest may be traced back to the rise of militant trade unions, which has exacerbated political divides and increased the rate of political campaigning during both local and national elections. Hence, the outcome of various protests is a mix of government concerns on issues taken through the legal processes and unresolved matters on loss of lives. Given that the government is both the focus of the protests and the aggressor in the conflict, the consequences of protesters' behaviour are unclear. (Nwafor 2016: 32).

Political theorists have drawn attention to the phrase, "*political opportunities and mobile research*", which they believe to be the key cause of most protests (Southall

2014: 49). The youth has been identified as protagonists of protest. Their frustration is justified because of factors such as high unemployment rates, low levels of educational attainment, political disengagement, ineffective government, unequal gender roles, and widespread authoritarianism, all of which contribute to the aggravation they feel when confronted with obstacles to their development. (America Economic and Social Affairs 2012: 3).

Padyachee (2010: 3) reports that fee concerns by university students should be dealt with a year in advance to avoid disappointments the following year. The former Vice-chancellor of DUT, Professor Ahmed Bawa suggested to the Minister of Higher Education, that DUT should work on resolving current concerns of major strikes (Ndlovu 2011: 3). He believed that the quality of education wouldn't be jeopardised as the academic calendar would be adjusted, exam dates will be moved to a later date and the September vacation can be utilised to work on a catch-up programme.

More than 8 000 DUT students were funded by NSFAS, a third of its 25 000 population, which was significantly higher than average for universities (Pirthiraj 2017: 26). Murphy and Pasque (2005: 429) stated that R40-million was allocated to DUT at the beginning of 2010, however, there was still a shortfall of R16.5-million, which was later added to the original amount. Whilst, most student concerns were addressed, the institution stated that the others were out of its jurisdiction. They further stated that a proposal was put forward to fund B-Tech qualifications, but DUT was still awaiting confirmation from government.

Posastiuc (2013: 1) identified protest as a form of collective action or behaviour as people engage in social interaction and respond to structural ambiguity. Based on a viewpoint that redefines social action, spontaneous processes are actions that arise and take place outside of the current social structure and are generated in response to unidentified situations.

Collective behaviour is an unpredictable social process that is not governed by accepted rules. It is a shared culture that shapes power and resistance, hence people are more likely to adopt existing tactics of protests than to invent a new one. This suggests that the protestors of today are using the same tactics that were used during the apartheid era (Biggs 2012: 2). Smelser (1962: 21) assumes that protest participants are rational and have the ability to reason, however, circumstances other

than social existence factors have created an illogical and rational behaviour of people and therefore maybe regarded as unjustifiable. Considering the progress since the end of the apartheid regime, and the levels of infrastructure developments in communities, commentators have questioned the increase in protest and violent action from protestors, especially those in disadvantaged communities. According to Taunyatswala (2014: 27), who recommended a change in the notion of activism, this indicates a failure in service delivery. It is also a flawed and consigned dominant narrative in the eyes of critics.

Taunyatswala (2014: 27) emphasised the following important factors as significant predictors for the occurrence of protests:

- Struggle to deepen democratic participation and community involvement with the development process;
- The struggle to benefit from control in development of a democratic state;
- Economic participation and decent livelihoods;
- The struggle for enhancement of the government participation and responsiveness; and
- Engaging political leaders to be more effective.

These indicators suggest that protest is not a sign of failure but that of an effective state caught in its success. This means it is a victim of a democratic environment where citizens who were previously denied participation now grapple with controversy. According to the South African Knowledge, Transfer and Skills Development Unit (2012: 3), the main reason of protests in South Africa was unfulfilled promises of service delivery and concerns of the worsening conditions of government departments to supply basic services. Other contributing factors include the transparency related to poor governance, political infighting, and the inability by government to perform municipal functions.

Mashamate (2014: 236) identified the following shortcomings at local government levels:

- Lack in response to citizens' requirements;
- Organisational culture not lending itself to effective service provision;
- Government systems being unfavourable to local municipalities;

- Municipalities are forced to carry the burdens of failed policies.; and
- Mixed reaction of higher authorities towards protesters and the disregard of their demands.

Municipal IQ (2014) suggests that people are prone to protests due to colder weather conditions, as there is an increase in demand for the socio-economic state which is electricity, housing deficits, water and pollution caused by storms. These demands will only receive attention with the call of protest action; thus, protest remains a common and continuing occurrence. Municipal IQ (2014) urged local municipal counsellors, government officials and ward councillors to include community members in their planning processes. This eliminates their frustrations of being excluded and also contribute to resolving issues such as the lack of communication, false rumours, corruption and mismanagement. Other suggested platforms include the strengthening of local governments and interventions to develop increased human capacity with skills at municipality levels, improved financial management systems, ensure accountability, transparency, participation and providing feedback to protesters (Mashamate 2014: 237).

Student protest has undoubtedly become an action of political activism at a time when the nation is battling to establish democracy in a functional manner. Hence, the problem remains the same or escalate as the year progresses leading to inadequate financial assistance, the problem of hunger and the issue of student accommodation. Some students are forced to live in squatter camps where they are exposed to areas of crime and poverty. They find themselves in this situation as they are dependent on NFSAS and have to share their funds with their families. As such, students are a crucial aspect of the restructured strategy as emphasised by Prof. Bawa below.

*“A lot of the times we forget students come from rural backgrounds and lack the confidence of top performing schools, yet the lecturers put in less effort to teach in the class room, and the institution should focus its energies of undoing the damage of disabled students, poor health and living conditions, holding up the university performance but should focus on working with these conditions in a manner that does not undermine the students’ dignity”, (Bawa 2014: 69-72).*

The use of multiple-choice questions and quizzes by lecturers to ease their marking burden is another factor that hinders student performance and the calibre of graduates. Therefore, student success can be measured in terms of participation, progress and graduating thus, enabling them to contribute to society. According to a report published by the Aspen Institute (2004), the structural framework of inequality may be seen in the context of concerns that impact student progress both inside and outside of the classroom. Equity can be depicted as a topic to redress transformation.

With the resources at their disposal, social workers at educational institutions are able to fulfil a specialised profession that assist with human needs, in this case, those related to student development and abilities. Being underprivileged, whether socially, culturally, economically, politically, or culturally, the goal is to enhance good teaching and learning practices to help students succeed. Everyone should be valued regardless of their character and challenges must be addressed to prevent serious action later. Additionally, social workers should establish programs to avoid violence, which will help to lessen protest at DUT and improve the learning atmosphere there. (Bawa 2014: 110).

### **2.3.1 The Fees Must Fall campaign**

The *Fees must Fall* movement started in Cape Town in 2015. Students raised concern over annual increases in fees and wished for a way forward towards free education. However, Muller (2016: 4) cautioned that the movement may not be beneficial to the development of students coming from the rural areas. According to the author, the government should invest in providing them with better basic education knowledge at the primary and secondary levels. This will better equip students for the university standard of work and will assist the poor in a more beneficial manner. Muller argues that because government spend less on education in comparison to tax GDP than other nations, youth from the rural area were not considered a priority. It is further highlighted in the statistics of the quarterly labour force survey, that 30.5 % of 15- to 34 -year-olds are unemployed and only 3.5 % are in higher education (Muller 2016:4).

The major problem most universities experience is that the NFSAS loans are not repaid on time to cover the overhead cost of universities. These hold back students from registration. The other common factor is that students are provided with funding

very late, book and food vouchers as well as a response from housing are delayed and they cannot register in due time. Students claim that their parents also bear the consequences of funding and as a result of this frustration, they protest. The new challenge will not be racial discrimination but rather background and social status, which is still a contentious issue today. Therefore, the "*Fees must Fall*" campaign is not about fees but about a fight to tackle mistakes made by the forefathers and the history of the Freedom Charter generation (Langa, Ndelu, Edwin and Vilakazi 2017: 13).

South African universities are heavily involved in student protests, rather than being seen as centres of cultured higher learning. Students, therefore, lack confidence in the higher education system and its capacity to adapt to change. At the end of 2015, massive student protests swept across South Africa when former President Jacob Zuma enforced a plan for an 11.5% fee increase for 2016. The *Fees must Fall* movement came as a call for free education or decolonised education, which is also recognised to be a component of popular politics by the "*Born Frees*" generation. When people challenge the freedom and institution-based systems, or reject particular political ideologies, they are met with inflammatory language. Student politics has replicated these tensions in the same way that disenchantment is tied to daily political issues. which erupted from the Marikana Massacre in 2012. Student politics has duplicated contradictions in the same manner of disillusionment which are linked to daily political matters and whenever people challenge the system of freedom and institutions or reject forms of politics are faced with negative terminology. Violent mobs, as a result of protesting students, are a form of affirmative action and the question it raises is whether the country will adapt to the economic and political crisis (Mavunga 2019: 82).

Similar to the "*Fees must Fall*" at UCT, the students at the WITS University also protested against the increase of fees of library books, journal scripts, research equipment and academic salaries. An average student at the university of Rhodes was required to pay an upfront fee of R45 000, hence it became a cry for disadvantaged students economically (Pillay 2016: 155-159). Student protests have damaged the qualification image because of students not having sufficient time to prepare for examinations. The lack of preparation and exhaustion has resulted in having poor pass

rates, and as such, many succumbed to fraud documentation to source employment (Sam 2017: 2).

### **2.3.2 Violence**

The South African Law of (2016) defines public violence as unlawful and unintentional performance of people who are involved in serious actions and intend to disturb the rights of others. The World Health Organisation (2016) defines the term “*Collective Violence*” as an instrumental use of violence by people who identify themselves as members of a group and whom are against another group of people to achieve a social, economic, or political objective. It is obvious that exposure to violence on a global scale normalises violence in society, which serves as the foundation for the acceptance of violent tactics as a common way to express one's political views (Lancaster 2016: 1-20).

The act of violence is closely linked to criminal acts such as damage to property, assault, harassment, bullying, drugs and alcohol abuse, and in extreme cases, murder. Like the reasons for protest, the reasons for acts of violence are also associated with social and economic inequality, poverty social change, and cultural norms that contribute to violence. Due to the rise in protests over the years from 2013 to 2015 which included protests regarding housing, sanitation, protests of national causes and xenophobic attacks, the SAPS could not control or manage these protests (Lancaster 2016: 20). Lancaster (2016: 22) further explained that the reason for xenophobic attacks was due to non-South African citizens taking away business opportunities of the South African citizens. More than half of the protests recorded in in the period of 2013 - 2015 was violent. Therefore, it is suggested that the government impose more stringent limitations on the entry of foreign nationals into South Africa (Lancaster 2016: 22).

The history of the colonial conquest of the violence in South Africa reveal that it was forcefully used to acquire land and resources. Similarly, archives of Apartheid revealed that apartheid was about fiery violence when the predominantly black and working class awaited a change in the future of economic freedom as promised by the constitution. Violent protesters negatively affect elected officials' opinion of the protest due to violent actions. Officials have a negative perception of the worthiness of



protesters, especially if a unified group of protesters provides a clear signal which the government officials easily interpret. Those protesters that disagree and are complex amongst themselves leave politicians puzzled. The strength of protest is directly related to democratic representation (Wouters and Walgrave 2017: 364).

### **2.3.3 Violence at learning institutions**

Education at universities and schools and mental health, are topics that are at the forefront of discussions involving protocols at education centres. Safety and security have been prioritised by violent events that have forced policies at learning institutions to be changed (Kennedy 2021: 1). Measuring public violence is complicated by the difficulty of developing a suitable definition. The nature of public violence can shift and expand, starting with housing, poverty, and attacks on foreign-owned shopkeepers. Another method of acquiring information should be built through efforts of collaboration and analyses of role players in order to establish a common understanding of the meaning of violence during crowd events. An example is the peace monitor system that emanated from the signing of the National Peace accord in 2002. Such ideas could be used to address South African violence. Further to violence, students also received mixed signals from the council and Minister of Education Blade Nzimande, who indicated that the government was yet to make a firm decision about the fees issues, hence, the "*Fees must Fall*" campaign is poised to continue (Ndelu 2015: 30)

According to Cornell and Maeng (2020: 25), the current generation of students is exposed to more acts of violence via social media, which lessens the value and the impact of violence. The study further stated that violence was prevalent in the youth from multiple outlets such as newspapers, advertisements and social media. Due to the increased exposure, students in today's learning institutions are not sensitive to the actions of violence as they do not view violence so intensively as earlier generations. They lack the empathy, and emotional and physical pain caused to victims because of violent attacks.

The main causes of the violent uprising in the "*Fees must fall*" at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) was due to unresponsive management and the police using rubber bullets to vacate students from residences and arresting student leaders. Students also targeted the control room, which burned down on the CPUT

campus. This was an act of defensive violence as it was going to be used to victimise them. Furthermore, the police did not care about the students being hurt; all they were interested in was protecting the building, and they wanted to be heard and, therefore, had to act extremely (Linden 2017: 4).

The massive shooting outbreak that took place at Columbine High School in the USA, compromised the lives of staff, students, and teachers. The incident led to negative outcomes such as staff retention as the staff members changed professions out of fear; and enrolment targets were decreased. The US Secret Services National Threat Assessment identified the attackers as being to be under ages of 17 and 16. These individuals were drug abusers, had a history of post-criminal records and individuals with unstable mental issues. Most of the attackers were found to have previously displayed disruptive behaviour in schools. The key finding from the school initiation was that the reaction of attackers was impulsive and sudden. Therefore, as a preparation tool and to avoid the situation from repeating itself, the school implemented the threat assessment team to combat violence. Considering the number of students that were affected by the trauma, more emphasis was placed on creating law and procedure to protect its students (Cornell and Maeng 2020: 26).

### **2.3.4 Violent behaviour**

Ideology is a belief or imagination of what life is; as it seeks to reflect an interest and fulfil a life purpose, which in turn reflects on the background of previous historical generations, also known as "*Geno politics*", that influenced people's behaviour and contributed to a protesting culture (Fomunyam 2017: 12). Human behaviour is influenced by the internal environment; therefore, it is difficult to generalise as a uniformed theory. Unstable homes might be found common factor when it comes to for student behaviours, but the reaction of an individual student is dependable on his/her background (Bawa 2014: 2).

At the Universities of Ibadan and Gambia, students protested about the living conditions of hostels, food price increases and the rape of a 13-year-old girl by a police officer. In Egypt and Morocco, the dissatisfaction of socio-politics and authoritarian regimes lead to violent protests and claimed the lives of people, which brought about the Arab uprisings in 2011. This constituted to up to 40% of the group, which was

students, who fought for the scarce resources of poor living conditions and hunger. Students also protested at the Ibn Tufail University because of increased prices of the bus tickets, food, and the lack of water and power supply at hostels. Many people also portrayed images of what they died for. The student struggle started with colonialism and although it is over, they have not stopped (Fomunyam 2017: 3).

## **2.4 The impact of student protest on the institution environment**

Due to ongoing protests, students are left with traumatic experiences and post-traumatic disorders (Sam 2016: 2). Political activists have changed their resource interactions considering political facts. They withdrew from religious beliefs and women in the workforce have decided not to have children. This compromises the lives of the future generation due to the outcomes of protests. Prior studies indicated that involvement in civil rights participation has a subsequent impact on careers with activists entering the workforce and changing jobs. Hence, the activists empower education and career choice while but assisting former activists in expressing their views (Darren and Sherkat 1997: 1049).

### **2.4.1 Measurement of education**

Muztafizur, Rouf and Uddin (2016: 377) state that education services are often intangible and difficult to measure since the outcome is reflected in the transformation of an individual's knowledge, characteristics, and behaviour. Therefore, student behaviour during protests could influence the perception and quality of education at DUT. Long-term survival is dependent on quality that sets one university apart from the rest. Universities' attributes and roles change as management changes over time. Pinguin (2005: 150) defines customer satisfaction as the attitude or feeling of service towards the usage of a product or service. The violent protests at DUT resulted in damaged property having to be repaired, costing the university millions and resulting in lecturers teaching with minimum resources. This also compromised learners' focusing on lectures, thus resulting in poor performance. However, DUT must maintain the 80% pass rate rule (Mushama 2020: 90). Furthermore, Kazmi (2011: 60) indicated that the SRC president, Mfanafuthi Ngwabe, requested the university to cancel charges against those students who were arrested for violent protest and damaging

of university property. They believed that the housing department was involved in fraud and therefore wished to arrange a forensic audit.

Just like the violence that occurs in schools, which has caused teachers to be afraid of continuing with their careers and losing the motivation for teaching, similarly, violence that occurs at universities has been influenced by political instability aimed at conflict, raising questions about the safety of learners and staff at the university. The disruptions caused have affected students' performance and impacted on dropout rates, resulting in students leaving the institution. Although substantial changes have taken place in South Africa since the 1994 elections, social, economic, and educational challenges remain a concern (Mushama 2020: 17).

Similar to political protests, China experienced the Senkaku/Diaoyu crisis in 2012, which involved 400 protesters spread across 208 cities in response to the Chinese government's purchase of the three Senkaku/Diaoyu islands. Trade and investment impacted on Chinese government officials who undermined investors' confidence and product boycotts rarely succeeded due to from consumer adjustments and free-riding. The cadre responsibility target system in the 1980s was not made public. Per capita GDP and GDP growth, leaders enforced tax targets while respecting the autonomy of the villagers. This contained the factors of GDP and tax revenue, which are career drivers for local Chinese officials (Foley, Wallace, and Weiss 2018: 362). However, the protest leads to localised economic costs, causing leaders to miss the revenue and GDP targets, ultimately lowering ed the economic hypothesis. The 2012 crisis has also affected the trade and FDI. Guangzhou Automobile Company reported the damage of 1800 cars and a 30% decrease in car sales of the Japanese brand. They feared that prolonged tension may damage the credit ratings of companies doing business in China. The results confirm that Japan protests had a negative effect on FDI growth, and leaders who were anti-Japan were less likely to be promoted (Foley, Wallace, and Weiss 2018: 23).

The societal signal protests affected the government officials, and politicians and their beliefs confirmed that the past intended actions changed as a mark of exposure. The size, their unity, and persuasion of the protesters are the important factors to consider during a protest. They know amongst themselves what they really want, and their perceptions of their group matters most. The author further emphasised that results

determine politicians' reactions to different forms of protest; the type of societal signal matters for representatives' opinion; and pushes the emphasis on elected representatives' decision to become in line with the opinion of the signals they are exposed to (Wouters and Walgrave 2027: 362).

There are three factors that Wouters and Walgrave highlighted which elected representatives react to:

1. The Salience Representative's behaviour towards an issue;
2. The position they hold; and
3. Their intent to undertake action regarding the issue.

They further indicated that student protestors' main aim is to bring about exposure to the problem, hoping that politicians will positively intervene. Although politicians observe the facts of student protestors, it is easier to convey messages of the protestors at parliament and resolve issues and track public preference out of fear of being accountable during election time. The behaviour of protestors is dependent on whether politicians should act or not.

#### **2.4.2 Cultural values and its influence on student behaviour**

Culture is accomplished through a pattern of behavioural responses that is acquired over time. These include explicit beliefs, values, norms, customs, arts, and for some, economic status that is transmitted by the strong sharing amongst family and other social organisations. Cultural aspects are evident in aspects of human traits that which influence the behaviour, beliefs, perceptions, and emotions of others. All these have important implications for learning (Abou-El Wafa, El-Gilany, Abd-El-Raouf, Abd-Elmouty, and El-Sayed Hassan El-Sayed, R. 2015: 252).

Being multi-cultural in education allows students to reach their potential as learners. Culture respects individuality while portraying respect for society. The contributions of the various ethnic groups, sexual orientations, and religions make up the population of the country. While understanding the various cultural beliefs, better communication is facilitated between lecturers and students. This also encourages students to better resolve conflicts in non-violent ways, thus enhancing a world of harmony and peace.

Moreover, cultural values and teachings in religion is a complex topic (Abou-El Wafa *et al.*, 2015: 253).

Learning methods defer for every individual, especially in the ways in which one interprets information during a lesson. It was suggested that students learn effectively when a preferred method and language is used, thus promoting better understanding and leading to improved performance. In the case of the study conducted on international nursing students, many experienced challenges with the system as the subject was taught in a language outside their home country. Students of the majority population (86.3%) indicated that cultural differences promoted a language barrier, and this affected the teaching and learning process. In other words, speaking a language is not the same as understanding culture, as individuals may speak the same language but not necessarily share the same culture (Abou-El Wafa *et al.* 2015: 254). Similarly, although English is a profound language, at DUT there are also international students that enrol non-Diploma courses. The institution should consider teaching them in a language that they understand. The researcher observed that many of the international students at DUT faced this challenge.

To improve diversity in classrooms, lectures should consider taking time to get to know students on an individual capacity, their hobbies, and what makes them different. Allowing them to be comfortable would make them feel valued and increase participation with their peers, thus ultimately improving performance. Acknowledging and respecting people from the different with various cultures improves social life and prepares the students for the world of work. Academics should consider using real-life examples as analogies from different cultures to assist students to relate to the lessons and retrieve information.

## **2.5 Brand identity**

A brand identity is a collection of all the elements that companies create to portray the correct image to consumers. In essence, it is defined by the value it adds to consumers' lives (Klopper and North 2011: 59). The new DUT identity represents an uncluttered, conscious movement to recognise those cultures that were marginalised through the visual depiction of universities and the province. Each of the faculty logos appears to be in respected faculty colours and features a black triangle with five white

triangles. In each case, the black triangle is repositioned to mirror the position of the faculty triangle in the primary logo DUT branding.

### **2.5.1 Brand awareness**

DUT maintains a consistent presence in the marketplace through ongoing advertisements on radio, billboards, newspapers, and the webmail routes, ensuring strategic marketing. The strategic function of marketing enables DUT to improve competitiveness in a changing world. It is an advantage in student recruitment, reputation building and fundraising. DUT is in a position of technology which makes knowledge useful. The social and cultural factors guarantee the future of DUT's corporate strategy, leadership, enhanced synergy, and a marketing orientation. These services are provided to raise awareness of DUT, its reputation, and course offerings; increase registration enquiries; increase student numbers with students from outside KZN; and ensure consistent, accurate, timely, and professional communication. In addition, the brand awareness assures students that the education they get is a smart investment for their future and worth the tuition money (DUT Brand Manual 2017: 2).

### **2.5.2 Brand personality**

Brand personality can be identified through human characteristics, and demographics which assist consumers in better understanding the product and defining what attitudes they have towards it. It also assists in creating equity (Becker and Palmer 2009: 32).

### **2.5.3 Brand equity**

Brand equity is a multi-dimensional concept. It is gathered from a consumer's point of view. Brand equity presents attributes like better performance, risk reduction, lower costs, and a positive image (Mourad, Kortam 2011: 403). Kalaimahal and Kumaradeepan (2020: 3) state that brand equity assists customers to interpret, store, and obtain large amounts of information about a variety of products and brands. These play a role in customers' purchasing decision and enhances consumer satisfaction when the product is tried and tested. They further state that the first step to building a strong brand is to determine the brand's power. The study identified five different brand

equity factors. They are loyalty to a brand, brand awareness, perceived quality, and brand associations in conjunction with brand assets. A great quality brand is built by a sequence of logical steps with consumers (Keller 2008: 3). In addition, Faquhar (1990: 57) emphasises how important it is to have a consistent image, meaning that all marketing tools and platforms should be the same and work well together.

Student satisfaction may be the deciding element in higher education, instead of academic excellence as a measure of the development of a customer-based brand (Vukasovic 2015: 1). It is stated that a brand is more favourable when customers tend to purchase more of the brand, although there are a variety of other products of the same nature (Pappu, Pascale and Ray 2005: 143). The truth about a brand results lies in the consumers' feelings and attitudes toward it (Keller 2013: 35). This means that consumers are willing to pay a higher price for a particular brand as compared to its competitors (Lassar, Mittal and Sharma 1995: 1).

#### **2.5.4 Brand associations**

According to Chandon (2003: 5) and Sultan and Wong (2019: 332), a brand image is defined as a consumer's perception and belief of a brand reflected by brand associations found in the mind of the consumer. The subjective insight of brand associations consists of tangible and intangible questions related to the cognitive and emotional evaluations by the consumer. One can either use and change a list of brand associations that already exists or start by asking people what brands they think of and how strong those associations are. In the context of a university, students develop trust and satisfaction in the institution's brand over the duration of their studies. Thus, justifying the relationship between brand image, brand performance, and perceived quality is evidently significant in the context of university branding (Sultan and Wong 2019: 332).

Brand associations can influence the image, for example through functional branding, which is the disruption of lessons and tests, which impacts on the academic calendar, also having cleaners tidy up the place due to students protesting and vandalising property and bins. Symbolic branding affects students as consumers, considering their feelings towards the protests and their perceptions about the protests, as well as and their safety in the environment during protests on campus. Students who lack



experience with an education service provider will have no one description to assist in the process of university recognition (Keller 1993: 1).

### **2.5.5 Brand image**

According to Sultan and Wong (2019: 332), branding of universities is classified as a recent marketing tool that aims to attract, retain students, engage, as well as position universities in the competitive higher education sectors. They go on to state that as higher education becomes more globalised, increased competition and lower government financing put much greater pressure on institutions to sell their programs and courses. The concept of the brand image of a place should be for several reasons. Firstly, people perceive significant differences in place personalities or place brand images. Secondly, the distinctive dimensions of the measurement scale is a valuable measurement tool for various stakeholders of a place, such as governments at municipal, national, or regional level (Fetscherin and Heilmann 2012: 2).

### **2.5.6 Brand image on customer retention**

Universities have become business operations with students as their customers. As a result, student satisfaction must be considered (Chen 2016: 1). In a system of education, universities are now based on the conception of business operations that utilise value-marketing performance to establish their brand and attract more students. Students prefer to study at a public university with a good brand image as opposed to the private education sector. From a recent study about the difference between the public and private education in Nigeria, it was found that there is a dynamic difference as students prefer to study at public education sectors for better social life, and it is more affordable hence this has affected the demand and supply curve. Due to private universities not affecting the market significantly, their marketing has changed to become dynamic (Olaleye, Ukpabi and Mogaji 2020: 19-36).

Another contributing factor to dropout rates and low enrolment figures is the protests and the university focusing more on first-year students as compared to the students currently there. According to Chen (2016: 1), universities could lower their fees if they have loyal students as their customers. Word-of-mouth also plays a vital role in students' purchasing and decision-making. Negative word-of-mouth can play a

negative role in connection with the brand of a university. Furthermore, a lack of resources contributes to students' not choosing a particular university and results in a poor brand image of the university (Richins1983: 1).

It is vital for university management to identify the reason students choose a particular university. Those variables that have an impact on students' choosing and being loyal to a particular university and continuing in higher education must be determined. Students who may not have a positive impression of the university and who are not being loyal may create a poor image of the university (Mulyono, 2016: 163).

The key to a successful brand image takes special details of the brand, logo, the product, and service it offers, which leaves a remarkable and memorable mark in the minds of consumers. These are the key tools in making a particular brand stand out amongst other similar competitive brands, making it different and favourable in a strong choice of a marketing mix. Hence, contributing to effective measures of a consumer's response rate, it is also important that visibility, credibility, expertise, objectivity, attraction, and power criteria could be considered in terms of when and how a brand could become famous for with a particular event (Keller 1993: 22).

### **2.5.7 Brand reputation**

Brand image and corporate reputation are defined as the combined opinions of customers, community members, and stakeholders' perceptions and attitudes towards the company, linked to customers' evaluation of the company. It also influences satisfaction and purchase intention, which is reflected on a company's performance in the quality of products and services it offers. Negative information affects customer evaluation of a company's product more intensely than positive information, deterioration in purchase intention of negative information damages brand equity and corporate assets that the company developed over a period of time. The impact of negative information on a company's financial status is crucial in terms of premiums than positive information, because it is used to determine the ultimate decision of consumer evaluations and processes, involving risks. Thus, people make decisions based on losses rather than future gains. Hence, ethical reputation can be regarded as a homogenous attribute that damages brand equity regardless of equity (Jung and Seock 2016: 15).

According to Becker (2009: 8), globalisation has an impact on universities, forcing them to change because of added pressure among competing universities. Being resistant to change has negative effects as other competing universities may opt for newer systems of technology in terms of teaching and learning. Branding can differ in terms of the size of the university. Compared to bigger universities who spend a lot of money on advertising without knowing if it will have a positive or negative impact, smaller universities are more likely to brand and market themselves to establish a favourable image. Perceived quality must be backed up with proof of customer loyalty. Marketing a university is complex in the sense that sometimes it is a product and sometimes a service. Students are both the product and the customer (Taylor, Celuch, Goodwin 2004: 27).

Bar Beau (2015: 5) reported that housing and funding concerns were addressed with the SRC at DUT, who agreed upon actions to address these concerns in 2009. However, in 2010, students were short of funding and insisted on being registered even though they would not be able to pay it back. Kazmi (2011: 58) indicated that the SRC President requested the university cancel charges against those students who were arrested for violent protest and damaging of university property. The students believed that the housing department was involved in fraud and therefore wished to arrange a forensic audit. Unable to pay back, students wanted DUT to fund loans worth R35-million to those who qualified for registration in 2014. Kathmandu (2013: 2) state that in the culture of repayment, student funding would be a problem as: *“It is not advisable to say more funding is required when there is a system of non-repayment”*. These contributing factors may lead to damaging the brand name of the university. As a matter of fact, the university would not be able to be sustained following an ongoing cycle of non-repayments.

### **2.5.8 University branding**

According to a study conducted at a Swedish university, fewer places were occupied at the university due to demand exceeding supply, hence student recruitment was stated as an inactive approach. The outcome was increased competition and marketing was considered an unnecessary cost using the UK theory of approach. It was further stated that there have been disruptions in higher education moving

towards marketization; therefore, there is still no indication by scholars on how universities have carried out their marketing strategies (Becker and Palmer 2009: 1).

Temple (2011: 112) found that English institutions are unclear about higher education strategies and which specific brands are appropriate for universities. Hence, they are under pressure and spend more time and money on marketing and branding to make them unique in light of the changing market conditions. If unique, it becomes the key focus and may not acquire its meaning but could be trendy. Therefore, individual values and thoughts within an organisation are recommended to assist in the creation of a strong cultural brand to develop university brands and resolve the uncertainty of marketizations.

Park (2009: 27-30) mentions two aspects of brand equity: the macro aspects comprising of market share and leadership and consumer familiarity, knowledge, loyalty and preferences forms properties of the micro items. Park further indicates that "*functional brand image*" refers to product attributes of a brand which performs the function of satisfying customers' needs. He also states that symbolic brands, on the other hand, is a non-product-related brand that satisfy higher-level personal needs of the customer. Therefore, it can be drawn from the case of DUT that customers who are the respondents, can measure symbolic brands in terms of knowledge obtained from the university.

A student may be aware of a particular brand of the university, not knowing how the product works unless it is used. The student may only appreciate the brand after they have completed the qualification and has graduated. The decision to study at a particular university is mainly recommended by word of mouth (Chen 2016: 1). In higher education, the brand of a university has to live up to the promise of a service and the outcomes of a student, although it is a complex set of benefits that provides customer satisfaction. The image and reputation of a university brand assists to conjure up a level of brand equity in a student. These are vitally important in the development of customer loyalty and to ensure the student stays longer to complete post- graduate studies at university (Kieran 2009: 1). The results from the study of reputational risk at the University of Zambia conducted by Namukokoba (2020: 68) revealed that student protests, slow progression of staff members and abuse of social media affected the reputation of the university, furthermore the documents and policies

were found to be ineffective in managing reputational risks of the university. Branding in higher education is about what the institution stands for and there are no limits to the services it offers. The brand is identified by the point where the values and constituents meet in accordance with expectations. It involves strategic direction, allocation of resources, curriculum development, and hiring of staff. Many universities often adapt to a brand strategy to enforce ranking in higher education (Becker and Palmer 2009: 15). The brand image of Covenant University situated in Nigeria has improved over the years due to ranking by world leading ranking bodies (Olaleye *et al.* 2020: 11). The social image of an institution plays a role in influencing its position in the marketplace, and this affects the selection process (Paden and Stell 2006: 45).

From a perspective of emotional branding, brand strategists should be focused on captivating and inspiring consumers. The story of emotional branding must impact on consumer lifestyles, goals, and aspirations of consumers, which creates an important network of social links with society (Thompson, Rendfleisch and Arsel 2006: 55). Similarly, Fournier (2017: 20) continues to state that the meanings of the relationship, love and self-connection, loyalty, and trust only occurs when brands form part of a consumer's life. The Equity Brand model presented by Keller (2003: 92) is based on the resonance of a brand which refers to the level of attachment and the relationship that a consumer has with the brand. Ramoketsi (2017: 50) indicated that society only understands educational aims when they understand educational intent from the foundation of learners. Then only can they judge the biasness of government that contributes to their progress.

## **2.6 The DUT corporate branding**

According to DUT's Advertising, Corporate Brand and Marketing (2018: 6), the university's focus is on attaining a high calibre of students by creating an image in the minds of the grade 9-12 learners. Therefore, DUT offers an uncompromised brand reinforcement to reposition the brand in the public domain. The aim is to reinstall the perception of the university as committed to teaching, research, academic excellence, and student conduct. To establish the university as student-centred requires safety, facilities and continuity of the academic programme (DUT Brand Manual 2017: 11). The manual further stresses establishing the brand in the minds of stakeholders,

highlighting student and staff achievements, and offering courses which are affordable and competitive.

The Executive Dean's communique, circulated on the 6<sup>th</sup> of February 2020 to the Faculty of the Management Sciences, highlighted the importance of portraying an unwavering support of the faculty. Being the largest faculty at DUT, it has to create a progressive and responsive nature which impacts on the corporate, general, and sector leadership in society. The Dean further stated that:

*“Students are our purpose and reason for a longer stay at DUT. Hence, students and their peers should be satisfied. The university should make certain to assist in resolving queries efficiently, assistance with new and returning students from point of direction to completion and provide service to the stakeholders to seize partnerships that which ultimately do not leave parents and students feeling dejected. The learning and growth development are contributory factors for the future learners are dependent on the quality of service we provide. Hence, adopting new teaching methods should not be ignored as this is the reality of the world changing and preparing for the fourth industrial revolution. Therefore, the image and reputation of the institution should be transformed into the best training centre in the country”.*

The Vice-chancellor raised questions in an email circulated on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of February 2020 of reasons why DUT was a common ground for protest, which has become an annual trend. He attributed this to issues of trust. He further mentioned that staff, students, and various stakeholders should realise that continuous strikes have a negative impact on the DUT brand image and ultimately affects its functional component. Graduates struggle to find jobs as it was impossible to hide from the fact that the institution is referred to as, *“The strike capital of higher education”*. He further recommended that the DUT team should start with the setting of goals and have the end product in mind, which clarifies how we do it and what needs to be done. The DUT corporate brand manual is intended to provide guidelines in the application of corporate branding that defines the institution. The vision, mission, and core values are empirical. Promotion of DUT through serving the community and by building partnerships with community

leaders, schools, industry and government are essential. The focus is on technology which is important for employability.

DUTs' focus is on attaining a good calibre of students by creating an image in the minds of the grade 9-12 learners. Therefore, DUT offers an uncompromised brand reinforcement over the next five years to reposition the brand in a public domain. The aim is to reinstall the perception of the university as committed to teaching, research, academic excellence, and student conduct. To establish the university as student-centred includes safety, facilities, and continuity of the academic programme. To establish the brand in the minds of stakeholders, student and staff achievements are continually highlighted and to offer courses that which are affordable and competitive.

Organisations that are favoured by customers are more likely to be successful, in comparison to organisations that are disliked. Customers will invest in or buy a product or brand that they are content with. As a result, it is critical for the organisation to establish a solid reputation, first by establishing an identity and then by understanding "*Who we are and what we are here for*". A brand that is trusted and cost-effective, hence it is important for the organisation to build a strong reputation, firstly by building an identity and then knowing the "*What are we and what are we here for*" (Klopper and North 2011: 356). They further highlighted that the main aim of a good organisation will be to focus its energies on attaining great customer feedback, creating an organisational culture of how things are done in that particular organisation, making itself different to stand out from its competitors and other stakeholders. Klopper and North (2011: 357) further state the importance of a great slogan behind a name that creates a strong reputation and that results in a great perception that stakeholders have on their organisation which takes cognoscente of identifying the key stakeholders and what they expect from the company. Being friendly and warm are one of the examples that create good relationships that will last.

Klopper and North (2011: 358) identified the following themes for building a corporate brand:

- Involving top managers with procedures;
- Treating corporate branding as a multi- disciplinary process;
- Aligning the vision, image and cultural backgrounds;

- Identifying role of employees, interaction with customers;
- Seizing relationships with other stakeholders; and
- Consistent monitoring of corporate brands ensuring relevance.

On February 6, 2020, another email informed staff about the 2nd Annual Conference on Higher Learning and the 4th Industrial Revolution (4IR). This conference focused on changing the education system to prepare for the future. Therefore, higher education should embrace the impact of 4IR. The question arises of how lecturers, mentors, and teachers will plan for the transmission of knowledge. Hence, universities should consider redesigning a future-facing holistic experience, taking challenges and opportunities as a means of exploration. This conference aimed to assist with corporate branding and preparing staff and students for the future in conjunction with the 4IR and branding of universities (Duncan 2016: 1).

### **2.6.1 DUT brand recognition and vision**

The new DUT logo represents a beginning. The triangle, as part of the province's heritage, represents Shaka's reign. The "Amasumpa" pyramid-shaped pellets found are early examples of Izindaba, or traditionally fired clay pots (DUT Brand Manual 2021: 6). There is also the triangle form of the Nguni culture, which was taught by the Koi San approximately 350 years ago. The history of the province's reputation as "*The Zulu Kingdom*," currently promoted under Durban Tourism, is on a national and worldwide scale. The colourful logo, representative of the six faculties, is positioned in an upward trajectory intrinsic to learning in higher education. The university's aim is to improve communication and understanding between staff and students and to work with students to broaden their participation in the governance of the university. DUT is a higher education institution committed to providing knowledge, ensuring that students leave the university employable. According to Bucha *et al* (2022: 4501) universities that produce graduates, expose them as the best tool used in higher education to provide that has the required skill for industry.

### **2.6.2 Perception of students and other viewers about the protest**

Postma (2016: 2) expresses concern about how student protests affect the emotions of other viewers and students as they become paranoid about the place of occurrence



and the people involved in violence and protest. The researcher further observed that many students de-register from DUT due to protest. Student protests have many implications for various stakeholders in society. Student protests disrupt economic activities and contribute to poor education standards. These disruptions affected the scope and curriculums of the programmes offered. At the University of Zambia, due to violence and disruption of property, exams were conducted without completion of the syllabus. Some students lost their lives, and as a result, the protesting students were dismissed from the university and arrested. At the University of the Free State, students demanded food and book allowances to the value of R71 million. This has caused a deficit in cash flow (Onivehu 2021: 11).

## **2.7 University service delivery operations**

Perceived quality is the most imperative leader of product brands. It is more difficult to measure an old image with low quality. If consumers do not know about the product, this could make a difficult judgement. Hence, in a system of higher education knowing how to judge quality could be an issue. This also determines the brand positioning in the marketplace.

### **2.7.1 Student perception**

Student protests often present different platforms of political issues however, they rely on the internet as a means of communication and organisation. In November 2010, 50 000 people marched through London streets, protesting against the plans of the government to raise university fees. However, messages went viral on Facebook and Twitter when members of the country followed through to later November and December that year (Becker and Palmer 2009: 32).

In countries with authoritarian regimes or in process of transition to democracy, it is viewed in two components, namely how people view it and how it is adapted to fit their lives (Tom 2017: 4). Further research by Sajuria (2013: 4) is proof that democracy is complex and the internet is responsible for the change in people who protest to understand democracy. When South Africa gained liberation in 1994, South African universities entered the international community in higher education. The changes in the global environment affected the organisational structure, curriculum and

pedagogic approaches and responses to the community. The change towards epistemological justice stems from diverse student populations which impact on culture and processes and the national and global commitment to transform higher education (Schreiber 2014: 9).

It has been reported by many communities' that local government makes empty promises during times of election all because they wish to have more votes however, when elections are over promises are not kept (Mushama 2020: 76). Higher education institutions are pressurised to address issues of equity. Assurance and standardisation of student success and employability are major concerns for students (Schreiber 2014: 11). More so, teachers and lecturers are afraid to continue at schools and universities as they have become victims of protest and feel unsafe in the classrooms (Mushama 2020: 36).

### **2.7.2 Teaching and learning resources**

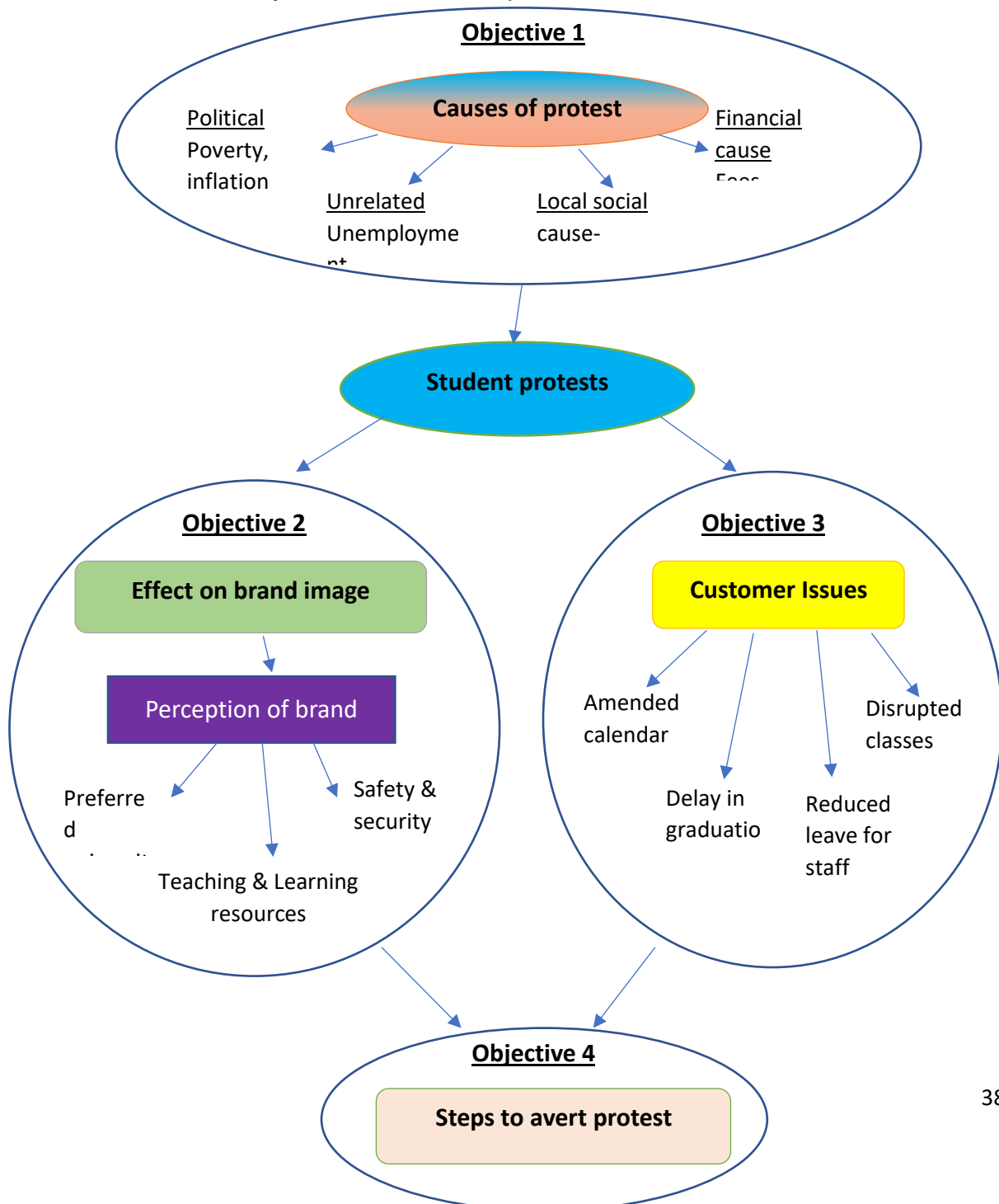
The question of resources yet again arises as to whether universities perform at a better rate due to sufficient allocation of resources. Most students today prefer online blended learning, although some still prefer attending face-face lectures. This has also worked for some academics but for some it was strenuous. Blended learning has a positive effect on reducing dropout rates and improving exam marks. Perez (2011: 818) argue that satisfaction is related to academic achievement and the relationship between student success and student satisfaction. During the pandemic, academic staff at DUT also opted for online teaching and learning to continue with the academic programme. The protests have also impacted largely on university resources as some have resulted in burned libraries and labs where students access the internet. This has compromised the available resources for teaching and learning to run smoothly (Czerniewics, Trotter and Haupt 2019: 20). The lack of methodology remains a universal concern when it comes to student affairs (Bawa 2014: 4). He, therefore, stated that the elements of student affairs methodology in the making include:

1. Emotional, material and academic support.
2. Social recognition, informal and formal for the learning experience.
3. Leadership, personal, and shared values for self-development.
4. Mental, physical and spiritual for wellness.

- Volunteerism, citizenship, participation, academic, service and learning for social responsibility.

## 2.8 Conceptual framework

As illustrated in Figure 2.1, this study adopts the following conceptual framework. Based on the literature reviewed, the research problem and the research objectives, this framework, which is structured according to the research objectives, illustrates all the issues and variables investigated in the study, and through the flow of the framework (illustrated by the arrows) implies the proposed relationships between the variables that are analysed in the next chapter.



## 2.9 Conclusion

Student protest has undoubtedly become an act of “*political activism*” where the country is struggling to maintain democracy in practice. Hence, problems of hunger, student accommodation, poverty and delayed NSFAS funding escalates as the year progresses. Lecturers are forced to teach with minimised resources from damaged property. This has compromised learners’ performance making it difficult to obtain the “80% pass rates” as stipulated by the DUT policy. Although some change has taken place in South Africa after the 1994 elections, the socio and educational challenges remain a concern. These indicators suggest that protests are an action of correcting the errors of state government. Furthermore, citizens are denied participation in decisions of economic and political matters and therefore lack faith in government policies and their promises.

This chapter discussed the history of DUT. The student protest and its causes, as well as their implications for the institution, were explored. The action of violence at learning institutions, violent behaviour with cultural values and its influence was also discussed. Since the brand image component was a major part of the study, the brand identities, brand concept, brand equity and brand personality concepts were highlighted. The link of brand associations, brand image and the effect on university branding and customer retention was discussed in depth. The perception of the protest by students and other viewers were explained, with their effect on the teaching, learning and resources.

In the next chapter presents the research methodology adopted for this study.

# CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

## 3.1 Introduction

The information gained in the literature study was used to develop an understanding of the background and the research problem. It was also used to identify gaps in the knowledge about protest action and the image of the university and in order to develop an appropriate research methodology and data collection instrument. In Chapter two, an overview of the student protests and perceptions of the brand image of DUT was described and examined. This chapter reviews the research methodology that was adopted and the collected data from the questionnaires. This chapter outlines the research design, sampling method, data collection and analysis. reliability, validity, as well as the pilot study. To put the empirical findings into perspective and to facilitate possible replication by other researchers, it is important to understand the research methodology followed. As such, this chapter provides the rationale for the research design, data collection, sampling method, questionnaire, and data analysis.

## 3.2 Aim and objectives of the study

The main aim of the study, as mentioned in Chapter 1, is to assess the effects of the student protests on the brand image of DUT as perceived by its' students.

The researcher intends to determine the major causes of student protest and how the university can develop ways to deal with the protests and thereby avoid tarnishing the brand of DUT.

The objectives of the study are:

- To determine the causes of student protests.
- To determine whether student protests affect the brand image of DUT.
- To establish whether students' strikes affect service delivery at DUT.
- To ascertain how student protests can be averted.

### **3.3 Research process**

The research process followed in this study was a multi-stage systematic process whereby the researcher formulated a clarifying topic, reviewed the literature, designed the research, collected data, and finally wrote up the research report. These stages were followed to reach an outcome for the research to be considered valid and reliable (Wiid and Diggines 2013: 31; Crosswell, Ebersohn, Eloff, Ferreira, Ivankova, Jansen, Nieuwenhuis, Pieterse and Clark 2019: 36; Mark, Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2019: 173).

### **3.4 Research design**

The research design was based on a quantitative approach as it was the most cost-effective way to collect the data. According to Gravetter (2016: 21), the quantitative method is the most appropriate approach for the examination of specific data from a large number of participants. Quantitative research focuses on the present facts. It entails large samples of the target population answering structured questions. The findings can be analysed with precise estimation. Therefore, results are considered reliable and valid.

This study used a descriptive research design with a quantitative approach. According to Gabriel (2013: 1), the quantitative method of study is explanatory and deductive with numerical data being collected to test a theory. Watson (2015: 1) explained that quantitative research is to be considered as a way of thinking about the world. It is essentially deductive: measurements are made, data is analysed and conclusions are drawn. Quantitative data may be statistically analysed (Watson *et al.*, 2006), with data being described in terms of percentages, and central tendencies such as the mode, median, and means and the range and standard deviation. Analysis of the data in the sample may be used to draw inferences about the population. Usually, the analysis is performed using a set of analysis known as inferential statistics (Gingery 2016: 1). Pre-arranged questions are used in the questionnaire making it easier to appraise the research data gathered.

The process also involves examining the various dimensions of service delivery and then identify the critical elements in the current service delivery at DUT. The research,

therefore, employed a descriptive study to investigate the factors which influenced the service to students at in DUT. Cooper and Schindler (2014: 134) states that descriptive research is a type of study which aims to find out who, what, when, where, and how much.

Collis and Hussey (2013: 58) defines research design as, "*the science and art of planning procedures for conducting studies to get the most valid findings*". As prescribed research, this study also utilised a cross-sectional method to obtain information conditional fields. Cross-sectional studies are inexpensive and the most frequently used descriptive design used in marketing research. Collis and Hussey (2013: 60) state that cross-sectional studies are often used to investigate economic characteristics of many people or organizations when there are constraints of time and resources. The researcher collected data from five faculties across three DUT campuses. The collected information has practical implications for DUT since it allows the institution to direct its resources towards improving weak service dimensions and refining their marketing efforts so that customer expectations are met by the services delivered. This information has practical implications for DUT as they can direct their resources to improving weak service dimensions and to refine their marketing efforts so that customer expectations are met by the services delivered.

### **3.5 Population and sampling**

Survey Research Methods (2008: 1) defines target population as a set of units in which survey data are utilised to make inferences. Furthermore, Vonk (2017: 1) defines target population as a group of people who are chosen for the research study, which affects the validity of the research. According to Hasan (2018: 2), a sample is a subset of the population.

The next section presents the study's target population, the sampling technique and description of sample; the sampling process; and the inclusion and exclusion criteria used in this study.

### **3.5.1 The study target population**

The target population is the total that is made up from of units falling into various subgroups in which the researcher might be interested. The selected sample, as a subset of the target population, provides data from which one can plan for about the larger group and fully reflect on the population (Garner, Wagner and Kawulich 2016: 160). In this study, approximately 25 000 DUT students represented the target population.

### **3.5.2 Sampling technique and description of sample**

In general, the larger the sample size, the better the results for the research purpose. However, this generalisation does not apply to all situations. Fridah (2018: 46) also describes sampling as an action, process or technique of a suitable chosen sample or partial population for the purpose of parameters or characteristics of the whole population. To an extent, the size of an adequate sample depends on how homogeneous or heterogeneous the population is. In other words, how alike or different its members are. Since DUT has a student body made up of different genders, ethnicity, and academic disciplines, etc., although of similar ages, this is a heterogeneous population and therefore requires a larger sample. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2016: 13), sample sizes larger than 30 and less than 500 are appropriate for most research. Leedy and Ormrod (2016: 179) also believe that a sample size of 400 is adequate if the target population size is beyond 5 000. A sample size of This research selected 400 students as respondents is deemed appropriate for this study as it at DUT because the population, at 25000 students, meets both Leedy and Ormrod's (2016) and Sekaran and Bougie's (2016) criteria. Alexander, Jan, and Khati (2017: 62) states that a good sample technique not only assists in identifying the kind of data, but also leads to efficient and accurate data collection. Planning sample design, as a crucial step of the primary data collection in a positive research process, it therefore involves three dimensions: the target population, sampling methods and sampling size (Lacobucci and Gilbert 2018: 285).

According to Hasan (2018: 2), a sample is a subset of the population. The concept arises from the inability of researchers to test all individuals in a given population. A



survey was conducted among the five faculties, that is, Accounting & Informatics, Management Sciences, Applied Sciences, Engineering & Built Environment, and Health Sciences, on the ML Sultan, Steve Biko and Ritson campuses at DUT.

### **3.5.3 Sample method and sample size**

The non-probability sampling method was used in this instance, as it is less complicated and time and money intensive, than a probability, method. With non-probability sampling, the researcher is unable to predict or guarantee that each member of the population will have an equal chance of being selected, but by using a quota sampling method, all components of the population can be represented in the sample. It is often used for small-scale or pilot studies as in the case of the present study. People will be included in the sample because they are available and willing to participate in the study (Wagner, Kawulich and Garner 2017: 8), resulting in the use of convenience sampling.

There are variety of sampling methods which can be used to select a sample. Bryman, and Harley (2019: 239) mentions two major categories of sampling, namely, the probability and non-probability sampling. Probability sampling is the most common technique when a survey needs to make inferences from the population. I, it uses a random selection technique so that each unit of the population has a known chance of being selected and, it is also assumed to be the representative sample which is a likely outcome. The aim of this method is to keep sampling error to a minimum. Leedy and Ormrod (2016: 182) also indicate that non-probability sampling is subjective, and the surveys can produce acceptable results more efficiently and at a minimum cost as opposed to the probability sampling method.

The non-probability sampling method was used in this study, as it is less complicated and time and money intensive, than a probability method. With non-probability sampling, the researcher is unable to predict or guarantee that each member of the population will have an equal chance of being selected, but by using a quota sampling method, all components of the population can be represented in the sample. It is often used for small-scale or pilot studies as in the case of the present study. People will be included in the sample because they are available and willing to participate in the study

(Wagner, Kawulich and Garner, 2017: 8), resulting in the use of convenience sampling.

This sampling technique was a two-step sampling process. The first step was a quota sample representing the population of the five faculties, plus gender. The second step was a proportional sample consisting of the convenience sample method (with a minimum of 80 students) chosen from each faculty selected to give a sample of at least 400 (Sekaran and Bougie 2016: 14). This allowed for some non-useable responses, but still resulting in the minimum sample as suggested by Sekaran and Bougie (2016: 14).

The second step involved the convenience sampling technique to select the actual respondents, as this ensures a quick and easy method to complete the questionnaire. A total of 400 questionnaires were distributed to second, third, fourth- and fifth-year students across the five faculties of DUT which amounted to 80 students per faculty.

### **3.5.4 Inclusion/exclusion sampling criteria**

#### **3.5.4.1 Inclusion**

The full-time registered students from across the faculties and in their second- and third-year qualifications were considered for the study. The study included participants that were eighteen years of age and over, and willing to complete the consent letter attached to the questionnaire.

#### **3.5.4.2 Exclusion**

The first-year students were excluded from the study as they might be under the age of eighteen and are less likely to have experience of student protests. The students from the Faculty of Arts and the Pietermaritzburg-based campuses were excluded from the study as they are situated outside the central campuses of Steve Biko and ML Sultan where most of the protests occur. Postgraduate students and the in-service training students were also excluded from the study as they are not based on campus for the full-time duration.

This study consisted of 40 male and 40 female respondents from each of the five

faculties, which comprised 75 % black students, 15 % Asian, 5 % coloured and 5 % white. This survey excludes post- graduate respondents. Table 3.1 illustrates the resultant sample.

**Table 3.1: Study sample**

	<b>Categories</b>	<b>Sample</b>
<b>University Campus</b>	ML Sultan	133
	Steve Biko	133
	Ritson	134
<b>Generation</b>	X	200
<b>Generation</b>	Y	200
<b>Gender</b>	Male	200
	Female	200
<b>Ethnicity</b>	African	300
	Indian	60
	White	10
	Coloured	30
<b>Total</b>		400

## **3.6 Data collection**

### **3.6.1 Overview of data collection**

Fouche', Strydom and Roestenburg (2021: 200) define data collection as an important part of a problem-solving process which is used to clarify the purpose of any research. These following sections on data collection present the derivation of instrument such as, the structure which includes content, format, pretesting and administration of the instrument. Various data collection techniques exist such that primary data collection methods can be classified in several ways such as: surveys, structured observation schedules, structured interview schedules, questionnaires, checklists, and scales. which are effective in data collection. Surveys, where respondents are asked for their answers, are the method of choice in descriptive research studies. Descriptive studies concentrate on the population from which the sample has been drawn. As this is a quantitative study, the survey method was deemed suitable to gather primary data.

The research instrument used in the collection of data was questionnaires. The questionnaire is an effective tool to get opinions, attitudes and descriptions and is one of the most popular data collection methods to be used for analysis (Ghauri and Gronhaug 2010; Fouche, Strydom and Roestenburg, cited in Research Grassroots 2021: 211). Hair, Bush and Ortinau (2000: 256) distinguish among four types of survey methods, namely: person-administered, telephone-administered, self-administered and computer-assisted surveys. This study employed a person-administered survey which is regarded as the most appropriate data collection technique based on three advantages: more friendly contact, more orderly, and a high 100% response rate.

The researcher, with the aid of a research assistant, administered the questionnaires face-to-face with the study respondents. In this way, the researcher had personal contact with the participants so that the purpose of the study and its relevance could be explained. Whilst this ensures a higher response rate, care was also taken to ensure that the researcher did not influence or prejudice the responses.

### **3.6.2 Data collection instrument**

#### **3.6.2.1 Derivation of the questionnaire**

Collis and Hussey (2013: 303) state that a questionnaire is “*a list of carefully structured questions, chosen after considerable testing, with a view of eliciting reliable responses from a chosen sample*”. According to Garner, Wagner and Kawulich (2016: 61), a questionnaire is considered as one of the most widely used survey data collection methods and technique to collect information from a large sample size. Garner *et al.* (2016) further stated that questionnaires have the following advantages:

- Each respondent is asked the same question;
- They can be administered at a minimum cost;
- They provide an effective and efficient way of collecting responses from a large sample prior to the quantitative analysis of study; and
- The respondents remain anonymous and can provide a truthful response without fear of being victimised. especially at the time of Protest action and allow contact with inaccessible respondents such as students.

Consequently, this research involved the use of structured questionnaires as a means of gathering the relevant information. The questionnaire consisted of closed-ended questions containing the Likert scale option. Sekaran and Bougie (2016: 9) state that structured questionnaires are used conducted when the information required is ultimately known. The research was descriptive in nature, and data was collected through a self-developed questionnaire utilising the amended instrument. This method was suitable to assess the status of perceptions held by students with respect to the quality of services and the impact of protests on the brand image of the university. Before pre-testing, the supervisor assessed the instrument for content and structure. The instrument was amended after being reviewed for validity and structure by the supervisor before sending to the respondents Kawulich (2005: 9).

Table 3.2 below provides details on the derivation and structure of the questionnaire.

**Table 3. 2: Questionnaire derivation table**

Objectives	Construct	Question	Reference Sources
<p><b>Effect of student protest</b>  <b>Objective 2:</b> To determine whether student protests affect the brand image of DUT.            2.1 Of Questionnaire</p>	BRAND IMAGE OF DUT	1. Student protest affect the brand of DUT. (Dependent variable)	Mulyono, 2016: 163
<p><b>Objective 3:</b> To establish whether students' strikes affect service delivery at DUT.            2.2 Of Questionnaire</p>	STUDENT PROTEST	2. Student Protest affects the adjustment of the calendar, delays graduation, lectures and syllabus. DUT Operations. (Dependent variable)	Becker and Duncan (2016: 1)
<p><b>Objective 1:</b> To determine the causes of student protests.            3.2 and 3.4 Of Questionnaire</p>	STUDENT PROTEST	3. Main reason for protest is due to unmet demands of educational and financial resources, clearance of historic debt, operational matters and service providers. (Dependent variable)	Nwafor (2016: 216) and Formunyam (2017 : 1-12)

		Students protests because they want their demands to be heard and fulfilled (from Literature)	
<b>Brand image of DUT</b> <b>Objective 3.6</b> Of questionnaire		1. DUT has effective brand image on customer retention (Independent Variable)	Chen (2016: 4)
<b>Objective 2:</b> To determine whether student protests affect the brand image of DUT		2. DUT holds a favourable disposition in the Higher education sector	DUT Brand Manual (2018: 2)
<b>3.7, 4.2 and 4.7</b> of Questionnaire		3. DUT is a public university and a university of technology (Independent Variable)	
3.13 of Questionnaire	BRAND IMAGE OF DUT	4. Student behaviour toward protest action could potentially influence the perception and the quality of DUT (Independent Variable)	Richards (2016: 2)
4.5 of Questionnaire		5. A brand image is defined as a consumer's perception of a brand reflected as an association in the mind of the consumer (Dependent Variable)	Andrews & Shimp (2017: 31)
<b>Brand Marketing of DUT</b> <b>Objective 2:</b> To determine whether student protests affect the brand image of DUT 2.7 Of Questionnaire		1. Students prefer to study at a well -known branded university look for term for recognised brand Dependent variable	Chen (2016: 1); Ernest and Klopper (2017).
4.1, 42 of Questionnaire	BRAND IMAGE OF DUT	2. DUT has effective ways of advertising in building a brand reputation (Dependent variable)	DUT Corporate Brand and Marketing (2018)
4.3 Of Questionnaire		3. The service awareness of DUT provides a reputation for a dependable organisation. (Dependent Variable)	DUT Corp-orate Brand and Market- ing (2018)

		4. A brand is identified by what the institution stands for and what it offers (Dependent Variable)	Becker and Palmer (2009: 1-32)
<b>Objective 3:</b> To establish whether students' strikes affect service delivery at DUT. <b>Service Offering and Customer Satisfaction</b> 5.4 Of Questionnaire	SERVICE DELIVERY	1. To establish the university as student centred, requires safe facilities and continuity of the academic programme. (Dependent Variable)	Ndlovu (2011); DUT Corporate Brand and Marketing (2018)
5.2 Of Questionnaire		2. Intend to continue with my studies at DUT (Post grad level) (Dependent Variable)	Murphy and Pasque (2005: 429); Muztafir, Rouf & Uddin (2016: 377).
Objective 2. To determine whether student protests affect the brand image of DUT 5.3 Of Questionnaire	BRAND IMAGE OF DUT	3. Without quality education a university will battle to retain students (Dependent Variable)	Taylor and Goodwin (2004).
Objective 3. To establish whether students' strikes affect service delivery at DUT. 5.5 and 5.6 Of Questionnaire	SERVICE DELIVERY	4. Student satisfaction is related to academic achievement employability (Independent Variable)	Hillman and Kumar (2012: 118)
<b>Objective 3.</b> To establish whether students' strikes affect service delivery at DUT. 6.3 Of Questionnaire	FEES	1. The University costs/fees/price are affordable compared to other universities (Independent Variable)	DUT Brand Manual (2018: 2)
6.2 Of Questionnaire		2. DUT offers a suitable payment plan (Independent Variable)	DUT Brand Manual (2018: 2)
None		3. NFSAS loans must be repaid by graduates on completion (Independent Variable)	Kathmandu (2013: 2-3)
		4. "Fees must fall" arose due to unresponsive management (Independent Variable)	Muller (2016: 1)
		1. Issues of protests rose from domestic, economic, political,	Postma (2016: 1)

<p><b>Objective 2.</b> To determine whether student protests affect the brand image of DUT.</p>		<p>and social factors affecting education (Dependent Variable)</p>	
<p><b>Causes of Student Protest</b> 2.5 Of Questionnaire 3.11 of Questionnaire</p>	<p>STUDENT PROTEST</p>	<p>2. Management portrays mixed signals from council and government (Independent variable)</p>	<p>Karakmako (2011: 12) and Lancaster (2016: 1)</p>
<p>None</p>		<p>3. Universities in South Africa are not regarded as cultural universities as a result, student lack faith in education (Independent Variable)</p>	<p>Naicker (2016: 33)</p>

### 3.6.2.2 Questionnaire content, format, and type

The relevant literature and survey instruments developed by past studies provided the foundation for developing the questionnaire for this study. The questionnaire (Appendix B) was designed by the researcher. The questions posed to the sample are directly linked to the aim of the study. The questionnaire used a five-point Likert scale to answer questions around protests and brand image of the Durban University of Technology. The Likert scale It is the most widely used form of scaled items where the respondent chooses a point on the scale that best represents his/her opinion (Leedy and Ormrod 2005: 175). The questions comprised of closed-ended response alternatives with a horizontal format and was coded from 1-5 (strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree). The demographics for the respondents were in and have closed ended response alternatives with a horizontal format. Section A addresses demographics of respondents and Section B covered s the factors that are required to be addressed in this study. The literature review in Chapter two provided insight into the concepts being researched. The questions are derived from the content of the literature. The questionnaires were in English.

### 3.6.2.3 Pilot Study

A pilot study is designed to improve questionnaires to ensure that respondents do not experience problems in answering the questionnaire. Pretesting also eliminates problems when analysing data (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2007: 470). Pretesting



is a real-life test with a smaller scale of respondents, testing not only the questionnaire but also the actual process of data collection. It culminates in a decision as to whether the instrument and collection process works well and is understood and easily completed by the smaller sample. This ensures the researcher provides a well-structured questionnaire.

Pre-testing of the questionnaire is an important step in the entire research process. Lacobucci and Gilbert (2018: 297) state that the real test of a questionnaire is how it performs under the actual conditions of the data collection. Pre-testing ensures that the questionnaire has been designed to perform the function it was intended for, and that the data collected is relevant and accurate. The process of the pre-test may be necessary to make amendments to the questionnaire and to test the face validity of the survey instrument. The questionnaire was reviewed evaluated by two supervisors and a statistician, who made a few minor wording amendments to the questionnaire before it was administered dispatched to a small sample of 20 students for pre-testing.

The results of pre-testing provided valuable information for avoiding questions that are ambiguous, and the instrument was refined based on the feedback according to comments from the students who participated. There was an introduction section where students were requested to state if questions were easily understood or if certain statements needed to be rephrased. They were also required to state if any important aspect of protest was omitted. The results of the pilot study showed a Since the Cronbach's Alpha test for reliability of with the twenty pre-test respondents was 0.771. This which is greater than the 0.7 minimum for reliability as specified by Hair, Black, Bablin, Anderson, and Tatham's (2006). It was therefore can be concluded that the questionnaire was reliable and fit for purpose.

### **3.6.3 Administration of questionnaire**

All the questionnaires were written in the English language since the international language is suitable for the target population. The questionnaire consisted of 27 questions which took ten minutes of the respondents' time. A process was followed where the researcher gained permission from the lecturers to administer the questionnaires to students in their class. The data was collected after communicating with respective lecturers to obtain permission for this to be conducted. The

respondents remained anonymous throughout the self-administration of the questionnaire.

### **3.7 Data analysis**

This section presents the data analysis methods adopted for this study. After the data was collected, the next step in the research process was the data analysis. The purpose of the analysis was to draw conclusions and interpret the findings from the from the mass of collected data. In quantitative research, the researcher may apply a variety of techniques to analyse data, beginning with simple frequency analysis (percentages) to sample statistics measures (mode, median, mean, range, standard deviation) to culminating into complex multivariate techniques (Hair *et al.* 2000: 42).

In this study, the collected data was analysed using a computerised statistical analysis package, namely, SPSS program version 26. Descriptive and inferential analysis techniques was performed to determine the factors that influence the brand image component at DUT. The data analysis process included data preparation and various tests related to the importance of the different dimensions under study.

#### **3.7.1 Data preparation**

To assure the gathered data was accurate and complete, editing, is the first step in any analysis process. This includes checking for respondents' mistakes and correcting their errors or, where necessary, deleting any inappropriate responses. Coding is referred to as the process of classifying raw data gathered and converting that data to numerical code for assisting the researcher to make analysis more efficient. Data entry is an important step to analysing the responses from a large questionnaire survey using a computer statistics package (Cooper and Schindler 2003; 454-472). For this study the data was captured on an excel spreadsheet.

In the process of editing, all questionnaires were checked to ensure they complied with the correct completion requirements The coding for each question made the process of coding and data entry clearer and smoother. The coding for the demographics section was coded as level 1 for female and 2 for male and from

strongly disagree level 1 to strongly agree level 5 for all the Likert scaled questions. The various faculties were coded from level 1 to level 5.

### **3.7.2 Data analysis and interpretation of the results**

After the data was collected, captured, and stored, they were carefully summarised and analysed by the use of statistical techniques. Since the purpose of statistics is different, statistical process have two major categories, namely, descriptive statistics and inferential statistics, (Collis and Hussey 2013: 153). The related statistical analysis process in the study was covered under the following headings:

#### **3.7.2.1 Descriptive statistics**

Descriptive statistics is the most useful method of technique used to present and summarise the data in table, charts, graphs, and other diagrammatical forms. In this study, three main groups of descriptive statistics techniques were used, (namely, frequency, measures of location or central tendency, and measures of dispersion) were used (Sekaran and Bougie 2016: 287-299). However, for the purpose of describing the results and drawing inferences from the data, central tendency and dispersion are the most important descriptive parameters. A measure of central tendency is a convenient and simpler way of describing a large frequency distribution by means of a single value. The main measures of central tendency include: the mean, the median, and the mode. The other is measure of dispersion which is a method used in describing the spread of values in a data distribution. The measure of location and dispersion are commonly used together for obtaining a concise and useful description of the distribution of data. (Cooper and Schindler 2014: 406-407).

#### **3.7.2.2 Inferential statistics**

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2016: 253), inferential statistics draw conclusions about a complete population by quantitative data collected from a sample. Inferential statistics is used when ideas, hypotheses or predictions need to be tested. All measures of inferential statistics are divided into four groups in terms of estimating from samples, measuring associations, measuring differences, and forecasting (Collis and Hussey 2013: 258). In this research, some measures of the first three groups were used as follows:

### **a) The t-test**

The t-test is used to see if there are any significant differences in the means for two groups in the variable of interest (Sekaran 2016: 278). In this study, the paired t-test was carried out to test the significant difference between the two means of expectations and perceptions.

### **b) Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)**

McDaniel and Gates (2015: 55) indicate that ANOVA is a statistical process in order to look for differences among three or more means by comparing the variances in both within and across groups. In this study, ANOVA was used to determine whether expectations and perceptions of service quality are influenced within the different age groups.

## **3.8 Validity and reliability**

Reducing the possibility of getting the wrong answers means that the researcher must pay attention to two particular details of the research design: reliability and validity (Babbie and Mouton 2007: 6). According to Blumberg, Cooper and Schindler (2014: 26), the term validity refers to “*the extent to which the test measures what we actually wish to measure*” whilst reliability refers to the “*accuracy and precision of a measurement procedure.*”

### **3.8.1. Validity**

The validity of a measurement is the extent to which the instrument measures what is intended to measure (Leedy and Ormrod 2016: 279). The research instrument must test adequately all the relevant criteria or aspects of the research study. The questionnaire was subject to a pre-test to ensure validity and reliability. To ensure the validity of the quantitative study, pilot testing and face validity were also undertaken. Preventative measures were used to minimise the occurrence of errors. Questionnaires included brief and easy to understand questions. During the distribution of questionnaires, the purpose of the study and how respondents were expected to answer was explained.

According to De Vos (2017: 62), there are four types of validity. These are as follows:

- Face validity – refers to whether the statements are appropriate, reliable on the subjective judgment by the researcher.
- Content validity – is the accuracy with which an instrument measures the contents being studied.
- Criterion validity – is determined by relating and making a comparison with the performance of one measure against another with the second measure, checking the accuracy of the first measure: and
- Construct validity – refers to the degree to which the content of the study is measured by the questionnaire.

In this study, the researcher applied the assessment of the supervisors and a statistician which contributed to face, content, and construct validity. The questionnaire was pre-tested with students similar in profile to the final respondents. Furthermore, they were students in the field of Marketing and so they had some expertise in market research. Therefore, their opinions were considered to be those of experts as well. The pilot test ensured a valid questionnaire and survey procedure.

### 3.8.2 Reliability

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2016: 280), reliability can be seen as the consistency of performance of measuring the instrument. This means that, apart from delivering accurate results, the measuring instrument must deliver similar results consistently. Furthermore, the Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha for the pilot test were all above 0.7 (0.771 to 0.891), as shown in Table 3.3 below, and it was therefore concluded that the questionnaire was reliable. Hence, it was deemed fit for the main study.

**Table 3. 3: Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha**

Dimensions	Cronbach's alpha	Number of items
Protest experience	.771	9
Perceived image	.849	10
Branding	.831	7
Customer satisfaction	.875	6
Fees	.891	5

Saunders *et al.* (2007:106) assert that there are four threats to reliability, namely:

- **Subject error** – choosing a neutral time for respondents to complete the questionnaire.
- **Subject bias** – respondents may be answering what thought the interviewer wanted to hear.
- **Observer error** - there different approaches to eliciting answers; and
- **Observer bias** - as with observer error, with different people interpreting the same research, they may be different approaches to interpreting the replies.

### 3.9 Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations are issues and concerns that may arise from the appropriate procedure used to conduct research (Fleming and Zegwaard 2018: 207). Ethics approval to conduct the research was granted by the DUT Institutional Research Ethics Committee (Appendix C). A gatekeepers letter (Appendix D) was obtained from DUT, granting permission to engage with the study sample. A letter of information and consent (Appendix A) was provided to the respondents to explain the purpose and nature of the study and for participants to consent voluntarily. The place and the method of data collection was explained to participants. These steps were followed for the sake of ethical procedure for this study. Data was collected in a safe and secured manner ensuring no harm came to its participant. Overall, participant confidentiality and anonymity, as well as their informed agreement to engage in this study, ensured that the study adhered to ethical rules of practice. The researcher took adequate precautions to protect all data. The collected data is password-protected on Google Drive.

### 3.10 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the research design, sampling design, design of the questionnaire, data collection, data analysis, reliability and validity. The pilot test concluded that the questionnaire was fit for purpose. The findings from the study is discussed in the next chapter.

# CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

## 4.1 Introduction

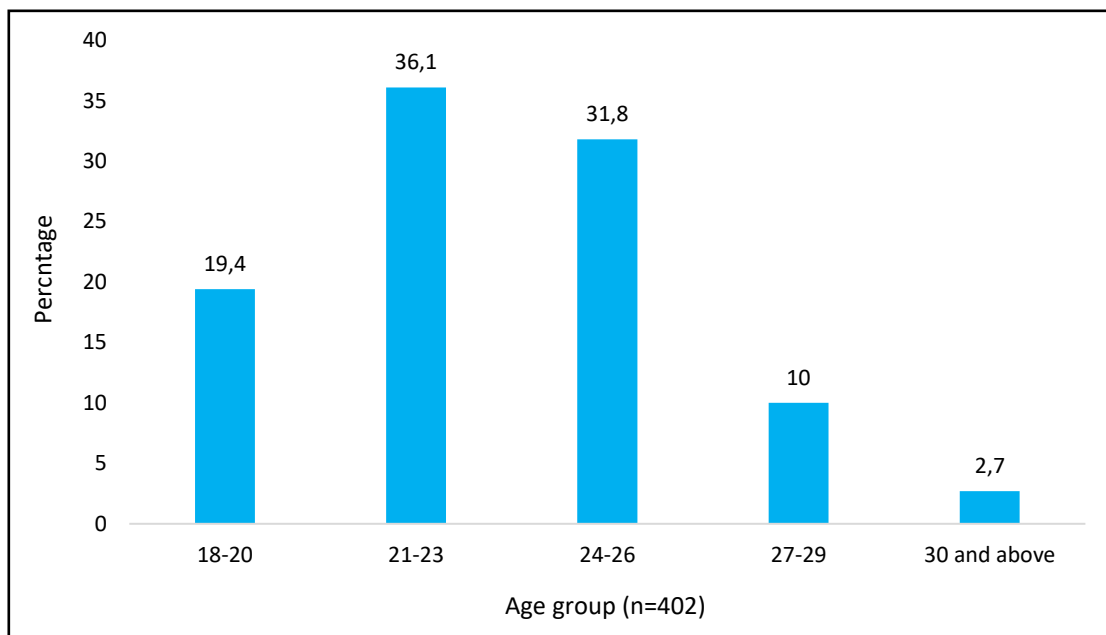
This chapter presents the results obtained from a questionnaire administered to 402 registered students at a selected University of Technology in Durban, South Africa. The findings are presented with reference to the views of the respondents on the major causes of student protest and how the institution can develop strategies to mitigate it. The data was analysed with SPSS (version 27<sup>®</sup>) in line with the research objectives. This chapter provides a full assessment of the results and presents a discussion on them accordingly.

## 4.2 Social demographic characteristics of sample

This section details the social demographic characteristics of the respondents. The aspects of age, gender, race of the demographic profile is discussed.

### 4.2.1 Age group

Figure 4.1 shows the respondents' age group distribution.



**Figure 4. 1: Age group distribution of the respondents**

The data in Figure 4.1 shows that 36.1% of the respondents were within 21-23 years of age, 31.8% were within 24-26 years of age, 19.4% were 18-20 years of age, 10% were within 27-29, and 2.7% were 30 and above. The analysis indicates that the majority of respondents (87.3%) are between the ages of 18 and 26. This reflects the active years of undergraduate students at the Durban University of Technology.

#### 4.2.2 Gender

Table 4.1 reflects the gender of the respondents

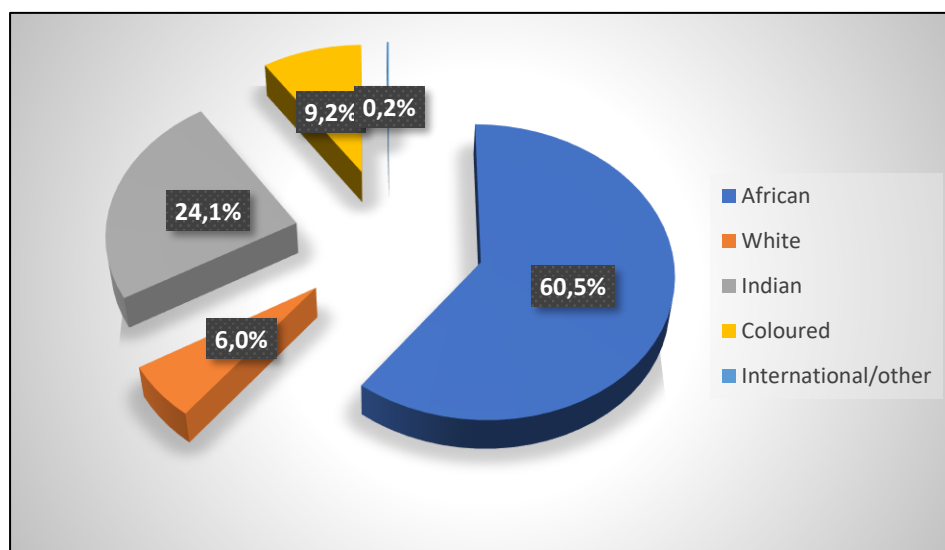
**Table 4. 1: Respondents' gender**

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	184	45.8
Female	213	53.0
Diverse/Other/Not specified	5	1.2
Total	402	100.0

The data in Table 4.1 above shows that a major percentage (53%) of the respondents were females while males constitute 45.8% of the total number of participants. This is a reasonable reflection of the student population at DUT.

#### 4.2.3 Race

The pie chart in Figure 4.2 shows the race of the respondents.



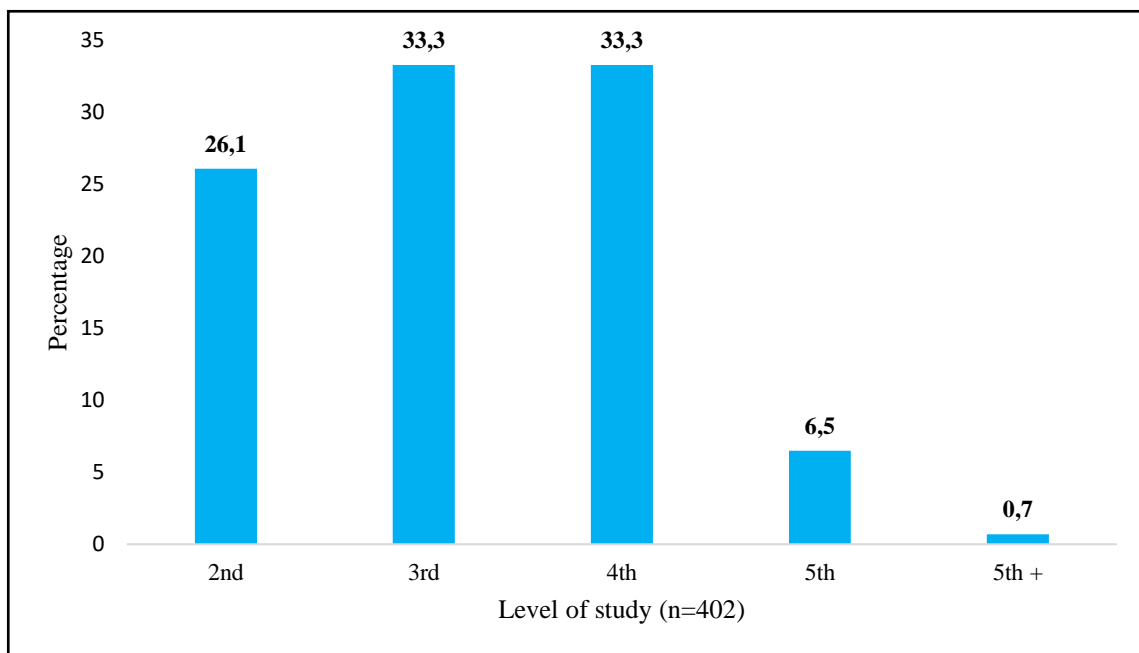
**Figure 4. 2: Race of the respondents (n=402)**



The data in Figure 4.2 shows that 60.5% of the respondents were African, followed by Indian (24.1%), Coloured (9.2%), and White (6.0%), while only 1 (0.2%) identified as international. This again appears to be a reasonable reflection of the DUT undergraduate student population.

#### 4.2.4 Level of study

Figure 4.3 below depicts the information on the respondents' level of study.



**Figure 4. 3: Respondents' level of study**

From the data in Figure 4.3, respondents in their 3<sup>rd</sup> year and 4<sup>th</sup> year of study were 33.3% each, 26.1% were in their 2<sup>nd</sup> year, 6.5% in their 5<sup>th</sup> year while only 3 (0.7%) indicated to be in above the 5<sup>th</sup> year.

#### 4.2.5 Faculty of the respondents

The faculty identified by the respondents within which they were registered is given in Table 4.2.

**Table 4. 2: Faculty identified by the respondents**

Faculty	Frequency	Percent
Management Sciences	121	30.1
Engineering and the Built Environment	52	12.9
Applied Sciences	115	28.6
Accounting and Informatics	74	18.4
Health Sciences	40	10.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>402</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The data in Table 4.2 above shows that 30.1% of the respondents are in the Faculty of Management Science, 28.6% in Applied Science, 18.4% in Accounting and Informatics, 12.9% in the Engineering and the Built Environment, and 10% in the Health Sciences. This reflects a reasonably accurate spread of respondents among the faculties. With regard to the response received from the faculties, the faculty of management sciences had the highest response rate which may be because they were more accessible to the researcher (M=121+30.1).

#### **4.2.6 First option university**

Table 4.3 shows the responses gathered from the respondents when asked if DUT was the first choice/option to pursue their tertiary education.

**Table 4. 3: Response to whether DUT was the first option university to study at**

		Frequency	Percent
Was DUT your first choice / option to study?	Yes	217	54.0
	No	185	46.0
	Total	402	100.0

The data in Table 4.3 indicates that many (54%) of the respondents answered, 'yes' that DUT was their first choice/option to study while 46% answered 'no'.

### 4.3 Reliability test

Before discussing the findings of this study, this section focuses on the reliability of the research instrument. The internal reliability of the component variables consisting of experience of student protest, image perceived by DUT students, university branding, customer satisfaction and fees was tested using Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha.

**Table 4. 4: Reliability test for the research instrument**

Sections	Items	Dimensions	Cronbach's alpha
<b>B</b>	6	Experience of student protest	0.713
<b>C</b>	13	Image perceived by DUT students	0.735
<b>D</b>	7	University Branding	0.703
<b>E</b>	6	Customer satisfaction	0.701
<b>F</b>	3	Fees	0.734
<b>Total</b>	35		0.810

According to Hair *et al.* (2006), an alpha of 0.70 and above is regarded as acceptable. The data in Table 4.4 shows that the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the experience of student protest ( $\alpha=0.713$ ), the image perceived by DUT students ( $\alpha=0.735$ ), University branding ( $\alpha=0.703$ ), Customer orientation ( $\alpha=0.701$ ), and Fees ( $\alpha=0.734$ ) were all above the recommended value of 0.70. This indicated that the instrument was sufficiently reliable. Overall, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for all the items combined was found to be good ( $\alpha=0.810$ ). Thus, the questionnaire was considered as a reliable instrument for measuring the research constructs.

### 4.4: Section analysis

This section details the responses gathered from the respondents on their experiences of student protest at DUT. Positive statements (strongly agree and agree) were interpreted (conflated) as agreement, while negative statements (disagree and strongly disagree) were interpreted (conflated) as disagreement. The mean value was used to show the level of agreement and disagreement. A one-sample t-test was applied to determine if there is significant agreement or disagreement with each statement. The average agreement score was tested against the central score of '3'

to determine if it is significantly different from '3'. The results are summarised in the sub-sections below.

#### 4.4.1 Experience of student protest

Table 4.5 details the scoring pattern of the respondents on their experience of student protest at the selected university.

**Table 4. 5: Respondents' scoring pattern on their experience of student protest**

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean (SD)	t	Df	p-value
<b>2.1 Affects the brand reputation of the Durban University of Technology</b>	Q 1	4 (1.0)	20 (5)	36 (9)	187 (46.5)	155 (38.6)	4.17 (0.859)	97.264	40 1	.00 0
<b>2.2 Leads to the adjustment of the academic calendar, delays completion of diploma, lectures and syllabus</b>	Q 2	4 (1.0)	14 (3.5)	47 (11.7)	181 (45)	156 (38.8)	4.17 (0.840)	99.536	40 1	.00 0
<b>2.3 Violent student protest places my life in danger</b>	Q 3	4 (1.0)	10 (2.5)	70 (17.4)	172 (42.8)	146 (36.3)	4.11 (0.846)	97.362	40 1	.00 0
<b>2.4 Increases student dropout rate</b>	Q 4	18 (4.5)	20 (5.0)	60 (14.9)	181 (45)	123 (30.6)	3.92 (1.027)	76.616	40 1	.00 0
<b>2.5 Emerged as a result of lack of funds, book allowances and housing</b>	Q 5	6 (1.5)	9 (2.2)	30 (7.5)	178 (44.3)	179 (44.5)	4.28 (0.816)	105.14 6	40 1	.00 0
<b>2.6 Costs the university tremendously to repair and replace broken equipment and fixtures</b>	Q 6	4 (1.0)	6 (1.5)	32 (8)	137 (34.1)	223 (55.5)	4.42 (0.783)	113.11 5	40 1	.00 0

As shown in Table 4.5, the mean values measured for all six statements were above 3. This suggests that there is a significant agreement between these statements, with all being statistically significant ( $p < 0.001$ ). The statement with the strongest agreement was the sixth which was stated as "Student protest costs the university tremendously to repair and replace broken equipment and fixtures" ( $M=4.42$ ;  $SD=0.783$ ;  $t(401) = 113.115$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).

The statement with the second strongest score was the 5<sup>th</sup> statement stated as "Emerged as a result of lack of funds, book allowance and housing" ( $M=4.28$ ,  $SD=0.186$ ;  $t(401) = 105.146$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).

Thereafter, statement number two followed which stated, “*Leads to adjustment of the academic calendar, delays completion of diploma, lectures and syllabus*” (M=4.17, SD=0.840,  $t(401) = 99.536$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).

The statement that was considered the weakest statement was the 4<sup>th</sup> statement which stated “*Increases student dropout rate*” with (M=3.92, SD= 1.027,  $t(401) = 76.616$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). This suggests that the statement I was the least significant to the respondents comparatively to other statements.

Question 2.1 of the questionnaire which states “*Student protest affects the brand reputation of DUT*”, a high response to this statement was achieved, depicted as 85% of the respondents agreeing to this statement.

Question 2.2 is a significant statement related to the outcome and experience of student protest which states “*Leads to the adjustment of the academic calendar, delays completion of the diploma, lectures and syllabus*” with 84% of the respondents in agreement (M= 4.17, SD= 0.840,  $t(401) = 99.536$ ,  $p < 0/001$ ).

In statement 2.3, “*Violent student protest places my life in danger*”, 89% of the respondents were in agreement with this statement meaning it is significant (M= 4.11, SD= 0.846,  $t(401) = 97.362$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).

In Question 2.4 75% of the respondents believe that “*Student protest increases the dropout rates*” (M= 3.92, SD= 1.027,  $t(401) = 76.616$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).

In Question 2.4, 75% of the respondents believe that “*Student protest increases the dropout rates*” (M= 3.92, SD= 1.027,  $t(401) = 76.616$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).

In the results from Statement 2.5 of the questionnaire, which states that “*student protest emerged as a result of lack of funds, book allowances and accommodation*”, the majority of the respondents (89%) agree with this statement.

The most relevant statement is question 2.6 of the questionnaire, which states that “*Costs the university tremendously to repair broken equipment and fixtures*” is the one which is most significant with the highest mean score in this section (M=4.42; SD = 0.783;  $t(401) = 113.115$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).

#### 4.4.2 Image perceived by DUT students

Table 4.6 details the scoring pattern of the respondents on the image of DUT as perceived by the respondents.

**Table 4. 6: Respondents' scoring pattern on the image perceived by DUT students**

		Strongly disagree	Dis-agree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean (SD)	T	Df	p-value
3.1 Student protest damages the DUT's brand image	Q1	9 (2.2)	7 (1.7)	32 (8.0)	177 (44.0)	177 (44.0)	4.26 (0.852)	100.218	401	.000
3.2 Student protest about matters / resources that are not managed by DUT	Q2	18 (4.5)	26 (6.5)	57 (14.2)	154 (38.3)	147 (36.6)	3.96 (1.082)	73.392	401	.000
3.3 The university cares about student and staff safety during protests	Q3	16 (4.0)	70 (17.4)	63 (15.7)	149 (37.1)	104 (25.9)	3.63 (1.157)	62.954	401	.000
3.4 DUT has sufficient teaching, learning and financial facilities / resources	Q4	8 (2.0)	40 (10.0)	79 (19.7)	175 (43.5)	100 (24.9)	3.79 (.991)	76.746	401	.000
3.5 Negative publicity/word of mouth has an influence on university branding and student's choice of university	Q5	3 (0.7)	4 (1.0)	47 (11.7)	201 (50.0)	147 (36.6)	4.21 (.740)	113.901	401	.000
3.6 DUT's brand image increases student enrolment / retention	Q6	4 (1.0)	1 (0.2)	73 (18.2)	194 (48.3)	130 (32.3)	4.11 (.771)	106.795	401	.000
3.7 DUT is a preferred university of technology in KZN	Q7	1 (0.2)	5 (1.2)	157 (39.1)	125 (31.1)	114 (28.4)	3.86 (.854)	90.680	401	.000
3.8 Gender based violence affects DUT's brand image	Q8	6 (1.5)	18 (4.5)	141 (35.1)	140 (34.8)	97 (24.1)	3.76 (.921)	81.776	401	.000
3.9 Violence during protest creates fear amongst staff and students at DUT	Q9	2 (0.5)	7 (1.7)	43 (10.7)	173 (43)	177 (44)	4.28 (.763)	112.510	401	.000
3.10 Social media communication contributes to the brand image of the university	Q10	1 (0.2)	4 (1.0)	50 (12.4)	168 (41.8)	179 (44.5)	4.29 (.740)	116.391	401	.000
3.11 Changes of managerial staff influences the university's overall performance	Q11	6 (1.5)	7 (1.7)	82 (20.4)	148 (36.8)	159 (39.6)	4.11 (.890)	92.586	401	.000
3.12 Resistance to change in the university environment will affect overall performance and the brand image	Q12	6 (1.5)	10 (2.5)	49 (12.2)	165 (41)	172 (42.8)	4.21 (.861)	98.111	401	.000
3.13 Student behaviour during protest influences the perception and the quality of education at DUT	Q13	14 (3.5)	17 (4.2)	63 (15.7)	156 (38.8)	152 (37.8)	4.03 (1.009)	80.095	401	.000

As shown in Table 4.6, the mean values measured for all the thirteen statements were above 3. This suggests that there is a significant agreement to these statements, with all being statistically significant ( $p < 0.001$ ). The statement with the strongest agreement

was the tenth, which was stated as “Social media communication contributes to the brand image of the university” (M=4.29; SD=0.740;  $t(401) = 116.391$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).

The statement that followed next was the ninth statement “Violence during protest creates fear amongst staff and students (M=4.28, SD= 0.763,  $t(401) = 112.510$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).

The statement indicated as “Student protest damages the DUT’s brand image follows. (M=4.26, SD=0.852,  $t(401) = 100.218$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).

The next statement that followed was the 5<sup>th</sup> statement which stated, “*Negative publicity/word of mouth has an influence on university branding and students ‘choice of university’*” (M=4.21; SD=0.740,  $t(401) = 113.901$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).

The statement with the weakest agreement was the “*University cares about student and staff during the protest*” (M=3.63, SD=1.157,  $t(401) = 62.954$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).

The majority of the respondents (88%) as shown in Table 4.6, maintain that student protests damage the DUT brand image. It was interesting to note that Richins (1983: 1) concurs with the finding that a lack of resources contributes to students not choosing a particular university which also results in a poor brand image of universities. Very often student protests occur due to fees related problems. Furthermore, Table 4.5 revealed that 73.9% of respondents agreed that students protest about resources not managed by the university. However, 68.4% of the respondents indicated that the university has sufficient teaching, learning and financial facilities. According to Mulyono (2016: 163) students that may not have a positive impression of the university may create a poor image of the university. According to Chen (2016: 4) students prefer to study at public universities with a good brand image than the private education sector. From a recent study about the difference between the public and private education in Nigeria, it was found that there is a dynamic difference as students prefer to study at public education sectors for better social life, and affordability (Olaleye *et al.* 2020: 19-36).

It is also important to note that respondents were second and third-year students. Table 4.6 revealed that the majority of the respondents (86.6%) agreed that negative publicity and negative word of mouth has an influence on university branding and

students' choice of university. According to Mulyono (2016: 163) the factors that influence the choice of the university by the student are critical with regard to continuing in higher education. Students tend to protest when they do not prefer the university as a destination to study or perhaps when they choose not to continue with their studies at the university. A major percentage of the respondents (80.6%) agreed that DUT's brand image increases student enrolment and retention. According to Sultan and Wong (2019: 335) branding aims to attract, retain, engage and position universities in the higher education environment. On the other hand, protest contribute to dropout rates and low enrolment figures (Chen 2016: 4). The quality of university administration is critical in encouraging academic quality, so colleges should be managed professionally. Good university governance (GUG) is a new variable in the field of student satisfaction determinants (Martono *et al.* 2020: 5).

Nwafor's (2016: 26) study focused on the service delivery in the Mbizana district in Eastern Cape. Community members protested when they did not receive feedback on service delivery promises. In this study, the main reason for protests was due to unmet demands of resources (educational and financial resources). It was interesting to note that Fomunyam (2017: 2) found that universities at Ibadan, Gambia, Morocco, and Egypt students protested against the issues around the experience of food, accommodation, increased fees in bus tickets, and lack of water and power supplies. On a positive note, 69.5% of respondents believe that DUT is a preferred university of Technology in KZN.

It is evident that violence affects staff and students on campus during protests as majority of the respondents (87%) agree with the statement, "*Violence during protest creates fear amongst staff and students*". Additionally, Mushama (2020: 17) also believes that violence questions the safety of learners and staff at the university.

The majority of the respondents (86%) from Table 4.6 agree that social media communication contribute to brand image of the university. Faquhar (1990: 57) also emphasizes the importance of using a constant image, where all tools and platforms of marketing communications should be consistent through functional mediums like social media. Similar to protest that have taken place at the Mbizana district where community members were distraught about not receiving feedback from government officials and not being added to making decisions of the community Mashamate (2014:



237). While the demographic profiles of students and senior management at UCT have changed since the 1990s, the profile of the academic staff who are at the core of the academic enterprise has hardly changed (Adonis and Silinda 2021: 77). Hence, majority of the respondents (77%) agrees with the statement changes in managerial staff influences the universities overall performance.

According to Bekker (2009: 8), being resistant to change has negative contributions as other competing universities maybe opting for new systems of technology in terms of teaching and learning. Similarly, universities at the United States has stated that leadership requires demonstration that adapts to a new set of communication among university leaders, security, students, faculties, staff and all stake holders that is dependable on the crisis (Moerschell and Novak 2020: 38). 83% of the respondents agree with the statement “Resistance to change in the university environment will affect overall performance and affect the brand image on a negative note.

Many prospective students may fear coming to DUT due to the behaviour of students during protest action. In addition, 76% of the respondents concur with the statement student behaviour during protests could influence the perception and quality of education at DUT. Similarly, Muztafizur, Rouf and Uddin (2016: 377) state that student behaviour during protests could influence the perception and quality of education at DUT.

#### **4.4.3 University branding**

Table 4.7 below, details the scoring pattern of the respondents on the statements measuring university branding.

**Table 4. 7: Scoring pattern on the statements measuring university branding**

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean (SD)	T	Df	p-value
4.1. Effective advertising creates brand awareness and impacts on students' choice of university	Q1	2 (0.5)	13 (3.2)	49 (12.2)	181 (45)	157 (39.1)	4.19 (0.808)	103.981	401	.000
4.2 DUT's choice of media for advertising is very effective	Q2	1 (0.2)	10 (2.5)	126 (31.3)	172 (42.8)	93 (23.1)	3.86 (0.806)	96.094	401	.000
4.3 DUT's brand is trustworthy	Q3	1 (0.2)	9 (2.2)	140 (34.8)	138 (34.3)	114 (28.4)	3.88 (0.856)	91.003	401	.000
4.4 Competition among KZN universities has forced technological development of facilities	Q4	0 (0.0)	6 (1.5)	94 (23.4)	185 (46)	117 (29.1)	4.03 (0.765)	105.548	401	.000
4.5 DUT has created a brand image in the minds of public, when compared to similar competing universities	Q5	0 (0.0)	9 (2.2)	127 (31.6)	152 (37.8)	114 (28.4)	3.92 (0.828)	95.046	401	.000
4.6 The brand awareness at private universities is more effective than public universities	Q6	2 (0.5)	20 (5)	88 (21.9)	175 (43.5)	117 (29.1)	3.96 (0.868)	91.395	401	.000
4.7 First year students lack experience to rank a university in South Africa	Q7	6 (1.5)	11 (2.7)	65 (16.2)	148 (36.8)	172 (42.8)	4.17 (0.899)	92.964	401	.000

As shown in Table 4.7, the mean values measured for all the seven statements were above 3. This suggests that there is a significant agreement to these statements, with all being statistically significant ( $p < 0.001$ ). The statement with the strongest agreement was the first, which was stated as “*Effective advertising creates brand awareness and impacts on students' choice of the university*” ( $M=4.19$ ;  $SD=0.808$ ;  $t(401) = 103.981$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).

The next statement which followed was statement number 7 which stated, “*First year students lack the experience to rank a university in South Africa*” ( $M=4.17$ ;  $SD=0.899$ ,  $t(401) = 92.964$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).

The next statement that followed was statement number 4 which stated, “*Competition among KZN universities has forced technological development of facilities*” ( $M=4.03$ ;  $SD= 0.765$ ,  $t(401) = 105.548$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).

The weakest statement in agreement was statement number 2 which stated, “*DUTs choice of media for advertising is very effective*” ( $M=3.86$ ;  $SD=0.806$ ;  $t(401) = 96.094$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ).

In Table 4.7 most of the respondents (93%) agree with the statement effective advertising creates brand awareness and impacts on students' choice of university. According to DUT's Advertising, Corporate Brand and Marketing manual (2018: 6), DUTs' focus is on attaining a good calibre of students by creating an image in the minds of grade 9-12 learners and stresses establishing the brand in the mind of stakeholders.

The DUT Brand Manual (2017: 11) states that DUT offers an uncompromised brand reinforcement to reposition the brand in the public domain. The aim is to reinstall the perception of the university as committed to teaching, research, academic excellence and student conduct. This statement is also agreed to by 66% of the respondents who claim DUT's choice of media for advertising is effective. Table 4.7 further reveals that 75% of the respondents agreed with the statement that competition among KZN universities has forced technological development of facilities. Likewise, the (DUT Brand manual 2017: 2) further explains that strategic function of marketing enables DUT to improve competitiveness in a changing world.

The DUT Brand Manual (2017: 2) states that social and cultural factors guarantee the future of DUT as a corporate strategy with enhanced synergy and a marketing orientation. DUT opts to further ensure that communication is consistent, accurate, and professional in order to build a trustworthy organisation assuring students the education obtained is a good investment for their future and worth the price of tuition fees. Therefore, most respondents (62%) also agree that DUT's brand is trustworthy.

In this study, the first-year students were excluded from the study as the researcher felt that they did not have enough experience at university, hence, "*First year students lack experience to rank the university...*" was developed, in which the majority of the respondents (79%) agreed with this statement.

#### **4.4.4 Customer orientation**

Table 4.8 details the scoring pattern of the respondents on the statements measuring customer orientation.

**Table 4. 8: Scoring pattern on the statements measuring customer orientation**

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean (SD)	t	Df	p-value
5.1 The university is both a product and a service	Q1	4 (1.0)	12 (3)	54 (13.4)	205 (51)	127 (31.6)	4.09 (0.808)	101.581	401	.000
5.2 Intent to continue with my studies at DUT (Post graduate level)	Q2	3 (0.7)	9 (2.2)	68 (16.9)	207 (51.5)	115 (28.6)	4.05 (0.782)	103.879	401	.000
5.3 Without quality education, a university will not be able to retain students	Q3	2 (0.5)	4 (1.0)	32 (8)	212 (52.7)	152 (37.8)	4.26 (0.688)	124.176	401	.000
5.4 To establish the university as student centred, requires safety facilities and continuity of the academic programme	Q4	0 (0.0)	4 (1)	41 (10.2)	196 (48.8)	161 (40)	4.28 (0.683)	125.691	401	.000
5.5 Student satisfaction with the university is related to academic achievement	Q5	1 (0.2)	7 (1.7)	52 (12.9)	173 (43)	169 (42)	4.25 (0.762)	111.726	401	.000
5.6 The university qualification is appropriate for the world of work	Q6	2 (0.5)	15 (3.7)	74 (18.4)	182 (45.3)	129 (32.1)	4.05 (0.836)	97.093	401	.000

As shown in Table 4.8 above, the mean values measured for all six statements were above 3. This suggests that there is a significant agreement to these statements, all of which were statistically significant ( $p < 0.001$ ). The statement with the strongest agreement was the fourth, which was stated as, “*To establish the university as student-centred, requires safety facilities and continuity of the academic programme*” ( $M=4.28$ ;  $SD=0.683$ ;  $t(401) = 125.691$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).

The second statement that followed was statement number 3 which stated, “*Without quality education, a university would not be able to retain students*” ( $M=4.26$ ;  $SD=0.688$ ,  $t(401) = 124.176$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).

The next statement that followed was the 5<sup>th</sup> statement which stated, “*Student satisfaction with the university is related to academic achievement*” ( $M=4.25$ ;  $SD=0.762$ ,  $t(401) = 111.726$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).

The weakest statement was statement 2 which stated, “*Intent to continue with my studies at DUT (Postgraduate level)*” ( $M=4.05$ ;  $SD=0.782$ ,  $t(401) = 103.879$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).

The majority of the respondents (82%) in Table 4.8 agree that the university is both a product and a service. Taylor, Celuch and Goodwin (2004: 27) concurs with this statement and further states that marketing a university is complex in the sense that sometimes it is a product and sometimes a service. In Table 4.8 the majority of the respondents (80%) indicated that they wish to continue with their studies at DUT.

However, Mulyono (2016: 163) feels that variables that have an impact on students choosing a particular university, being loyal to one university, and continuing in higher education must be further determined.

Most students and parents are generally concerned about the quality of education at universities. In this study, the majority of the respondents (90%) agreed with the statement that without the quality of education the university will not be able to retain its students. According to Sultan and Wong (2019: 332) branding of universities utilises a marketing tool that aims to attract, retain, engage and position universities in the higher education sector. The majority of the respondents (88%) agree that establishing a university that is student centred requires safety facilities to continue with the academic programme. Similarly, the DUT Brand Manual (2017: 11) also concurs with the statement that being student centred implies that safety facilities must be considered.

Many of the respondents (85%) believe that student satisfaction with the university is related to academic achievement. Perez (2011: 818) also found that student satisfaction is related to academic achievements. Abou-El Wafa *et al.* (2015: 254) indicate to improve diversity in classrooms lecturers should consider taking time to know students on an individual capacity, their hobbies, and what makes them different, allowing them to be comfortable would make them feel valued and increase participation with their peers thus ultimately improving performance. Acknowledging and respecting people with various cultures improves social life and prepares the students for the world of work. A great proportion (77%) of the respondents agree that the university qualification is appropriate for the world of work.

#### **4.4.5 Fees**

Table 4.9 below, details the scoring pattern of the respondents on the statements about fees.

**Table 4. 9: Respondents' scoring pattern on the statements measuring fees**

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean (SD)	t	Df	p-value
6.1 The university fees are affordable compared to other universities	Q1	41 (10.2)	32 (8.0)	113 (28.1)	150 (37.3)	66 (16.4)	3.42 (1.160)	59.065	401	.000
6.2 NFSAS loans must be repaid by graduates upon completion	Q2	39 (9.7)	59 (14.7)	128 (31.8)	82 (20.4)	94 (23.4)	3.33 (1.252)	53.323	401	.000
6.3 DUT offers a payment plan to suit me	Q3	75 (18.7)	47 (11.7)	94 (23.4)	115 (28.6)	71 (17.7)	3.15 (1.356)	46.574	401	.000

As shown in Table 4.9, the mean values measured for all the three statements were above 3. This suggests that there is a significant agreement to these statements, which were all statistically significant ( $p < 0.001$ ). The statement with the strongest agreement was the first, which was stated, “*The university fees are affordable compared to other universities*” ( $M = 4.42$ ;  $SD = 1.160$ ;  $t(401) = 59.065$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).

The next statement which followed was statement number 2, “*NFSAS loans must be repaid by graduates upon completion*” ( $M = 3.33$ ;  $SD = 1.252$ ,  $t(401) = 53.323$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).

The weakest statement in table 4.8 was the third statement, “*DUT offers a payment plan to suit me*” ( $M = 3.15$ ;  $SD = 1.356$ ,  $t(401) = 46.574$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).

The main reason for protests was due to funding. It plays a major role as many students come from impoverished backgrounds and cannot afford to pay the university fees. Therefore, about half of the respondents (53%) agreed that fees are affordable compared to other universities. The DUT Brand Manual (2017: 2) further states that to build a trustworthy organization assuring students the education obtained is a good investment for their future and worth the price of tuition fees.

Less than half of the respondents (43%) agree with the statement “*NSFAS loans must be repaid by graduates upon completion*”. Muller (2016: 4) emphasised that the fees must fall are not beneficial to the future youth as the key importance lies in building them up with greater basic education starting from school which the government should fund. Students raised concern over annual increases in fees and wishes a way forward to free education.

Only 46% of the respondents agree that DUT offers a payment plan to suit them. However, Kathmandu (2013: 2) states that in the culture of repayment, student funding

would be a problem. The author asserted that it is not advisable to say more funding is required when there is a system of non-repayment. But the DUT Brand Manual (2017: 2), like the above-mentioned discussion, stated that to build a trustworthy organisation assuring students that the education obtained is a good investment for their future and worth the price of tuition fees.

#### 4.5 Relationship between socio-demographic variables and constructs

The relationship between the respondent's demographic characteristics such as gender, age, racial group, level of study, and faculty and the constructs such as experience of student protest, images perceived by DUT students, University branding, customer orientation, and fees was conducted using a one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The results are summarised in Table 4.10 below.

**Table 4. 10: Association between constructs and respondents' socio-demographic variables**

Socio-demographic	Experience of student protest	Image perceived by DUT students	University Branding	Customer satisfaction	Fees
	M±SD	M±SD	M±SD	M±SD	M±SD
<b>Gender</b>					
Male	4.11±.64	3.99±.46	4.00±.51	4.13±.50	3.21±1.04
Female	4.23±.46	4.07±.43	4.00±.49	4.19±.47	3.39±.99
Diverse/Other/Not specified	4.50±.35	4.35±.20	4.09±.81	4.47±.27	2.80±.73
Sig.	0.030**	0.050	0.912	0.182	0.123
<b>Age group</b>					
18-20	4.14±0.60	4.07±0.47	4.09±0.54	4.10±0.59	3.12±1.10
21-23	4.14±0.59	4.03±0.44	4.02±0.52	4.13±0.52	3.18±1.03
24-26	4.19±0.54	4.03±0.47	3.94±0.46	4.21±0.40	3.33±0.94
27-29	4.28±0.41	4.05±0.31	4.00±0.45	4.25±0.39	3.83±0.86
30 and above	4.47 ±0.22	4.01 ±0.28	3.81±0.49	4.18±0.35	3.88±0.95
Sig.	0.231	0.948	0.164	0.336	0.001***
<b>Race</b>					
African	4.12±.60	3.97±.47	3.94±0.51	4.13±0.51	3.24±0.97
White	4.24±.46	4.29±.34	4.29±0.37	4.28±0.33	2.89±1.29
Indian	4.30±0.46	4.13±0.36	4.00±0.46	4.18±0.44	3.44±1.03
Coloured	4.18±0.46	4.13±0.36	4.19±0.55	4.27±0.45	3.56±1.00
International	4.33±0.00	3.92±0.00	4.14±0.00	4.17±0.00	4.33±0.00
Sig.	0.095	0.000***	0.002***	0.366	0.040**

Level of study					
2 <sup>nd</sup>	4.10±0.53	3.96±0.50	4.00±0.52	4.10±0.52	3.06±1.04
3 <sup>rd</sup>	4.11±0.57	3.99±0.45	3.91±0.51	4.16±0.43	3.32±0.95
4 <sup>th</sup>	4.28±0.56	4.12±0.39	4.07±0.47	4.19±0.51	3.47±0.99
5 <sup>th</sup>	4.26±0.47	4.24±0.32	4.13±0.49	4.35±0.39	3.27±1.20
5th +	4.56±0.63	3.97±0.29	4.05±0.59	3.89±0.19	3.22±1.58
Sig.	0.029**	0.004***	0.072	0.124	0.046**
Faculty					
Management Sciences	4.16±0.60	4.03±0.53	4.00±0.59	4.19±0.50	3.05±1.23
Engineering and the Built Environment	4.14±0.40	4.07±0.35	4.01±0.48	4.24±0.46	3.27±0.86
Applied Sciences	4.19±0.55	4.04±0.44	4.05±0.44	4.19±0.42	3.46±0.96
Accounting and Informatics	4.12±0.66	3.99±0.37	3.86±0.45	4.02±0.55	3.45±0.90
Health Sciences	4.33±0.35	4.09±0.39	4.12±0.49	4.16±0.48	3.38±0.71
Sig.	0.395	0.788	0.058	0.073	0.017**

\*\*\* =  $p < 0.001$  ; \*\* =  $p < 0.05$ .

In terms of the respondents' gender, the results of the ANOVA in Table 4.10 reveals that there are no differences in the views on the image perceived by DUT students, university branding, customer orientation and fees ( $P > 0.05$ ). There was, however, a statistically significant difference measured in the experience of student protest ( $P = 0.030$ ). The mean measured for respondents who indicated that they are diverse respondents ( $M = 4.50 \pm 0.35$ ), for example, was higher when compared to the females ( $M = 4.23 \pm 0.46$ ) or the males ( $M = 4.11 \pm 0.64$ ). This suggests that the respondents who identified as diverse agreed more with statements measuring the experience of student protest.

In terms of the age group, the ANOVA values measured suggest that there are no differences in the respondents' views on the constructs' experience of student protest, Image perceived by DUT students, University branding, and customer orientation ( $P > 0.05$ ). There was, however, a very high significant difference measured for fees ( $P = 0.001$ ). The highest mean value measured was for respondents within the age group 30 and above ( $M = 3.88 \pm 0.95$ ) while the lowest was for respondents within 18-20 ( $M = 3.12 \pm 1.10$ ). This suggests that older respondents agreed more with the fees statement compared to those who were younger.

In terms of race, the ANOVA values measured suggest that there are no differences in the respondents' views in two of the constructs namely, experience of student protest and customer orientation ( $P > 0.05$ ). The views of the respondents, however, differ with respect to the image perceived by DUT students ( $p < 0.001$ ), university



branding ( $P=0.002$ ), and fees ( $P=0.040$ ). The results indicate that respondents who identified as international agreed more with the statements measuring image perceived by DUT ( $M=4.33\pm 0.00$ ) and fees ( $M=4.33\pm 0.00$ ) while White respondents agree more with university branding statements ( $M=4.29\pm 0.37$ ).

In terms of race, the ANOVA values measured suggest that there is a difference in respondents' view in the construct, namely image perceived by the DUT students, and the race group ( $p<0.001$ ). The results determine that the white race group agree most with the statement ( $M=4.29\pm 0.34$ ).

In terms of the respondents' level of study, the ANOVA values measured suggest that there are no differences in the respondents' views in two of the constructs, namely, university branding and customer orientation ( $P>0.05$ ). The views of the respondents, however, differ with respect to the experience of student protest ( $P=0.029$ ), image perceived by DUT students ( $P=0.004$ ), and fees ( $P=0.046$ ). The results indicate respondents in their fifth or more year of study agreed more with the statements measuring the experience of student protest ( $M=4.56\pm 0.63$ ) and fifth year respondents agreed more with the statements measuring image perceived by DUT ( $M=4.24\pm 0.32$ ), and 4<sup>th</sup>-year respondents agreed more with the fees statements ( $M=3.47\pm 0.99$ ). In terms of the respondents' faculty, the ANOVA values measured suggest that there are no differences in the respondents' views in four of the constructs, namely, experience of student protest, image perceived by DUT students, university branding, and customer orientation ( $P>0.05$ ). The views of the respondents, however, differ with respect to the fees statements ( $P=0.017$ ). The mean value measured for respondents from Applied Science was the highest which suggests that they agreed more with the statements measuring fees ( $M=3.46\pm 0.96$ ).

#### **4.6 Correlation analysis**

Pearson correlation was used to analyse the association existing among the four constructs: Experience of student protest, Image perceived by the students, University branding, Customer satisfaction, and fees, as shown in Table 4.11 below.

**Table 4. 11: Correlation among the constructs**

		Experience of student protest	Image perceived by DUT students	University Branding	Customer orientation	Fees
Experience of student protest	Pearson Correlation	1	.456**	.090	.250**	.189**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.072	.000	.000
	N	402	402	402	402	402
Image perceived by DUT students	Pearson Correlation	.456**	1	.330**	.225**	.146**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.003
	N	402	402	402	402	402
University Branding	Pearson Correlation	.090	.330**	1	.205**	-.085
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.072	.000		.000	.090
	N	402	402	402	402	402
Customer orientation	Pearson Correlation	.250**	.225**	.205**	1	.110*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.028
	N	402	402	402	402	402
Fees	Pearson Correlation	.189**	.146**	-.085	.110*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.003	.090	.028	
	N	402	402	402	402	402
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).						
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).						

As shown in Table 4.11, the association experience of student protest and image perceived by DUT students was strong and positive ( $r=0.456$ ;  $p<0.001$ ), this suggest that those who experience student protest also tend to feel strongly about the image of the university. A weak association was found between the experience of student protest and customer orientation ( $r=0.250$ ;  $p<0.001$ ), and the experience of student protest and fees ( $r=0.189$ ;  $p<0.001$ ). This could suggest that the experience of the customer service is not negatively affected by the protest.

The Pearson correlation coefficient also shows that the association between image perceived by the DUT students and university branding was fairly strong and positive ( $r=0.330$ ;  $p<0.001$ ). This suggests that respondents who feel strongly about the brand also tend to view the brand concept with high regard. A weak association was found between image perceived by the DUT students and customer orientation ( $r=0.225$ ;  $p<0.001$ ), which means that customers do not view DUT as having a poor image. Image perceived by the DUT students and fees was also a weak association ( $r=0.146$ ;  $p<0.001$ ). There was a weak positive association between university branding and customer orientation ( $r=0.205$ ;  $p<0.001$ ), as well as between customer orientation and

fees ( $r=0.110$ ;  $p<0.001$ ). This suggests that the respondents do not feel that the brand is influenced by cost of fees or the service rendered by DUT.

In Table 4.11 the association with image perceived by DUT student protest and university branding was a weak relationship ( $r=0.330$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). Respondents do not feel that the student protest negatively influence the brand of DUT.

The association between the image perceived and customer orientation was also identified as a weak relationship ( $r=0.0025$ ,  $p<0.001$ ) as well as image perceived by DUT students and fees ( $r=0.146$ ;  $p<0.003$ ). This means that the fees aspect and the image of DUT was not negatively influenced by the protest. Another association between the experience of student protest and fees was a weak association ( $r=0.189$ ,  $p<0.001$ ), with image perceived by students and fees ( $r=0.146$ ;  $p>0.003$ ), and customer orientation and fees also a weak relationship ( $r=0.110$ ;  $p>0.001$ ). The results discussed indicate that student protest does not influence the cost of fees neither do students feel the cost is affected by the DUT image nor the protest. The image of the university is believed not to be tarnished.

#### **4.7 Factor analysis and validation of the research constructs**

In an attempt to validate the constructs (Experience of student protest, Image perceived by DUT Students, University branding, Customer orientation, and fees), factor analysis was performed using exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). Watkins (2018: 220) states that factor analysis can help identify common factors that explain the order and structure among measured constructs. EFA analysis, making use of the principal component analysis (PCA) extraction method and Varimax rotation, were set as the measuring parameters. According to Shrestha (2021: 7), for EFA to be carried out, the Kaiser-Meyer value should exceed the value of 0.5 and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity must be statistically significant. The data in Table 4.12 show that the Kaiser-Meyer value for all the four constructs exceeded the recommended values while Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was statistically significant which provides evidence for the suitability of the correlation matrix.

**Table 4. 12: KMO and Bartlett's Test for the constructs**

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.789
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	3852.745
	df	595
	Sig.	.000

**4.7.1 Factor analysis coefficients**

Using the eigenvalues greater than one, the PCA for the extracted items revealed ten factors explaining 59.9% of the total variance as shown in Table 4.13.

**Table 4. 13: Factor analysis matrix**

Rotated Component Matrix <sup>a</sup>										
	Component									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Q3.4	.718									
Q3.3	.689									
Q3.7	.673									
Q5.2		.726								
Q5.3		.656								
Q5.1		.628								
Q5.5		.561								
Q5.6		.545								
Q5.4		.539								
Q3.1			.641							
Q2.5			.632							
Q2.4			.523					.505		
Q3.2										
Q6.1				.826						
Q6.3				.809						
Q6.2				.708						
Q2.2					.722					
Q2.1					.571					
Q3.9					.554					
Q2.3					.529					
Q2.6										
Q4.2						.782				
Q4.3						.591				
Q4.5						.547				
Q4.4							.706			
Q4.7							.640			
Q4.1										
Q3.13								.733		
Q3.11								.614		
Q3.8	.506							.510		
Q3.10									.749	
Q3.12									.598	
Q4.6									.503	
Q3.6										.661
Q3.5										.650

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.      Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.  
a. Rotation converged in 14 iterations.

## 4.7.2 Emerged factors

The data in Table 4.14 details the emerged factors from the factor analysis.

**Table 4. 14: Emerged factor showing new emerged dimensions**

Original items	Construct	Emerged factor	Emerging Items	New dimensions
Item Q3.1-Q3.13	Imaged perceived by students	1 (3 items)	Item Q3.3, Q3.4, and Q3.7	Positive imaged perceived by students
Item Q5.1-Q5.6	Customer orientation	2 (6 items)	Item Q5.1-Q5.6	Customer orientation
Item Q2.1-Q2.6 and Q3.1-Q3.13	Experience of student protest & Imaged perceived by students	3 (2 items)	Item Q2.5 and Q3.1	Causes of student protest and its impact on brand image
Item Q6.11-Q6.3	Fees	4 (3 items)	Item Q6.1-Q6.3	Fees
Item Q2.1-Q2.6 and Q3.1-Q3.13	Experience of student protest & Imaged perceived by students	5 (3 items)	Item Q2.1-Q2.3, and Q3.9	Impact of student protest
Item Q4.1-Q4.7	University branding	6 (3 items)	Item Q4.2, Q4.3 and Q4.5	University branding
Item Q4.1-Q4.7	University branding	7 (2 items)	Item Q4.4 and Q4.7	University ranking and competition
Item Q3.1-Q3.13	Imaged perceived by students	8 (2 items)	Item Q3.11 and Q3.13	Promoting brand image
Item Q3.1-Q3.13 and Item Q4.1-Q4.6	Imaged perceived by students and University branding	9 (3 items)	Item Q 3.10, Q3.12, and Q4.6	Factors influencing brand awareness
Item Q3.1-Q3.13 and Item Q4.1-Q4.6	Imaged perceived by students	10 (2 items)	Item Q3.5 and Q3.6	Brand image

The emerged Factor 1 had three items which are categorised under the new dimension, “*Positive image perceived by the students*”. Factor 2 had 6 items retained under the original dimension, “*Customer orientation*”. Factor 3 had 2 items which is a good mix of the items related to the “*Experiences of student protest*” (Item Q2.5) and “*Image perceived by DUT students*” (Item Q3.1) under the new dimension of “*Causes of student protest and its impact on brand image*”. The emerged Factor 4 contained three items (Item 6.1-Q6.3) which are categorised under the original construct “*Fees*”. The emerged Factor 5 that had three items drawn from the original “*Experience of student protest*” (Item Q2.1-Q2.3) and “*Image perceived by DUT students*” (Item Q3.9) which is then regrouped into a new “*Impact of student protest*”. The emerged Factor 6 had three items (Item Q4.2, Q4.3, and Q4.5) which constitute the original “*University branding*” construct and was therefore retained.

The emerged Factor 7 had two items (Item Q4.4 and Q4.7) which were drawn from the original “*University branding*” construct and subsequently regrouped into a new dimension of “*University ranking and competition*”. The emerged Factor 8 had two items (Item Q3.11 and Q3.13) which were regrouped into a new dimension “*Promoting brand image*”. Factor 9 had three items drawn from the original “image perceived by DUT students” (Item Q3.10, Q3.12) and “*University branding*” (Item Q4.6) which is then regrouped into the new “*Factors influencing brand awareness*”. Factor 10 had 2 items which are regrouped into a new dimension “*Brand image*”.

#### 4.7.3 Validating the emerged constructs

To validate the emerged constructs, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was computed.

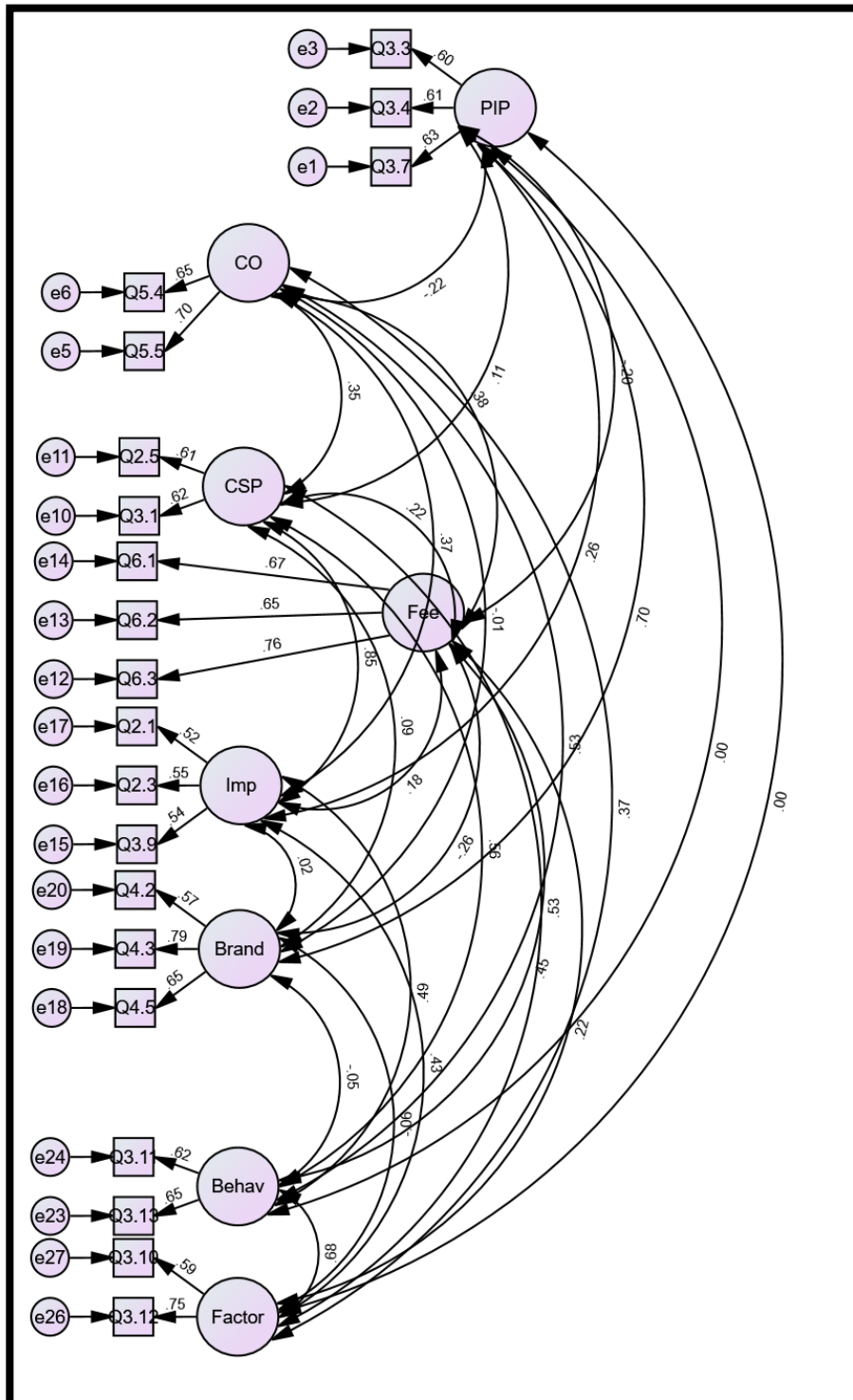
**Table 4. 15: Reliability, discriminant and convergent validity for emerged constructs**

	CR	AVE	MSV	MaxR(H)	Imp	PIP	Factor	Prom	Brand	Fee	CSP	CO
<b>Imp</b>	0.547	0.287	0.724	0.547	<b>0.536</b>							
<b>PIP</b>	0.643	0.376	0.484	0.644	0.258	<b>0.613</b>						
<b>Factor</b>	0.624	0.457	0.462	0.649	0.433	0.000	<b>0.676</b>					
<b>Prom</b>	0.575	0.404	0.462	0.576	0.494	0.002	0.680	<b>0.636</b>				
<b>Brand</b>	0.714	0.458	0.484	0.741	0.025	0.696	-0.057	-0.054	<b>0.677</b>			
<b>Fee</b>	0.737	0.484	0.202	0.745	0.178	0.197	0.220	0.449	-0.258	<b>0.696</b>		
<b>CSP</b>	0.550	0.380	0.724	0.550	0.851	0.110	0.535	0.560	0.093	0.215	<b>0.616</b>	
<b>CO</b>	0.628	0.458	0.278	0.629	0.366	0.222	0.370	0.527	-0.007	0.383	0.347	<b>0.676</b>

Note: Imp= Impact of student protest; PIP= Positive imaged perceived by the students; Factor=Factors influencing brand awareness; Prom=Promotion of brand image; Brand=University Branding; Fee= Fees; CSP= Causes of student protest and its impact on the brand image; CO=Customer orientation

The data show that only two of the factors, *University branding* and *Fees*, have acceptable reliability. The validity of the dimensions was assessed using both convergent and discriminant validity. The convergent validity was assessed using the average variance extracted (AVE). According to Hair *et al.* (2010), standardised factor loading with a value of 0.50 or higher provides strong evidence of convergent validity. The data in Table 4.15 above, failed convergent validity as all measures AVE were less than 0.5. On the other hand, only two of the factors’, *Fees* and *Customer orientation*, average variance extracted (AVE) have adequate discriminant validity as

the MSV values measured were less than the AVE (Mimouni-Chaabane, and Volle 2010: 34). The CFA result is further illustrated in Figure 4.4 below.



**Figure 4. 4: The CFA result**

The overall fitness indices of the CFA analysis were assessed by multiple fit criteria. The normed chi-square (cmin/df) is an absolute fit index that is obtained by dividing  $\chi^2$

by df. It is recommended that for a  $cmindf$  to be acceptable, the value should be greater than 1 but less than 5 (Hair et al. 2015). Another fit index is the Goodness of fit index (GFI). Hu and Bentler (2009: 17) recommend a GFI value to be  $\geq 0.9$ . The third fitness index used is the Comparative fit index (CFI). Alalwan *et al.* (2018: 132) recommended the acceptable value to be  $\geq 0.9$ . The final fit index used is the Root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA). The RMSEA value is recommended to be between 0.05 and 0.08 (Mimouni-Chaabane and Volle, 2010: 34). The model fit indices are as follows:  $\chi^2 = 317.413$ ;  $df = 142$ ;  $cmindf = 2.235$ ;  $CFI = 0.896$ ;  $GFI = 0.929$ ;  $RMSEA = 0.056$ , which suggests that the measurement model is acceptable.

## 4.8 Conclusion

In summary, the above chapter analysed and presented the data gathered on student protests and the brand image of a University of Technology. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse and present the data. The descriptive data shows that the majority of the participating students were within 18-26 years of age, female, African, in their 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> year of study, and mainly from the Management Sciences faculty. One sample t-test was used to compare if the responses from the participating students differed statistically. Using the mid-point of 3, the data suggests that there was mostly a significant agreement among the respondents in the statements measuring the experience of student protest, images perceived by the DUT students, University branding, customer orientation, and fees. Factor analysis using EFA, and CFA was used to validate and check the reliability of the data. The EFA results revealed 10 factors that emerged from the five constructs. However, the CFA results failed to support the validity of these emerging constructs. Therefore, the discussion in the next chapter of the findings relative to the research objectives will be structured according to the constructs developed from the literature review.

The next chapter will focus on drawing conclusions from the findings according to the research objectives and, based on these findings, on providing recommendations to the university for how to respond to protest actions to minimise damage to the university image. Finally, limitations to the study will be discussed and based on these limitations, recommendations for further research will be made.



# CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## 5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed and analysed results obtained from the primary data, bearing in mind that the aim of the study was to determine whether student protests affected the brand image of DUT. This chapter will present the conclusions reached in terms of the research objectives, and the implications of the findings for academics and practitioners. It presents the limitations of the study and provides key suggestions to minimise student protest at DUT, thereby ensuring the brand image of the university is not compromised.

This chapter is structured according to the results and the discussion of the study's objectives. The result of each objective is explored in-depth, the conclusions addressing the research problem is presented, the implications for the study's theory is discussed, and finally, the recommendations for policy and practice are provided. Consequently, recommendations for further research are provided.

## 5.2 Addressing the study's objectives

This section discusses the results obtained from Chapter four, that is the results from the empirical study, and explain these findings in context of prior research as highlighted in Chapter two.

### 5.2.1 Objective 1: To determine the causes of student protests.

The main causes of student protests at DUT are dissatisfaction with the NSFAS funding, accommodation, and the unresponsive attitude by management to address these issues. The results from statement 2.5 of the questionnaire state that, "*student protest emerged as a result of lack of funds, book allowances, and accommodation.*" Majority of the respondents (89%) agree with this statement. Similarly, statement 3.2, "*Student protest about matters and resources that are not managed by the DUT*", also shows that these matters are not resolved by management of DUT, thus (75%) of respondents agree to this statement. The results of these two statements are

relevant in the sense that they both are stating the same indication as the literature reflects.

Furthermore, question 2.6 of the questionnaire states, “*Costs the university tremendously to repair broken equipment and fixtures.*” This is the most significant, with the highest mean score value in this section ( $M=4.42$ ;  $SD = 0.783$ ;  $t(401) = 113.115$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). This was the most agreed upon statement with a high response rate (89.6%). During the protest action, the equipment and fixtures were damaged, impacting on the finances at DUT to repair these fixtures. This led to a lack of resources and facilities, which was inconvenient for both employees and students. In reviewing the causes of student protests with other institutions globally. Several studies (Marie-Eve 2012: 114; Bawa 2014: 69-72; Postma 2016: 1; Nwafor 2016: 26; Mavunga 2019: 82) and Ismail 2022: 83).

concur that the issues of student protests in other parts of the world are similar in comparison with causes of student protests experienced in South Africa.

Thus, Objective 1 has been met by showing that the main causes of student protest at DUT are problems with NSFAS funding, accommodation, and the unresponsive attitude by management to student dissatisfaction.

### **5.2.2 Objective 2: To determine whether protest affect the brand image of DUT**

Majority of the respondents (85%) agreed that “*Student protests affects the brand reputation of DUT*”. Therefore, it was considered one of the significant statements with ( $M= 4.17$ ,  $SD= 0.859$ ,  $t(401) = 97.264$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). With a similar pattern, question 3.1, “*Student protest damages the DUT’s brand image*” also reflects the above statement about the brand image and reputation of DUT, with 88% of respondents agreeing to the statement. This was also significant ( $M=4.26$ ,  $SD=0.852$ ,  $t(401) = 100.218$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). Another important statement reflecting on image was 3.5, namely “*Negative publicity and word of mouth has an influence on university branding and students’ choice of university*” ( $M=4.21$ ,  $SD= 0.740$ ,  $t(401) = 113.901$ ,  $p<0.001$ ), with 86% of respondents agreeing with the statement. Question 3.6 is also relevant to the image perspective of DUT, namely “*DUT’s brand image increases enrolment and retention.*” This statement was also as significant as the others with 80% of respondents agreeing ( $M = 4.11$ ,  $SD= 0.771$ ,  $t(401) = 106.795$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). Statement 3.13, “*Student*

behaviour during protest influences the perception and quality of education at DUT” (M = 4.03, SD = 1.009, t (401) = 80.095) was agreed with by 76% of respondents, indicating a probable public point of view about protests. Thus, it can be concluded that the student protests do have an impact on the brand image and reputation of DUT. Furthermore, word of mouth plays a vital role in students’ choice of university and therefore also forms a link with the brand image and the customer retention at DUT.

Question 2.2 is a significant statement related to the experience and outcome of student protest, which states “*Leads to the adjustment of the academic calendar, delays completion of the diploma, lectures and syllabus*”, with 84% of the respondents in agreement (M= 4.17, SD= 0.840, t (401) = 99.536, p< 0/001). In statement 2.3 “Violent student protest places my life in danger”, 89% of the respondents agreed with this statement, meaning it is also significant (M= 4.11, SD= 0.846, t (401) = 97.362, p<0.001). In Question 2.4 75% of the respondents believe that “*Student protest increases the dropout rates*” (M= 3.92, SD= 1.027, t (401) = 76.616, p< 0.001).

For the image perceived questions in statement 3.3, which stated “*The university cares about student and staff during the protes*” (M= 3.63, SD= 1.157, t (401) = 62.954, p<0.001), 63% of respondents were in agreement. This statement can also be linked with statement 3.5 of the questionnaire where it states that, “*Negative word of mouth could contribute to the negative image of the DUT brand*”, with 86% of respondents in agreement. Considering safety at the university during the protests, and possibly the perception of parents and the public, Statement 3.9 states “*Violence during protest creates fear amongst staff and students at DUT*” (M=4.28, SD= 0.763, t (401) = 112.510, p<0.001). This was another significant statement with 87% of the respondents in agreement.

Many of the respondents (76%) agree with statement 3.13, “*Student behaviour during protest influences the perception and quality of education*” (M= 4.03, SD= 1.009, t (401) = 80.095, p<0.001). From the results obtained regarding the previous statements, it can be concluded that the student protest disrupts learning at DUT and affects the daily operations, such as the academic calendar being amended, delay in graduation and threat of non-completion of the syllabus. Only a small proportion of students feel that the university cares about staff and students during protests, with staff expected to work through these protests. Negative word of mouth creates a

negative image of the institution. Many of the students feel unsafe, fearing for their lives during violent protests. Another negative contribution is that student protests lead to deregistration of students at DUT by those who feel threatened and cannot continue with their studies under these circumstances. Furthermore, the violent behaviour of protesting students influences the perception and quality of education.

In support of the above discussion, the results depicted in Table 4.10 in Chapter 4, reflects a strong correlation between the experience of student protest and the image perceived by students (.456  $p < .000$ ). Similar significant correlation was found between university branding and image perceived by DUT students (.330  $p < .000$ ). Brand associations influences the image, for example through functional branding, which is the disruption of lessons and tests in this study which impacts on the academic calendar. Symbolic branding affects students as consumers, considering their feelings towards the protests and their perceptions about the protests, as well as and their safety in the environment during protests on campus (Keller 1993: 1).

Universities have become business operations with students as their customers. In a system of education, universities are based on the conception of business operations that utilises value-marketing performance to establish their brand and attract more students. Students prefer to study at a public university with a good brand image as opposed to the private education sector. According to Chen (2016: 1), word-of-mouth also plays a vital role in students' purchasing and decision-making. Negative word-of-mouth plays a negative role in connection with the brand of a university. Furthermore, a lack of resources contributes to students' not choosing a particular university and results in a poor brand image of the university (Richins 1983: 1).

Students who may not have a positive impression of the university and who are not being loyal may create a poor image of the university (Mulyono 2016: 163). Brand image and corporate reputation are defined as combined opinions of customers, community members, and stakeholders' perceptions and attitudes towards the company, linked to customers' evaluation of the company. It also influences satisfaction and purchase intention, which is reflected on a company's performance in the quality of products and services it offers. Negative information affects customer evaluation of a company's product more intensely than positive information, deterioration in purchase intention of negative information damages brand equity and

corporate assets that the company developed over a period. The impact of negative information on a company's financial status is crucial in terms of premiums than positive information because it is used to determine the ultimate decision of consumer evaluations and processes, involving risks. Thus, people make decisions based on losses rather than future gains. Hence, ethical reputation can be regarded as a homogenous attribute that damages brand equity regardless of equity (Jung and Seock 2016: 15).

The above discussion, supported by the correlations, indicates protest has a negative impact on the image of an institution, potential students are influenced by negative word-of-mouth, and violence during protest. This further impacts on students leaving the university and deregistering from courses due to an unsafe environment. Thus, objective 2 has been achieved.

### **5.2.3 Objective 3: To establish whether student protest affects service delivery of DUT**

Statement 5.1, in the customer satisfaction section of the questionnaire states "*The university is both a product and service*" – most of the respondents agree with this statement (82%) (M=4.09, SD= 0.80, t (401) = 101.581, p<0.001). Statement 5.2, "*Intent to continue with my studies at DUT (Postgraduate level)*", was agreed with by 80% of the respondents (M=4.05, SD=0.782, t (401) = 103.879, p<0.001). Statement 5.3, namely "*Without quality education, a university will not be able to retain students*" (M=4.26, SD=0.688, t (401) = 124.176, p<0.001) is the most significant question of this section with 90% of respondents agreeing. Statement 5.4, "*To establish the university as student centred requires safety facilities and continuity of the academic programme*" had 88% of the respondents agreeing (M= 4.28, SD=0.683, t (401) = 125.691 p< 0.001). The statement 5.5 stating that "*Student satisfaction with the university is related to academic achievement*" had 85% of respondents in agreement (M= 4.25, SD=0.762, t (401) = 111.726, p<0.001). In statement 5.6, "*The university qualification is appropriate for the world of work*", had agreement from 77% of respondents (M= 4.05, SD=0.836, t (401) = 97.093, p< 0.001).

In support of the discussion above, the findings in Table 4.10 in Chapter 4, show that there is a small, positive correlation between experience of student protest and

customer orientation and between student perception of the brand image and customer orientation. Therefore, a conclusion can be drawn that majority of the respondents wish to continue with their studies but without compromising the quality of education. However, they wish to be safe and find that DUT provides them with great opportunity for the world of work.

When South Africa gained liberation in 1994, South African universities entered the international community in higher education. The changes in the global environment affected the organisational structure, curriculum and pedagogic approaches and responses to the community. The change towards epistemological justice stems from diverse student populations which impact on culture and processes and the national and global commitment to transform higher education (Schreiber 2014: 9).

It has been reported by many communities' that local government makes empty promises during times of election all because they wish to have more votes however, when elections are over promises are not kept (Mushama 2020: 76). Higher education institutions are pressurised to address issues of equity. Assurance and standardisation of student success and employability are major concerns for students (Schreiber 2014: 11). More so, teachers and lecturers are afraid to continue at schools and universities as they have become victims of protest and feel unsafe in the classrooms (Mushama 2020: 36).

The question of resources yet again arises as to whether universities perform at a better rate due to sufficient allocation of resources. Most students today prefer blended learning, although some still prefer attending face-face lectures. This has also worked for some academics but for some it was strenuous. Blended learning has a positive effect on reducing dropout rates and improving exam marks. Perez (2011: 818) argue that satisfaction is related to academic achievement and the relationship between student success and student satisfaction. During the pandemic, academic staff at DUT also opted for online teaching and learning to continue with the academic programme. The protests have also impacted largely on university resources as some have resulted in burned libraries and labs where students access the internet. This has compromised the available resources for teaching and learning to run smoothly (Czerniewics, Trotter and Haupt 2019: 20).

From the above discussion it can be concluded that student protests do influence service delivery and thus customer orientation, is concluded that Objective 3 is achieved.

### **5.3 Conclusions about the research problem**

Many organisations in South Africa and particularly those in Durban, have experienced protests recently. The outcome of student protests has resulted from major issues associated with students coming from impoverished backgrounds. The study focused on DUT, the largest University of Technology in KwaZulu-Natal. Students have expressed their concerns about the increase in registration fees, NFSAS funding, accommodation and book allowances. These issues could potentially damage the brand image of DUT. As a result of these unmet demands, the student protests turned violent. According to Bar Beau (2015: 1), the main causes of protests have been empty promises made by government officials of the country.

Such activities undoubtedly create a negative image of the institution and could negatively influence students' attitudes towards, and beliefs about the University. For many years, the institution has been faced with annual student protests which has become the norm. Students also feel that if no action is taken, the University will not take their complaints seriously. The students' aim is to complete their qualifications and leave the university employable. A university succeeds when it is able to provide knowledge and value, but when not properly managed by administrators and staff, results in failure of its function to provide quality, knowledge and value (Della 2016: 1). DUT must live up to the brand image being promoted, by serving the community and building partnerships with community leaders, schools, industry and government. A way of betterment for poor students is to benefit from advancing technologies' demand for skills from a large high-quality university, which will be produced through academic growth and expansion of higher education that can lead to social mobility.

The aim of the study was to assess the effects of the student protests on the brand image of DUT as perceived by its' students. The purpose of the study was to find out the major causes of student protest and whether student protest affected the brand image of DUT.

The CFA was used to validate and check the reliability of the data. The EFA results revealed the factors that emerged from the constructs. The main factors that were revealed were the key importance of the study: Brand image of DUT as perceived by students, quality of education and continuity of the academic Programme, brand reputation, brand trust of DUT, fees, causes of protest and safety. It is evident that majority of students believe that protest damages the brand reputation of the university (85% in agreement in 2.1 of the construct), the causes of protest are agreed (89% in agreement that funds, housing and allowances are the causes of protest), however students still feel unsafe with violence during protest (79% in agreement that violence places lives in danger and students and staff fear unsafety of the environment also depicted in 3.9 of the construct with (87% in agreement).

Statement 3.1 of the construct (88%) of respondents agrees that the DUT brand image is affected by protest which confirms that protest impacts on the brand image of the university however not many believe that university cares about safety of students and staff (63%) in agreement and the protest has impacted on the resources at DUT as only (68%) in agreement that DUT has sufficient resources. Only (59%) state that DUT is a preferred university, thus indicating that respondents do not have knowledge regarding the fees at other universities in KZN.

Only (65% of respondents feel that DUTs advertising on media is effective and (62%) believe that the brand is trustworthy. This indicates a negative trust on the brand of DUT. Not many respondents (66%) believe that DUT created an image in the minds of the students. Thus, indicating DUT need to improve their advertising to increase attention of potential learners. Only half the respondents (53%) feel that DUT fees are affordable, possibly indicating that fees are possibly cheaper at other universities. Good university governance (GUG) is a new variable in the field of student satisfaction determinants (Martono *et al.* 2020: 3). Students are also unaware of the repayment process as indicated in 6.2 of the constructs with only (43%) in agreement that loans must be repaid. Most respondents also feel that the DUT payment plan is not suited (46%) in agreement. This indicates that there is a huge fall out when it comes to the fees aspect and the institution is running on a loss in cases of non-repayments.

Majority of respondents (90%) believe that without quality education the institution will not be able to continue and meet enrolment targets in future and (85%) agrees that



students are satisfied with great academic achievements. The discussion in section 5.2, shows that the study objectives have been successfully addressed.

## **5.4 Implications for DUT**

It seems that the causes of protest are the same as the ones that exist globally. The primary causes of student protests at DUT are NSFAS funding, accommodation, and lack of resources, all reflecting the unresponsive attitude by management, ultimately implying governments unfulfilled promises. Majority of respondents felt that the image and reputation of the university was damaged by student protest, which contributes to the perception and quality of education at DUT. Word-of-mouth plays a role in students' choice of study and retaining students. Furthermore, results reflect that the student protests disrupt learning, and the daily operations at DUT, while student protests also increase the dropout rate in fear of the uncomfortable protest environment. It seems like certain respondents feel that DUT does not care much about the staff and student safety during protests.

From all the discussion and conclusions drawn from the study, it seems that more intervention is required from DUT management and external stakeholders to resolve student demands. There is a lot of negative publicity about student protests, but there seems to be a gap in knowledge when it comes to the brand image component of the university, as there is not enough literature found on the negative image of DUT caused by student protests. The literature describes an unsafe environment for DUT students and staff. However, the DUT's new branding policy is committed to promoting, re-establishing and working on being people-centric, in the case of ensuring safety of students and staff and ensuring continuity of the academic programme. Despite this, the responses reflect that students and staff are left traumatised by from the experience and many are not comfortable on DUT premises during protests.

Although the brand image of the university was not perceived to be significantly affected by the protests, a good proportion of the respondents (88%) felt that student protest could potentially affect the brand image of a university.

## **5.5 Recommendations for policy and practice**

According to the findings in this study, there exist knowledge gaps in the areas of fees and the trustworthiness of the DUT brand. As stated in section 5.4, 44% of respondents agreed with the statement that loans must be repaid. This could indicate that more than half of the respondents were not aware that they were liable for loan repayments. As such, students should get a clear indication from the finance department that loans should be repaid. This will assist in the upgrading of the university, repairing broken equipment and vandalised property. Regarding the statement, "*DUT's brand is trustworthy*", only 62% agreed that the brand is trustworthy. This could mean that respondents do not have knowledge of the brand of other universities to agree or rate DUT according to this statement. Another statement on fees, "*DUT has a payment plan to suit me*", indicates from the results only (46%) agrees that DUT has a suitable payment plan. This could suggest that the respondents are unaware of the affordability and payment plan options available at other universities to compare and agree with this statement. These indicators could suggest that there is a lack of communication between the staff, students and possibly the government. Also, regarding ongoing protest, the university should be involved with obtaining tighter security measures to make sure the fixtures and property is not tampered with as this has an implication on the university's resources and facilities on campus. The institution should keep the government informed of its commitments and recommendations. The university students' lives are being negatively impacted by the absence of such communication and engagement.

## **5.6 Limitations**

The study was restricted to the Durban-based campuses only. There was limited research conducted on the brand image of DUT. The study was restricted to DUT students only. During the COVID-19 epidemic, students were engaged with online learning, which caused the data collection process to be delayed.

## **5.7 Recommendations for further research**

This study was based only on DUT and as such, the results cannot be generalised to other higher learning institutions. Therefore, further research could be conducted via a comparative analysis with other universities to ascertain if other institutions are similarly affected by student protests and the impact this has on their brand image. The results achieved from the statements on the brand image of DUT suggest that society believes that student protest does negatively impact on the brand of the university, and so deeper research on this is warranted. Expanded research on other universities will broaden the knowledge base on this topic and provide insight and suggestions for other universities to cope with student protests. Furthermore, further research at other universities will help to understand the impact and the importance of protest action on the brand image and reputation of universities.

## **5.8 Conclusion**

Objective 1 of this study has shown that student protest is a result of lack of funds, accommodation and book allowances with 89% of respondents in agreement, and that inadequate resources are a reflection on DUT management. Similarly, inadequate liaison and communication between the SRC and management contributed to student protest turning violent. Therefore, DUT should look to good university governance as a new variable of student satisfaction determinants (Martono *et al.* 2020: 3).

The only previous study into the brand of DUT identified damage caused to the brand by inadequately qualified staff who worked longer hours and were paid less (Pitso 2018: 26). Together these findings indicate that management has not fully tackled and resolved the problems being faced, which cause harm to the DUT reputation.

From both the literature and this study's findings relating to Objective 2, it is clear that student protest has an impact on the brand image and reputation of DUT. The perception is that the university cares little for students and staff during protests, with delays and postponements of lectures and syllabus completion and, ultimately, graduation. Furthermore, violence during protests creates fear amongst staff and students, disrupting learning and affecting the daily operations to the extent that some students have deregistered due to feeling unsafe. These perceptions caused by the

violent behaviour of some students also influences the perception of the quality of education received.

The findings relevant to Objective 3 relating to service delivery at DUT show that perceptions of inadequate quality education and a lack of both safety and continuity of the academic programme can lead to the university being unable to retain students as the majority of students wish to continue with their studies, without compromising quality education, in a safe environment and in the hope of finding employment after graduating.

The results from the three objectives suggest that the DUT management requires improvement as there are unresolved issues with funding, book allowances and student accommodation, which cause continuing annual protests. These protests damage both staff and student facilities and resources, impacting on the financial structure of the university which has to spend money on repairs. It is evident, therefore, that student protest impacts on the brand image and reputation of DUT.

This chapter addressed the study objectives as set out in Chapter 1, section 1.3, and drew on the conclusions about the research problem. Further implications, recommendations, policy and practice were discussed, limitations of the study were highlighted and recommendations for further research was stated.

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## APPENDIX A: LETTER OF INFORMATION AND CONSENT



### LETTER OF INFORMATION

**Title of the Research Study:** Student protest and the brand image of a university of Technology

**Principal Investigator/s/researcher:** (Sajida Abdool, Bachelors' Degree in Management)

**Co-Investigator/s/supervisor/s:** (Dr M Maharaj, D. Com Marketing/ Prof R Mason, PhD in Marketing)

**Brief Introduction and Purpose of the Study:** Greetings and thank you for taking this opportunity to partake in my study. Your contribution, efforts and input is highly appreciated and of great value. The main aim of the study is to assess the effects of the student protests on the brand image of DUT as perceived by its students'

**Outline of the Procedures:** The participant will be responsible for answering the questionnaire. You will be given 5 to 10 minutes to complete the questionnaire. The survey will be conducted at DUT, the ML Sultan, Steve Biko and Ritson campuses. The questionnaire consists of the closed ended questions and a five-point Likert scale. Non-probability sampling will be used to select the sample. The attention of the researcher will be directed towards students at the Durban University and their perception of the brand.

**Risks or Discomforts to the Participant:** The nature of the research does not place any risk on you and you may choose to withdraw.

**Benefits:** The research will benefit respondents by helping to make the university a better environment for all.

**Reason/s why the Participant May Be Withdrawn from the Study:** You can withdraw due to non-compliance, illness or adverse reactions. There will be no adverse consequences for the participant should they choose to withdraw.

**Remuneration:** Participation is voluntary. No remuneration will be given to you as a result of study.

**Costs of the Study:** Your participation in this study has absolutely no cost implications to you.

**Confidentiality:** Your name will not be used in the final document and everything that is said during this study will be kept confidential by the researcher.

**Research-related Injury:** No injuries are expected to emanate as a result of your participation to this study.

**Data Storage:** Data will be stored in the Department of Marketing in a locked storeroom. There is limited access controlled by the Head of Department. Data will be kept in the department for five years and then shredded. Electronic data will be kept in a password protected file on a password protected computer in the department for 5 years, after which the data will be deleted.

**Persons to Contact in the Event of Any Problems or Queries:** Please contact the researcher (0710808484), my supervisor Professor Roger Mason, PhD (0799 208 208) or the Institutional Research Ethics Administrator on 031 373 2375. Complaints can be reported to the DVC: Research, Innovation and Engagement Prof S Moyo on 031 373 2577 or [moyos@dut.ac.za](mailto:moyos@dut.ac.za)



**CONSENT**

**Statement of Agreement to Participate in the Research Study:** Student protest and the brand image of a University of Technology

- I hereby confirm that I have been informed by the researcher, \_\_\_\_\_ (name of researcher), about the nature, conduct, benefits and risks of this study - Research Ethics Clearance Number: \_\_\_\_\_,
- I have also received, read and understood the above written information (Participant Letter of Information) regarding the study.
- I am aware that the results of the study, including personal details regarding my sex, age, date of birth, initials and diagnosis will be anonymously processed into a study report.
- In view of the requirements of research, I agree that the data collected during this study can be processed in a computerised system by the researcher.
- I may, at any stage, without prejudice, withdraw my consent and participation in the study.
- I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and (of my own free will) declare myself prepared to participate in the study.
- I understand that significant new findings developed during the course of this research which may relate to my participation will be made available to me.

_____	_____	_____	
<b>Full Name of Participant Thumbprint</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Signature / Right</b>

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (name of researcher) herewith confirm that the above participant has been fully informed about the nature, conduct and risks of the above study.

_____	_____	_____
<b>Full Name of Researcher</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Signature</b>

_____	_____	_____
<b>Full Name of Witness (If applicable)</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Signature</b>

_____	_____	_____
<b>Full Name of Legal Guardian (If applicable)</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Signature</b>

***Please note the following:***

Research details must be provided in a clear, simple and culturally appropriate manner and prospective participants should be helped to arrive at an informed decision by use of appropriate language (grade 10 level - use Flesch Reading Ease Scores on Microsoft Word), selecting of a non-threatening environment for interaction and the availability of peer counseling (Department of Health, 2004)

If the potential participant is unable to read/illiterate, then a right thumb print is required and an impartial witness, who is literate and knows the participant e.g. parent, sibling, friend, pastor, etc. should verify in writing, duly signed that informed verbal consent was obtained (Department of Health, 2004).

If anyone makes a mistake completing this document e.g. wrong date or spelling mistake a new document has to be completed. The incomplete original document has to be kept in the participant file and not thrown away and copies thereof must be issued to the participant.

**References:**

Department of Health: 2004. *Ethics in Health Research: Principles, Structures and Processes*  
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[http://www.nhrec.org.za/?page\\_id=14](http://www.nhrec.org.za/?page_id=14)

## APPENDIX B: QUESTIONNAIRE

Questionnaire – “Student protest ad brand image of a university of Technology”.

Dear Sir / Madam

I am Sajida Abdool, a student at the Durban University of Technology, studying towards a master’s degree in Marketing. My study is based on “Student protest and the brand image of a University of Technology”.

Managers of many universities are struggling with student protests and I hope my research will contribute to changing the university environment and to having a strike free university. I have developed a questionnaire which I need to conduct within the Durban University of Technology. My study involves getting your opinions and perspectives about student protests. I would like to take this opportunity to invite you to participate in my research study. I request that you kindly fill in the questionnaire as honestly as possible. Be assured that your anonymity will be respected and preserved. I thank you in advance for contributing to my research, your efforts are greatly appreciated.

Once you complete the questionnaire, kindly reply to this email stating if you had any problems completing the questionnaire, any questions you did not understand, questions you thought were incorrectly phrased and how they can be improved or worded, important information about the protests you felt have been omitted or any other things you wish to state must be changed or improved.

### Section A

**Kindly tick or cross X the appropriate boxes**

1. DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE					
1.1 Age	18-20	21-23	24-26	27-29	30 and above
1.2 Gender	Male		Female		Diverse/Other/Not specified
1.3 Race	African	White	Indian	Coloured	International/other Specify.....
1.4 Level of study	2 <sup>nd</sup> year	3 <sup>rd</sup> year			
1.5 Faculty option	Management Sciences	Engineering and the Built Environment	Applied Sciences	Accounting and Informatics	Health Sciences
1.6 Was DUT your first choice / option to study	Yes		No		

### Section B

**Please rate the questions below, using the following rating scale and marking your answer with a cross**

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEUTRAL	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE

<b>Experience of student protest</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Student Protest</b>					
1. Affects the brand reputation of the Durban University of Technology					
2. Leads to the adjustment of the academic calendar, delays completion of diploma, lectures and syllabus					
3. Violent student protest places my life in danger					
4. Increases student dropout rate					
5. Emerged because of lack of funds, book allowances and housing					
6. Costs the university tremendously to repair and replace broken equipment and fixtures					

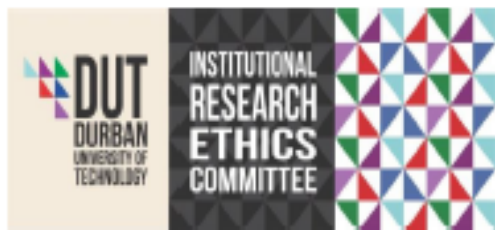
<b>Image perceived by DUT students</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
1. Student protest damages the DUT's brand image					
2. Student protest about matters / resources that are not managed by DUT					
3. The university cares about student and staff safety during protests					
4. DUT has sufficient teaching, learning and financial facilities / resources					
5. Negative publicity / word of mouth has an influence on university branding and student's choice of university					
6. DUT's brand image increases student enrolment / retention					
7. DUT is a preferred university of technology in KZN					
8. Gender based violence affects DUT's brand image					
9. Violence during protest creates fear amongst staff and students at DUT					
10. Social media communication contributes to the brand image of the university					
11. Changes of managerial staff influences the university's overall performance					
12. Resistance to change in the university environment will affect overall performance and the brand image					
13. Student behaviour during protest influences the perception and the quality of education at DUT					

<b>University Branding</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
1. Effective advertising creates brand awareness and impacts on students' choice of university					
2. DUT's choice of media for advertising is very effective					
3. DUT's brand is trustworthy					
4. Competition among KZN universities has forced technological development of facilities					
5. DUT has created a brand image in the minds of public, when compared to similar competing universities					
6. The brand awareness at private universities is more effective than public universities					
7. First year students lack experience to rank a university in South Africa					

<b>Customer Orientation</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
1. The university is both a product and a service					
2. Intent to continue with my studies at DUT (Post graduate level)					
3. Without quality education, a university will not be able to retain students					
4. To establish the university as student centred, requires safety facilities and continuity of the academic programme					
5. Student satisfaction with the university is related to academic achievement					
6. The university qualification is appropriate for the world of work					

<b>Fees</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
1. The university fees are affordable compared to other universities					
2. NFSAS loans must be repaid by graduates upon completion					
3. DUT offers a payment plan to suit me					

## APPENDIX C: ETHICS APPROVAL



Institutional Research Ethics Committee  
Research and Postgraduate Support Directorate  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Benwyn Court  
Gate 1, Steve Biko Campus  
Durban University of Technology

P O Box 1224, Durban, South Africa, 4001

Tel: 031 272 2275

Email: [levithad@dut.ac.za](mailto:levithad@dut.ac.za)

[http://www.dut.ac.za/research/institutional\\_research\\_ethics](http://www.dut.ac.za/research/institutional_research_ethics)

[www.dut.ac.za](http://www.dut.ac.za)

12 March 2021

Mrs S Abdool  
3 Camel Thorn Place  
Trenance Park  
Verulam  
4339

Dear Mrs Abdool

### STUDENT PROTESTS AND THE BRAND IMAGE OF A UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

Ethical Clearance number IREC 048/20

The Institutional Research Ethics Committee acknowledges receipt of your notification regarding the piloting of your data collection tool.

Kindly ensure that participants used for the pilot study are not part of the main study.


In addition, the IREC acknowledges receipt of your gatekeeper permission letter.

Please note that **FULL APPROVAL** is granted to your research proposal. You may proceed with data collection.

Any adverse events [serious or minor] which occur in connection with this study and/or which may alter its ethical consideration must be reported to the IREC according to the IREC SOP's.

Please note that any deviations from the approved proposal require the approval of the IREC as outlined in the IREC SOP's.

Yours Sincerely

  
Professor J K Adam  
Chairperson: IREC



## APPENDIX D: GATEKEEPERS LETTER



*Directorate for Research and  
Postgraduate Support  
Durban University of Technology  
Tromso Annexe, Steve Biko Campus  
P.O. Box 1334, Durban 4000  
Tel.: 031-3732576/7  
Fax: 031-3732946*

1<sup>st</sup> March 2021 Mrs Sajida Abdool  
c/o Department of Marketing and Retail Management  
Faculty of Management Sciences  
Durban University of Technology

Dear Mrs Abdool

### **PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT THE DUT**

Your email correspondence in respect of the above refers. I am pleased to inform you that the Institutional Research and Innovation Committee (IRIC) has granted **Full Permission** for you to conduct your research “Student protests and the brand image of a University of Technology” at the Durban University of Technology.

The DUT may impose any other condition it deems appropriate in the circumstances having regard to nature and extent of access to and use of information requested.

We would be grateful if a summary of your key research findings would be submitted to the IRIC on completion of your studies.

Kindest  
regards.  
Yours  
sincerely

---

DR LINDA ZIKHONA LINGANISO  
DIRECTOR: RESEARCH AND POSTGRADUATE SUPPORT DIRECTORATE

## APPENDIX E: EDITING CERTIFICATE LETTER

**Dr. Maleni Thakur**

92 Victoria Road, Hillary, Durban, 4094

B. Tech: Journalism, M. Phil: Quality Management

031-4645041 / 078 5442461

Ph.D. Public Admin (DUT)

maleni.thakur@gmail.com

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### EDITING CERTIFICATE LETTER

**Date:** 25 October 2022

**Re:** Ms. Sajida Adool

Durban University of Technology

Student Number: 20429520

Master's in Management Science: Marketing

### STUDENT PROTESTS AND THE BRAND IMAGE OF A UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

I confirm that I have proof-read, language edited and lay-out edited the above-mentioned work by the master's candidate Ms. Sajida Adool.

The work was returned to the candidate with evidence of track changes and implementations to be undertaken. The correct implementation of the changes in the text and references is the responsibility of the student. The final edited version was returned to the student on 25 October 2022 via email.

I am satisfied that the editing and proof-reading of the above-mentioned work meets the post-graduate guidelines as set-out.

Sincerely,

**Dr. Maleni Thakur**

Editor

# APPENDIX F: TURNITIN REPORT

10/18/22, 12:37 PM Turnitin - Originality Report - STUDENT PROTESTS AND THE BRAND IMAGE OF A UNI...

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### Turnitin Originality Report

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**STUDENT PROTESTS AND THE BRAND IMAGE OF A UNI... By Sajida Abdul Kader**

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1% match (student papers from 11-Jun-2020) Submitted to Durban University of Technology on 2020-06-11	■
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<1% match () Davids, Annes. "The relationship between work engagement, self-efficacy and optimism among call centre agents", 2011	□
<1% match () Chinisa, Amonso. "Teaching methods in grade 7 in Shurupwi district, Zimbabwe", 2011	□
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<1% match (student papers from 18-Jun-2016) Submitted to Ghana Technology University College on 2016-06-18	□

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1/20

Turnitin report approved

Professor R B Mason (Supervisor)

Co-supervisor 26 October 2022

## APPENDIX G: STATISTICIAN CERTIFICATE

**Dr. SC Onwubu**

45 Thomson Avenue, Sandown, Durban, 4091  
0717930852  
Profstan4christ@yahoo.com

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### STATISTICIAN CERTIFICATE

**Date:** 27 October 2022

**Re: Sajida Abdool**

Faculty of Management Sciences, Durban University of Technology

**Master's Dissertation: Student protest and the brand image of a University of Technology**

I confirm that Ms Sajida Abdool consulted me regarding her data analysis. I did her statistical work using both descriptive and inferential statistics. I attest that the statistical analysis conducted meets the post-graduate guidelines and addresses her research objectives.

**Dr. SC Onwubu**

27 October 2022