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An exploration of internal branding at the National Treasury of South Africa

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Purpose: National Treasury plays a significant role in the country's branding, and its employees are responsible for carrying out its functions. Internal branding empowers management to appropriately manage employee performance. The study aimed to determine whether internal branding practices are appropriately applied at the National Treasury, provide a non-technical reference to internal branding, and determine whether it is a predictor of employee performance.

Design/methodology/approach: A quantitative approach was followed wherein two questionnaires were administered to all employees of the National Treasury ($n = 1189$), a response rate of 42.1% ($n = 501$) was achieved. Data were analysed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences 25 (SPSS).

Findings/results: Internal branding practices are somewhat appropriately applied ($m = 5.819$). First- and second-order internal brand identity are provided as a non-technical reference. Internal branding has been determined to be a predictor of individual work performance ($r = 0.531$, $p < 0.005$).

Practical/managerial implications: Literature suggests that there exists very little research on internal branding with a particular focus on the public sector when compared to that relating to the private sector. This study aimed to create awareness of the concept and highlight its importance to National Treasury's management team for managing employee performance.

Contribution/value-add: The importance of internal branding, which has been alternatively termed first- and second-order internal brand identity, to employee performance has been established, thereby making a case of the development and implementation of an internal branding policy at the National Treasury.

Keywords: internal branding; National Treasury; individual work performance; national branding; Public Finance Management.

Introduction

Orientation of the study

This study rests on the suggestions of the Department of National Treasury (2019), Kaneva (2011) and Mugo and Misiani (2017) that an appropriately functioning central treasury, which would be the National Treasury in the case of South Africa, is critical to the efficient management of public finances in accordance with applicable financial legislation (Republic of South Africa, 1999) and the national brand, as evidenced by investor confidence amongst other considerations (Fetscherin, 2010). Kaneva (2011) defined national branding as the ability of a government to influence its nation's brand image in a manner that promotes foreign interest and trust. Anholt (2006) proposed six dimensions of the nation-brand hexagon, namely investment and immigration, export, governance, culture and heritage, tourism and people. Of these, investment and immigration, export and governance which would include financial governance and stability are within the direct control of a country's central treasury department (Department of National Treasury, 2019). In support and detailing its mission statement, the Department of National Treasury (2015) stated:

> [T]he National Treasury supports economic growth and development, good governance, social progress and rising living standards through the accountable, economic, efficient, equitable and sustainable management of South Africa's public finances, maintenance of macroeconomic and financial sector stability, and effective financial regulation of the economy. (p. 4)

The National Treasury is, thus, mandated to provide a financial management consultancy service to broader government including the control over the implementation of the national budget in

accordance with *Public Finance Management Act* and other related financial legislation such as the Treasury Regulations (Republic of South Africa, 1999). The Auditor-General of South Africa (n.d.) and Department of National Treasury (2019) suggest that this service, if adequately provided, would translate in the achievement of good audit outcomes by the government, low levels of corruption and a high degree of investor confidence. Auditor-General of South Africa (n.d.) further adds that audit outcomes reflect the extent to which a given department has implemented its budget within the parameters of the law wherein a clean audit outcome implies that this has occurred, corruption simply means the use of public resources for private gain (Mosikari, Nthebe, & Eita, 2018), and good investor confidence means that investors perceive the South African investment market as relatively low risk and are thus willing to invest in various portfolios offered (Fetscherin, 2010). Auditor-General of South Africa (2020) mentions that only 26% of government institutions audited in the 2019/20 financial year achieved clean audits. 'Transparency International's (TI) 2017 global Corruption Perception Index (CPI) shows that South Africa has dropped 34 places since 2001, with half the decline of 17 places occurring since 2009' (Krsteski, 2017). The South African Chamber of Commerce and Industry (2021) stated that the Business Confidence Index, which reflects marketplace sentiment from the perceptive of industry and often impacts willingness thereof to expand investment, for South Africa in 2020 was at its lowest since the inception of this measure in 1985. These facts taken into account, at least on a practical level, suggest a need for a stronger presence of the National Treasury.

Given that the National Treasury is service oriented (Department of National Treasury, 2019), there is a need to zoom in on employee performance as its functions would largely be carried out by its employees as suggested by Skaalsvik (2017). The author further mentioned that value creation for a service brand relies more on the employees than in the case of tangible product brands. Employees are positioned to be equally important as management and external customers. In support, Krishan (2011) stated that:

> [A]n organization is not a mere building, but it consists of the people, the staff, management and other internal publics that enable the organization to function. Thus, they make the most important part of an organization. (p. 1)

Internal branding is proposed to be one of the most comprehensive ways to improve employee performance (Allada & Rajyalakshmi, 2012; MaClaverty, McQuillan, & Oddie, 2007), as it provides a mechanism for management to bring employees on board with the values and mission of an organisation (Nirmali, Yajid, Khatibi, & Azam, 2017). It is therefore surprising that research on the topic in the public sector context is scanty (Leijerholt, Biedenbach, & Hulten, 2020), noting poor government performance levels, which largely relies on employee performance (Fourie & Poggenpo, 2017). A Google search of published work on internal branding on the national government level yielded no useful

results. This study aims to address this research gap particularly given that the national government is the most important sphere as it sets country and foreign trade policy (Constitution of the Republic of South African 1996). This study relied on the definition of MaClaverty et al. (2007) who stated that internal branding is:

> [T]he set of strategic processes that align and empower employees to deliver the appropriate customer experience consistently. These processes include, but are not limited to, internal communications, training support, leadership practices, reward and recognition programs, recruitment practices and sustainability factors. (p. 2)

Moreover, what makes this concept of particular interest to the industry is that researchers have proven that it assists in getting employees to live the brand that, in turn, results in good employee performance (MaClaverty et al., 2007). Yua, Asaadb, Yenc and Gupta (2018) proved that internal market orientation, which is the basis of internal branding, positively relates to employee commitment, and this, in turn, promotes brand supportive behaviour. Punjaisri, Wilson and Evanschitzky (2019) further showed that internal branding positively impacted employee brand performance and brand commitment as well as brand loyalty. Ali-jabari and Ghazzawl (2019) referred to employee commitment as a state wherein an employee identifies with and displays a heightened degree of involvement with an organisation, its objectives and goals. Mousvai and Mehdi (2012) mentioned that a committed employee is also likely to display extra-role behaviour, which is desirable behaviour that goes beyond formally prescribed tasks and contributes to organisational performance. An example would be a more senior employee helping less experienced colleagues to achieve their work tasks. Brand loyalty in human resource management, much like its definition in marketing, is the highest level of brand commitment (Opatha, 2015) and generally increases employee retention. This study uses the concept of individual work performance as the desired outcome of good internal branding. Koopmans et al. (2013, p. 63) referred to individual work performance as 'behaviours or actions that are relevant to the goals of the organisation.'

Based on the discussions above, it is clear that National Treasury, a service organisation, relies heavily on its employees to ensure that its key functions which include providing support to the government to achieve clean audit outcomes, curbing corruption and ensuring suitably high investor appetite in domestic ventures. Poor performance in these areas has been seen suggesting the need for intervention. As internal branding is suggested as an appropriate mechanism to improve employee performance, this article aims to increase management's awareness of the concept so that it may be appropriately applied as part of the intervention. There is also very little published research on internal branding, particularly in the context of the South African public sector as confirmed by a Google search. The problem statement of this study is thus formulated as follows:

The performance of the National Treasury is inadequate as evidenced by poor audit outcomes, high corruption levels and dwindling investor confidence. Since its employees carry out its functions, there is a need to focus on employee performance. While internal branding is provided as means to do so, it is under-researched particularly in the context of the South African public sector.

Research purpose and objectives

Noting the problem statement, the main research question is whether internal branding would empower National Treasury's management to appropriately manage employee performance. The research is guided by three main questions: Is internal branding appropriately applied at National Treasury? How do we explain what internal branding is to a non-human resource and marketing expert? Is there evidence to support the suggestion that internal branding positively relates to employee performance in the case of the National Treasury?

In order to respond to these research questions, the study aims to:

1. Determine the adequacy of internal branding practices applied in order to establish a baseline.
2. Propose a more operationally relatable and non-technical reference to the internal branding concept, using the data collected from the National Treasury on the adequacy of internal branding practices, for the benefit of line-function management teams.
3. Determine whether internal branding positively relates to individual work performance.

Literature review

Internal branding refers to specific methods and tools employers may use to promote brand supportive behaviour (MaClaverty et al., 2007) and falls within the broader umbrella of internal marketing (Nirmali et al., 2017). Internal marketing is defined as the process through which management is able to promote the products and services of an organisation to its employees (Amangala & Wali, 2013; Farias, 2010). Skaalsvik (2017), who developed a value-creation model, proposed that employees, customers and management are equally important, each in their own right, particularly in the context of a service organisation. The employees form an independent part of the service, and it is the responsibility of management to ensure that the service is appropriately delivered. Thus, unlike with the manufacturing sector, which deals with tangible products, services can't go through an immediate quality check before it reaches the customer. It is usually only after the provision that management would know about a quality issue and that is only if the customer reports the issue. Internal branding, therefore, seems appealing as a method of internal marketing in which employees are treated as internal customers to motivate them to buy into the organisational brand objectives. It would be reasonable to expect that such an approach would be easier to apply as opposed to the application of

punitive measures to discourage poor performance. This is particularly true in South Africa where labour legislation has been referred to as overly protective of workers (Mogab, Kishan, & Vacaflores, 2013).

Punjaisri et al. (2019) mentioned that the internal branding concept steadily gained popularity in the industry during the early 2000s wherein big corporations such as Ernst & Young started to apply some of the principles of internal branding. This occurred when it became clear that internal branding seemed to provide the means to easily achieve congruency between internal and external brands, and when organisations started to shift focus from being overly concerned with brand image and gave some attention to brand identity. In developing a definition of internal branding, MaClaverty et al. (2007) asked research participants to define activities aimed at linking organisational strategy to its execution. Although not directly referred to as internal branding practices, the responses indicated the following key themes, which also featured strongly in the definition of the concept as used in this study:

- Living corporate value activities.
- Leverage brand strategy to reaffirm the requirements of the brand internally and use this to seek potential external recruits.
- A set of processes, activities and messaging are used to empower associates, and
- The creation and demonstration of a good brand experience at all points of interaction.

Menon (2014) also alluded to internal branding by introducing the concept of employee branding. This concept suggested that contrary to the belief that the employer is the sole ambassador of a brand, its employees also play a role. In marketing, it is said that an unhappy customer would tell people about the experience; this also applies in human resources as unhappy employees would do the same and potentially limit a brand's ability to recruit good external candidates as employees. Gilani and Cunningham (2017) confirmed this and stated that employees, by discussing their experiences with other current or potential internal customers, based on the word-of-mouth principle, inadvertently also become brand ambassadors. It is further stated that efforts to harness an appropriate internal brand image should be targeted at all employees and not be limited to those who have direct contact with external stakeholders, as employees can influence each other across all departments within the organisation.

The premise of internal branding is that brand values are, through internal branding, communicated to employees, thereby providing parameters for appropriate workplace behaviour. It is further suggested that if such messaging is consistent, the likelihood of promoting a strong organisational culture of performance and consistency would be high (Blazevic, Agevall, & Klemets, 2012). King, Grace and Funk (2012) further indicated that, along with service excellence, investing in an organisation's brand is probably the most

powerful tool to obtain and maintain a competitive advantage in a highly competitive market. The brand promise of service excellence is mainly the responsibility of the employees. It is, therefore, important that employees believe in this brand promise themselves. This belief can be enhanced through internal branding as reiterated by Eid, Zaabi, Alzahmi and Elsantil (2019). The following practices are suggested as those that lead to a good internal brand (MaClaverty et al., 2007):

- **Internal communications:** Nirmali et al. (2017) broadly referred to an organisation's interaction with the environment within which it operates as marketing communication. Traditional literature on this interaction placed greater emphasis on the external environment. It was only in the advent of globalisation in the 1990s, which led to increased competition, that focus was placed on the mediating role an organisation plays between its external and internal market for optimum performance. Rogala and Kaniewska-Sęba (2013) reiterated that it would generally be easier for internal stakeholders to effectively deliver on a brand promise if they truly believed in it. The complete synergy between internal and external communications is critical for organisational effectiveness. This is based on the perspectives of internal communication from different fields such as public relations, which views employees as internal stakeholders, and corporate communication management, which specifically refers to employees as internal customers.

- **Training support:** Karial, Omari, Mwanaongoro and Kimori (2016) described training as the process through which employees are educated for the acquisition of new knowledge or reinforcement of already acquired knowledge. Training support refers to 'helps, gadgets, hardware, and services are given to encourage productive operation' (Nirmali et al., 2017, p. 121). MaClaverty et al. (2007) believed that workshops on brand roles and attributes, as a common practice in organisational management, contribute towards improved employee brand awareness. This facilitates an understanding of how different units in the organisation fit together, which is arguably technical knowledge, and how the organisational goals and objectives fit with the brand vision. The recognition of training as a practice in the contemporary business management field finds its roots in the patrimony of education from learning that was driven by survival, to religious education, to leadership and technical training post the second world war, to the current development of communities, employees and organisations mainly for work purposes (Torraco, 2016).

- **Leadership:** Khan, Nawaz and Khan (2016) stated that leadership has been a focal point in management theory for years. The initial focus on the leader as an individual has deepened to consider the interaction between the followers, peers, work-setting context and culture. The authors defined leadership as the process through which activities are influenced in a manner that will support the reaching of set goals. Leadership is also not limited to those who formally hold senior leadership positions but also requires followers and goals for it to occur. In support,

MaClaverty et al. (2007) indicated that leadership of internal branding efforts often cuts across several units and staff members. Leadership, however, is still largely seen by employees as those who own the brand, therefore, living the brand should start with them. Employees will not develop trust in a brand if the owners do not display such trust themselves. Leaning more towards the basic understanding of leadership, that is, the conventional supervisor and subordinate relationship, Cakmak, Oztekin and Karadag (2015) mentioned that there are different approaches to leadership cited in theory. An assessment of which style would be more appropriate depends on various factors including the workplace context.

- **Rewards and recognition:** According to Salah (2016), rewards are a common industry practice used to promote and influence employee performance. Rewards are the desirable outcomes received for good performance by employees. It is important to note, however, that needs and wants to differ from person to person; therefore, the relative value assigned to rewards would vary accordingly. Recognition of performance by management as well as peers has been found to relate positively to good performance. Peer recognition programmes and direct feedback from supervisors are examples of how performance can be recognised (MaClaverty et al., 2007).

- **Recruitment practices:** Productivity and organisational performance largely depend on the quality of the employees as a resource. The recruitment process is, therefore, very important to ensure that the right people are placed in the right positions (Nirmali et al., 2017; Saddam & Mansor, 2015). Van Dijk (2008) alluded to the importance of recruitment by stating that it, along with retention, are primary concerns in human capital management. Skills and knowledge development and training can only occur after these concerns have been appropriately managed (Van Zyl, Mathafena, & Ras, 2017). Gill-Mclure (2015) added that as government employees deal with complex policy issues daily, it is important that these employees be sufficiently qualified. The Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation (2015) suggested that recruitment practices in the public sector have been somewhat problematic by stating that one of the contributing factors to the underperformance of the public sector is the inadequate quality of employees. Thebe and Van der Walt (2014) highlighted key concerns in the public sector recruitment as the lack of standardisation, little attention given to the job analysis before the job advertisements are finalised and insufficient record keeping of completed recruitment.

In summary, as explained in Figure 1, internal branding, to an extent, forms the foundation for the management of an organisation's resources. The appropriate use of physical resources can only be executed through the human element and is, therefore, central to the sustained achievement of competitive advantage (MaClaverty et al., 2007). This is particularly true in the service industry, where employees are in a sense part of the product offering in their own right
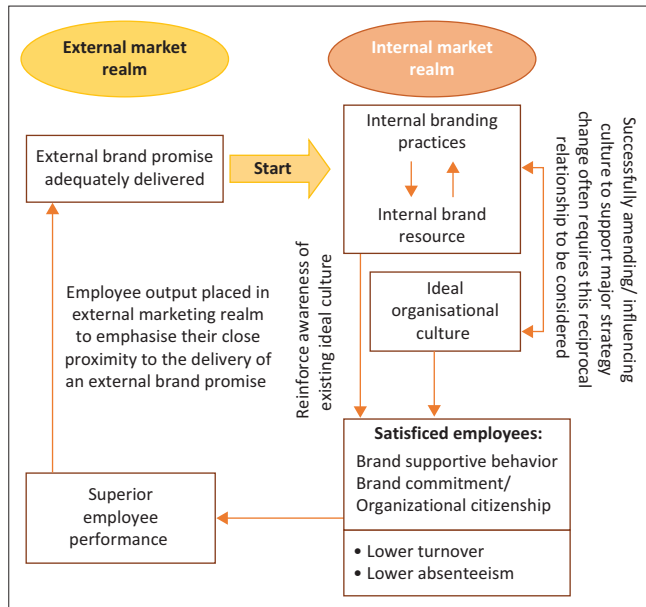
FIGURE 1: Suggested link between the external and internal market.

FIGURE 2: Graphic illustration of the conceptual framework.

(Skaalsvik, 2017). The brand promise is communicated to the customer through the organisation's external marketing efforts (Maurya & Mishra, 2012). This promise must, however, be known and believed by employees to be delivered through superior performance (MaClaverty et al., 2007; Nirmali et al., 2017). This implies that the internal market realm must be guided by the external market realm, synergy between the two realms can be created through internal branding (Allada & Rajyalakshmi, 2012). Moreover, there seems to exist a mutual relationship between the internal brand resources and internal branding practices. In other words, these practices need to be crafted in a manner that supports the desired internal brand 'stock', but a clear definition is necessary to do so (Nirmali et al., 2017). Satisfied employees who are committed to the brand and the organisation are mostly present and tend to stay longer with the organisation (Cucchiellaa, Gastaldia, & Ranieri, 2014). To achieve this level of employee satisfaction, two main processes are supported by Limwichitr, Broady-Preston and Ellis (2015) and are displayed in Figure 1:

- Firstly, to reinforce an ideal organisational culture: if the organisational culture is deemed appropriate and in line with organisational needs and strategies, and its rationale appears to be largely understood by *employees* then internal branding practices can be harnessed to reinforce the culture.
- Secondly, if amending the organisational culture is necessary, which is a much more complex process, this involves gradual movement between the internal brand and the culture before finally achieving the ultimate desired culture.

Contextualising the internal branding concept using data collected

Given the novelty of the internal branding concept and that is under-researched in South Africa as mentioned earlier, the authors attempted to contextualise the concept based on
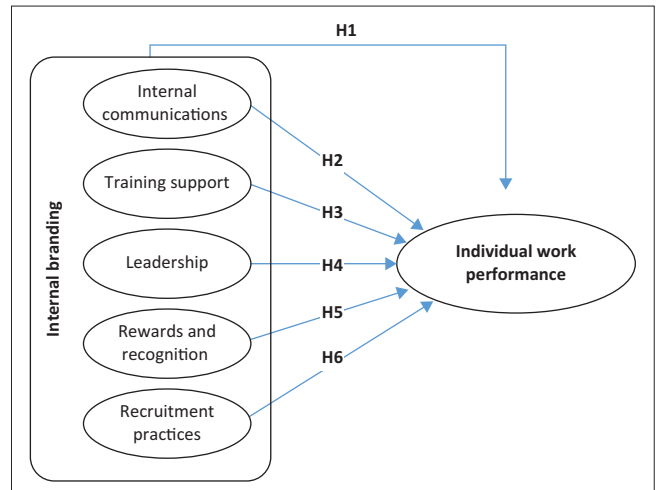
data collected from the National Treasury. Factor analysis was conducted, which suggested that a two-factor solution for the questionnaire on internal branding would be appropriate. Using the distribution of items in each factor, these were labelled. Based on the discussions earlier, it would seem that internal branding can be synonymised with brand identity specifically focused in-house or simply put internal brand identity (Nirmali et al., 2017; Surbhi, 2018). It also seems to consist of two ordinal layers; first-order internal brand identity and second-order internal brand identity. The former, in essence, simply refers to the values of the organisation and focuses on the appropriate treatment of employees through the provision of a work environment that enables good performance. The latter is a more technical layer as it touches on job knowledge, leaders showing how the work should be done and recruitment of individuals whose aptitude commensurate with the level of job knowledge they would need to master. The justification for this labelling is contained in Table 1. More detail on the factor analysis is provided in the results section of the article.

Towards a conceptual framework on the relationship between internal branding, its practices and individual work performance

The conceptual framework for the study, focusing on the association of internal branding and its various practices to the performance of employees, as graphically illustrated in Figure 2 is justified by the following hypothesis statements:

Hypothesis statement 1 (H1): Internal branding has a strong positive relationship with individual work performance

Individual work performance has been of great interest and a focal point for research in many fields, including management, occupational health and organisational psychology. Albeit, different approaches taken to understand the concept in each respective field. For instance, whilst the focus in the management field on how to optimise employee performance, occupational health generally investigated how to limit

TABLE 1: Rationale for labelling of factors as proposed in this study.

Theme in items	Interpretation
First-order internal brand identity – the 'who we are'	
Authentic brand messaging	*RR 14. Management encourages and promotes living the brand 'National Treasury'* Whilst the internal brand cuts across various departments, management is still the main driver and, in the true sense, owns the brand. Seeing those who own the brand also live the brand will encourage employees to internalise and live the brand as well (MaClaverty et al., 2007).
Sincere and conducive workplace	*RR 11. National Treasury has peer recognition programmes that specifically encourage co-workers to acknowledge each other's good performance.* *IC 4. The organisation encourages internal interaction amongst employees across different units.* In recognition of employees as potential brand ambassadors, it is probably worthwhile to encourage brand promotion through peer recognition programmes and more intensified interaction between employees (Semnani & Fard, 2014). Such promotions are likely to be seen as sincere coming from peers. Menon (2014) added that employees are able to develop each other through knowledge sharing and observation of experienced employees, which requires greater internal interaction. *RP 17. I want to remain in the employment of the National Treasury for the next 5 years.* *TS 8. The corporate services unit of the National Treasury is functioning effectively to support me in my job.* Nirmali et al. (2017) proposed that good working conditions generally include the adequate provision of the tools of the trade, which contribute to a conducive work environment and lesser turnover intentions. *RR 13. There are suitable incentives in place, such as the performance bonus system, which encourages me to continuously seek to improve my performance* Rewards not only encourage performance, particularly if they consider the individual's needs, but also make employees feel appreciated and give a sense of sincerely being valued by management (Salah, 2016)
Trust and openness	*IC 2. I feel adequately informed by management on current external developments that impact the organisation.* *IC 3. I feel adequately informed by management on current external developments that impact the organisation.* A sense of knowing internal and external developments that impact the organisation gives employees a sense of belonging and generally promotes a culture of trust and openness. Ozyilmaz, Erdogan and Karaeminogullari (2017) mentioned that trust is a positive mediator of the relationship between self-efficacy and performance and job satisfaction.
Second-order internal brand identity – the 'what we do and how we do it'	
Continuous improvement of job knowledge, skills and supporting personal attributes	*TS 6. It is clear to me how my particular unit contributes to the annual budget process.* *TS3 7. It is clear to me how my particular unit contributes to the budget implementation monitoring process.* Job knowledge is suggested to be a direct function of productivity (Mukul, Rayhan, Hoque, & Islam, 2013). Thus, knowing how one's unit fits into the overall budget preparation, and implementation process will contribute to the faster conclusion of processes and greater appreciation of the interdependency of the units. This is particularly important as both processes require a flow of input from various units. Completion of the next step often depends on the successful completion of a previous step by an alternative unit. *RP 16. I believe that I am a good fit for the organisation.* Onwuchekwa, Udekwe and Arachie (2018) introduced the term 'person-job fit' to illustrate the importance of employee fit to the organisation. Person-job-fit refers to the alignment between the personal attributes and skills of an employee and features of the various job demands. Moreover, there is an expectation that an employee with a high sense of self-efficacy, self-esteem and optimism, which are personal resources, will support the achievement of the various job demands (Ahmed, 2012). *TS 5. There are adequate training opportunities in place to support me to be more effective in my job.* The importance of being taught to do the actual job, including other necessary supporting attributes is undoubtable. Karial et al. (2016) confirmed a positive relationship between training and performance.
Leadership that extends beyond policy setting and issuing of instructions	*IC 1. Managers 'walk-the-talk' by ensuring sound management of the public funds allocated to their respective cost centres.* *LP2 10. Management explicitly endorses the values of public sector resource sustainability overall, in line with the National Treasury brand.* *LP 9. Management is hands-on in finalising key work tasks.* *RR 12. My manager acknowledges good individual work performance by directly informing me of this.* The authentic brand messaging theme in the first-order internal brand identity focused on conveying the brand by 'the talk'. The items in this factor extend this 'talk' by adding 'the walk'. For instance, cost centre managers are also allocated budgets, which are raised from public funds, as with all other cost centre managers in the public sector. Those who walk-the-talk would abide by all relevant public sector policies and ensure that spending incurred under their watch is justifiable. Furthermore, National Treasury, as the budget allocators from national raised revenue (Department of National Treasury, 2015), needs to believe in all its policies including revenue-raising principles such as taxes. A manager who explicitly supports such enterprises by accepting the impact of taxes on their own income, which is usually substantial, in a positive manner would also encourage workers to support these 'unpleasant' policies of the organisation. Management, who is generally more experienced and thus more skilled, can share a lot more technical knowledge by getting involved with employees in doing the actual work. Van Dyck, Dimitrova, De Korne and Hiddema (2013) supported this by stating that recognition of good behaviours by management serves as a powerful reinforcement tool.
Placement of employees with requisite capacity to learn	*RP 15. The right people for the job have been recruited in my unit*. Ahmed (2012) suggested that there are certain preconditions, such as a basic cognitive ability and other attributes such as emotional intelligence that make it easier to be able and willing to gain and retain knowledge and skills.

RR, Rewards and cognition; RP, Recruitment practices; TS, Training support; IC, Internal communication; LP, Leadership practices.

probable losses in production because of disease or ill-health. Organisational psychology has often focused more on what it is that influences individual work performance, such as work engagement and job satisfaction. Despite these differences, it seems to be that good individual work performance is the preferred consequence in any workplace setting, because of its close relation to organisational success (Koopmans et al., 2013). Koopmans et al. suggested that there is no general agreement on how to measure the concept, mainly because of differences in what constitutes performance for a particular job to begin with. Gibbs, Merchant, Van Der Stede and Vargus (2005) highlighted the following two main approaches taken to measure performance. Firstly, *objective measures* can easily be assessed by anyone in the organisation including those who are not necessarily technical experts. Secondly, *subjective measures* are more complex as these are concerned with quantity as well as the quality of an employee's output. Line managers and other technical experts would need to participate in assessments of quality.

As subjectivity is a key feature in these measures, perceptions of fairness should be regarded by management. Perceptions of unfair evaluations may lead to unintended negative consequences on motivation and thus performance (Al-Zawahreh & Al-Madi, 2012).

Koopmans et al. (2013, p. 63) refer to individual work performance as 'behaviours or actions that are relevant to the goals of the organisation'. Koopmans et al. further mentioned that the concept had the following key features; emphasis is placed on behaviour as opposed to actual results and only behaviour relevant to the achievement of organisational goals matter when referring to performance in the workplace. This, however, does not discount the mitigating impact of counterproductive work behaviour. The focus is further on those behaviours that are under the control of the individual and not those brought about by the environment. Another feature was the multidimensional nature of the concept of individual work performance. Koopmans et al. (2013)

provided a heuristic framework that provided dimensions of individual work performance. These include task performance that refers to an employee's proficiency to achieve job-specific tasks; contextual performance that indicates extra-role behaviours, such as taking initiative, helping other employees and generally going beyond the formally prescribed duties, and adaptive performance that refers to the ability to learn new methods and technologies, to be flexible and accept change. Koopmans et al. (2013) and Pradhan and Jena (2017) in order to make it clearer why individual work performance would be desired, stated the following dimensions of the concept: quality, productivity, effort, administrative competence, interpersonal competence and communication competence.

Through the mere consideration of the definition of individual work performance, as a collection of behaviours and actions that are aligned towards the achievement of organisational gaols (Koopmans et al., 2013), it becomes clear how it probably would relate to internal branding practices. The latter is essentially the 'how' to get employees to do the former as suggested by Nirmali et al. (2017). This relationship is perhaps best explained through the proposed link between external and internal branding as shown in Figure 1. The proposed link detailed in Figure 1 essentially holds the following: firstly, employee performance is paramount to the delivery of a brand promise to customers. Secondly, the said brand promise needs to be understood by its deliverers, who are the employees, through internal branding. Thirdly, a well-received internal brand typically results in satisfied employees. Finally, the performance of satisfied employees is typically superior. It is, therefore, expected that internal branding practices, which shape the internal brand, will have a significant relationship with individual work performance.

Hypothesis statement 2 (H2): Internal communications have a strong positive relationship with individual work performance

Ozyilmaz et al. (2017) suggested that internal communications foster trust, which has been found to mediate the relationship amongst self-efficacy, performance and job satisfaction. Effective internal communication can also enhance bonds or friendships amongst employees. This can be beneficial for the transfer of knowledge from senior employees to less experienced employees thus improving the likelihood of good performance for the latter (Gaston, 2020). Krishan (2011) emphasised the importance of internal communications as a useful tool to bring together and influence the delicate link between all stakeholders relevant to the organisation. In further support of this hypothesis statement, the expectancy theory, developed by Vroom (1964), was considered. It is based on the premise that employee motivation is not entirely based on the expectation of a reward for good performance. Employee expectation that specific efforts put in the job will result in valued outcomes by the organisation is just as important (Lloyd & Mertens, 2018). It is through internal communications that employees would know exactly which areas of their work are critical to the organisation, making it easier for them to exert more effort, through motivation, thereto knowing that organisational management would value related output (Lunenburg, 2011).

Hypothesis statement 3 (H3): Training support has a strong positive relationship with individual work performance

In conceptualising this hypothesis statement, the job demands and resources model were considered. The model hypothesised that employee performance results from a favourable alignment of job demands and job resources (Demerouti & Bakker, 2011). Job demands are the physical or psychological efforts required to complete given work tasks whilst job resources refer to the social or physical aspects that make it possible to do the job. Examples of these resources would include job knowledge, which can be improved through training, and appropriate information technology infrastructure, which is a support element. Thus an employee who knows the job and has appropriate information technology infrastructure given the context of job demands is likely to achieve good performance (Schaufeli & Taris, 2014). Moreover, employee performance does not entirely depend on organisational aspects but also certain personal aspects, known as personal resources (Ahmed, 2012). These include self-esteem, self-efficacy and optimism and have been found to be strong mediators of the relationship between organisational environment factors and performance (Karatepea, Yavasb, Babakusc, & Deitzc, 2018). Training as a general educational process positively relates to all components of personal resources (Ahmed, 2012). In support, Mincu (2015) empirically illustrated that personal resources were amongst significant predictors of organisational trust and job satisfaction, both of which according to Ozyilmaz et al. (2017) and Popović, Maletić and Paunović (2015) relate to employee performance.

Hypothesis statement 4 (H4): Leadership has a strong positive relationship with individual work performance

Noting that leadership, which in fact represents the owners of the brand (Maclavery et al., 2007), is the cornerstone to building a good internal brand; Genc (2013) and Zeqiri and Alija (2016) highlighted its significance to performance in that it impacts the very culture of an organisation, which in turn sets the scene for employee behaviour. If the configuration of leadership is appropriate, employees are likely to feel empowered and are thus able to perform even very challenging tasks. Naidoo (2013), in support, provides the leadership and brand alignment model. The model finds that good leadership directly impacts the internal brand, which moulds organisational culture. The author further mentioned that a good organisational culture increases the likelihood of employees being content and thus demonstrates higher organisational commitment levels and performance.

Hypothesis statement 5 (H5): Rewards and recognition have a strong positive relationship with individual work performance

Rewards simply refer to anything given to employees in recognition of good performance examples include

commission and an additional benefit. The intentional act of manager's expressing appreciation of employee contribution, or even encouraging employees themselves to acknowledge the contributions of their peers, is an example of recognition. The objective is to show that the effort of deserving employees is valued (Durrab, Khaliq, Nisar, Kamboh, & Ali, 2019). Uysal, Aydemir and Genc (2017) refer to the work of Maslow (1945), which stated that amongst the considerations that drive motivation to behave in a manner consistent with organisational goals are esteem needs that would include a sense of achievement, status and reputation within the organisation. These can be facilitated through good rewards and recognition programme (MaClaverty et al., 2007). Following on this thinking, therefore, it is reasonable to expect a positive correlation between the said programme and the employee performance.

Hypothesis statement 6 (H6): Recruitment practices have a strong positive relationship with individual work performance

Shanin (2006) stated that employee-job fit is very important as it is a strong predictor of the ability and willingness of the employee to follow policies and procedures. Obtaining such an employee would increase the likelihood of easier on boarding to the organisation and ability to fit into organisational culture and thus achieve various job demands (Bakker, 2017). Hark (2018) mentioned that lower labour turnover and good employee morale are likely to result from effective recruitment practices. The former not only leads to disruptions in business operations but also impacts workplace group dynamics that are key to performance (Naveenan & Kumar, 2018). Furthermore, Shaw (2011) stated that more experienced employees tend to perform better. Relating to the latter, Aidoo, Donkor and Odoi (2018) mentions that positive morale is characterised by employee devotion to the organisation increasing their productivity.

Methodology
Research approach

This study followed an explanatory research approach in that the study aimed to provide an accurate description of the given situation and then used this description to determine the association between the study constructs (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016). The study is quantitative.

Research method

This study is cross-sectional as phenomena were studied at a particular point in time (Saunders et al., 2016). The internal branding practices questionnaire developed for this study was administered via an online census survey. Factor analysis was used to determine an appropriate factor structure and labelled these with the aim of providing for a more operational and non-technical reference to internal branding. The hypothesis statements of the study were based on a review of the literature and tested using correlation analysis.

Research participants

A response rate of 42.1%, 501 of 1189, was achieved in both questionnaires. Most participants, at 53.9% (n = 270) were male, 41.1% were female (n = 201) and 5% (25) did not disclose their gender. Senior managers constituted 39.7% (n = 199) of the respondents, followed by junior managers 20.6% (n = 103), middle managers 20.2% (n = 101), top managers 11.6% (n = 58), non-management staff 7.8% (n = 39) and one respondents selected the highest than salary level 16 option, which, if not an error, may be the Minister or Deputy Minister or the Director-General. Most of the respondents at 83% (n = 416) had an honors degree, followed by undergraduate degrees at 13.6% (n = 68), diplomas at 2.2% (n = 11), whilst four respondents had higher certificates and two had national senior certificates.

Measuring instruments

The responses obtained, as they appear in Table 3, for negatively worded items have been recoded for ease of analysis and are denoted with 'r' at the beginning of a reference code for these items. This also makes it easy to immediately compare such responses with those obtained from positively worded items as the recoding effectively makes them positive.

The internal branding adequacy survey was developed to measure the common internal branding practices (Table 2) as provided by MaClaverty et al. (2007). Validity and reliability were ensured through pre-testing and pilot testing. An expert panel of three practising human resource professionals in government was used for the pre-test to determine face validity.

For reliability, Cronbach's alphas of 0.865 and 0.946 were obtained for the internal branding practices and the individual work performance questionnaires, respectively, for the pilot study using 17 employees selected randomly. For the main study, values of 0.974 and 0.946 were obtained, which are above the recommendation of 0.7 by Pallant (2007).

Research procedure and ethical considerations

The data were collected using an online census survey (n = 1189). Respondents were informed that participation was completely voluntary. The ethics committee of a University in Gauteng granted ethical clearance for the study.

Statistical analysis

SPSS, version 25 was used for descriptive and inferential statistical data analysis; frequency tables, factor analysis and Pearson's correlation coefficient were used in accordance with the objectives of the study.

Results
Frequency distributions of data collected

Table 3 provides the descriptive information of responses obtained from the questionnaires; detail of the reference

TABLE 2: Summary of questionnaires used.

Reference code	Items
Internal branding questionnaire	
IC1	Managers "walk-the-talk" by ensuring sound management of the public funds allocated to their respective cost centres.
IC2	I feel adequately informed by management on current external developments that impact the organisation.
IC3	I feel adequately informed by management on current internal developments that impact the organisation.
IC4	The organisation encourages internal interaction amongst employees across different units.
TS5	There are adequate training opportunities in place to support me to be more effective in my job.
TS6	It is clear to me how my particular unit contributes to the annual budget process.
TS7	It is clear to me how my particular unit contributes to the budget implementation monitoring process.
TS8	The corporate services unit of the National Treasury is functioning effectively to support me in my job
LP9	Management is hands-on in finalising key work tasks.
LP10	Management explicitly endorses the values of public sector resource sustainability overall, in line with the National Treasury brand.
RR11	National Treasury has peer recognition programmes which specifically encourages co-workers to acknowledge each other's good performance
RR12	My manager acknowledges good individual work performance by directly informing me of this.
RR13	There are suitable incentives in place, such as the performance bonus system, which encourages me to continuously seek to improve my performance.
RR14	Management encourages and promotes living the brand "National Treasury".
RP15	The right people for the job have been recruited in my unit.
RP16	I believe that I am a good fit for the organisation.
RP17	I want to remain in the employment of the National Treasury for the next 5 years.
Individual work performance questionnaire	
TP1	I manage to plan my work so that it is done on time.
TP2	My planning is optimal.
TP3	I keep the results I have to achieve in mind.
TP4	I am able to separate main issues from side issues at work
TP5	I am able to perform my work well with minimal time and effort.
CP6	I take on extra responsibilities.
CP7	I start new tasks myself, when my old ones were finished.
CP8	I take on challenging work tasks, when available.
CP9	I work at keeping my job knowledge up to date.
CP10	I work at keeping my job skills up to date.
CP11	I come up with creative solutions to new problems
CP12	I keep looking for new challenges in my job.
CP13	I actively participate in work meetings.
rC14	I complain about unimportant matters at work.
rC15	I make problems greater than they are at work.
rC16	I focus on the negative aspects of a work situation, instead of on the positive aspects.
rC17	I speak with colleagues about the negative aspects of my work.
rC18	I speak with people from outside the organisation about the negative aspects of my work.

RR, rewards and recognition; RP, recruitment practices; TS, Training support; IC, internal communication; LP, leadership practices; rC, counterproductive behaviour; CP, contextual performance; TP, task performance.

codes is also provided. Responses were guided by a 7-point Likert scale with 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree. The total mean of 5.867, which is not too far from the highest positive score of 7, for the 17 items, which measures the perceived appropriateness of internal branding practices as applied at the National Treasury, suggests that employees largely agreed that these were applied appropriately. This was confirmed by the total percentage of positive responses (87%) that are the somewhat agreed (12.6%), agreed (35.3%)

and the strongly agreed (39.1%) response options. Despite this rather positive picture, the following two observations are concerning given the somewhat high frequencies observed in the negative responses, which are strongly disagree, disagree and somewhat disagree, particularly when the actual number of responses are considered. The first is on item RR11 that reads 'National Treasury has peer recognition programmes which specifically encourages co-workers to acknowledge each other's good performance'. A total of 66 respondents that is 13.2% of total responses either strongly disagreed ($n = 32$), disagreed ($n = 19$) or somewhat disagreed ($n = 15$). The second is on item *TS8* that reads 'the corporate services unit of the National Treasury is functioning effectively to support me in my job'. A total of 53 respondents that is 10.6% of the total responses either strongly disagreed ($n = 15$), disagreed ($n = 13$) or somewhat disagreed ($n = 25$). The second part of Table 3 shows the responses obtained from the individual work performance questionnaire. Overall, it seems that respondents are of the view their performance is adequate ($m = 5.819$); however, it is important for National Treasury's management to note the rather strong presence of counterproductive behaviour as evidenced by a very low mean score ($m = 4.4846$). The average mean score is pushed by the other subscale sales that $m = 6.248$ for task performance and $m = 6.364$ for contextual performance.

Adequacy of internal branding practices applied and level of individual work performance

Figure 3 summarises the average number of responses received in each response category ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree. Neutral responses are indicated on number 4 with a red vertical line. Responses to the left of this line would imply that lower levels of the given constructs were observed, and the opposite is true for those to the right of the neutral line. The line graph shows responses obtained from both questionnaires.

Results from factor analysis

Table 4 summarises the eigenvalues obtained using principal axis factoring and the factor loadings obtained from the rotated factor matrix. To determine an appropriate number of factors, only those with eigenvalues above 1 were retained in line with Kaiser's criterion as suggested by Pallant (2007). The first factor explained 71.18% and the second 7.96%. Cumulatively these account for 79.14%. This level of representation is considered sufficient as it exceeds 60% as suggested by Pallant (2007). The suggestion is thus that internal branding, on the basis of the responses received from the respondents using the questionnaire used in this study, may be appropriately explained by a two-factor solution on the basis of the emerging themes of the items allocated in each factor.

An attempt was made to determine a more operational and non-technical reference to the internal branding using the distribution of items in each factor. Although Neill (2008)

TABLE 3: Frequency distributions for the questionnaires used in the study.

Items	Internal branding questionnaire							Total	Mean	Std. Dev
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7			
IC1										
Count	5	3	19	18	106	244	106	501	5.741	1.090
Row n%	1.0	0.6	3.8	3.6	21.2	48.7	21.2	100.0	-	-
IC2										
Count	11	17	15	22	51	147	238	501	5.950	1.454
Row n%	2.2	3.4	3.0	4.4	10.2	29.3	47.5	100.0	-	-
IC3										
Count	13	14	20	13	55	150	236	501	5.948	1.463
Row n%	2.6	2.8	4.0	2.6	11.0	29.9	47.1	100.0	-	-
IC4										
Count	14	15	14	30	56	126	246	501	5.916	1.506
Row n%	2.8	3.0	2.8	6.0	11.2	25.1	49.1	100.0	-	-
Internal Communications total										
Row n%	**2.1**	**2.4**	**3.4**	**4.1**	**13.4**	**33.3**	**41.2**	**100.0**	**5.889**	**1.379**
TS5										
Count	10	9	21	26	67	328	40	501	5.545	1.175
Row n%	2.0	1.8	4.2	5.2	13.4	65.5	8.0	100.0	-	-
TS6										
Count	6	8	12	23	69	292	91	501	5.756	1.103
Row n%	1.2	1.6	2.4	4.6	13.8	58.3	18.2	100.0	-	-
TS7										
Count	7	8	14	25	36	157	254	501	6.118	1.274
Row n%	1.4	1.6	2.8	5.0	7.2	31.3	50.7	100.0	-	-
TS8										
Count	15	13	25	39	93	155	161	501	5.577	1.502
Row n%	3.0	2.6	5.0	7.8	18.6	30.9	32.1	100.0	-	-
Training support total										
Row n%	**1.9**	**1.9**	**3.6**	**5.6**	**13.2**	**46.5**	**27.2**	**100.0**	**5.749**	**1.264**
LP9										
Count	5	16	15	22	119	222	102	501	5.611	1.224
Row n%	1.0	3.2	3.0	4.4	23.8	44.3	20.4	100.0	-	-
LP10										
Count	5	11	11	33	44	150	247	501	6.070	1.281
Row n%	1.0	2.2	2.2	6.6	8.8	29.9	49.3	100.0	-	-
Leadership practices total										
Row n%	**1.0**	**2.7**	**2.6**	**5.5**	**16.3**	**37.1**	**34.8**	**100.0**	**5.840**	**1.253**
RR11										
Count	32	19	15	43	66	124	202	501	5.539	1.773
Row n%	6.4	3.8	3.0	8.6	13.2	24.8	40.3	100.0	-	-
RR12										
Count	11	12	11	19	30	140	278	501	6.148	1370
Row n%	2.2	2.4	2.2	3.8	6.0	27.9	55.5	100.0	-	-
RR13										
Count	18	12	16	18	57	138	242	501	5.926	1.519
Row n%	3.6	2.4	3.2	3.6	11.4	27.5	48.3	100.0	-	-
RR14										
Count	11	16	17	53	60	131	213	501	5.754	1.509
Row n%	2.2	3.2	3.4	10.6	12.0	26.1	42.5	100.0	-	-
Rewards and recognition total										
Row n%	**3.6**	**2.9**	**2.9**	**6.9**	**10.6**	**26.6**	**46.7**	**100.0**	**5.842**	**1.543**
RP15										
Count	9	8	6	23	77	200	178	501	5.920	1.225
Row n%	1.8	1.6	1.2	4.6	15.4	39.9	35.5	100.0	-	-
RP16										
Count	1	3	11	11	29	165	281	501	6.359	0.961
Row n%	0.2	0.6	2.2	2.2	5.8	32.9	56.1	100.0	-	-
RP17										
Count	12	13	13	51	61	135	216	501	5.804	1.474
Row n%	2.4	2.6	2.6	10.2	12.2	26.9	43.1	100.0	-	-
Recruitment practices total										
Row n%	**1.5**	**1.6**	**2.0**	**5.7**	**11.1**	**33.3**	**44.9**	**100.0**	**6.028**	**1.220**
Total										
Row n%	**2.2**	**2.3**	**3.0**	**5.3**	**12.6**	**35.3**	**39.1**	**100.0**	**5.867**	**1.351**

Table 3 continues →

TABLE 3 (Continues…): Frequency distributions for the questionnaires used in the study.

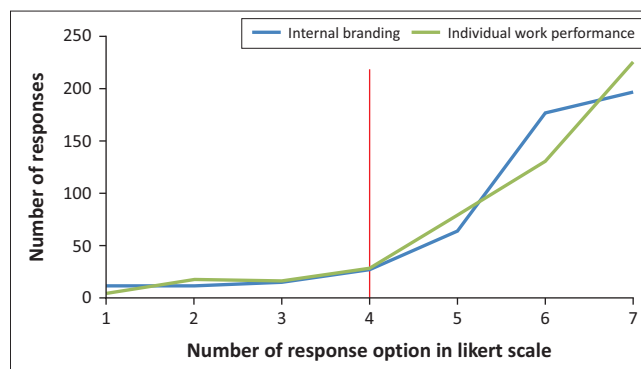| Items	Individual work performance questionnaire							Total	Mean	Std. Dev
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7			
TP1										
Count	2	1	7	10	38	123	320	501	6.453	0.921
Row n%	0.4	0.2	1.4	2.0	7.6	24.6	63.9	100.0	-	-
TP2										
Count	1	3	10	37	107	97	246	501	6.036	1.152
Row n%	0.2	0.6	2.0	7.4	21.4	19.4	49.1	100.0	-	-
TP3										
Count	1	1	4	10	30	87	368	501	6.593	0.823
Row n%	0.2	0.2	0.8	2.0	6.0	17.4	73.5	100.0	-	-
TP4										
Count	2	2	12	35	92	93	265	501	6.098	1.168
Row n%	0.4	0.4	2.4	7.0	18.4	18.6	52.9	100.0	-	-
TP5										
Count	3	4	11	33	104	81	265	501	6.062	1.214
Row n%	0.6	0.8	2.2	6.6	20.8	16.2	52.9	100.0	-	-
Task performance total										
Row n%	**0.4**	**0.4**	**1.8**	**5.0**	**14.8**	**19.2**	**58.4**	**100.0**	**6.248**	**1.056**
CP6										
Count	1	3	6	11	39	116	325	501	6.457	0.928
Row n%	0.2	0.6	1.2	2.2	7.8	23.2	64.9	100.0	-	-
CP7										
Count	2	1	6	15	29	114	334	501	6.485	0.922
Row n%	0.4	0.2	1.2	3.0	5.8	22.8	66.7	100.0	-	-
CP8										
Count	1	3	7	14	31	137	306	501	6.421	0.940
Row n%	0.2	0.6	1.4	2.8	6.2	27.3	61.5	100.0	-	-
CT9										
Count	0	3	8	9	36	127	318	501	6.455	0.901
Row n%	0.0	0.6	1.6	1.8	7.2	25.3	63.5	100.0	-	-
CP10										
Count	2	2	8	14	35	130	310	501	6.409	0.971
Row n%	0.4	0.4	1.6	2.8	7.0	25.9	61.9	100.0	-	-
CP11										
Count	3	1	11	15	50	160	261	501	6.257	1.027
Row n%	0.6	0.2	2.2	3.0	10.0	31.9	52.1	100.0	-	-
CP12										
Count	2	3	9	20	52	159	256	501	6.230	1.040
Row n%	0.4	0.6	1.8	4.0	10.4	31.7	51.1	100.0	-	-
CP8 13										
Count	3	5	9	16	75	124	269	501	6.200	1.117
Row n%	0.6	1.0	1.8	3.2	15.0	24.8	53.7	100.0	-	-
Contextual performance total										
Row n%	**0.3**	**0.5**	**1.6**	**2.8**	**8.7**	**26.6**	**59.4**	**100.0**	**6.364**	**0.981**
rC14										
Count	8	77	45	31	261	55	24	501	4.439	1.432
Row n%	1.6	15.4	9.0	6.2	52.1	11.0	4.8	100.0	-	-
rC15										
Count	3	5	14	93	58	265	63	501	5.485	1.132
Row n%	0.6	1.0	2.8	18.6	11.6	52.9	12.6	100.0	-	-
rC16										
Count	10	76	34	28	92	210	51	501	4.896	1.683
Row n%	2.0	15.2	6.8	5.6	18.4	41.9	10.2	100.0	-	-
rC17										
Count	11	72	43	45	96	193	41	501	4.768	1.656
Row n%	2.2	14.4	8.6	9.0	19.2	38.5	8.2	100.0	-	-
rC18										
Count	12	47	37	77	206	85	37	501	4.639	1.420
Row n%	2.4	9.4	7.4	15.4	41.1	17.0	7.4	100.0	-	-
Counterproductive behaviour total										
Row n%	**1.8**	**11.1**	**6.9**	**10.9**	**28.5**	**32.3**	**8.6**	**100.0**	**4.846**	**1.465**
Total										
Row n%	**0.8**	**4.0**	**3.4**	**6.3**	**17.3**	**26.0**	**42.2**	**100.0**	**5.819**	**1.167**

RR, rewards and recognition; RP, recruitment practices; TS, Training support; IC, internal communication; LP, leadership practices; rC, counterproductive behaviour; CP, contextual performance; TP, task performance.

TABLE 4: Eigenvalues and rotated factor matrix.

Component	Factor	
	1	2
Eigenvalues	12.101	1.354
% of variance	71.181	7.963
% of cumulative variance	71.181	79.145
Rotated factor matrix (reference codes of items in Table 2)		
RR14	0.901	-
RR11	0.872	-
RP17	0.823	-
RR13	0.795	-
TS8	0.749	-
IC4	0.736	-
IC2	0.731	-
IC3	0.699	-
TS6	-	0.893
TS7	-	0.794
IC1	-	0.758
LP10	-	0.700
RP15	-	0.678
LP9	-	0.652
RP16	-	0.649
TS5	-	0.645
RR12	-	0.606

RR, rewards and recognition; RP, recruitment practices; TS, Training support; IC, internal communication; LP, leadership practices.

FIGURE 3: Adequacy of internal branding practices and level of individual work performance.

suggested using the first two items with the highest factor loadings for labelling, this study used the top five items. Firstly, it was important to determine an appropriate overall self-explanatory branding umbrella term to use in the place of internal branding. Brand identity seemed reasonable given that internal branding was suggested as a mechanism that can be used to highlight organisational vision and values through one internal brand massaging, thereby promoting desired organisational brand identity to employees (Nirmali et al., 2017). It is further suggested that brand identity is a concept, which encompasses what a particular organisation stands for and represents. Surbhi (2018) further explained brand identity as deliberate and active efforts taken by an organisation to convey to its target market, the reality of what the brand incorporates. However, as the focus is on the internal customer, internal brand identity seems to be appropriate. The first factor was labelled *first-order internal brand identity* as the items focus on recruitment and retention of employees. This forms the foundation of human capital before even talking about what and how it is, they should do as suggested by Van Dijk (2008). Van Dijk further referred to employee development process for improved productivity as a continuum that starts from recruitment and selection to the ultimate performance. The latter seems more appropriately captured in items of the second factor which are about performance aspects or simply put the 'what we do' and 'how we do it'. Thus, the second factor was labelled second-order internal brand identity. Many of the items in this factor are related to the technical aspects of the nature of the job, and how a unit fits into the main performance area and what its contributions are. These areas of performance require technical financial and budget management knowledge. According to Toszewska-Czerniej (2018), human capital is only able to create value for the organisation if it is disposable

in a manner aligned to organisational goals. The level of skills, knowledge and experience are amongst some of the factors that contribute to the human capital stock. The talent management framework proposed by Van Zyl et al. (2017) also places skill, knowledge development and training as a successive component to recruitment and selection. This factor essentially encompasses the 'what we do' and the 'how we do it'. This labelling is further supported by themes that emerged from the literature relating to the items as summarised in Table 1.

Results from hypothesis testing

Pearson's correlation coefficient measures the direction and strength of the hypothesised relationships. A negative result indicates a negative relationship between variables, with –1 indicating that this relation is perfect. The opposite applies for a positive relationship. Values exceeding 0.5 indicate a strong relationship (Gogtay & Thatte, 2017).

Figure 4 summarises the results obtained. The notion of MaClaverty et al. (2007) that internal branding, based on their findings based on private sector organisations, relates positively to employee performance is corroborated as a strong positive relationship is found (*H1*: $r = 0.531$, $p < 0.000$). Despite inherent differences between the public and private sectors such as greater bureaucracy and lesser incentive for performance given the absence of the immediate concern for profits necessary business survival for the former (Zuñiga-Collazos, Castillo-Palacio, & Padilla-Delgado, 2019), the impact of internal branding is universal. Following on the suggestion of Fourie & Poggenpo (2017) that employee performance in the South African public sector is inadequate, internal branding is a valuable topic for public sector management teams. The results for the hypothesised relationships H2 ($r = 0.547$), H3 ($r = 0.561$), H5 ($r = 0.544$) and H6 ($r = 0.544$) as conceptualised in the literature review section are accepted. These findings also support the popular views of Maslow (1945), Herzberg, Mausner and Snyderman (1959) and Alderfer (1989), which, according to Uysal et al. (2017) and Van der Schyff et al. (2018), are still relevant in modern management that human behaviour is not entirely driven by money to perform. Humans are far more complex, and aspects including feeling part of an organisation by being kept informed, confident in their abilities, being
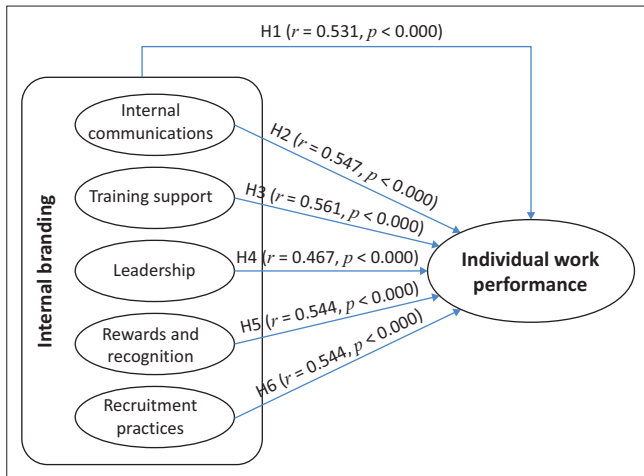
FIGURE 4: Confirmed conceptual framework.

recognised and appropriate alignment between own values and those of the organisation (Ali et al., 2014; Onwuchekwa et al., 2018) all shape behaviour and thus performance. These aspects are manageable through internal communication, training support, rewards and recognition and recruitment practices (Karial et al., 2016; Khan et al., 2016; Rogala & Kaniewska-Sęba, 2013; Salah, 2016). In the case of H4 ($r = 0.467$), a positive correlation was confirmed only with moderate strength as it falls below the 0.500 threshold. It may be surprising that leadership is observed to have the lowest correlation; however, this is not to say that leadership at NT is inadequate. Firstly, accepting that organisational leaders own organisational policy (MaClaverty et al.,2007) and in this manner influence all aspects of the organisation, it can be argued that the adequacy of the other elements of internal branding as evidenced in the results from H2, H3, H5 and H6 is a direct result of good leadership. Secondly, Wikaningru and Yuniawan (2018) mentioned that the actions of leaders from the perspective of employees are often categorised as either task-oriented or relationship-oriented behaviour. The former relates to performing purely managerial functions such as planning and coordinating, whilst the latter is more focused on giving attention and fostering relationships by being friendly with employees. Taking these two considerations into account, it is possible that leadership is mostly focused on task-oriented behaviours that negatively impact their visibility to employees and thus a sense of absence is felt.

Discussion
Outline of the results
Research objective 1
Figure 2 was used to graphically depict the skewness of the distribution of frequencies to determine the appropriateness of both constructs measured. The frequency polygon shown in Figure 2 was used to graphically depict the skewness of the distribution of frequencies. Since the frequency polygon is negatively skewed, as it peaks on the right-hand side which implies greater concentration of positive scores (Saunders et al., 2016), it can be said that a

notable degree of internal branding and individual work performance have been observed in this study. This view is supported by the mean values contained in Table 3 of $m = 5.867$ and $m = 5.819$ as these are quite close to the maximum score of 7. However, despite this positive picture, it is important to zoom in on individual item scores particularly those with the highest frequencies observed in response categories below the neutral point of 4; items RR11 and TS8 are the top items wherein this is seen as detailed in the results section. For item RR11, National Treasury has peer recognition programmes that specifically encourage co-workers to acknowledge each other's good performance, it is important to note the findings of Durrab et al. (2019) that recognition, even though informal peer recognition programmes related notably to employee performance. Durrab et al. (2019, p. 3) further added that monetary rewards are inferior to non-monetary rewards including recognition as the former does not necessarily enrich one's job. Furthermore, the author stated that 'job enrichment is an important motivator because individuals derive personal meaning from enriched jobs'. This notion also conveniently aligns to the fact that government budgets have been rather limited (Department of National Treasury, 2019) making it difficult to use money as a motivator. For TS8, *The corporate services unit of the National Treasury is functioning effectively to support me in my job,* noting that this unit is responsible for key support functions such as information technology and are commonly referred to as the 'tools of trade' (Department of National Treasury, 2019), intervention is needed. The model of internal service quality would be a good place to start given the level of internal service quality typically impact the level of external service quality provided (Almohaimmeed, 2019). According to Shanin and Samea (2010), this model helps to identify a breakdown in internal service quality between frontline workers and internal support unit, which is the corporate services unit, in the case of National Treasury. Three possible internal service quality gaps are defined in the model: first gap is caused by differences in support staff perceptions of what front-line staff expect. Secondly, differences in internal service quality specifications versus service performed can also result in a service gap. The last gap may result from differences between front-line staff expected service and their perceived service experience.

Research objective 2
A two-factor solution was proposed for the internal branding practices questionnaire. The first was labelled *first-order internal brand identity*, which relates to the 'who we are' and the second was labelled *second-order internal branding*, which relates to the 'what we do and how we do it'. These factors clearly illustrate that it is not enough to just recruit good candidates, but they too need continuous support to ensure sustained good performance particularly given ever-changing nature of the industry and the presence of time-bound competition. Abou-Moghl (2015) supports this suggestion by stating that:

[*I*]f employers offer a high level of support to their employees, employees are possibly to emotionally commit to their organizations with a low possibility of turnover and a high level of job performance. (p. 198)

Research objective 3

Internal branding was shown to significantly and positively correlate with individual work performance ($r = 0.531$, $p < 0.000$). This confirms the suggestion from the literature review that a good internal brand provides an enabling environment for performance.

Practical implications and recommendations

The study finds that internal branding practices are adequately applied although some areas such as little encouragement for peer recognition by managers and the Corporate Services Unit needing improvement need to be noted and addressed. As shown in this study, internal branding relates notably to individual work performance and the functioning of a service organisation largely rests on its employees. The development of a dedicated internal branding policy, that one be developed that brings together all practices in a complementary manner, is thus recommended. It is further recommended that such a policy clearly distinguishes between first-order and second-order internal brand identity issues so that accountability for its application be appropriately assigned. For instance, first-order internal brand identity would primarily be the responsibility of human resources as it features elements such as recruitment. However, second-order internal brand identity issues would be best managed by line-function management with human resources playing a coordination and administrative role as technical work knowledge is needed for this.

Limitations and recommendations for future research

The researcher is an employee of the National Treasury, and colleagues, perhaps not entirely convinced of anonymity, may have given slightly more positive responses. This may have led to the overestimation of both the constructs measured. The research design of the study wherein structured data collection instruments were used may have effectively silenced other views on the topic that the researcher may not have necessarily conceptualised. The study is also rather employee focused and does not take into account the views of management. It is recommended that this study be replicated in other national government departments to increase the generalisability of the findings.

Acknowledgements

We would like to extend our appreciation to all those who participated and contributed to this study.

Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no financial or personal relationships that may have inappropriately influenced them in writing this article.

Authors' contributions

R.L.T. conducted the research. V.N. and H.H.H. supervised the research and co-wrote the article.

Data availability

Data can be shared anytime for the purpose of this publication's processes.

Disclaimer

The views and opinions expressed in this article are the authors' own and not an official position of any particular institution or funder.

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