The influence of brand equity on consumer responses: A replication and extension

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DECLARATION

I, ___Duduzile Mkhize_, declare that this research article is my own work except as indicated in the references and acknowledgments. It is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration in the Wits Business School, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in this or any other university.

Duduzile Mkhize

Signed at …Parktown North…

On the ……20……….. day of …February……… 2018

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: The purpose of this paper is to replicate and extend the brand equity model that was developed by Buil, Martínez, and de Chernatony (2013) in South Africa. The paper also seeks to compare the impact of brand equity on consumer goods and in media companies.

Design and Methodology: Structural Equation Modelling was used to test the hypotheses. Classic continuous modelling techniques and structural equation path modelling were used. The structural equation models were conducted using the two-phase approach: the measurement section is analysed in a confirmatory factor analysis and path models are then constructed as per the Buil et al. (2013) model and analysed for deviations.

Findings: The results of the study were quite similar to the original study done by Buil et al. (2013). There was a positive correlation between overall brand equity and the underlying dimensions of brand equity. All hypotheses aside from those for perceived quality were supported. In the inter-category comparison, there is no difference, the consumers of media are also influenced by brand equity and its dimensions. However, overall brand equity seems to be very important for influencing purchase intention for television broadcasters.

Limitations: This research was limited to South Africa; thus, it cannot be generalised to other countries. The research was also limited to people with access to smart phones and computers, as it was only available online. There is an opportunity for the study to be replicated in other countries and also in a way that is accessible to people who do not have access to computers. In the findings, there was consistently high and significant positive correlations between all variables that act to support the model; this could be a limitation as some of this strength may arise from common method bias. The survey participants had to answer all questions using the slider; this might have caused the bias. The research produced a high number of incomplete surveys.

Future research: The analysis of Lagrange multipliers suggests two paths that could be considered, namely, for direct associations between purchase intention and both brand awareness and brand associations.

Key words: brand equity, consumer responses, media brand equity, brand equity dimensions, consumer responses.

1 Introduction

Buil, Martinez and de Charnoy (2013)have conducted research to see if brand equity has an influence on consumer responses. The research's aim was to establish if brand equity of any product could influence or have any impact on a consumer's response to the brand. Their findings showed that there is a 'positive' impact of brand equity on consumers' responses. This means that brand equity has the power to positively influence a consumer towards a brand. The examples of positive influence are purchase intention, willingness by the consumer to try brand extensions, the consumer's loyalty to the brand, the consumer's willingness to pay a premium price for the brand's products and many others. It is clear why these findings will be important for any business that seeks to build an enduring brand. This is why this research replicates this study and extends it to the media companies in South Africa. This research establishes if brand equity has the same impact on the South Africans consumers' responses and also extends it to investigate if South Africans put the same emphasis on the brand equity of the media platforms.

The research establishes if the brand equity of the channel plays an important role in the consumption of media content. Does it matter what the brand of the media channel is if the content or programming is good? It seems that the audiences have become quite discerning in their taste; they are also fragmented and differ in the way they engage with the media (Livingstone, 1999). The scope of content here is limited to traditional content providers like television channels and online subscription channels, e.g. Netflix or Showmax. The research did not include social media content platforms even though some of these channels like Facebook, Instagram have become media of choice for consumers.

The television broadcasters are looking for new ways to retain their audiences in the face of the new challenge caused by the emerging and diverse multi-channels. This paper investigates the impact of brand equity on the television viewing habits of South African audiences. The following research questions were investigated.

What if just delivering good content is not enough?
Is the channel of the content as important as the content it carries?
Does Brand equity play a role in the selection of content that the consumer selects?

Replication studies are not often seen as adding value to the body of knowledge, but this paper does not just replicate the study. It also extends the study to a new country, South Africa, while the original study was done in Spain and England. It also extends the study by adding new product categories, namely, television broadcasters and content streaming devices while in the original study, the product categories were sportswear, consumer electronics and cars. This replication study is more than just applying it to a different geographical area and in different industries. The research seeks to validate the study in nontraditional industries like the television and video streaming industries which is likely to provide a different consumer response to brand equity. Buil et al. (2013) and others propose and test a model to better understand brand equity and investigate the effects of this construct on consumers' responses using data from two European countries. This research replicates the model that Buil et al. (2013) developed to test the effect of brand equity in influencing consumers' viewing habits .All the hypotheses that Buil and others tested are tested in this paper as well.

There are also other papers that have been written and published after Buil et al. (2013) published on the role of brand equity in influencing consumer responses. This paper takes into consideration what the new research reveals in this field. South Africa is an emerging economy, and thus this research establishes the effects of brand equity on the consumers' responses in an emerging economy. The media industry also has a variety of factors that influence content selection and consumption. All these different facets tested to test Buil et al.'s (2013) research to see if it still holds.

Much work has been done on the concept of brand equity Naidoo and Abratt (2018) developed a social brand equity model for brands in a non commercial setting. Their literature review cites the following studies on brand equity recently: Bendixen, Bukasa, and Abratt (2004) studied brand equity in the B2B market; Dahlén and Rosengren (2005) show that slogans may work as carriers of brand equity; Das and Bandyopadhyay (2009) lay the foundation for an integrated systems model of brand equity; Papadopoulos and Heslop (2002) suggest that country brands have built-in equity that individuals in various target markets develop over their lifetimes; Jones (2005) developed a stakeholder model of brand equity; M'zungu, Merrilees, and Miller (2010) suggest that brand management ought to play an important role in safeguarding brand equity and proposed a three-stage conceptual model for building and sustaining brand equity; research by; Dwivedi, Merrilees, Miller, and Herington (2012) explained the effect of brand extensions on the relationship equity of a parent brand; Pauwels and Dans (2001) found that brand equity in the marketplace can be efficiently leveraged into the market space.

Online readership depends both on offline popularity and on the profile fit between the typical Internet user and the typical offline reader of the newspaper; (Raggio & Leone, 2007) propose a new framework for conceptualising brand equity that distinguishes between brand equity, conceived of as an intrapersonal construct that moderates the impact of marketing activities, and brand value, which is the sale or replacement value of a brand; Villarejo-Ramos and Sanchez-Franco (2005) studied the impact of marketing communications and price promotion on brand equity; Spielman (2014) recommending new assets and liabilities unique to brands that are bounded to their origins. These are brands that are inseparable from their origins, as is the case with most wines; and (Uggla, 2004)presented a conceptual model for leveraging partner brand equity

2 Literature review of brand equity

The authors cite the emergence of international brands competing in the global space and the lack of knowledge of how the brands should be managed as the reason for their research (Buil et al., 2013) . This is true as globalisation has made markets easily accessible for all products. They discovered that assessing brand equity was complex, and other researchers had discovered that instead of just measuring the brand equity, there was also a need to understand how the brand equity influences the consumer behaviour and attitude (Buil et al., 2013). The researchers believed that a successful brand strategy could only be built with an understanding of brand equity and how it applies to different markets and the importance of each brand dimension in the construction of brand equity (Buil et al., 2013). This is important as the value of the brand is directly attached to what the end user responds to. There are different ways that a user can respond to the brand. They can hate it and not buy it, they can love it so much that they are willing to pay a premium price for it, they are willing to buy its brand extensions and they remain loyal to it. This is the most ideal and lucrative consumer response for brands.

The authors also found that other researchers assumed that brand equity had a positive influence on consumer choices (Buil et al., 2013). Thus, the researchers established that there was a lack of empirical research that explored 'the relationship between consumer-based brand equity and consumer response' (Buil et al., 2013, p. 63). There was not enough evidence to support the assumption that the consumer-based brand equity had a positive influence on the said consumer's responses. This is very important as the consumers are those that give the equity to the brand and this influences how they then respond to the brand. Brand equity, even if it is consumer-based brand equity is very important for all businesses as it comes with financial implications and is important for the overall well-being of the business.

The authors then endeavoured to close the literature gap, by proposing and testing a model that would help with better understanding of brand equity and to investigate the effects of brand equity on consumer behaviour. They used data from Spain and England (Buil et al., 2013). The research's major focus is on the "effect of brand equity on consumers' willingness to pay price premiums, consumers' attitude towards brand extensions, brand preference and purchase intention" (Buil et al., 2013, p. 63). All these responses point towards the consumer spending money on the brand's products, this is the ideal response. Willingness to pay premium prices means that the consumers likes the brand enough that they deem the high price suitable for the brand. Attitude towards brand extensions refers to the consumer's willingness to try other products from the same brand. For example, consumers liked the Virgin brand so much that when Virgin gyms, Virgin money and Virgin mobile were introduced, they were willing to trust them as well. Brand preference means that the brand is always their choice in that category. For example, a consumer will only buy Nike sportwear, Nike is their prefered brand in the sportwear category. Purchase intention refers to the consumer's intention to purchase the brand's products when they encounter them.

This research (Buil et al., 2013) builds on the model done by Yoo and Donthu (2001) who developed a multidimensional measure of consumer-based brand equity and assessed its psychometric properties. The paper further defined consumer-based equity using the "measurement means of cognitive and behavioral brand equity at the individual consumer level" (Yoo & Donthu, 2001, p. 2). The individual consumer level behaviour is at the centre of the consumer-based brand equity. What influences the consumer-based brand equity? What experiences lead to some brands receiving the equity while others do not get the equity?

Buil et al. (2013) cites the limited set of product categories, brands, and countries used as its biggest limitation. It only had three product categories which were sportwear and the brands used in this category were Adidas and Nike. This category and the brands are used as controls in this paper. The second category was the consumer electronics which featured Sony and Panasonic and the third category was cars which featured BMW and Volkswagen. The researchers found the categories limiting and suggested that more research needed to be done in different countries and in different industries. This limitation led to the development of this research where the objective is to replicate and extend the model in a different country and in different industries.

2.1 Brand equity

What is a brand? Brand can be defined from different perspectives; from the company perspective, it was best defined by the American Marketing Association (AMA) in 1960 as a 'term', 'symbol', 'logo', 'design' or a combination of those that differentiate a product from that of competitors (Aaker, 1996; Keller, 2001; Kotler & Gertner, 2002). For example, Apple is a brand. What makes it a brand is the combination of its design, the logo with a bitten apple even though many associate Apple with its logo. That is from a company's perspective. From the consumer perspective, the best way to define brand is the promise that is associated with the brand that could be psychological or functional (Ambler, 1992; Gardner & Levy, 1955). What is the Apple brand from the consumer's perspective? Some consumers buy Apple products not because of the logo and its technical capabilities but for identity as Apple is often associated with creative people and people who break the norm. This is the consumer-based brand equity stemming from the consumer's interpretation of the brand.

However, modern companies are faced with deeper challenges than what logos they should put on their products. Companies need to understand their brand so that they can strategically use the brand's personality (Aaker, 1996). In a world where most of the products are good and competitive, companies are focusing on developing brand personalities. The brand's personality speaks to the psychological needs of the consumers, the consumers' need to see the brand as a reflection of themselves.

Over the past few years, there has been a growing interest in brand equity and the brand became an integral part of marketing strategies. The highly congested markets call for products that are highly differentiated. How do you differentiate your product? Products are differentiated by branding and creating equity on the brand name. Brand equity is the unique brand features and knowledge of the brand that makes the consumer respond to the brand in a certain way (Keller, 1993, 2001; Keller, Parameswaran, & Jacob, 2011). Continuing with the example of Apple, the name itself, the logo, the seamless design and the user experience is what creates the brand equity - the Apple brand. Brand equity is the incremental value of the product that can be solely attributed to its brand name (Yoo, Donthu, & Lee, 2000). Apple products are often the most expensive in their product categories, not because of any other value than the fact the they have the Apple logo.

Brand equity is the ability of a brand to create value for both the customers and the company and that value tends to be intangible (Aaker, 1996; Chatzipanagiotou, Veloutsou, & Christodoulides, 2016; Nam, Ekinci, & Whyatt, 2011). When you look at Apple products, there are some functions that they do not perform better than their competitors, for example, their cameras might not be the best or it has low battery life, but that does reduce its value in the eyes of its consumers. This is achieved through the strengthening of the brand's dimensions which are brand awareness, brand associations, the perceived quality of the brand by the consumer and brand loyalty by the consumer (Aaker, 1996). This shows the importance of the consumer in the creation of the consumer-based equity. The brand dimensions are the foundation for building brand equity; the brand equity can be a source of competitive advantage (Naeini, Azali, & Tamaddoni, 2015; Washburn & Plank, 2002; Yoo & Donthu, 1997). Once Apple used the brand dimensions to build its brand equity, it had a big competitive advantage over its competitors. Companies value their brand as it distinguishes it from its competitors and creates value for the company. Consumer behaviour also contributes to brand equity through actions like brand loyalty, willingness to pay a premium price, purchase intention, brand preference and willingness to try brand extensions. Strong brands also create credibility (Aaker, 1996).

Brand equity thus helps the company create additional value for its products using its brand.

Wood (2000) argues that brands should be managed as long-term company assets. This means that brands should be protected from any damage. This is very important at the present moment with the presence of social media where brands developed over a long period can be destroyed by one senseless post on the social media. She continues to argue that the importance of customer loyalty to the brand and the value of the brand should be accounted for in the business's accounting systems. This makes sense as often when a company's brand is damaged, it also suffers financial loss.

Some researchers find that brand equity is very important for protecting and growing a business (Farquhar, 1989). Farquhar (1989) also argued that there were three sources of equity for the brand, which were the organisation itself, the consumer and the trade. He argued that any company that focused on building a strong bond with the consumer was likely to succeed as a company and keep the brand equity going over time.

New research is emerging in this space, Gürhan-Canli, Hayran, and Sarial-Abi (2016) are reviewing Keller's ground-breaking research paper of 1993 (Keller, 1993) which conceptualised and measured customer-based brand equity. They are looking at technological, digital, social and environmental developments and assessing the impact on the model developed by Keller (Gürhan-Canli et al., 2016). They have identified three new brand attributes which are innovativeness, responsiveness and responsibility (Gürhan-Canli et al., 2016). They argue that these attributes are important in the development of brands. Most companies now have social media pages where they can quickly respond to customer queries; this considers the responsiveness of the company. Companies that are seen to be innovative like Uber, Discovery, Tesla, increase their brand equity as consumers admire them and aspire to be associated with them. Responsibility discusses the caliber of a corporate citizen that the company is. This theme of ethical responsibility comes up in the research by Iglesias, Markovic, Singh, and Sierra (2017) who are certain that ethical consumerism is forcing organisations to be ethical in their governance. Their research found that perceived corporate ethicality had direct and indirect influence on brand equity. Their research also found that brand heritage had an impact on perceived corporate ethicality which in turn, had an impact of the brand equity (Iglesias et al., 2017). Ethical consumerism means that consumers will not buy the product if the producers of the product is seen to be unethical in the way they conduct their business. This is prevalent in the goods industries where some consumers will not buy products that is produced in countries with sweatshops or that contain animal products. These are emerging new brand equity dimensions.

Another emerging facet of consumer-based brand equity is the impact of social media on the brand equity. Godey et al. (2016) discusses the impact of social media marketing on consumers' responses towards the brand. They studied the luxury brands and they surveyed the people who followed them on the social media pages. What their research shows is that there is a link between social media advertising and consumers' responses to the brand, (Godey et al., 2016).The social media marketing was found to increase the consumers' preference for the brand; it increased their willingness to pay a premium price and it also increased the consumers' loyalty to the brand. Social media marketing also played a big role in influencing the brand equity dimensions, which are brand awareness and brand image. This highlights the importance of social media in creating modern brands and the subsequent brand equity. Schivinski and Dabrowski (2015) had previously built a foundation for this kind of research. In 2015, they wanted to differentiate between the company-based social media communication and the user-based social media communication and how each of them influenced the consumer-based brand equity (Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2015). Their research found that both company created and user created brand communication on social media had an impact on the consumer awareness of the brand and the associations that the consumers have with the brand, (Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2015). However, the user generated social media brand communication had an impact on the consumer's loyalty to the brand and also had an impact on how the quality of the brand was perceived by the consumers (Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2015). The trends in the research in the past few years put social media at the centre of developing consumer based brand equity (Datta, Ailawadi, & van Heerde, 2017; Godey et al., 2016; Gürhan-Canli et al., 2016; Iglesias et al., 2017; Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2015). Social media's influence on brand equity did not play a big role on the research conducted by Buil et al. (2013) as there had not been a lot of research conducted at that stage. In this research, its importance is noted, but none of the hypotheses regarding social media are tested.

3 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES

As brand equity is one of the most important assets that a company has, it makes sense that the companies would like to measure it. Based on the diverse views that the scholars have on the subject of what brand equity is, it is not expected that they would agree on the best way to measure it. A wide variety of models have been developed to measure brand equity; some want to measure financial performance of the brand while the majority of researchers want to measure the value that is brought in by the brand equity dimensions to a product (Aaker, 1996; Buil et al., 2013; Keller, 1993; Kotler & Gertner, 2002; Washburn & Plank, 2002; Yoo & Donthu, 2001). The most used brand equity model is by Aaker (Aaker, 1991). Aaker's model views brand equity as a result of the combination of the consumer's brand awareness, brand loyalty, the perceived quality of the brand and the consumer's brand associations. These dimensions add up to give the extra value to the product (Aaker, 1991). Aaker's brand equity equation is Brand equity = brand awareness + brand association + brand loyalty + perceived quality + the proprietary asserts of the product (Aaker, 1991).

Keller developed the much adopted Customer Based Brand Equity Model (CBBE) (Keller, 1993). Keller's brand equity model focused on the four steps of the pyramid that he argues represent the four fundamental questions that any brand customers will ask, whether consciously or subconsciously about the brand they consider buying (Keller, 1993). At the bottom of the pyramid the question is on salience. What is the identity of the brand? That is a very important question for the consumer. There are two questions on the second level of the pyramid. One is on imagery and the other is on performance. The question is what are you as a brand? What are you promising to deliver? Image and performance are used to satisfy these questions (Keller, 1993). The two questions on the third tire are on judgement and feelings. They focus on how the consumer responds to the product. How do they feel or judge this product (Keller, 1993). The last question for the model at the top of the pyramid is on resonance. Do the product and the consumer feel each other? If there is resonance between the consumer and the product, then a successful brand can be built (Keller, 1993). These are the six steps on which Keller proposed to build a successful brand.

Buil and others did not believe the existing models helped understand brand equity and how it influenced consumer choices (Buil et al., 2013). They found them lacking as a wide variety of questions remained unanswered, specifically the question on what was the impact of the brand equity, if any, on the consumers' responses? How certain could the researchers be of this impact if they could not measure it (Buil et al., 2013)?

New research has been done building on Buil et al. (2013) to find ways in which brand equity can be used as a measurement component to measure brand loyalty (Vera & Trujillo, 2017). Researchers are looking at the dimensions of consumer-based equity and arguing that these dimensions should not be equally weighted (Romaniuk & Nenycz-Thiel, 2013). Brand awareness is seen to be a pivotal aspect of consumer-based brand equity as it does not just happen at the beginning of the brand journey but evolves with the brand to create new awareness oppotunities, (Romaniuk & Nenycz-Thiel, 2013). Other researchers are looking at the role of brand experience in the creation of consumer-based brand equity (Altaf, Iqbal, Mohd. Mokhtar, & Sial, 2017). This new research confirms that brand loyalty, brand image, brand awareness, perceived quality and brand experience are positively correlated (Altaf et al., 2017; Romaniuk et al., 2017). The creation of brand personality through marketing strategies is seen to be very important, especially in industries that need high differentiation (Giroux et al., 2017). New research is also finding previous research on consumer-based equity to be limited and not able to explore the complexities of brand equity. It has added brand understanding, brand relationships and brand building into the mix; this is moving the dialogue from the construct of brand equity to the process of brand equity (Chatzipanagiotou et al., 2016).

3.1 Brand consumption in media

There is pressure in academia for more understanding of the audience, in how the audience shapes the media technology and how they consume the media (Livingstone, 1999). The audiences are now being understood to be multiple and diverse and very selective in what they consume. Previous research on video-on-demand show that at least 63% of American households use a video streaming device, the most common being Netflix, Hulu and Amazon Prime (Matrix, 2014). Forbes reports that Apple, Facebook, and Disney are launching streaming devices (Granados, 2017). These are some of the biggest brands in the world that are valuable to the consumers. These brands are ranked in the top 15 of the UK independent 2016 most valuable brands in the world (Chapman, 2016). It can look coincidental that some of the most valuable brand names are entertainment distribution channels, but the rise of Netflix as one of the most valuable brands in the world indicates how the company took the building of its brand name as strategically important. Netflix achieved its brand equity by constantly creating value for its customers, personalising its services, but its biggest asset has been its ability to engage with its customers on social media (Gilliland, 2016). This shows that the channel brand influences the content consumption by the audience. In the United Kingdom, research shows that 81% of millennials have Netflix accounts.

Previously, viewers used to be able to identify certain television shows with a television channel, however, research shows that young adults between the ages of 18 to 26 recognised Netflix shows twice more than broadcast media (Dixon, 2017). Dixon (2017) also found that social media contributed to Netflix brand recognition and the popularity of its programmes. The research also found that it was important for a brand to be associated with its television shows as consistency on the quality of the show helps develop the brand image and its perceived quality. Jason (2015) writes that in the Nielsen survey on customers' brand perception of streaming services, Netflix performed better than Hulu and Amazon. Netflix's brand identity was seen to be superior to its competitors. Previous research on the importance of branding for various news brands discovered that it was more important to develop the brand of the channel than the programme brand as the channel often outlasted the programme, (Chan-Olmsted & Jiyoung, 2007; Chan-Olmsted & Kim, 2002). This shows that the channels of content's brand are also important and do influence the consumption of the content it provides. This research, however, establishes how brand equity influences consumer responses to content consumption. Bevan-Dye, Garnett, and De Klerk (2012), in their research, found that Generation Y in South Africa used the consumption of brand names' products as a status symbol. It is therefore likely that even the media brands consumed must reflect a certain status.

The model that Buil et al. (2013) developed “investigate(s) the effects of brand equity on consumer responses towards brands” (Buil et al., 2013, p. 62). Extensive literature was done to identify important consumer patterns that could be used to make a brand stand out. The researchers prioritised the consumer patterns that pushed sales, growth and overall performance of the car. The focus was on the effect of the four-brand equity dimension. These dimensions were: premium price, brand extensions, brand preference, and purchase intention (Buil et al., 2013; Yoo et al., 2000). The assumption was that if brand equity had any effect on these dimensions, then a brand strategy could be set that would allow profitability through high prices and high sales as consumers would prefer the product to its competitors. Another important factor was how much the consumers were open to extensions as this indicated potential growth for the company.

3.2 Brand Equity Dimensions and their relationships

Buil et al. (2013) observed that there were various brand components at play in brand equity and that these components did not carry the same weight as the previous research on equity had suggested. These brand equity dimensions have been researched before to demonstrate how they interrelate (Keller, 1993; Naeini et al., 2015; Yoo & Donthu, 2001; Yoo et al., 2000). Buil et al. (2013) discovered that previous researchers opted for a traditional hierarchy of effects model (Yoo & Donthu, 1997, 2001). This method was seen to be useful for studying dimensions of the brand equity and its causal order. The causal relationship leads to a sequential process of the cognitive, conative and affirmative stage (Buil et al., 2013) that has been widely adopted in brand equity models. Keller (1993) used the same method in his consumer-based brand equity research. The sequential process assumes that the consumer becomes aware of the product, then develops conceptions about its quality and then brand associations are formed. The consumer is then influenced into developing some form of brand loyalty (Yoo & Donthu, 2001).

The beginning of a journey to brand equity starts with the brand equity dimension of awareness. This relates to the consumer’s ability to recognise the brand and how easily it is recognised (Naeini et al., 2015). The awareness and the knowledge of the brand and how it matches the customer’s needs plays an important role in the brand being recalled in the memory of the customer. Brand awareness has been found to have a positive correlation to brand equity (Naeini et al., 2015).

The second and third brand equity dimensions are the perceived quality and brand associations. Perceived quality relates to the perception that the consumer has about the quality of the brand. The perceived quality of the brand plays an important role in the purchase decision and the customer has to match the price of the product and the quality that they perceive the product to have (Naeini et al., 2015).

Brand awareness, brand association, and perceived quality were seen as brand equity dimensions that led to brand loyalty in a linear causal relationship (Buil et al., 2013). Brand loyalty is the response to the brand by the customer as a result of previous interaction with the brand and is influenced by brand awareness, brand association and perceived quality (Naeini et al., 2015).

It is the understanding of the brand equity dimensions and how they relate to each other that lays the foundation for the development of the first hypothesis for the development of this model (Buil et al., 2013; Yoo & Donthu, 2001).

3.3 Hypotheses

Each hypothesis builds logical steps from the moment of brand awareness to purchase intention and brand loyalty.

H1. Brand awareness has a positive influence on perceived quality (Buil et al., 2013, p. 64). This hypothesis needs to be operationalised through questions for it to be measured. The questions to measure the hypothesis are as follows: I am aware of brand X, When I think of this product category, brand X is one of the brands that comes to mind, X is a brand of this product category that I am very familiar with, I know what brand X looks like and I can recognise brand X among other competing brands on this product category.

The formulation of these questions was developed by Buil et al. (2013) who were influenced by Yoo et al. (2000) and Netemeyer et al. (2004) on the formulation of the questions that makes it possible to measure brand awareness.

H2. Brand awareness has a positive influence on brand associations (Buil et al., 2013, p. 64). These first steps were seen by the researchers to lead to brand loyalty (Buil et al., 2013; Keller, 1993; Yoo & Donthu, 2001).

H3. Perceived quality has a positive influence on brand loyalty (Buil et al., 2013, p. 64). The questions are used to operationalise this dimension are: Brand X offers very good quality products, Brand X offers products of consistent quality, Brand X offers very reliable products and Brand X offers products with excellent features. Buil's questions were influenced by the writings of Pappu and Quester (2006).

H4. Brand associations have a positive influence on brand loyalty (Buil et al., 2013, p. 64).These two hypotheses represent two relationships among brand equity dimensions and overall brand equity (Buil et al., 2013).

H5. Perceived quality has a positive influence on overall brand equity (Buil et al., 2013, p. 64).

H6. Brand associations have a positive influence on overall brand equity (Buil et al., 2013, p. 64).

H7. Brand loyalty has a positive influence on overall brand equity (Buil et al., 2013, p. 64).

Willingness to pay premium price:

H8. Overall brand equity has a positive influence on consumers' willingness to pay price premia (Buil et al., 2013, p. 65). Overall brand equity effects on consumers' responses; openness to brand extensions. The questions asked to operationalise this hypothesis are: It makes sense to buy brand X instead of any other brand in this category, Even if another of this brand product has the same features as brand X I would still buy brand X, If there was another brand of this product that was as good as X, I would still buy brand X, If another brand of this product is not different from X in any way I would still buy brand X. These questions were influence by the research done by Yoo et al. (2000).

H9. Overall brand equity has a positive influence on consumers' attitude towards brand extensions (Buil et al., 2013, p. 65).

Brand Preferences:

H10. Overall brand equity has a positive influence on consumers' brand preference (Buil et al., 2013, p. 65).

H11. Overall brand equity has a positive influence on consumers' purchase intention (Buil et al., 2013, p. 65).

H12. Brand preference has a positive influence on consumers' purchase intention (Buil et al., 2013, p. 65)

The questions that are used to operationalise brand preference hypotheses are these: I like brand X better than other brands of this product, I would use brand X products more than other brands that produce this product, In this product category, Brand, X is my preferred brand. These questions were influenced by Sirgy et al. (1997).

The attached appendix contains the detailed questions of how each hypothesis is operationalised with questions.

4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

There are three possible research paradigms: positivist, interpretive and critical. This study was located in a positivist paradigm and adopted a quantitative methodology; the most common approach to research in the social sciences. Positivism believes in a single truth; where knowledge can either be confirmed or rejected, (Bryman, 2016)

The data was collected through a Qualtrics survey in South Africa which was shared through a database and social media. The social media pages used to share data were WhatsApp, LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook, and the database shared the links to the online survey via emails. The data on the sex, age and geographical regions was collected, but it was not used as variables in the data analysis. Race data was not collected as it is a very sensitive issue in South Africa. All questionnaires were in English.

4.1 The Stimuli

In the previous research, Buil et al. (2013) used six brands from three product categories as stimuli. The selected product categories and brand names were well known, leading brands in both Spain and the United Kingdom (UK). All products and their categories had to be known for similar functions in both the UK and Spain (Buil et al., 2013). These products were Nike and Adidas for sportswear, Sony and Panasonic for consumer electronics and Volkswagen and BMW for cars. For this study, we used the same hypotheses, but applied them to different brands and different product categories. The products still had to be known by the respondents and known for similar functions in South Africa. Three product categories and two brands per category were used. In this research, Nike and Adidas for sportswear were used as stimuli, these two brands are well known in South Africa, but also for control as the result is a direct comparison with the findings of Buil et al. (2013). The second category is that of the broadcaster. Two of the biggest television channels in South Africa, SABC 1 and Mzansi Magic, were used as stimuli. These brands are well known in South Africa. The difference with these stimuli is that SABC is a public broadcaster and Mzansi Magic is a subscription channel. However, the user still must pay for both even though the SABC is a small annual fee. The third product category tested in the research was the video streaming services. The two brands in this category were Showmax and Netflix. Netflix is an international brand and Showmax is a local brand, but these brands are both well known in South Africa and they are known for similar functions.

4.2 Sample and Procedure

The Geographical scope for this study was smaller than in the original study; it was restricted to South Africa and it was also limited to people who has access to a computer or a smartphone who could access the online survey. The objective for the sample size of the research was to get 300 people to complete the questionnaire, with the aim to collect an average of 50 responses per product. 330 responses were collected, but there were an excessive number of surveys with missing data. Of the 330 collected surveys, only 211 were used in the analysis. There was also an expectation that all the brands would attract almost equal responses, but some products seemed more popular among respondents, and Showmax had the lowest number of respondents. Each respondent completed one version of the questionnaire and evaluated only one brand. To be eligible for the study, respondents had to be familiar with the focal brand on their questionnaire. If the respondent was not familiar with any brand, Qualtrics forced them to exit the survey. Only a small number of respondents exited because they were not familiar with the brands. As all questionnaires were in English, there was no need for back translation. The data for dependent and independent variables was collected from the same respondents as done by Buil et al. (2013). This data was used to test for common method variance.

4.3 Measurements

In the original research, Buil et al. (2013) used a seven point Likert scale in the survey to gather data. The Likert scale works better in the paper survey, but since Qualtrics was used on this survey, a slider scale was used because it has been found to be more accurate than the Likert scale (Cook, Heath, Thompson, & Thompson, 2001; Roster, Lucianetti, & Albaum, 2015; Thompson, Cook, & Heath, 2000). The same constructs measured by Buil et al. (2013) were also measured in this research. The constructs that were measured are brand awareness which had five questions, perceived quality which had four questions, perceived value which had four questions, brand personality with three questions, organisational associations with three questions, brand loyalty with three questions, overall brand equity with four questions, consumer's willingness to pay premium price with three questions, brand attitude and brand preference with three questions each, and lastly, the construct to be measured was purchase intention with three questions. The Likert scale has five or seven measurement points with strongly agree and strongly disagree on the opposite ends, with other measurements points in between. These points represent numerical values with strongly agree carrying the highest value and strongly disagree with the lowest numerical value. However, the Likert scale is not as accurate as a slider (Cook et al., 2001). The slider has a range of zero to hundred percent that a respondent can select the value that best represents the extent to which they agree with the statement. This allows for more accurate information. It is for that reason that the slider was used for this research instead of the Likert scale as was done by Buil et al. (2013) .

In this survey, 11 constructs were measured using 37 operationalised questions. The dimensions of consumer-based brand equity were measured separately. For brand awareness, five operationalised questions were used to measure recall, recognition and familiarity (Buil et al., 2013) and this method was replicated in this study. Perceived quality was also operationalised into four measurable items. Three kinds of associations which are perceived value, brand personality and organisational associations were also measured (Buil et al., 2013). As in Buil et al. (2013), brand loyalty was used to measure the consumer's attitude and loyalty to the brand. The research also measured overall brand equity and consumer's responses to brand equity. Consumer's response to brand equity is determined by the consumer's attitude to brand extensions, their intension to purchase and to purchase at a premium price (Buil et al., 2013).

5 RESULTS

5.1 Measurement model

This article employed the classic continuous modelling techniques of correlational analysis (using Pearson correlations) and structural equation path modelling with latent variables. As per usual practice (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 1998), the structural equation models are conducted using the two-phase approach: the measurement section is analysed in a confirmatory factor analysis (already reported above) and path models are then constructed between the latent variables as per the Buil et al. (2013) model and analysed for deviations .

To analyse factor structure and reliability, Cronbach alphas for internal consistency of individual constructs and confirmatory factor analysis for convergent and discriminant validity were used, just as in the Buil et al. (2013) research. The Cronbach alphas are reported in the diagonal of the correlations in table 1. As can be seen, no factor's alpha falls below 0.7, widely considered to be a cut-off for acceptable reliability (Lee, 2016). This finding is similar to that of Buil et al. (2013), as their Cronbach alphas findings were also above 0.7.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics and correlations of main variables.

	M	**SD**	**1.**	**2.**	**3.**	**4.**	**5.**	**6.**	**7.**	**8.**
1. Purchase intention	63.22	31.51	(.94)							
2. Brand extensions	60.08	25.67	.63***	(.80)						
3. Price premium	42.80	27.63	.64***	.54***	(.75)					

4. Overall brand equity	53.17	28.73	.68***	.72***	.72***	(.90)				
5. Brand loyalty	48.70	30.04	.71***	.63***	.69***	.83***	(.86)			
6. Brand associations	62.46	23.55	.77***	.74***	.65***	.79***	.76***	(.81)		
7. Perceived quality	66.81	27.16	.80***	.71***	.59***	.73***	.74***	.88***	(.94)	
8. Brand awareness	81.36	20.20	.67***	.57***	.45***	.58***	.50***	.72***	.69***	(.80)

*Notes: *** = $p < .01$. Cronbach alphas are on diagonal in parentheses.*

The confirmatory factor analysis was conducted (with full information maximum likelihood estimation or 'FIML' to account for missing data) to test for convergent and discriminant validity. The initial model suggests that the factor brand preference is excessively correlated with that of brand loyalty, in fact, creating impossible solutions in the standardised covariance section of the analysis. On face value, loyalty and preference would seem highly related concepts. The extreme similarity of the constructs suggests multicollinearity is present, with solutions being either to combine or eliminate one. Brand preference was eliminated since it was not originally conceived in the same part of the model as loyalty. After this deletion, one other manifest variable (loading on the price premium factor) was also removed as it had a weak factor loading and was not necessary to form the factor. The final model fit is acceptable with Chi-square = 465.66 (df = 271) $p < .01$, SRMR = .04, RMSEA = .058 (90% CI = .049-.067), CFI = .96, NNFI = .95, and with acceptable path loadings and R^2 statistics for the manifest variables.

5.2 Correlational Analysis

The results for this analysis follow the approaches of Buil et al. (2013) in employing correlational and structural equation modelling analysis as the main forms of analysis.

The first set of main results stems from the variable correlations, seen in Table 1. As seen there, substantial and statistically significant positive correlations exist between all the major variables. Purchase intention has a large correlation with overall brand equity (r = .68, p < .01) as hypothesised by Buil et al. (2013). Similar or larger correlations exist for other antecedent variables in the model, notably perceived quality (.80, p < .01).

Overall brand equity has similar correlations of .72 (p < .01) with both brand extension and price premium, while in both cases of the variables further back in the model, brand loyalty is the strongest correlation (r = .69 and .83 respectively, p < .01).

As done by Buil et al. (2013), the main results for this analysis arise from the structural equation modelling, which is capable of complete modelling as opposed to the bivariate approach of correlations, as reported next.

5.3 Structural Equation Models

This section reports the various structural equation path models used to test and vary the model. All the structural path models are conducted with latent variables, i.e. the measurement portions are included in the models, although not shown in the path diagrams.

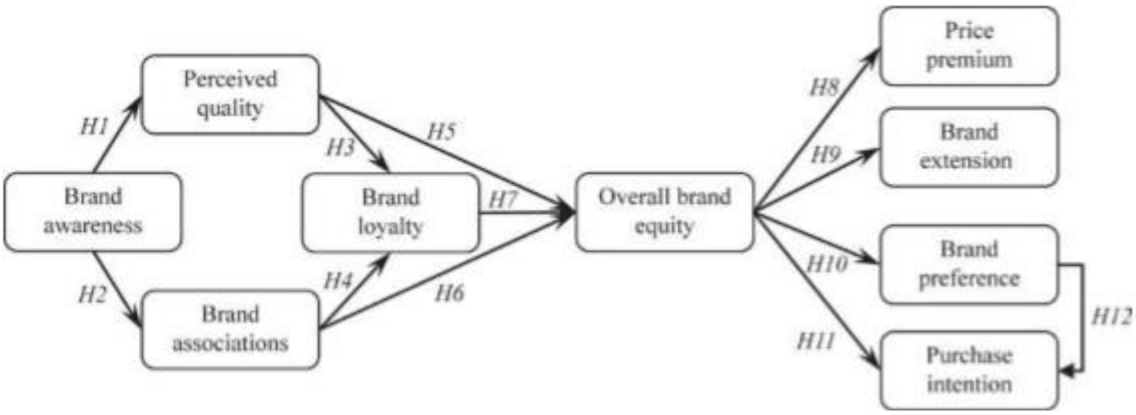

Figure 1: Testing the original Buil et al. (2013)

The original Buil et al. (2013) model, shown above, produced good fit, but had two issues; firstly, a Heywood case in that one of the standardised paths exceeded one, this was the correlation relationship between brand preference and brand loyalty, and secondly, that the perceived quality latent variable has very small and non-significant effects on either brand loyalty (β = -.10, p = .72) or overall brand equity (β = -.10, p = .59). Wald statistics support removing any variant that has insignificant effect and the perceived value was removed as a predictor. Therefore, its role in the model became redundant. In addition, its removal corrects the Heywood case. Accordingly, the model is re-estimated without perceived quality.

The Amended Model without Perceived Quality

The model with the perceived quality removed shows an acceptable overall fit of Chi-square = 440.76 (df = 202) $p < .01$, SRMR = .06, RMSEA = .075 (90% CI = .065-.084), CFI = .93, NNFI = .92. Figure 2 shows the direct paths.

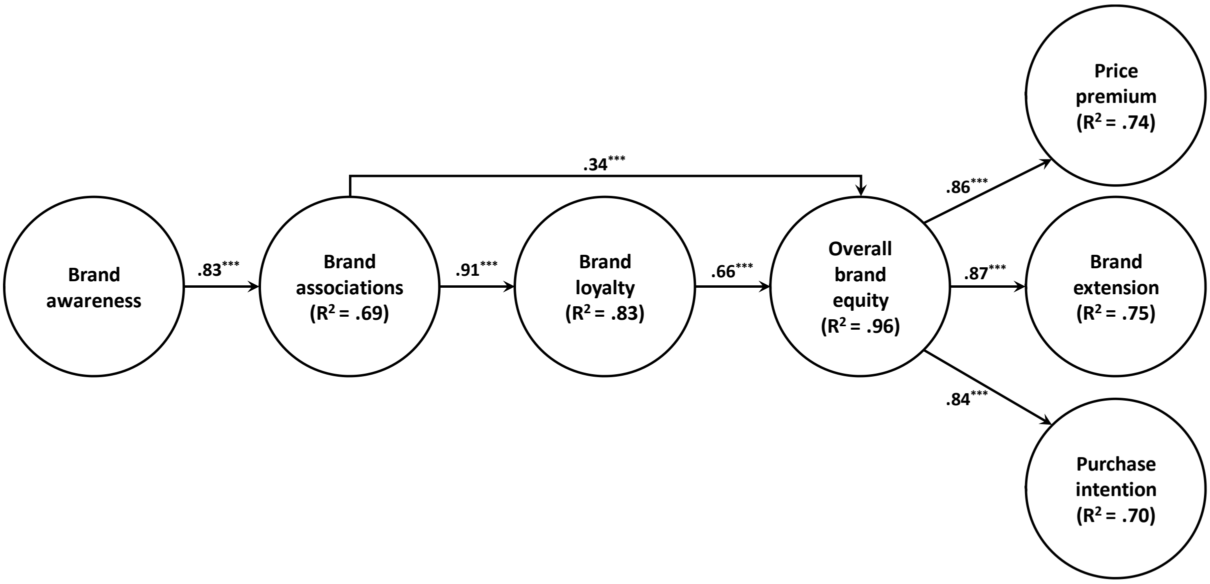

Figure 2: Path diagram for model without perceived quality

As it can be seen, in this model all paths are large, positive, and statistically significant, providing support for all hypotheses. The associations between overall brand equity and all the outcomes are in the order of β = .84-.87, suggesting very strong effects for brand equity. As discussed later, it may also indicate that these three outcomes might themselves be highly inter-related. In turn, overall brand equity has strong to moderate direct antecedents in brand loyalty ($\beta = .66$, $p < .01$) and brand associations ($\beta = .34$, $p < .01$). Brand associations are extremely strongly associated with brand loyalty ($\beta = .91$, $p < .01$) and are preceded strongly by awareness ($\beta = .83$, $p < .01$).

Aside from supporting all hypotheses apart from those for perceived quality, analysis of Lagrange multipliers suggests two paths that should be considered. This is the path for direct associations between purchase intention and brand awareness, purchase intention and brand associations. Therefore, the next section includes these paths.

5.4 The Augmented Final Model

The model that next adds direct associations between purchase intention and both brand awareness and brand associations has good fit of Chi-square = 391.66 (df = 200) p < .01, SRMR = .06, RMSEA = .067 (90% CI = .058-.077), CFI = .95, NNFI = .94. Figure 3 shows the direct paths.

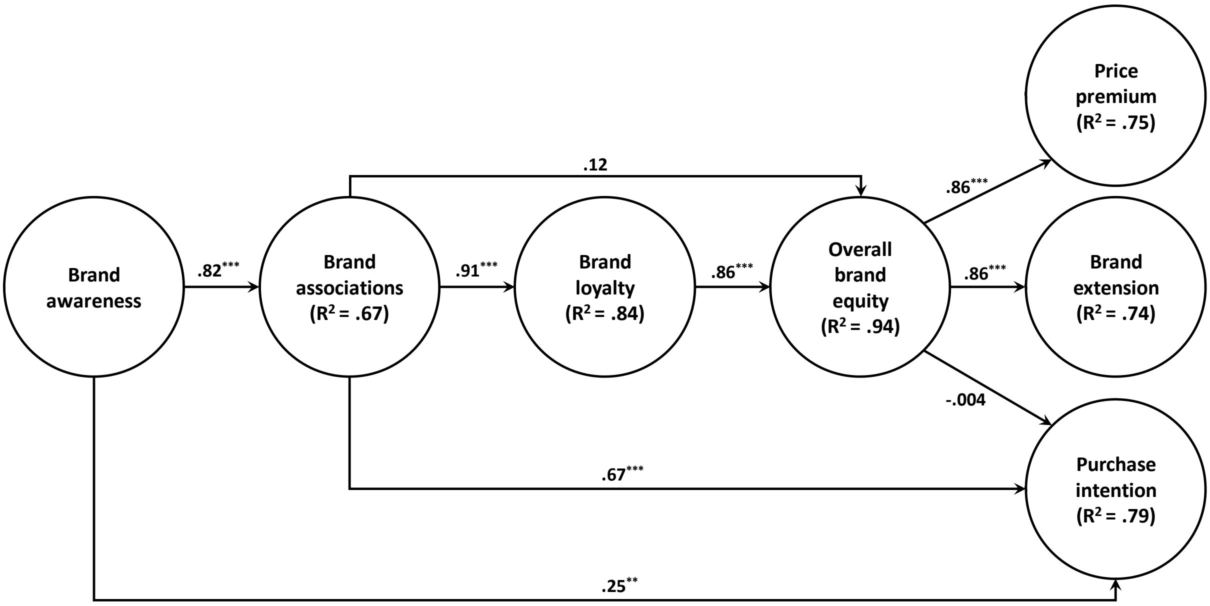

Figure 3: Augmented model

As can be seen in Figure 3, substantial changes to the previous model exist. Brand associations now has a strong direct association with purchase intention (β = .67, p < .01) and brand awareness has a modest but significant direct association (β = .25, p < .05). These direct effects now account for the bulk of the model's explanatory ability for purchase intentions, with the path from overall brand equity falling to near zero. This suggests that purchase intentions are primarily a factor of brand image with the customer rather than later brand equity, while the opposite is true for price premium and brand extension.

Modification indices do not suggest any further sensible changes to the model. Therefore, the next section compares the two feasible models and provides more complete effects analysis of the chosen model.

Model Comparisons and Full Effect Analysis of Final Model

It is worth comparing these prior two models. Table 2 displays the comparative fit indices (information criteria) for the two models.

Table 2: Model comparison for two models.

	Model 1: Original model with perceived quality removed	**Model 2: Perceived quality removed and extra paths**
AIC	40,004	39,959
CAIC	40,226	40,189
SBC	40,175	40,136

Notes: AIC = Akaike Information Criterion, CAIC = consistent AIC, SBC = Schwartz's Bayesian Criterion.

As can be seen, the last augmented model has lower and therefore superior information criteria. Therefore, it was this model that was chosen as the final model.

As the final finding, Table 3 shows the full effects decomposition for the final augmented model. As seen there, the highest total effect on purchase intention is brand awareness with $\beta = .80$, composed of the relatively modest direct effect of .25 ($p < .05$) but more importantly, the indirect effect of brand awareness through brand associations ($\beta = .55$, $p < .01$). Brand association has the other substantial total effect on purchase intentions with $\beta = .67$ ($p < .05$), due to its large direct effect of the same size (the indirect effects through overall brand equity are negligible due to that variable's near-zero direct effect on purchase intentions, as discussed earlier). As can be seen, hypotheses for brand equity are therefore not supported for purchase intention, rather potentially more visceral factors rooted in the brand's image for the customer appear to hold sway for purchasing.

Both price premium and brand extension enjoy a variety of standardised total effects in the large to very large range, led by overall brand equity ($\beta = .86$, $p < .01$), followed by brand loyalty ($\beta = .74$, $p < .01$) and brand association ($\beta = .78$, $p < .01$) and finally, followed by brand awareness ($\beta = .64$, $p < .01$). Therefore, unlike for price premium, the hypotheses for brand equity are supported here.

Table 3: Final augmented mode effect decomposition (standardised parameters).

'Causal' variables	**Endogenous Variables**					
	Purchase intentions	**Price premium**	**Brand extension**	**Overall brand equity**	**Brand loyalty**	**Brand associations**
Overall brand equity						
Direct	$.00^{ns}$	$.86^{***}$	$.86^{***}$	-	-	-
Indirect	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	$.00^{ns}$	$.86^{***}$	$.86^{***}$	-	-	-
Brand loyalty						
Direct	-	-	-	$.86^{***}$	-	-
Indirect	$.00^{ns}$	$.74^{***}$	$.74^{***}$	-	-	-
Total	$.00^{ns}$	$.74^{***}$	$.74^{***}$	$.86^{***}$	-	-
Brand associations						
Direct	$.67^{***}$	-	-	$.12^{ns}$	$.92^{***}$	-
Indirect	$.00^{ns}$	$.78^{***}$	$.78^{***}$	$.79^{***}$	-	-
Total	$.67^{***}$	$.78^{***}$	$.78^{***}$	$.90^{***}$	$.92^{***}$	-
Brand awareness						
Direct	$.25^{**}$	-	-	-	-	$.82^{***}$
Indirect	$.55^{***}$	$.64^{***}$	$.64^{***}$	$.74^{***}$	$.75^{***}$	
Total	$.80^{***}$	$.64^{***}$	$.64^{***}$	$.74^{***}$	$.75^{***}$	$.82^{***}$

Notes: *** = p < .01, ** = p < .05, ^{ns} = non-significant

5.5 Testing Inter-Category differences

One of the questions of this research was to establish if brand equity was as important for media channels as it was for consumer goods, given that there are different categories of brands represented, which are consumer sports goods, and the two media categories, which are the broadcasters and the streaming devices. This section therefore tested for differences within the categories, i.e. between category brands. It compared the broadcaster's category to the sportswear category and the streaming devices category. Table 4 shows the simple mean differences between brands within the categories. As can be seen, the mean differences between brands in the same category are not significantly different. This means that there is not much difference between the individual products within the category, the significance of brand equity is similar.

Table 4 Inter-category Brand differences on Major Variables.

	Athletic Wear				Television				Streaming			
	Adidas		Nike		Mzansi Magic		SABC1		Netflix		Showmax	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Brand awareness	89.52	12.16	91.84	10.51	80.77	17.59	65.72	24.82	90.90	13.32	80.23	16.03
Brand associations	71.30	20.78	74.92	16.93	66.63	20.39	41.90	23.35	71.37	14.56	54.45	23.41
Brand loyalty	59.73	31.75	63.34	28.79	47.06	27.04	31.13	26.85	59.83	27.02	35.17	22.98
Perceived quality	80.05	19.70	84.92	17.95	71.12	20.69	38.39	24.06	78.62	17.68	60.38	28.08
Overall brand equity	66.09	29.64	64.94	27.12	54.30	25.74	38.28	28.96	57.03	26.54	39.60	18.31
Purchase intent	78.53	26.31	82.45	18.99	63.72	25.75	32.50	26.80	79.59	23.09	56.53	38.33
Price premium	52.26	30.22	58.76	25.81	42.53	23.91	28.73	25.90	46.79	27.13	29.30	19.59
Brand extensions	74.68	21.88	75.84	20.53	64.04	20.53	40.80	25.42	59.19	23.87	54.70	19.43

Notes: None of these inter-brand inter-category differences are statistically significant at even the $p < .10$ level.

Table 5 shows the main correlations between antecedent and main dependent variables in the model. There are marked inter-brand differences in some cases. For sports gear, correlations are notably larger for Adidas than Nike in almost all cases, except for brand loyalty and purchase intent and overall brand equity and brand extensions. In many cases, the correlation difference is so large as to indicate dramatically different roles within the two brands for the key variables, for instance, overall brand equity with price premium (r = .89 for Adidas vs .30 for Nike), brand loyalty with price premium (r = .90 for Adidas vs. r = .49 for Nike), and so on. In sum, for most relationships, Adidas' outcomes depend more on brand equity elements. Similarly, almost all correlations are markedly higher for SABC 1 than for Mzansi Magic within the television segment. Finally, many of the correlations are substantially higher for Showmax than for Netflix within the streaming category.

Table 5: Inter-Category Correlations between Major Variables

Key Correlations	**Athletic wear**		**Television**		**Streaming**	
	Adidas	**Nike**	**Mzansi Magic**	**SABC**	**Netflix**	**Showmax**
Overall brand equity <-> Purchase intent	.73	.50	.60	.86	.44	.77
Brand loyalty <-> Purchase intent	.70	.67	.50	.85	.53	.69
Brand associations <-> Purchase intent	.62	.52	.64	.82	.48	.92
Brand awareness <-> Purchase intent	.74	.49	.50	.59	.44	.68
Overall brand equity <-> Brand extensions	.55	.53	.66	.88	.57	.71
Brand loyalty <-> Brand extensions	.53	.44	.59	.87	.22	.52
Brand associations <-> Brand extensions	.54	.41	.69	.90	.51	.65
Brand awareness <-> Brand extensions	.32	.23	.56	.65	.19	.12
Overall brand equity <-> Price premium	.89	.30	.67	.74	.69	.80

Brand loyalty <-> Price premium	.90	.49	.57	.69	.52	.66
Brand associations <-> Price premium	.71	.59	.61	.59	.53	.52
Brand awareness <-> Price premium	.57	.26	.32	.42	.29	-.02

There was no significant differences in the inter-category comparison which can be an indication that brand equity is just as important for broadcasters and streaming devices as it is for the consumer goods.

6 DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This was a replication and extension study of Buil et al.'s (2013) study. This research set out to replicate Buil et al.'s study and to extend it by applying the model to a new population in South Africa and to new product categories of broadcaster and media streaming devices. All hypotheses aside from those for perceived quality were supported.

Some findings of this replication study were similar to those of Buil et al.'s (2013) findings but have been interpreted differently from the original study. Perceived quality was included in Buil et al.'s model, even though it had a P value of 0,05 which is highly insignificant on the overall brand equity. Its impact was overstated in Buil et al.'s model. In this paper, we decided to remove it as it was insignificant and thus the model developed by Buil et al. (2013) has been modified. The managerial implication for this variable is that if a company put a lot of resources to improve the perceived quality of its brands, the improvement on the overall brand equity would be so small as to be statistical insignificant. It does not make sense that Buil et al. (2013) had added it to their model in the first place. It would not make for good managerial decision-making to allocate resources to improve the perceived quality; those resources would be better spent on brand awareness and brand loyalty initiatives that have better overall brand equity impact and the money spent there would yield better results for the brand. Brand awareness and brand loyalty variables' impact on overall brand equity is big. Any resources allocated to improve these will benefit the company in the long run as it will improve the overall brand equity of the company, no matter how small the resources allocated to these variables.

Brand loyalty has a direct impact on overall brand equity and an indirect impact on willingness to pay premium price and to try brand extension. This result indicates that it is a good management decision to invest in brand loyalty. This could be the reason why loyalty programmes are so popular because loyal customers are indirectly impacted to pay premium price and indirectly impacted to purchase brand extensions. The result shows that brand association has a positive impact on purchase intention, overall brand equity and brand loyalty. Brand association also has an indirect impact on premium price, brand extension and its indirect impact on overall brand equity is bigger than the direct one. Investing in brand association is therefore a good decision for managers and it is already a popular brand variable in which marketing managers are investing. Big companies are investing in opportunities that create brand associations, music festivals are a popular way to create brand associations. Companies often pay out millions for naming rights of music festivals. Some of the big music festivals in South Africa that consumers associate with certain brands are Huawei Jo'burg day, DSTV delicious food and music festival, Standard Bank Jazz festival, and many others. These are opportunities that create valuable brand associations in the consumer's minds. These are often costly, but it is money that is well spent as the direct and indirect impact of brand association is very significant.

Brand awareness has a direct impact on purchase intention and brand awareness, and an indirect impact on price premium, brand association, brand loyalty and overall brand equity. All these findings are similar to some extent to the findings of Buil et al. (2013). In this section, only those hypotheses that are seen to have significant implications for business are discussed.

H1. Brand awareness has a positive influence on perceived quality.

The research supported this hypothesis. However, perceived quality had negligible positive influence on brand loyalty and the overall brand. It would not make any business sense to invest resources in increasing perceived quality if the returns are statistically insignificant. Those resources would be better spent on variables with better returns.

H2. Brand awareness has a positive influence on brand associations.

The findings of the research prove the hypothesis to be true. Brand awareness did influence brand associations; this is important for decision makers as brand awareness is the beginning of the journey that leads to brand equity. It is a wise decision to invest in creating awareness for your brand.

H3. Perceived quality has a positive influence on brand loyalty.

The findings of this research did not support this hypothesis. The relationship was statistically insignificant which led to perceived quality being dropped from the path diagram model and the augmented model. It is important for products to be perceived to be of high quality, but loyalty to the brand can be achieved through investing in other brand equity dimensions with higher positive influence on brand loyalty.

H4. Brand associations have a positive influence on brand loyalty.

People's previous brand always yields positive influence on brand loyalty. Investing in opportunities for the company to interact with customers is important. Most companies are already hosting brand activation events or getting naming rights for big sporting or music events to create lasting memory association with the brand. This is a good investment for businesses as these associations will increase brand loyalty which in turn, increases overall brand equity. Overall brand equity also has a positive influence on purchase intention, to pay premium price and increased willingness to purchase extension products. Investing in creating brand associations in the consumers' minds is thus a worthwhile investment. Hypotheses 6, brand associations have a positive influence on overall brand equity and H7, brand loyalty has a positive influence on overall brand equity are just confirmation of the importance of these dimensions for brand managers. These need to be prioritised in the management of the brand.

6.1 Media implications

As part of extending the Buil et al. research, the model was applied to two media categories to investigate if the impact of brand equity on consumer responses would be as impactful on these categories as on the consumer good. The research finds that there is no difference; the consumers of media are also influenced by brand equity and its dimensions. The correlations for each brand equity dimension was always higher in the sports gear category than in the media categories. It does seem however, that overall brand equity seems to be very important for influencing purchase intentions for television broadcasters. The media companies also had higher correlations between brand equity and product extension, brand equity and premium price. This means that media companies should also invest in building their brand equity as it is clear brand equity is very important in influencing their selection of media companies. The media companies can also charge premium prices if they have high brand equity. Another business opportunity for business companies is that consumers look favourably on is buying extension products from the media companies. It is an opportunity for media companies to grow and diversify their businesses.

The media marketing managers that are constantly having to make do with constantly decreasing budgets, this research demonstrates that they must invest the resources on the brand equity dimensions that have bigger influence on overall brand equity. This will push their companies and ensure that they stand apart from their peers.

6.2 Limitations and future research

In the findings, there were consistently high and significant positive correlations between all variables in support of the model; this could be a limitation as some of this strength may arise from common method bias. The survey participants had to answer all questions using the slider; this might have caused the bias. However, it is unlikely that common method bias accounts for all correlation, and so positive correlations between the variables of the model seem generally supported. Another limitation was that there were an excessively high number of responses with incomplete information.

The analysis of Lagrange multipliers indicates that the direct associations between purchase intention and brand awareness, purchase intention and brand associations should be investigated further. This is a possible area that needs further investigation.

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