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The role relationship benefits have on brand equity in the business to business, services environment

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ABSTRACT

A review of the literature reveals that companies' brands and their management have dominated the marketing of goods and services to consumers but the idea of measuring brand equity has been slow to take hold in business to business (B2B) marketing. On-going relationships between businesses and their industrial customers are receiving renewed interest in marketing and the building of strong customer relationships has been suggested as means of gaining a competitive advantage particularly for service businesses. The importance of benefits recieved through relationships indicates that customer value is not linked to the the product or service received, but is also derived from the benefits recieved from relationships with the organisation. The study seeks to determine the importance relationships have on the brand equity of organisations that operate in a B2B services environment. This is achieved by focusing on the drivers of brand equity in a B2B services environment, consisting of price, product quality, service quality and relationship benefits.

The findings offer important insightas to the drivers of brand equity in the B2B services industry. The results indicate that the benefits a buying organisation receives from having a relationship with the organisation providing the service is significant to improving itsbrand equity . The other drivers that significantly influence the brand equity of the orgnsiations providing the service is the quality of the product or service it provides followed by the price.

The research involved a two phase approach. Phase one involved face-to-face interviews with five Learning and development professionals from various industries in South Africa, namely Financial Services, Manufacturing, Telecommunications and Retail sectors. The data gathered from the interviews, together with the reviewed literature was used to develop an instrument that was used to measure the importance relationship benefits have on brand equity in the B2B services environment . One hundred and twenty one questionairres were processed. The data was subjected to inferential and multivariate statisical analysis.

This research provides both an academic contribution to the relationship marketing field as well as a practical implication for marketing managers within B2B service organisations. The main contribution for academic purposes involves confirmation from hypothesised relationships. This research is of specific value to managers who are responsible for increasing brand equity within their organisations. With a more dedicated focus on improving the benefits the buying organisation receives from the organisation providing the service will allow managers to improve their brand equity.

Keywords: Brand Equity, Business to Business (B2B), Relationship Benefits

DECLARATION

I declare that this research project is my own work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration at the Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria. It has not been submitted before for any degree of examination in any other University. I further declare that I have obtained the necessary authorisation and consent to carry out this research.

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1.1 Introduction

The development and effective management of a brand is critical in creating a sustainable competitive advantage in Business to Business (B2B) organisations (Nyadzayo, Matanda, & Ewing, 2011). It is therefore surprising that the interest in corporate branding and the literature concerning corporate branding is still scarce (Ahonen, 2008). Little research has been devoted to corporate brand equity in B2B markets (Juntunen & Juga, 2011).

In today's rapidly changing competitive environment, B2B service organisations are quickly discovering that far greater profits are yielded from harvesting existing accounts than from cultivating new ones (Doney, Barry, & Abratt, 2007). Various challenges cloud the economic and business outlook both globally and in South Africa including lower economic growth, unemployment and high inflation. Addressing and managing these issues will have a profound effect on the business environment and business mood in the future. With wide-ranging changes taking place in South Africa, as well as internationally, business people find it increasingly difficult to operate and ensure survival (sacci, 2012). It is therefore essential to create a strong brand in a B2B environment where the object of the purchase is tangible (Juntunen *et al*., 2011). A strong brand is amongst the most valuable intangible asset for any company (Clark, 2002; Keller, 2008); Keller and Lehmann, 2003). On average a brand accounts for more than 50 percent of the market value of a company, this value of brands will further increase in the future (Martensen & Gronholdt, 2010) and marketers are in the business to create strong brands in order to increase their organisations brand equity. According to (Prasad & Dev, 2000, pg.22) "brands are at the heart of marketing and business strategy and building a brand equity is consindered to be one of the key drivers of a company's success. It is important for organisations operating in a B2B service environment to ensure brand equity measures reflect the asset value of the brand and the focus must be on creating a sustainable advantage that is not easily duplicated by competitors. They should not only be tactical indicators such as the traditional marketing mix descriptors or the amount of advertisting spend as these tactics are easily copied and do not truly represent the asset value of the organisations brand (Aaker, 1996)

Consumer brands and their management have dominated the marketing of goods and services to consumers and the idea of measuring brand equity has been slow to take hold in business to business marketing (Bendixen, Bukasa, & Abratt, 2004). The concept of brand equity has attracted considerable interest among marketing researches and practitioners in the last decades and while there have been few attempts to study brand equity in B2B markets, both in industrial markets and in services (Juntunen *et al.,* 2011) most discussions of marketing in businesses, focus on the performance characteristics of the product or the needs of buyers addressed by the features of the products. Studies do point to cases where the price and the tangible factors of the physical product do not fully explain the purchase decisions (Bendixen *et al*., 2004).

According to (Baumgarth *et al.,* 2011) there is an aphorism that B2B brands have feet which encapsulates a widely-held belief that the human factor features strongly in B2B marketing. It is reasonable to assume that the perception of B2B brands will be strongly influenced by the quality of personal communication with customers and the emotions that result from human interaction and it is from this perspective that (Baumgarth *et al*., 2011) highlight that people, rather than products, generate brand equity in the B2B environment. Due to the fact that decision making in a B2B environment is seen as a rational process, the emotional aspects of branding are perceived as being inappropriate in the B2B environment (Rosenbroijer, 2001). According to a study performed by (Lynch and de Chernatony, 2004) they found that due to the limited work on business branding, the role of emotion and the extent to which organisational purchases may be influenced by emotional brand attributes has been largely ignored.

Marketing scholars have looked extensively at brand awareness, brand association, brand quality and brand loyalty as the factors that influence an organisations brand equity and although it has been proven that there is a positive effect of customer-employee rapport on the enhancement of brand equity in a B2B context (Beidenbach, Bengtsson, & Wincent, 2011) little work has been done in trying to understanding the impact this rapport has on brand equity.

Relationship marketing has received increasing attention on both marketing theory and practice as it aims to establish, develop, and maintain successful relational exchanges with customers. The strategy that organisations develop around relationship marketing is particularly important to the services industry because of the intangible nature of the services and their incredibly high levels of customer interaction. An effective relationship marketing strategy does not result in an increase in customer retention and company profitability but also provides service organisations in a B2B environment a sustainable competitive advantage as the intangible aspects of a relationship are not easily duplicated. (Huang, 2008).

Relationship selling on the other hand looks beyond the immediate sales transaction but rather at the on-going relationship between the customer in a B2B environment (the buyer) and the seller. Marketers are realising that a sale is no longer the end point, and often is not even the ultimate goal but rather it's the beginning of a longer term relationship. According to (Short, 2011) profits and continued financial gain are certainly gained as a result of relationship selling and the benefits that arise from these relationships. The move from transactional to relational exchange and relationship marketing has resulted in a shift in the emphasis in both branding theory and practice (Lian & Laing, 2006). The sales function within any organisation now plays a highly important role on how customers, in the B2B environment of products and services may be influenced by these emotional brand attributes. Salespeople no longer just explain the product features and negotiate prices; they also shape perceptions as part of the interpersonal communication process (Baumgarth & Binckebanck, 2011).

Within the B2B environment salespeople are in a prime position to recognise and manage the costs and profitability of individual customers, influence repeat purchases and increase customers share of spend that could help their firms appropriate value (Blocker, Cannon, Panagopoulos, & Sager, 2012) and in so doing increases their brand equity. According to Baumgarth *et al.,* (2011) salespeople today are not only expected to meet sales targets, they are expected to build strong, long term, profitable business relationships. Previous research shows that these relationships are based on positive emotions such as satisfaction and therefore 'relationship selling' and the behaviours associated with it are important from a branding point of view (Ahearne, Jelinek, & Jones, 2007).

In summary, with the current business environment being the way it is, it has become aparent that customer relationships are essential to creating the competitive advantage om B2B service organisations. As studies have shown that the economic benefits are derived from customer retention (Verhoef, 2003). However understanding the impact these customer relationships have on brand equity has yet to be discussed in previous literature Gordon, Calantone, di Benedetto, Roger, & Anthony, (1993) have show that B2B service providers stand to gain sustainable competitive advantages through the development and strategic use of brand equity, particularly when competing in today's global economy and therefore understanding the role relationships have on an organisations brand equity is essential for B2B service organisations.

1.2 Research Scope and Objectives

The research aims to gain a deeper understanding of the role relationship benefits have, relative to other drivers, on brand equity in a B2B services environment. The research study has two specific objectives:

- To determine the suitable drivers used to measure Brand Equity in the B2B services environment: And
- To establish the role relationship benefits have relative to other drivers in predicting brand equity in a B2B services environment

The findings of this research may have significant management implications. The results should be useful for any organisation operating in a B2B services environment as the research aims to identify suitable drivers that are responsible for improving brand equity and understanding the role relationship benefits have on the brand equity.

The research will also not focus on the individuals themselves, who select programmes from a specific service provider, as a relationship is not always formed with individuals who select stand along programmes and therefore the benefits that and organisation receives from a relationship may not always be felt by the individual. Due to a number of studies that have looked at the 'formation' of brand equity (Aaker, 1996) this research will also not measure the predictors of brand equity that (Aaker, 1996) refers to as brand awareness, brand association, brand quality and brand loyalty. The literature reviewed in chapter 2 will however discuss these predictors in the context of brand equity in the B2B services environment.

1.3 Research Motivation

On-going relationships between businesses and their customers are receiving renewed interest in marketing. Indeed the building of strong customer relationships has been suggested as a means of gaining a competitive advantage and for service business especially. Strong customer relationships are particularly important because of the inherently interpersonal focus and relative lack of objective measures for evaluating service quality (Gwinner, Gremler, & Bitner, 1998).

According to (Sweeney and Webb, 2002) a number of authors have claimed that relationship marketing offers a paradigm shift for marketing, a 'springboard' from which some of the inadequacies associated with conventional marketing management can be addressed. While it would be inaccurate to suggest that relationships have no place in conventional marketing thinking, the relationship marketing view is differentiated in that it advocates longetivety of relationships and the benefits one recieves from them. Gummesson, (1998) refers to mutual respect, a win-win strategy and the acceptance of the customer as a partner and co producer of value and not just a passive recipient of the suppliers product or service that creates these benefits.

The importance of value creation through relationships in a study performed by (Ravald & Gronroos, 1996) proposes that customer value cannot only be derived from the product or service it recieves but is also derived from the benefits they recieve from the relationship is has with the organisation and the people in it.

By better understanding the role and influence relationship benefits have, relative to other drivers, on brand equity in a B2B services environment, brand managers will be in a better position to make decisions and recommendation on how to improve the equity of an organisations brand.

1.4 Structure of the Report

The brief introduction in Chapter one is followed by an additional six chapters. These chapters are structured as follows:

Chapter two provides an overview of the relevant literature within five key areas namely, theories relating to brand equity, business to business environments, relationship marketing and relationship selling. The final section of Chapter two draws the findings from the literature together in a framework which proposes the drivers of brand equity in a B2B services environment. Chapter three, facilitated by the literature review, explains the objectives of the research. Chapter four describes the research methodology. It defines the population studied and explains the sampling procedure for each section of the research. The pilot study and details on the construction of the questionnaire and data collection methods are discussed. The chapter concludes by discussing the limitations of this study.

Chapter five is exploratory and statistical in nature and determines the drivers used in measuring brand equity in a B2B services environment while chapter six discusses the hypothesis development and the testing of these hypotheses. Chapter six also lists the hypotheses that are either accepted or rejected and the results are evaluated and interpreted. The final chapter, Chapter seven, presents the conclusions of the study and makes recommendations for marketing/branding personal in order for them to improve their organisations brand equity. And finally suggestions for future research are discussed.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The literature on brand equity presents various definitions, frameworks and explanations, each reinforcing the other and building on the previous research. These frameworks have been researched and discussed in detail, including what drives brand equity in the Business to Business (B2B) services environment however these frameworks have yet to consider relationship benefits as a potential driver of brand equity.

The literature reviewed comprises of five sections. Firstly, a full literature review of what brand equity is. Secondly, the literature reviewed what brand equity means in the B2B environment while the next section looks at the formation of brand equity, where a comprehensive review was performed highlighting specific measures, namely brand awareness, brand association, brand quality and brand loyalty.

The next section considered the individual drivers of brand equity namely price, product and service quality and finally relationships. The final section of the literature reviewed looks at relationship marketing, relationship selling and relationship benefits. The formation of relationship benefits were then identified, looking at psychological, functional and social benefits.

2.2 Brand equity

A number of theories have been advanced to explain how brands enhance relational and economical value. Louro and Cunha (2001) explain that relational theories conceive brand management as a continual dynamic process, in which brand value and meaning are concurrently created through interlocking behaviours, collaboration and competition between firms. Brand equity is conceptualised as a relational market-based asset that is an external resource that resides in the relationships of final users. Brand equity ultimately derives in the market place from the set of brand associations and behaviours that have been developed towards the brand (Nyadzayo, Matanda, & Ewing, 2011). Brand equity is therefore derived from the overall brand image created by the totality of brand associations, perceived by customers. Therefore, the attainment of a positive image in core values and any other values that differentiate it should be the highest priority to any company (Bendixen , Bukasa, & Abratt, 2004). The four major influencers of brand equity, identified by (Aaker, 1996) in his research, are brand awareness, brand association, perceived quality and brand loyalty.

Keller (1998) combines the sources of brand equity into brand awareness and brand image. Firms that have built brands with high equity have a competitive advantage that allows them the following: a price premium that can be attained, increased demand by customers, brands that can be extended easily, communications that will be more readily accepted, there will be better trade leverage, larger margins could be obtained and the company will be less vulnerable to competitive marketing actions (Bendixen , Bukasa, & Abratt, 2004).

A strong brand is among the most valuable intangible asset for any company. On average, the value of brands accounts for more than fifty per cent of the market value of a company and this value of brands will further increase in the future. Marketers are in the business of creating strong brands in order to deliver brand equity (Martensen & Gronholdt, 2010). Brand equity is often referred to as a brand mental equity, concentrating on measures related to the consumers mindset that is the mental associations and relationships customers have toward the brand (Martensen & Gronholdt, 2010). Achieving and maintaining a high market share and a high price premium through brand equity is particularly important in the business to business market (Rauyruen & Miller, 2007).

2.3 Brand equity in a B2B environment

According to Calantone, Geoffrey, Di Benedetto and Anthony (1993) brand equity in B2B settings has received little attention in the marketing literature. Yet according to the research B2B product or service providers stand to gain sustainable competitive advantage through the development and strategic use of brand equity, particularly when competing in today’s global economy.

Literature suggests that developing a B2B brand has a positive effect on perceived quality. It helps to build customer loyalty, increases the power in the distribution network and drives sales volume and revenue whilst adding to the balance sheet value in the event of a sale (Coleman, De Chernatony, & Christodoulides, 2011).

Coleman, De Chernatony, and Christodoulides (2011) have shown that organisations in a business to business environment that present a cohesive, distinctive and relevant brand identity can create preference in the market place, add value to their offer and commad premium prices. Building brand identity in business to business markets aslo fosters trust, facilitates differentiatiation and helps customers identification with the brand (Ghodeswar, 2008).

There have been a number of brand equity frameworks published in business to consumer literature but only a small number of researches have considered brand equity in the B2B context. Therefore the development and validation of B2B brand equity frameworks is of particular importance given the unique characteristics of B2B markets. These B2B characteristics include multifaceted supply chain relationships, a complex selling process to decision making unit, highly customized solutions, a smaller number of powerful clients, high value transactions and a predominance of personal selling (Coleman, De Chernatony, & Christodoulides, 2011)

According to Gordon, Calantone, di Benedetto, Roger and Anthony (1993) the evolution of brand equity within a business market may be depicted as a learning process on the part of the customer, consisting of several stages known as brand awareness, brand associations, brand quality and brand loyalty.

2.4 The formation of brand equity in a B2B environment

There are various measures established that organisations use to measure brand equity as well as a number of models that have been proposed for the conceptualisation of brand equity. A model proposed by Aaker and McLoughlin (2007) consists of a four-factor model, known as drivers consisting of: brand awareness, brand associations, perceived quality and brand loyalty. Keller (1993) proposed the formation of brand equity to be brand knowledge, which is a two dimensional construct, consisting of brand awareness and brand image. Table 1 represents the measures and defenitions of these measures that organisations use to assess brand equity.

Table 1: Terminology used in previous brand equity studies

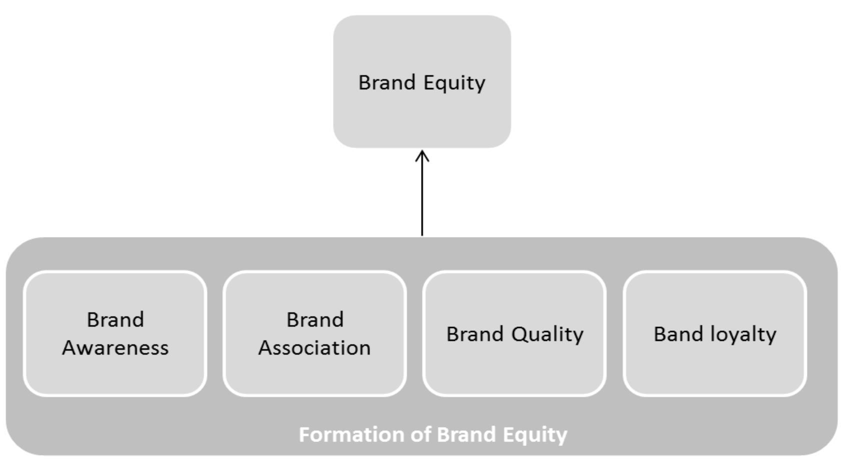
Organisational measures of brand equity	Definition	Reference
Brand quality	The customers perception of the overall quality or superiority of a product or service with respect to the intended purpose, relative to alternatives	(Baumgarth & Binckebanck, 2011)
Brand heuristic	The decision rules or heuristics used by the consumer that favor brands with high global brand attitude	(Punj & Hillyer, 2004)
Brand magic	A brand's magic is composed of the brand's image, and its relationships	(Biel, 1997)
Brand awareness	The customer's ability to recognize and recall the brand when provided a cue	(Aaker D. , 1996)
Brand attributes	Functional or emotional associations that are assigned to a brand by its customers and prospects. Brand attributes can be either negative or positive and can have varying degrees of relevance and importance to different customer segments	(de Chernatony & McDonald, 1998)
Brand attitude	The brand atiitude will tell what people think about a product or service, whether the product answers a consumer need, and just how much the product is wanted by the consumer.	(Keller K. , 1993)
Brand asociation	Thoughts and ideas held by individuals in their memory related to a specific service or product	(Beidenbach, Bengtsson, & Wincent, 2011)
Brand image	A unique set of associations within the minds of target customers which represent what the brand currently stands for and implies the current promise to customers. (Note that brand image is what is currently in the minds of consumers, whereas brand identity is aspirational).	(Keller K. , 1993)
Brand personality	Brand image or identity expressed in	(Aaker D. , 1996)

	terms of human characteristics. Distinguishing and identifiable characteristics which offer consistent, enduring and predictable messages and perceptions.	
Brand loyalty	A deeply held commitment to rebuy or repatronize a preferred brand consistently in the future	(Beidenbach, Bengtsson, & Wincent, 2011)

In the model proposed by Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2000) brand awareness refers to the presense of a brand in the minds of consumers. The percieved qualiy or in this case the brand quality is in the essence of what the consumers in the B2B enviroment are buying and it is for this reason that it is directly correlated to brand equity. It must however be mentioned that percieved quality can differ from the actual quality of a product and service and therefore the the creation of a good quality product or service is only a partial victory since it is necessary to create a perception of this quality with the market. Brand associations however represents that which a firm wants the brand to represent in the minds of consumers and therefore is also directly correlated to brand equity (Crescitelli & Figueiredo, 2009).

Figure 1. represents the research propsed by Aaker and McLoughlin (2007) and highlights the formation of brand equity, those being, brand awareness, brand association, brand quality and brand loyalty.

Figure 1: The formation of brand equity (Aaker & McLoughlin, 2007)



2.4.1 Brand awareness

The ultimate goal of an organisation is to increase sales income and ideally businesses want to attract new customers to their products and services and encourage repeat purchases.

Brand awareness refers to how aware customers and potential customers are of your business and its products. Achieving successful brand awareness means that your brand is well known and is easily recognisable which is therefore critical to differentiating your product from other similar products and competitors (Homburg, Klarmann, & Schmitt, 2010).

A number of studies have highlighted that B2B brands function not only as entities but also as processes, making various dimensions of branding such as customer brand reputation key determinants of brand equity (Homburg, *et al*., 2010). The study conducted by (Homburg, *et al*., 2010) showed that brand awareness, under specific conditions is strongly related to the overall financial performance of an organisation in a B2B environment, therefore directly attributing this to brand equity.

It is therefore likely that brand awareness also plays a special role in driving brand equity in business markets (Davis, Golicic, & Marquardt, 2008). In particular; many B2B firms focus their branding activities merely on the dissemination of the brand name and the logo without developing a more comprehensive brand identity. Therefore, for many B2B firms, the creation of brand awareness is a pivotal element of the overall branding strategy (Homburg, *et al*., 2010).

Brand awareness can play a major role in purchasing decisions and therefore the more aware businesses are of another businesses brand, the more likely they are to buy those businesses products or services (Homburg, *et al.,* 2010).

2.4.2 Brand associations

Brand associations are defined as thoughts and ideas held by individuals in their memory related to a specific service or product (Alexandris, Douka, & Kaltsatou, 2008). Keller (1993) defined brand associations as the informal nodes linked to the brand node in the memory which contains the meaning of the brand for the purchaser.

Gladden and Funk (2002) indicate that research on brand associations can help managers to build their brand name, and marketers to determine the components of brand equity in order to target and manipulate them as well as contribute to enhancing the image, awareness and build loyalty. One of the most important tasks of brand managers is to understand and manage the set of associations around their brand. These associations give meaning to the brand and are an important component that drives brand equity (Till, Baack, & Waterman, 2011).

According to Till *et al*., (2011) the central role of brand associations in the creation and maintenance of brand equity is widely accepted and plays an important role for practitioners for a variety of reasons. Firstly, it assists the purchaser to process and retrieve information about the brand and help in differentiating or position the brand in the mind of the purchaser. Secondly, if the associations are positive, they will create beneficial attitudes and feelings and provide reason for the purchaser to buy the brand. Due to the fundamental importance of brand association as a driver of brand equity, it has become the centre of brand management (Till, Baack, & Waterman, 2011).

2.4.3 Brand quality

According to Nguyen, Barrett and Miller (2011) brand quality refers to the customer's perception of the overall quality or superiority of a product or service with respect to the intended purpose, relative to alternatives. Percieved quality is based on the judgement of consumers about the attributes of a brand that are meaningful to them (Nguyen *et al*., 2011). Boisvert and Ashill (2011) go on to define percieved quality as the consumers judegement about an entity's overall excellence or superiority relative to alternatives. In the study conducted in new financial service brands by Taylor, Hunter and Lindberg (2007), a posistive relationship between a brands percieved quality and purchase intensions was found to result in more frequent purchases and the relationship between perceived quality and brand equity was first established in 1991 by Aaker (Sanyal & Datta, 2011). A product or service that is perceived by the purchaser to be of high quality always tends to contribute to consumer satisfaction and previous studies have shown that consumer satisfaction may also be an important factor in how the purchaser perceives quality (Sanyal & Datta, 2011).

2.4.4 Brand loyalty

Among the factors used to describe strong brands, brand loyalty is suggested to be one that has received the most attention by academics and practitioners (Nguyen, Barrett, & Miller, 2011) . There are several definitions and measures for brand loyalty, some of which focus on the attitudinal dimension and other that focus on the behavioural aspect on brand loyalty (Gee, Coates, & Nicholson, 2008) .

In his book on customer satisfaction, Oliver (1997, p392) describes brand loyalty to be “a deeply held commitment to rebuy or repatronise a preferred brand consistently in the future, despite situational influences and maketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behavior”. In most models of brand equity, brand loyalty is either positioned as an outcome or a component of brand equity however brand loyalty remains a valuable asset for every brand. Previous research has indicated that the cost of recruiting new customers, especically in the B2B context, is high due to the advertising costs, relationship selling, establishing of new accounts and customer training and therefore brand loyalty remains a valuble asset for every brand in the B2B environment when driving brand equity (Nguyen, Barrett, & Miller, 2011).

2.5 The drivers of brand equity

Marketing activities in the B2B environment have traditionally focused on building a brand image through tangible attributes such as price, delivery and technology. There is however an increasing importance for what the literature refers to as intangible attributes that are used which is forcing marketing managers to search for new ways of differentiating their services which is turn creates brand equity (Biedenbach & Marell, 2010). There are a number of individual measures that businesses that operate in a B2B environment use to influence the brand equity of that organisation. Table 2 represents the definitions of the drivers of brand equity used in previous research;

Table 2: Terminology used to describe the drivers used in brand equity studies

Individual Drivers of brand equity	Definition	Reference
Price	Price is used to determine the quality of the product or service and also determines the sacrifice with its purchase	(Martensen & Gronholdt, 2010)
Service quality	The gap between consumers' expectations and perceptions	(Martensen & Gronholdt, 2010)
Differentiation	Communicating how your services are different from competitors	(Martensen & Gronholdt, 2010)
Trust	The trust that a consumer has in the organization and the product/ service they provide	(Martensen & Gronholdt, 2010)
Product Quality	The physical attributes to the product or service	(van Riel, de Mortanges, & Streukens, 2005)
Product Value	The value a consumer perceives for the price they pay for the product or service	(van Riel, de Mortanges, & Streukens, 2005)
Information services	The information that an organization provides to the consumer	(van Riel, de Mortanges, & Streukens, 2005)
Role ambiguity	When an employee lacks a clear definition of the expectations of their role and the required methods to fulfill their duties	(Beidenbach, Bengtsson, & Wincent, 2011)
Customer – employee rapport	Captures the customers perception of employees behaviour that directly affects the interaction between the customer and the employee	(Beidenbach, Bengtsson, & Wincent, 2011)

Image benefits	The image associated with the brand that influences buying decisions	(Backhaus, Steiner, & Lugger, 2011)
Risk reduction	When the perceived risk of purchasing a product or service is reduced	(Backhaus, Steiner, & Lugger, 2011)
Relationship benefits	Relationship benefits are achieved through economic and non-economic factors or better known as functional, social and psychological benefits. These are trust, convenience, competitive advantage and cost savings	(Sweeney & Webb, 2007)

In a service setting in particular, factors such as customer interaction and relationships (Gwinner, Gremler, & Bitner, 1998) have a strong impact on the formation of brand image. There is a current trend in differentiating services and hence enhancing the brand equity is to create engaging and long lasting experiences for customers.

In the B2B environment, service quality, including personal contact and support services, together with the products physical quality form the basis of competitive advantage (Alvarez & Galera, 2001). As price is an extrinsic cue of product quality and as product quality is homogeneous and easy substantiated, a higher price may negatively affect brand loyalty and in turn brand equity (Kim & Hyun, 2011).

2.5.1 Price

According to Kim and Hyun (2011) price in consumer markets is an intrinsic cue of product quality, and thus high priced brands are often percieved to be of a higher quality. Given that product quality is uniform and easily substantiated, a higher price may negatively affect the brand loyalty because it does not signal higher product quality, but instead highlights that more money has to be paid (Kim & Hyun, 2011).

The impact that the price has on brand equity varies depending on market characteristics and it is argued that companies use value for money as an antecedent of dimension of brand equity instead of the price (van Riel, de Mortanges, & Streukens, 2005). The value for the money has a positive impact on brand satisfaction which in turn increases brand loyalty.

It is however likely that the value-orientated to price would be a relevant characteristic of the brand and motivate consumers to think more about the brand and therefore increasing the brand equity of the product (Kim & Hyun, 2011)

According to Persson (2010) having a product or service that is premium priced offers an interesting form of brand strength. It considers how strong B2B brands have been shown to obtain price premiums and how price premiums is seen as the most useful and profitable driving measure of brand equity. Doyle (2000) argues that by having a product or service that is premium priced is the most important way in which brands create shareholder value as it requires no direct investments to charge a higher price.

2.5.2 Product/Programme quality

The literature around customer satisfaction and its related body of empirical research highlights a positive link between perceived product quality and several aspects of brand equity (Baumgarth & Binckebanck, 2011). According to Yoo and Donthu (2001) classical branding theory identifies non-personal communication as one of the central building blocks of a strong brand.

In B2B brand equity literature, product dimension is most commonly conceptualised as the physical core of the organisations offering or as Persson (2010, pg.96) refers to, the “thing” organisations do. Consumers refer to terms such as product quality, value, features, innovations, reliability, proven, consistency and performance which appear to be relevant elements when consumers talk about products or services. Customisation and value in use is slowly becoming an important aspect of product quality and organisations are now purchasing products that solve their specific problems and no longer ones that just provide general features and benefits (Persson, 2010).

2.5.3 Service quality

There are general frameworks on how to measure and build brand equity in a B2B environment (Keller,1998) but little is known about the relationship between a company's service quality and its brand equity (He & Li, 2011).

The measurement and conceptualisation of customer's perception around service quality is strongly debated in the service marketing literature mainly because services are intangible and consumers assess quality subjectively (Caceres and Paparoidamis, 2007).

Caceres and Paparoidamis (2007) define service quality as the result of a comparison between the received service and the expected service. These early definitions were based on what Caceres and Paparoidamis (2007) refer to as the 'disconfirmation' paradigm.

A perception of service quality is a result of a comparison between what a consumer considers the service should be and their perception about the actual performance offered by a service provider. Service quality that is experienced by a customer is experienced based on two dimensions – technical and functional which is moderated by the company image. The functional dimension looks at the way a service is provided, namely courtesy, attention, promptness and professionalism whereas the technical dimension of service quality refers to the result of the service (Caceres & Paparoidamis, 2007).

Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985) suggest five dimensions that describe the service experience, reliability, responsiveness, empathy, assurance, and tangibility. Reliability refers to a company's ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately. Responsiveness refers to a firms' willingness to help customers and provide prompt service. Assurance refers to the knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence. Empathy refers to the caring, individualized attention the firm provides to its customers and finally tangibles are the appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel and communication materials a company offers (He & Li, 2011).

According to Chen, Su and Lin, (2011) service quality including personal contact and support services, together with the products physical quality, increasingly form the basis of competitive advantage and are critical to purchasing decisions and the overall branding of the products or services in B2B markets and therefore delivering quality service is now considered an essential strategy for success and survival in a competitive environment.

Caceres and Paparoidamis (2007) mention that delivering quality service is considered to be an essential strategy for success and that companies that do offer superior service achieve higher than normal growth, not only in market share but in profits too by being able to offer premium price. He & Li, (2011) continue to add that by having a strong association dervived from service quality can possibly enable a strong brand equity.

2.6 Relationships

Collaborative buyer-seller relationships represent a source of competitor advantage (Barry & Terry, 2008). Customer relationships are a core organisational process that concentrates on establishing, maintaining, and enhancing long term associations with customers. Past studies, by and large, support that customer relationship management leads to greater customer loyalty and business performance (Ching-Fu & Myagmarsuren, 2011).

The concept of customer equity provides a way to effectively measure the benefits of the investments in customer relationship management (Richards & Jones, 2008). Customer equity is viewed as the discounted lifetime value of firms' customer base and is driven by factors such as value equity and relationship equity (Ching-Fu & Myagmarsuren, 2011).

Value Equity on the other hand is the customers evaluation of what is given and what is received so as to determine the aspect of equity. In other words, value equity is to measure the customer –perceived value of the relationship between the customer and the firm (Ulaga & Eggert, 2006).

Relationship equity represents the customer's view of the strength of the relationship between the customer and company. The potential relationship equity drivers include trust, satisfaction and commitment (Ching-Fu & Myagmarsuren, 2011). It has been argued that the more trusting a relationship is between the buyer and the seller, the higher the value a customer places in the relationship; and in turn, the customer is more likely to maintain a trusting relationship than risk the uncertainty of building new exchange processes (Foster & Cadogan, 2000).

In addition to the direct effect of trust on the future interaction perceptions, (Foster & Cadogan, 2000) argue that trust in the salesperson influences customers intentions to do business with the salesperson in the future indirectly, through satisfaction with the salesperson. Trust in a salesperson is established as an antecedent to satisfaction with the salesperson and when customers feel that a salesperson is sincere and honest, and believe that the salespersons actions will result in positive outcomes, they are likely to be highly satisfied with their dealing with them (Foster & Cadogan, 2000).

2.6.1 Defining relationship marketing

Relationship marketing has emerged over the years as an important aspect of marketing that focuses on the building of long term relationships with customers and other parties (Caceres & Paparoidamis, 2007). As Gronroos (1993, p96) writes in his book, relationship marketing is about;

"Establishing a relationship with a customer, can be divided into two parts: to attract the customer and to build the relationship with that customer so that the economic goals of that relationship are achieved"

The fundamental principles on which relationship marketing is based are described by Caceres *et al*. (2007) as being trust and commitment. If a customer achieves better levels of customer satisfaction with the relationship between them and the organization, there is a greater chance that the customer will remain loyal to the company providing the service and therefore the overarching objective of relationship marketing is to ensure high levels of customer satisfaction is achieved between the customers and the organisation providing the service (Christopher, Clark, & Peck, 1995).

The strategy of relationship marketing is exceptionally important to organisations in the service industry due the intangible nature of services and their high level of customer interaction. A key feature of having a good relationship marketing strategy is that it not only results in an increase in customer satisfaction and company profitability but will also provide organisations with a competitive advantage as the intangible aspects of a relationship in a services environment are not easily duplicated by competing organisations (Huang, 2008).

There is agreement in the relationship marketing literature that the quality of the relationship between customers and service organisations is an important determinant of the performance and intensity of the relationship but the literature fails to determine how these relationships impact the overall brand of the organisation (Gwinner, Gremler, & Bitner, 1998).

According to Huang (2008) previous studies have shown that the selling behaviour of employees is a critical tactic that firms needs to consider when developing successful relationships with their customers. Relationship selling behaviours such as cooperative intentions, mutual disclosure and intensive follow up contact produce a strong buyer seller bond in the B2B organisations that operative in the service environment (Crosby, Evans, & Cowles, 1990)

2.6.2 Relationship selling

Relationship selling in a B2B environment can be defined as the personal approach of the sales function, which aims to create and maintain long-term relationships with customers, as opposed too traditional, transactional selling (Bayaa, Goedegebuure, & Jones, 2009).

Beverland (2001) describes relationship selling as the approach to selling that is defined as an exchange relationship between parties that involves long term, highly committed relationships in the context of exchanges and outcomes that have occurred in the past and the expectations that the exchanges between the parties will incur in the future.

Bayaa, Goedegebuure, and Jones (2009) indicate that relationship selling requires extensive customer orientation by the salesperson, and often a transformation in the way he or she regards the nature and importance of customer encounters and selling situations.

In the B2B context, solutions must often be customised to the needs of customers through systematic and patient relational processes (Blocker, Cannon, Panagopoulos, & Sager, 2012). The question in many organisations is around who is responsible for co-creation processes and interpreting the complex customer needs in the B2B context. One-on-one encounters in B2B are in many cases the only opportunity where exchange between buyer and seller can happen and therefore this new rationale highlights the requirements for relationship selling (Bayaa, Goedegebuure, & Jones, 2009).

Blocker, Cannon, Panagopoulos and Sager (2012) continue to argue that although there are many fruitful channels to mine the voice of the customer within B2B interactions, it is the sales force or relationship sellers that are generally tasked with translating the customers voice back into the firm.

Research conducted by Foster and Cadogan (2000) shows that customers loyalty to a companies' brand is directly influenced by the customers trust in the firm and the quality of the customers relationship with the salesperson. Research has indicated that the cost of brand loyalty remains a valuable asset for every brand in the B2B environment when driving brand equity (Nguyen, Barrett, and Miller, 2011) and therefore we can assume that the relationship a customer has with the salesperson of the firm has a direct impact on brand equity.

Research conducted by Palmatier, Scheer and Steenkamp (2007) provides evidence that customer relationships tied to the individuals, in the case of a relationship seller, can be more important than relationships with firms due to the benefits they receive.

2.6.3 The difference between relationship marketing and relationship selling

There has been growing interest in academic research around relationship marketing to try and develop an understanding about what constitutes an effective marketing relationship and researches have tried to uncover and empirically examine the processes by which such relationships are developed and maintained (Foster & Cadogan, 2000).

Relationship marketing is often referred to the broader organisational efforts to maintain customer loyalty and stimulate repeat purchases over-time, however relationship selling focuses on the relationship behaviours of the salesperson (Foster & Cadogan, 2000).

As the salesperson is often the exclusive interface between both the organisations in a B2B environment (Lambert, Sharma, & Levy, 1997), the relationship that the salesperson forges with the customer can significantly influence the perceptions of the firm. Thus it can be implied that fostering a strong relationship between salespeople and customers is crucial to the organisations relationship marketing strategy (Foster & Cadogan, 2000).

According to Beverland (2001) it appears that the success of a firms' relationship marketing strategy depends to a good extent on the behaviour of its sales representatives and as a result of this Weitz and Bradford (1999) argued for a relationship marketing approach to the practice of selling, whereby selling activities are directed towards building relationships with key B2B customers.

2.6.4 Relationship benefits

The establishment of a good business relationship must reflect mutual benefits for both a firm and a customer (Dagger, David, & Ng, 2011). Zineldin (2006) adds that the relationship benefit that consumers receive from an organisation should add value to their service experience.

According to Reynolds & Beatty (1999) the concept of benefits rest on the idea that consumer's select services on the basis of the benefits they receive. It is argued that consumers in a B2B environment can receive benefits from interpersonal relationships as well as relationships with the service provider and therefore consumers who maintain relationships with the salesperson do so to fulfil certain desires or needs by obtaining certain benefits from these relationships.

Customers who have these relationships with service providers expect to receive satisfactory delivery of the core service and expect to receive additional benefits (Gwinner, Gremler, & Bitner, 1998). It was the work conducted by these authors that developed an empirically supported typology of three relational benefits consumers receive.

These relational benefits include confidence benefits, social benefits and special treatment benefits (Gwinner, Gremler, & Bitner, 1998). Confidence benefits refer to the perceptions of reduced anxiety and comfort in knowing what to expect during the service encounter. Social benefits on the other hand pertain to the emotional part of the relationship and is characterised by personal recognition of customers by employees, the customers own familiarity with employees and the creation of the friendship that is developed between the customers and employees. Special treatment benefits take the form of customers receiving special prices, fast and more efficient service as well as individualized and personal service. Relational benefits can therefore be defined as the services that exist above and beyond the core service of the organization. (Colgate, Buchanan-Oliver, & Elmsly, 2005)

However according to Sweeney and Webb (2007) the nature of relationships develop over time and pass through various stages as there are different needs of buyer and suppliers at each stage. There have been many studies that identify benefits of relationships in a B2B context which almost exclusively base the benefit in economic terms. These benefits are known as overall quality, operating efficiencies, reduced transaction costs, stronger competitive advantage and business continuity. Sharma and Fisher (1997) describe these economic benefits as being functional benefits.

The economic sociology literature takes a different stance towards benefits and indicates that economic transactions transpire within interpersonal relationships in such a way that economic goals are inseperable from non-economic goals such as status and sociability (Sweeney & Webb, 2007). It is argued that people do not seek non-economic goals indirectly through economic goals but rather that non-economic goals that are central to human motivations and therefore inherent in economic transactions. Research has argued that B2B relationships may be motiovated by both non-economic (social) motives as well as economic ones (Sweeney & Webb, 2007).

The studies conducted by Arnett, German and Hunt (2003), it is argued that social exchange theory is often used as a theorectical foundation for commitment and trust in relationship marketing and that relational exchange participants can be expected to derive complex, personal, non-economic satisfactions and engage in social exchange.

In an early article written by (Bagozzi, 1975), factors distinguishing social factors from psychological factors were highlighted and the significance of social and psychological experiences were identified and the underlying motives for the exchange. In more recent literature, pyschologiocal factors have been identified as the ‘grease’ in a relationship by (Sweeney & Webb, 2007) and it is on this basis that Sweeney and Webb (2007) propose that relationship benefits are made up of functional, social and psychological benefits in B2B environments.

2.6.4.1 Psychological benefits

Psychological benefits are defined by feelings of trust or confidence in the other party that result in great peace of mind (Sweeney & Webb, 2007). Psychological benefits describe the feelings of confidence or trust in the organization providing the service. According to Sweeney and Webb, (2002) the feeling of confidence is related to the perceptions of the individuals with whom they deal with and not necessarily the organisation.

Psychological benefits include the reduction of stress and anxiety and therefore the importance of the personal component between individuals remains critical in organsiations that have a strong service component, such as those in B2B settings (Zeithaml & Bitner, 2000). In a study conducted by Gwinner, Gremler and Bitner (1998) it was found that the feelings of reduced anxiety, trust and confidence in a service provider appear to develop over time and only after the relationship has been established between the customer and the organisation.

2.6.4.2 Functional benefits

Functional benefits are defined as the economic and strategic advantages derived through an interaction with another firm that enhances an organisations' competitiveness and drives its financial position (Sweeney & Webb, 2007). Functional benefits are referred to as economic gains through increased business with the relationship partner.

These economic gains or income gains arise through costs savings, price concessions or through indirect means such as referrals as a result of the relationship (Sweeney & Webb, 2002). Gwinner, Gremler and Bitner, (1998) refer to ecenomic benefits being discounts or price breaks for those customers who have developed a relationship with an organisation. Time saving was also identified which is refered to as nonmonetory benefits as the orginasation understands that the needs of the customers through the development of the relationship. If a strong relationship has been built, cutomers save time by not having to sesrch for another provider (Gwinner, Gremler, & Bitner, 1998).

The economic or functional benefits discussed above, that customers receive from engaging in relational exchanges whether monetory or nonmonetory is consistent with what scholars have argued in their prrimary motivation developing relationships with businesses (Gwinner, Gremler, & Bitner, 1998).

2.6.4.3 Social benefits

Social benefits are referred to as benefits that customers receive from actual relationships with the service firm (Dagger, David, & Ng, 2011). According to Reynolds and Beatty, (1999) customer and employee interactions remain central to the customer quality perception in service organisations and it is therefore understandable that social benefits remain an important consideration to the relationship between organisations. Gwinner, *et al*., (1998) describe social benefits as the benfits that customers receive from the emotional aspects of a relationshiop such as familiarity,friendships and personal recognition.

In the article written by (Bitner, 1995), social benefits that arise from having established a relationship with a service provider are said to facilitate the development of rapport and provide customers with a service based, social friendship that may end up enhancing the customers service experience. It is argued that service relationships facilitate the experience and openess and therefore assists in creating mutual understanding and ultimately commitment between the customer and the organisation (Dagger, David, & Ng, 2011).

Research conducted by Bendapudi and Berry (1997) suggests that social bonding in a B2B, service relationship is likely to increase customer dependence on the service provider and the association. Friendship and personal recognition that accompany social benefits will add value to the customers experience which in turn will provide motivation for the customer to maintain the relationship and remain committed to the organisation providing the service (Dagger, David, & Ng, 2011).

2.7 Conclusion

Brand equity in a B2B environment is assessed through a set of various dimensions however little research has been conducted on the structural composition of brand equity and the potential hierarchical order of these dimension (Biedenbach & Marell, 2010). Only a very limited set of antecedents and consequences have been empirically tested in prior research, such as satisfaction, commitment and relationship quality as determinants of brand equity in the B2B setting (Beidenbach, Bengtsson, & Wincent, 2011).

The formation and enhancement of band equity is vital for an organisations success in the contemporary business environment (Biedenbach & Marell, 2010). In B2B markets, it is increasingly difficult to gain a competitive advantage simply based on price or product/service quality and therefore implementing a B2B branding strategy is becoming essential (Chen, Su, & Lin, 2011). In order for an organisation to gain a competitive advantage, developing a strategy that focuses on service quality, product quality and personal contact will help in gaining a competitive advantage (Chen, Su, & Lin, 2011).

From a relationship perspective, the interactive nature of a customer-supplier relationship is stressed and there are evident consequences of how value and value creation is conceptualised through these dynamic relationships. In particular in B2B markets, where value creation in a business relationship has to reflect the characteristics of the interaction process between relationship value or relationship benefits are created (Hass, Snehota, & Corsaro, 2012).

A critical review of the brand literature theory has shown that there are various measurements that organisations use to measure brand equity. These include, brand quality (Baumgarth & Binckebanck, 2011), brand heuristic (Punj & Hillyer, 2004), brand magic (Biel, 1997), brand attributes (de Chernatony & McDonald, 1998), brand awareness (Aaker, 1996), brand attitude (Keller, 1993), brand association (Beidenbach, Bengtsson, & Wincent, 2011), brand image (Keller, 1993), brand personality (Aaker, 1996), brand loyalty (Beidenbach, Bengtsson, & Wincent, 2011). The measurements used for this study are organisational measures that, Keller (1993) and Aaker (1996) refer to as brand awareness, brand associations, brand quality and brand loyalty.

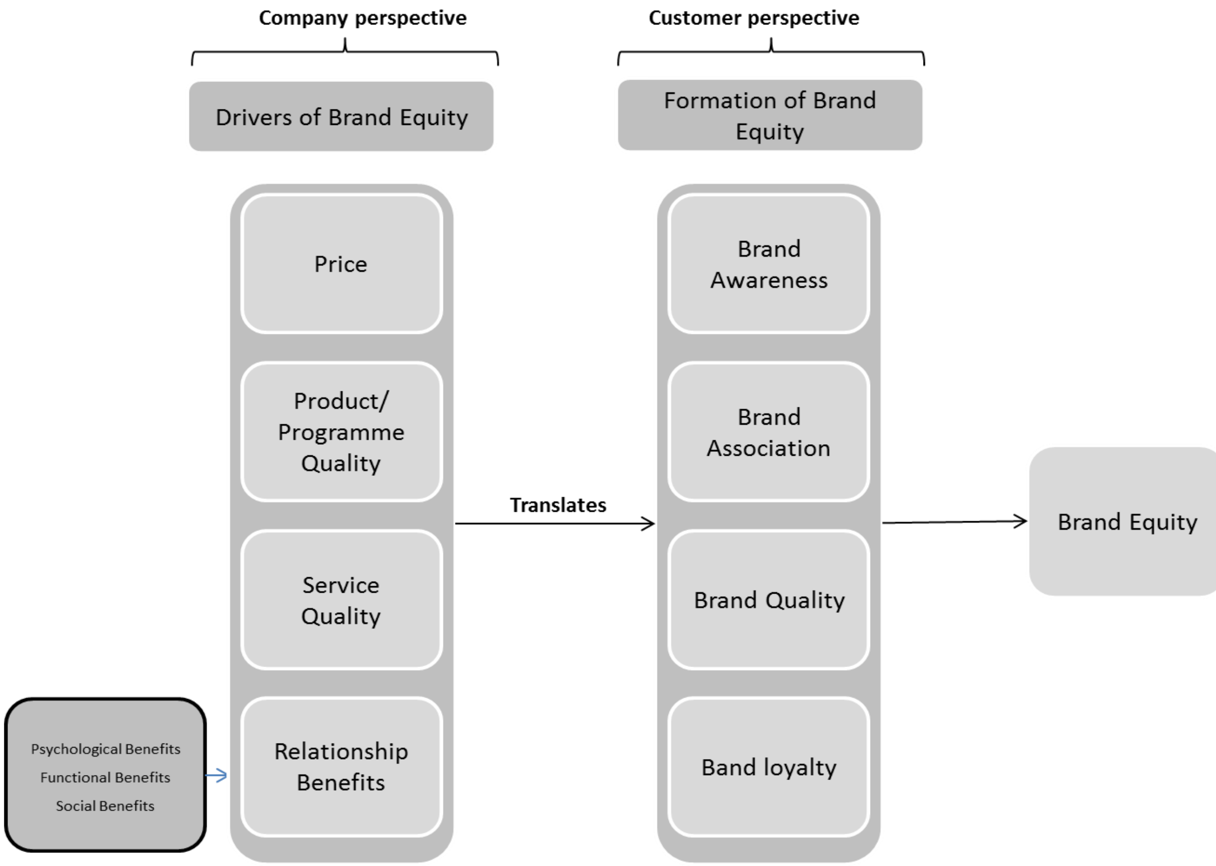
It was also discovered that the literature presents a number of individual measures that consumers use that influence the brand equity of an organisation that operate in a B2B environment. These include, price, service quality, differentiation and trust (Martensen & Gronholdt, 2010); product quality, product value, information services and loyalty (van Riel, de Mortanges, & Streukens, 2005); role ambiguity and customer-employee rapport (Beidenbach, Bengtsson, & Wincent, 2011); image benefits and risk reduction (Backhaus, Steiner, & Lugger, 2011); relationship benefits (Sweeney & Webb , 2007).

The individual measures used in this study are those that Martensen and Gronholdt (2010) and Sweeney and Webb (2007) refer to as being price, product quality, servcie quality and relationship benefits.

In summary, a review of the literature has revealed that a framework based on empirical evidence has yet to be developed that measures the drivers off brand equity in a B2B environment which takes into account the role relationship benefits have on the brand equity of an organisation.

This research aim was to better understand the drivers of brand equity in a B2B environment and to gain a better understanding of the role relationship benefits have on the brand equity in organisations operating a B2B services enviroment. The proposed framework in Figure 2 aims to illistrate the literature reviewed in this chapter.

Figure 2: Proposed model based on literature reviewed



CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND PROPOSITIONS

The primary objective of this research is to better understand the role relationship benefits play in building brand equity in organisations operating in a B2B services environment. In order to achieve the primary objective, the secondary objectives of this study are to confirm brand equity drivers in addition to relationship benefits, in order to measure Brand Equity in a B2B services environment.

The objectives together with the literature reviewed have led to the following research questions:

Research question 1:

Key drivers have been identified in a B2B environment however the need to identify the key drivers of brand equity in a B2B services environment and the role relationship play is gaining importance to ensure a competitive advantage is achieved. Therefore the following research question was proposed.

What are the key drivers of brand equity in a B2B services environment? Are relationship benefits a driver of brand equity?

Research question 2:

Brand managers need to understand the relative roles played by the drivers and the potential role played by relationship benefits in building brand equity. Therefore the following research question was proposed.

To what extent do the drivers identified in research question 1I predict brand equity in the B2B services environment? What is the contribution of relationship benefits in building brand equity?

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

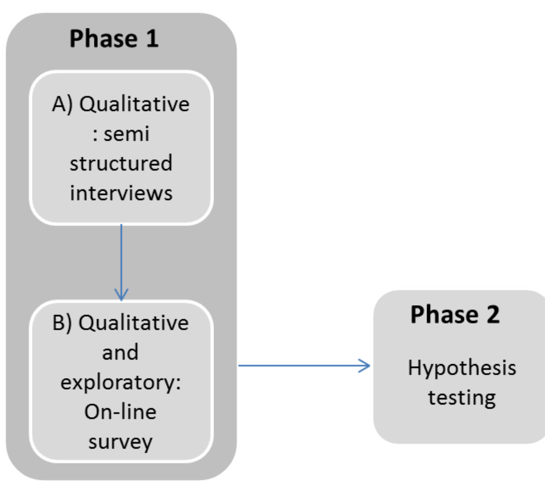
4.1 Introduction

Research methodology involves the application of various methods and techniques in order to create scientifically obtained knowledge by using objective methods and procedures (Welman & Kruger, 2005) .

The study contained both qualitative and quantitative research, referred to by Johnson and Onuegbuzie (2004) as the mixed methods approach. Johnson and Onuegbuzie (2004) indicate that by using quantitative and qualitative techniques within the same framework, the strengths of both methodologies can be incorporated.

Combining research strategies means certain approaches and strategies are more suited to particular stages of the research than others (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). Therefore the study involved two phases, phase one will be a qualitative, exploratory study with phase two being quantitative and descriptive in nature. The overriding character of the study was quantitative, in the aim to determine the importance relationship benefits have on brand equity in the business to business services environment. Figure 3 represents the research model used in this study.

Figure 3: Research model



4.2 Research design

Phase 1 (A) consisted of semi-structured interviews with Heads of Leaning and Development Professionals who are either consultants or who currently head up the Learning and Development departments of large organisations in South Africa and support the Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS) on their executive training courses. This phase was used to assist in improving the design of the questionnaire prior to phase 1 (B) of the study. Table 3 represents the titles and industries from which experts represented. One hour interviews were conducted on each expert as part of phase 1.

Table 3: A list of the titles and industries used in the study

Position	Company
HR Director	Manufacturing
L&D manager	Retail
L&D manager	IT Services
HR/L&D Director	Financial
HR manager	Financial

The qualitative, exploratory research approach in phase 1 involved an anonymous self-administered questionnaire that was used as the primary data collection tool and was developed based on the work by (Martensen & Gronholdt, 2010); (Aaker, 1996); (Beidenbach, Bengtsson, & Wincent, 2011); (Ching-Fu & Myagmarsuren, 2011). The questionnaire was made available electronically and the on-line link to the questionnaire was e-mailed to the participants. Participants who did not respond to the initial e-mail request were sent a reminder two weeks after the initial correspondence. Zikmund (2003) indicates that were the researcher has limited amount of knowledge or experience of a research area, exploratory research is a useful preliminary step in gathering data and ensures that a future study, in this case phase 2, will not begin with an inadequate understanding of the nature of the management problem. Phase 2 was descriptive and quantitative in nature. Saunders and Lewis (2012) describe descriptive research as a way to seek to describe accurately person, events or situations. Zikmund (2003) goes onto explain how descriptive research is conducted when there is some previous understanding of the nature of the research problem. Zikmund (2003) also states that descriptive research seeks to determine the answers to what, where and how questions, in this case the questions of the research problem.

The purpose of quantitative research is described by (Zikmund, 2003) as being able to determine the quantity or extent of some phenomenon in the form of numbers. It was designed to describe the characteristics of a population and is based on some previous understanding of the nature of the research problem.

4.2.1 Phase 1 (A)

4.2.1.1 Target population

In terms of the research problem the universe was defined as firms that operate in the business to business context. The population were the buyers of the other businesses services. Due to the size of the population the study was limited to buyers of these services within the management consulting/training industry and is further limited to those buyers who have a close association with the brand they purchase, in this case GIBS.

The above population and population criteria were selected because of the experience the above individuals had with the brands they have selected. This ensured their familiarity with the brand purchase decision they had made.

4.2.1.2 Sampling

A non-probability sampling method was applied which is less complicated and more economical in terms of time. Non-probability is a sampling technique used for selecting a sample when you do not have a complete population list of the population (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). Purposive sampling is a type of non-probability sampling technique in which the researcher's judgment is used to select the sample members based on a range of possible reasons and premise. In the case of this study, the researcher selected the sample based on the relationship he had with the client. The researcher selected five buyers within the business to business context.

4.2.1.3 Research instrument

An unstructured interview approach was used in the pilot phase of the research study. The participant spoke openly about what the variables were that drove their perception of brand equity in the business to business context, with little direction form the interviewer. The researcher had a clear idea of the topics to explore but did not make use of a predetermined list of questions.

4.2.2 Phase 1 (B)

4.2.2.1 Target population

In terms of the research problem the universe was defined as firms that operate in the business to business services context. The population was the buyers of the other businesses services. Due to the size of the population the study was limited to buyers of these services within the Management consulting/training industry.

4.2.2.2 Sampling

A non-probability sampling method was applied which was less complicated and more economical in terms of time. Non-probability is a sampling technique used for selecting a sample when you do not have a complete population list of the population. (Saunders & Lewis, 2012) Purposive sampling is a type of non-probability sampling technique in which the researcher's judgment is used to select the sample members based on a range of possible reasons and premise. In the case of this study, the researcher selected the sample based on the length of time the business buyer had used the service of the brand in question. The sample was not limited to the value of services purchased. The researcher sampled 121 businesses.

4.2.2.3 Research instrument

An on-line questionnaire was employed and respondents were asked to respond to fixed alternative questions. Respondents were asked to rank categorical data with the aim to put the data into a definite order. The questionnaire was available electronically and the link was e-mailed to the participants. Participants who did respond to the e-mail were contacted telephonically to complete the questionnaire with the researcher. Although self-administered web-surveys traditionally have the lowest response rate, however according to (Blumberg, Cooper, & Schindler, 2008) this approach is quick to complete/obtain the data and it is a cost effective method to collect data.

Appendix 1 represents the adapted construct, taken from (Martensen & Gronholdt, 2010); (Aaker, 1996); (Beidenbach, Bengtsson, & Wincent, 2011); (Ching-Fu & Myagmarsuren, 2011). The questionnaire in appendix 2 that was used in the study had been designed from the adapted construct and amended as a result of the semi-structured interviews of the study. The questionnaire was designed to collect the data of the dependent variable i.e. Brand equity and the independent variables i.e. brand awareness, brand association, brand quality, brand loyalty, price, product quality, service quality and relationship benefits, as illustrated in appendix 2.

The questionnaire consisted of the following nine sections;

- Section 1: Brand equity (BE) (Kim & Hyun, 2011)
- Section 2: Brand awareness (BA) (Aaker D. , 1996)
- Section 3: Brand Association (BAss) (Beidenbach, Bengtsson, & Wincent, 2011) (Aaker D. , 1996)
- Section4: Brand Quality (BQ) (Baumgarth & Binckebanck, 2011)
- Section 5: Brand loyalty (BL) (Baumgarth & Binckebanck, 2011)
- Section 6: Price (Baumgarth & Binckebanck, 2011)

- Section 7: Product/Programme brand equity (Baumgarth & Binckebanck, 2011) (van Riel, de Mortanges, & Streukens, 2005)
- Section 8: Service Quality (Baumgarth & Binckebanck, 2011)
- Section 9: Relationships (Sweeney & Webb, How functional, pschological and social relationship benefits influence individual and firm commitment to the relationship, 2007) and adapted from exploratory interviews

For the purpose of this study, sections two to five will not be analysed or discussed.

4.3 Data analysis

Sections 1-9 of the questionnaire used in the research study made use of a five-point Likert scale and used responses ranging from Strongly Disagree (represented by 1) to Strongly Agree (represented by 5) (Blumberg, Cooper, & Schindler, 2008)

The collected data was collated using an electronic data processing and a statistical analysis tool. Descriptive research involves the identification of attributes of a particular phenomenon based on the exploration of correlation between two or more phenomena (Williams, 2007)

The statistical analysis selected formed a logical thought process for addressing the research objectives with the final objective formulating a best fit model in predicting the desired outcome variable. In this section, the statistical analyses employed, in the analysis of the data of the study was described. SPSS 14.0 (SPSS Inc., 2005a) were utilised by the researcher in attaining the findings. The data analysis consisted of two broad phases. The first phase consisted of the descriptive statistical analysis describing the sample at hand.

Descriptive statistics simply described what the data was showing. They provided the researcher with a ‘bird’s eye’ view of how the data looked. The main focus of the data analysis was to provide proof that the measuring instruments and variables are reliable and valid for the purpose of the study.

4.3.1 Descriptive statistics

Descriptive statistics simply described what the data was showing. They provided the researcher with a 'bird's eye' view of how the data looks.

The descriptive statistics discussed below were used in the analysis.

- The Mean is calculated by summing the values of a variable for all observations and then dividing by the number of observations (Norusis, 2005). This describes the central tendency of the data.
- The Standard Deviation is calculated as the square root of the variance (Norusis, 2005). This describes the dispersion of the data. Since Standard Deviation is a direct form of Variance, it will be used in place of the latter when reporting.
- The Median is considered another measure of central tendency. It is the middle value when observations are ordered from the smallest to the largest (Martensen & Gronholdt, 2010).
- Skewness is a measure of symmetry of a distribution; in most instances the comparison is mad the emphasises those variables with a skewness higher than 2 should be avoided.
- Kurtosis is a measure of the peakedness or flatness of a distribution when compared with the normal distribution (Hair J. , Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2006). (Scheepers, undated) Leptokurtosis is normally associated with low reliabilities and should be avoided at all costs. Indices as high as 7 are rather extreme and signify very low reliabilities.

4.3.2 Factor analysis

This technique was incorporated to assist in establishing the reliability and validity of the measuring instruments used in the study. Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson and Tatham (2006) describe factor analysis as an interdependence technique, whose primary purpose is to define the underlying structure among the variables in the analysis. The general purpose of factor analytic techniques is to find a way to condense (summarise) the information in a number of original variables into a smaller set of new, composite dimensions or variants (factors) with the smallest loss of information. Norusis (2005) further adds that it is a statistical technique used to identify a relatively small number of factors that explain observed correlations between variables.

The interpretation and labelling of the outcome factors was a subjective process. To enable a meaningful interpretation, certain guidelines would be appropriate as postulated by (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2006). These are discussed below.

- Factor analysis should most often be performed on metric variables. In the case of the study, the 5-point Likert scale is appropriate.
- Strive to have at least five variables for each proposed factor. All dimensions in this study are more than sufficiently above this level.
- The sample must have more observations than variables; whilst the minimum absolute sample size should be 50 observations. The total number achieved for the sample was 367.
- Maximise the number of observations per variable, with a minimum of five and at least 10 observations per variable. The largest construct consists of 20 items (MSQ20), thus with a sample size of 367, this rule is comfortably met.
- A statistically significant Bartlett's test of sphericity (p-value < 0.05) indicates that sufficient correlations exist between the variables to proceed.
- Measure of sampling adequacy (MSA) values must exceed 0.50 for both the overall test and each individual variable; variables with values less than 0.50 should be omitted from the factor analysis one at a time, with the smallest being omitted each time. Although 0.50 is considered the bare minimum, Hair et al. (2006) describe that particular cut-off point as 'miserable'. Thus a stronger cut-off point of 0.6 will be enforced in the factor analyses of all questionnaires.
- Several stopping criteria need to be used to determine the initial number of factors to retain:
- factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.0 (unity);
- enough factors to meet a specified percentage of variance explained, usually 60% or higher; and
- A predetermined number of factors based on research objectives and / or prior research. This particular rule will only be enforced if there is any uncertainty concerning the structure resulting from the above two rules.

- A common rule of thumb is that each factor should have at least three factors that load highly on it (Norusis, 2005). Should this not be the case the factor would then be considered undefined.
- Choosing an extraction method was discussed below.
- The defining characteristic that distinguishes between the two factor analytic models is that in principal components analysis, it is assumed that all variability in an item should be used in the analysis, while in principal factors analysis, only the variability in an item that it has in common with the other items is used. In most cases, these two methods usually yield very similar results. However, principal components analysis is often preferred as a method for data reduction, while principal factors analysis is often preferred when the goal of the analysis is to detect structure. Although data reduction is one of the aims of the factor analysis in this study, a more pertinent aim is to determine if any underlying clear structure is present within the data per each questionnaire. Thus for the purposes of the study Principal Axis Factoring will be adopted.
- Choosing factor rotation methods is discussed below.
- Orthogonal rotation methods are the most widely used rotational methods and the preferred method when the research goal is data reduction to either a smaller number of variables, or a set of uncorrelated measures for subsequent use in other multivariate techniques.
- Oblique rotation methods are best suited to the goal of obtaining several theoretically meaningful factors or constructs, because few constructs in the real world are uncorrelated. For purposes of this study, all factor analyses utilised the oblique rotation method.
- Although factor loadings of ±0.30 to ±0.40 are accepted has the bare minimum, values greater than ±0.50 are generally considered necessary for practical purposes.
- Variables should generally have extracted communalities of greater than 0.50 to be retained in the analysis. However values as low as 0.30 are generally accepted.

4.3.3 Reliability and validity

In order to establish the reliability and validity of each research instrument, it is necessary firstly, to clarify these concepts and secondly, to relate them to the research in question (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2006).

Reliability is considered an assessment of the degree of consistency between multiple measurements of a variable. It is a measurement concept that represents the consistency with which an instrument measures a given performance or behaviour. A measurement instrument that is reliable will provide consistent results when a given individual is measured repeatedly under near-identical conditions. The diagnostic measure used is the reliability coefficient that assesses the consistency of the entire scale, namely Cronbach's Alpha, which is the most widely used measure. The generally agreed upon lower limit for Cronbach's Alpha is 0.70, although this may decrease to 0.60 in exploratory research (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham,(2006) and Robinson , Shaver , & Wrightman, (1991(a) and Robinson, Shaver , & Wrightman, 1991(b))

Validity, on the other hand, is a measurement concept that is concerned with the degree to which a measurement instrument actually measures what it purports to measure. Hair et al. (2006) show that validity is present in many forms and the five most widely accepted forms of validity are convergent, discriminant, nomological, content, and construct validity which described in table 4 below.

Table 4: Validity definitions

Validity	Definition
Convergent validity	Assesses the degree to which two measures of the same concept are correlated. This will be determined through a factor analysis for each instrument.
Discriminant validity	The degree to which two conceptually similar concepts are distinct. This was argued both in the previous and current chapter and thus the researcher is satisfied with the level of discriminant validity of the three constructs.
Nomological validity	Refers to the degree that the summated scales of each construct make accurate predictions of the other

	concepts in a theoretically based model. Theoretical relationships were established in the previous chapter, and these are tested on a practical level as described in the following chapter.
Content validity	Subjectively assesses the correspondence between the individual items and the concept. The objective is to ensure that the selection of scale items extends past merely empirical issues to include also theoretical and practical considerations. All measurement instruments have already been constructed and subsequently tested based on these terms; thus the researcher is satisfied with the level of content validity.
Construct validity	The extent to which a set of measured variables actually represent the theoretical latent constructs they are designed to measure. This was investigated by means of factor analysis. Factor analysis is a particularly useful as a tool for examining the validity of tests or the measurement characteristic of attitude scales. It will now be discussed further under the statistical analyses to be carried out.

4.4 Potential limitations to the study

Due to the nature of this study, including time constraints, various limitations have been identified. These included;

- The geographic restriction to South Africa is limiting. It would be interesting to compare the influence of relationships on brand equity in different geographical locations
- There may potentially be acknowledged bias from the indented respondents as they intend to be all using the services/products of GIBS
- Researches have proven that there are a number of drivers of brand equity however due to time constraints, these other drivers (Appendix 3), will not be discussed in the literature review. Further research my wish to explore if

there is a specific driver of relationship selling that has more of an effect on brand equity relative to the other drivers.

- As the research sample was limited to GIBS clients, it would be interesting to compare the influence of relationships on brand equity in different industries.

PHASE 1: EXPLORATORY RESEARCH

CHAPTER 5: RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, the research design was outlined and the research approach and methodology was discussed. The research approach was described as exploratory and quantitative with the usage of primary data as the design of the analysis. The research methodology referred to the target population, measuring instrument and the statistical procedures used in the analysis of the collected data.

The present chapter deals with the results of phase 1 of the research. The aim of this chapter was to answer the research questions stated in Chapter 3. In this chapter, the results of the various procedures are documented and the most significant observations made.

Permission was granted to use the Gordon Institute of Business Science's corporate, client, database and therefore due to the sensitivity of this information, detailed demographics of the respondents have been omitted from this research paper. One hundred and eighteen responded to the on-line survey resulting in a 52% success rate.

5.2 Phase 1 results

A total of five semi structured interviews were conducted. Service, retail, manufacturing and financial organisations that support GIBS on various executive programmes were selected for the interviews.

The data that was recorded during the semi structured interviews (phase 1) was analysed for common terminology/themes cited by the different respondents. The analysis began by creating a raw data table which contained all the individual responses so that all the data could be viewed to facilitate the extraction of the common themes that were identified.

The tabulated data was then examined for common terminology/themes that could be added to the questionnaire that was not already included. Points of confusion were identified in the terminology and this information was used to revise the scales of the questionnaire, used in the data collection phase. For example, interviewees' responded to Programme Quality rather than Product Quality and Price was referred to by the respondents as "value for money".

5.3 Descriptive statistics

Each variable used in this study is broken down into two parts, represented in two different tables. The first table shows the descriptives from the questionnaire and the second table depicts the mean, standard deviations, medians, skewness and kurtosis of each item.

5.3.1 Value for money

Table 5 : Descriptive statistics – Value for money

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
GIBS is competitively priced	Count	3	25	47	41	5	121
	Row N %	2.5%	20.7%	38.8%	33.9%	4.1%	100.0%
GIBS programmes are reasonably priced	Count	5	31	39	41	5	121
	Row N %	4.1%	25.6%	32.2%	33.9%	4.1%	100.0%
I have no problems with the prices GIBS charges	Count	3	35	45	33	5	121
	Row N %	2.5%	28.9%	37.2%	27.3%	4.1%	100.0%
When you consider what you get from them, GIBS' prices are good.	Count	3	16	34	63	5	121
	Row N %	2.5%	13.2%	28.1%	52.1%	4.1%	100.0%

While 33.9% of the respondents agree that GIBS is competitively priced, almost 21% of the respondents disagree when asked if GIBS is competitively priced. 25.6% also disagree

when asked if GIBS is reasonably priced while 33.9% agree that they are. 28.9% of the respondents do have a problem with the prices GIBS charge compared to the 27.3% that do not have a problem with the prices GIBS charge. However, 52.1% agree that when you consider what you get from GIBS, the prices are good.

Table 6 : Frequency table –value for money

	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
GIBS is competitively priced	3.17	3.00	.888	-.187	-.423
GIBS programmes are reasonably priced	3.08	3.00	.963	-.168	-.696
I have no problems with the prices GIBS charges	3.02	3.00	.913	.101	-.612
When you consider what you get from them, GIBS' prices are good.	3.42	4.00	.864	-.779	.193

From the above frequency table it is evident that the questions have a negative skewness, indicating that that the questions were favourably answered i.e. A positive inclination towards the Price. This is further supported by the fact that majority of the questions experience higher than average mean values. Since the likert scale used, is divided into 5 categories (strongly agree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree and strongly agree) the middle category “3” indicates a neutral response to the question. All of the items scored higher than “3” suggesting an overall positive inclination to the Price. This is again strengthened by the calculated median values. Both skewness and kurtosis values were found to be within the acceptable range.

5.3.2 Product/Programme quality

Table 7 : Descriptive statistics - Programme quality

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
GIBS programmes have a good reputation	Count	0	2	2	73	44	121
	Row N %	0.0%	1.7%	1.7%	60.3%	36.4%	100.0%
GIBS design of programmes are of high quality	Count	0	2	6	82	31	121
	Row N %	0.0%	1.7%	5.0%	67.8%	25.6%	100.0%
Compared to other service providers, GIBS is one of the best	Count	1	6	15	61	38	121
	Row N %	.8%	5.0%	12.4%	50.4%	31.4%	100.0%
Compared to other service providers, GIBS programms are of high quality	Count	1	2	18	70	30	121
	Row N %	.8%	1.7%	14.9%	57.9%	24.8%	100.0%
GIBS programme quality is dependable	Count	0	4	10	79	28	121
	Row N %	0.0%	3.3%	8.3%	65.3%	23.1%	100.0%
GIBS programme quality consistent	Count	1	5	8	84	23	121
	Row N %	.8%	4.1%	6.6%	69.4%	19.0%	100.0%
GIBS programmes are innovative	Count	1	4	13	71	32	121
	Row N %	.8%	3.3%	10.7%	58.7%	26.4%	100.0%

When the respondents were asked to rate the reputation, design, dependability and consistency of the product/programme quality, 96.7% and 93.4% of the respondents agree and strongly agree that GIBS programmes have a good reputation and the design of the programme are of high quality, respectively. 81.4% of the respondents think that GIBS is one of the best provider for business education while only 0.8% of the respondents strongly disagree with this statement. 88.4% of the respondents find GIBS both dependable and consistent with their quality of the products/services and 26.4% strongly agree that GIBS programmes are innovative.

Table 8 : Frequency table - Programme Quality

	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
GIBS programmes have a good reputation	4.31	4.00	.592	-.710	2.182
GIBS design of programmes are of high quality	4.17	4.00	.587	-.551	2.128
Compared to other service providers, GIBS is one of the best	4.07	4.00	.844	-.972	1.172
Compared to other service providers, GIBS programms are of high quality	4.04	4.00	.735	-.834	1.935
GIBS programme quality is dependable	4.08	4.00	.666	-.783	1.779
GIBS programme quality consistent	4.02	4.00	.707	-1.319	3.783
GIBS programmes are innovative	4.07	4.00	.761	-1.035	2.214

From the above frequency table it is evident that the questions have a negative skewness, indicating that that the questions were favourably answered i.e. A positive inclination towards the Product/Programme Quality. This is further supported by the fact that majority of the questions experience higher than average mean values. Since the likert scale used, is divided into 5 categories (strongly agree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree and strongly agree) the middle category “3” indicates a neutral response to the question. All of the items scored higher than “3” suggesting an overall positive inclination to Product/Programme Quality. This is again strengthened by the calculated median values. Both skewness and kurtosis values were found to be within the acceptable range.

5.3.3 Service quality

Table 9: Descriptive statistics - Service Quality

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
GIBS employees are competent	Count	1	1	13	81	25	121
	Row N %	.8%	.8%	10.7%	66.9%	20.7%	100.0%
GIBS provides us with personal attention	Count	1	6	25	67	21	120
	Row N %	.8%	5.0%	20.8%	55.8%	17.5%	100.0%
GIBS employees are courteous	Count	1	2	21	73	24	121
	Row N	.8%	1.7%	17.4%	60.3%	19.8%	100.0%

	%						
GIBS employees are reliable	Count	1	2	24	72	22	121
	Row N %	.8%	1.7%	19.8%	59.5%	18.2%	100.0%
GIBS employees are responsive to my needs	Count	1	7	22	74	17	121
	Row N %	.8%	5.8%	18.2%	61.2%	14.0%	100.0%

While 87.6% of the respondents agree and strongly agree that GIBS employees are competent, 73.3% feel that GIBS provides personal attention. Almost 20% of the respondents strongly agree that GIBS employees are both courteous and reliable while 75.2% of the respondents think that GIBS employees are responsive to their needs.

Table 10: Frequency table - Service quality

	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
GIBS employees are competent	4.06	4.00	.649	-.984	3.889
GIBS provides us with personal attention	3.84	4.00	.799	-.711	.924
GIBS employees are courteous	3.97	4.00	.718	-.775	1.970
GIBS employees are reliable	3.93	4.00	.721	-.703	1.719
GIBS employees are responsive to my needs	3.82	4.00	.775	-.875	1.369

From the above frequency table it is evident that the questions have a negative skewness, indicating that that the questions were favourably answered i.e. A positive inclination towards the Service Quality. This is further supported by the fact that majority of the questions experience higher than average mean values. Since the likert scale used, is divided into 5 categories (strongly agree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree and strongly agree) the middle category “3” indicates a neutral response to the question. All of the items scored higher than “3” suggesting an overall positive inclination to the Service Quality. This is again strengthened by the calculated median values. Both skewness and kurtosis values were found to be within the acceptable range.

5.3.4. Relationship benefits

5.3.4.1 Psychological benefits

Table 11: Descriptive statistics - Psychological benefits

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
We have peace of mind in dealing with GIBS	Count	1	3	21	74	19	118
	Row N %	.8%	2.5%	17.8%	62.7%	16.1%	100.0%
We trust GIBS	Count	0	1	14	82	21	118
	Row N %	0.0%	.8%	11.9%	69.5%	17.8%	100.0%
We know what to expect of/from GIBS	Count	2	1	11	86	18	118
	Row N %	1.7%	.8%	9.3%	72.9%	15.3%	100.0%
If GIBS give us their word, we know that whatever it is, it will be done	Count	1	2	30	63	21	117
	Row N %	.9%	1.7%	25.6%	53.8%	17.9%	100.0%
There is a real sense of understanding between GIBS and our organisation	Count	1	10	46	47	14	118
	Row N %	.8%	8.5%	39.0%	39.8%	11.9%	100.0%

87.3% of the respondents trust GIBS while 78.8% feel they have peace of mind when dealing with GIBS. 88.2% of the respondents know what to expect from GIBS but 39% neither agree not disagree when asked if there is a real sense of understanding between GIBS and their organization. However, half of the respondents agree or strongly agree that there in fact a real sense of understanding between GIBS and their organization.

Table 12: Frequency table - Psychological benefits

	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
We have peace of mind in dealing with GIBS	3.91	4.00	.716	-.856	2.139
We trust GIBS	4.04	4.00	.576	-.271	1.144
We know what to expect of/from GIBS	3.99	4.00	.660	-1.623	6.639
If GIBS give us their word, we know that whatever it is, it will be done	3.86	4.00	.753	-.507	.956
There is a real sense of understanding between GIBS and our organisation	3.53	4.00	.844	-.152	-.115

From the above frequency table it is evident that the questions have a negative skewness, indicating that that the questions were favourably answered i.e. A positive inclination towards the Psychological Benefit of the relationship. This is further supported by the fact that majority of the questions experience higher than average mean values. Since the likert scale used, is divided into 5 categories (strongly agree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree and strongly agree) the middle category “3” indicates a neutral response to the question. All of the items scored higher than “3” suggesting an overall positive inclination to the Psychological Benefit of the relationship. This is again strengthened by the calculated median values. Both skewness and kurtosis values were found to be within the acceptable range.

5.3.4.2 Functional benefits

Table 13: Descriptive statistics - Functional benefits

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Having a relationship with GIBS enables us to become more competetive in the market	Count	1	5	44	53	15	118
	Row N %	.8%	4.2%	37.3%	44.9%	12.7%	100.0%
We are able to capitalize on the value GIBS offers	Count	0	9	30	63	15	117
	Row N %	0.0%	7.7%	25.6%	53.8%	12.8%	100.0%

our relationship with GIBS enables us to enhance financial outcomes As a result of the relationship, we able to enhance financial outcomes	Count	0	11	62	34	10	117
	Row N %	0.0%	9.4%	53.0%	29.1%	8.5%	100.0%
As a result of the relationship, we able to maximize financial outcomes	Count	1	13	55	38	9	116
	Row N %	.9%	11.2%	47.4%	32.8%	7.8%	100.0%
GIBS and our organisation complement each other in terms of expertise	Count	0	5	44	55	14	118
	Row N %	0.0%	4.2%	37.3%	46.6%	11.9%	100.0%
Our relationship with GIBS enables us to proactively identify opportunities	Count	1	12	39	52	14	118
	Row N %	.8%	10.2%	33.1%	44.1%	11.9%	100.0%

12.7% of the respondents strongly agree that having a relationship with GIBS allows them to be more competitive in the market. While 44.9% agree. Only 0.8% of the respondents strongly disagree with this statement. While a quarter of the respondents, 25.6%, neither agree nor disagree that their organization capitalizes on the value GIBS offers, 66.6% of the respondents do capatalise from the value. 11.2% of the respondents disagree when asked if, as a result of the relationship with GIBS, they were able to maximize their financial outcomes whereas 40.6% agree and strongly agree that by having a relationship with GIBS, their financial outcomes are maximized. More than half, 56% of the respondents are able to proactively identify opportunities as a result of their relationship with GIBS, compared to the 11% who do not agree.

Table 14: Frequency table - Functional benefits

	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Having a relationship with GIBS enables us to become more competetive in the market	3.64	4.00	.790	-.223	.257
We are able to capitalize on the value GIBS offers	3.72	4.00	.786	-.428	-.054
Our relationship with GIBS enables us to enhance financial outcomes As a result of the relationship, we able to enhance financial outcomes	3.37	3.00	.772	.398	-.118
As a result of the relationship, we able to maximize financial outcomes	3.35	3.00	.816	.045	-.018
GIBS and our organisation complement each other in terms of expertise	3.66	4.00	.742	.003	-.344
Our relationship with GIBS enables us to proactively identify opportunities	3.56	4.00	.863	-.308	-.156

From the above frequency table it is evident that all of the questions have a negative skewness, indicating that that the questions were favourably answered i.e. A positive inclination towards the Functional Benefit of the relationship. This is further supported by the fact that majority of the questions experience higher than average mean values. Since the likert scale used, is divided into 5 categories (strongly agree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree and strongly agree) the middle category "3" indicates a neutral response to the question. All of the items scored higher than "3" suggesting an overall positive inclination to the Functional Benefit of the relationship. This is again strengthened by the calculated median values. Both skewness and kurtosis values were found to be within the acceptable range.

5.3.4.3 Social benefits

Table 15: Descriptive statistics - Social benefits

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Our relationship with GIBS goes beyond just business	Count	3	22	48	31	13	117
	Row N %	2.6%	18.8%	41.0%	26.5%	11.1%	100.0%
We have a real friendship with GIBS	Count	2	17	43	40	16	118
	Row N %	1.7%	14.4%	36.4%	33.9%	13.6%	100.0%
We work on things together	Count	2	12	43	46	15	118
	Row N %	1.7%	10.2%	36.4%	39.0%	12.7%	100.0%
Our relationship with GIBS enables us to share a lot together	Count	1	9	47	48	13	118
	Row N %	.8%	7.6%	39.8%	40.7%	11.0%	100.0%
We would call on GIBS if we had a problem	Count	2	10	33	58	14	117
	Row N %	1.7%	8.5%	28.2%	49.6%	12.0%	100.0%

While 18.8% of the respondents disagree when asked if their relationship with GIBS goes beyond business while only 11.1% strongly agree. Less than half of the respondents 47.5% agree and strongly agree that they have a real friendship with GIBS, while 51.7% work on things together. More than half, 61.6% of the respondents would call on GIBS agree that they would call on GIBS if they had a problem while only 10.2% would not call on GIBS if their organization had a problem.

Table 16: Frequency table - Social benefits

	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Our relationship with GIBS goes beyond just business	3.25	3.00	.973	.053	-.419
We have a real friendship with GIBS	3.43	3.00	.956	-.131	-.453
We work on things together	3.51	4.00	.903	-.273	-.092
Our relationship with GIBS enables us to share a lot together	3.53	4.00	.824	-.157	-.005
We would call on GIBS if we had a problem	3.62	4.00	.869	-.603	.402

From the above frequency table it is evident that the questions have a negative skewness, indicating that that the questions were favourably answered i.e. A positive inclination towards the Social Benefit of the relationship. This is further supported by the fact that majority of the questions experience higher than average mean values. Since the likert scale used, is divided into 5 categories (strongly agree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree and strongly agree) the middle category "3" indicates a neutral response to the question. All of the items scored higher than "3" suggesting an overall positive inclination to the Social Benefit of the relationship. This is again strengthened by the calculated median values. Both skewness and kurtosis values were found to be within the acceptable range.

5.4 Factor analysis results

The factorability of the 32 Drivers of Brand Equity Scale was examined. Several well recognized criteria for the factorability of a correlation were used. Firstly, it was observed that all items correlated at 0.3 with at least one other item, suggesting reasonable factorability.

Secondly, an examination of the Kaiser-Meyer Olkin measure of sampling adequacy suggested that the sample was factorable (KMO = 0.911) as presented in the table 17.

Table 17 : KMO and Barlett's test of the item intercorrelation matrix of the questionnaire

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.911
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	2869.524
	df	496
	p-value	0.000

From Table 17 above it can be clearly seen that there are sufficient correlations (p-value < 0.05) between the variables, and the KMO overall value is suitably high enough to proceed further with the analysis (must exceed 0.60). It is concluded that the matrix is suitable for further factor analysis. The diagonals of the anti-image correlation matrix were also all over .05. Finally, the communalities in appendix 6 were all above 0.3, further confirming that each item shared some common variance with other items.

In line with the stipulated restrictions, all extracted communalities are above 0.3, indicating that a suitable amount of variance in each variable is accounted for. Given all these overall indicators, factor analysis was deemed to be suitable with all 32 items.

The use of the two stopping criteria to determine the initial number of factors to retain, were used, namely:

- Factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.0 (unity); and
- Enough factors to meet a specified percentage of variance explained, usually 60% or higher.

Thus the results of four factors were initially extracted in line with the above. The cumulative percentage explained in this case was 66.3%, and therefore significant to continue the analysis. The eigenvalues of the unreduced item inter correlation matrix are provided table 18. Initial eigen values indicated that the first 4 factors explained 46%, 9%, 7% and 4% of variance respectively.

Table 18: Eigenvalues of the unreduced item intercorrelation matrix of the questionnaire

Factor	Initial Eigenvalues		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	14.672	45.849	45.849
2	2.868	8.963	54.812
3	2.327	7.271	62.083
4	1.365	4.265	66.348

A Principal Axis Factor (PAF) with Varimax rotation was conducted, rotated and sorted accordingly to enable easier interpretation of the underlying factors. See Table 19 below. As indicated previously, only those factors with loadings higher than 0.3 were retained for the analysis.

A total of six items were eliminated because they did not contribute to a simple factor structure and failed to meet a minimum criteria of no cross-loading of 0.3 or above. Appendix 6 contains The Principal Axis Factor with the eliminated items. The item "we trust GIBS", had factor loadings between 0.3 and 0.4 on both factor 2 and factor 3 respectively. The item "If GIBS give us their word, we know that whatever it is, it will be done" and "We have peace of mind in dealing with GIBS", had factor loadings between 0.3 and 0.5 on both factor 1 and factor 2. The item "Compared to other service providers, GIBS is one of the best", had a factor loading of 0.48 on factor 3. Finally items "GIBS design of programmes are of high quality" and "Compared to other service providers, GIBS programmes are of high quality" had factor loadings between 0.4 and 0.5 on Factor 2 and were therefore removed.

Table 19: Factor loadings

	Factor				
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
We work on things together	0.80	0.25			
Our relationship with GIBS enables us to share a lot together	0.77		0.12	0.19	
There is a real sense of understanding between GIBS and our organisation	0.77		0.14		
We have a real friendship with GIBS	0.74			0.17	
As a result of the relationship, we able to maximize financial outcomes	0.69	0.13	0.40	0.22	0.22
Our relationship with GIBS enables us to proactively identify opportunities	0.69	0.16		0.12	-0.12
GIBS and our organisation complement each other in terms of expertise	0.67	0.21	0.15	0.17	0.47
We would call on GIBS if we had a problem	0.67	0.22	0.27		
Our relationship with GIBS enables us to enhance financial outcomes As a result of the relationship, we able to enhance financial outcomes	0.66	0.14			0.22
Our relationship with GIBS goes beyond just business	0.66	0.26	0.17	0.20	-0.42
Having a relationship with GIBS enables us to become more competetive in the market	0.65	0.28	0.29		-0.22
We are able to capitalize on the value GIBS offers	0.59			0.14	
GIBS employees are courteous	0.29	0.69	0.19	0.13	
GIBS employees are responsive to my needs	0.27	0.67		0.11	
GIBS employees are competent	0.23	0.66			-0.10
GIBS employees are reliable	0.24	0.64		0.14	-0.11
We know what to expect of/from GIBS		0.64	0.27		0.11
GIBS provides us with personal attention		0.62	0.12	0.16	0.13
GIBS programme quality is dependable		0.16	0.82	0.10	0.12
GIBS programme quality is consistent	0.22		0.72		
GIBS programmes are innovative	0.31	0.25	0.61	0.14	
GIBS programmes have a good reputation	0.23		0.55		-0.12
GIBS programmes are reasonably priced	0.16			0.87	
GIBS is competitively priced	0.18			0.82	
I have no problem with the prices GIBS charges		0.14	0.10	0.78	
When you consider what you get from them, GIBS' prices are good.	0.19		0.15	0.63	
Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring.					
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.					

5.5 Factor loadings and labelling

5.5.1 Factor 1: Relationship benefits

Thirteen items loaded onto Factor 1. It is clear from table 19 that these thirteen items all related to relationships and the benefits received in a B2B relationship. This factor loads the following items;

- We work on things together
- Our relationship with GIBS enables us to share a lot together
- There is a real sense of understanding between GIBS and our organisation
- We have a real friendship with GIBS
- As a result of the relationship, we able to maximize financial outcomes
- Our relationship with GIBS enables us to proactively identify opportunities
- GIBS and our organisation complement each other in terms of expertise
- We would call on GIBS if we had a problem
- our relationship with GIBS enables us to enhance financial outcomes As a result of the relationship, we able to enhance financial outcomes
- Our relationship with GIBS goes beyond just business
- Having a relationship with GIBS enables us to become more competetive in the market
- We are able to capitalize on the value GIBS offers

This factor was labelled, “Relationship Benefits”

5.5.2 Factor 2: Service quality

Six items loaded onto Factor 2. It is clear from table 19 that these six items all relate to how the client perceives the service from GIBS and its employees. This factor loads the following items;

- GIBS employees are courteous
- GIBS employees are responsive to my needs
- GIBS employees are competent
- GIBS employees are reliable

- We know what to expect of/from GIBS
- GIBS provides us with personal attention

This factor was labelled, “Service Quality”.

5.5.3 Factor 3: Programme quality

Four items loaded onto Factor 3. It is clear from table 19 that these four items all relate to how the client perceives the quality and the reputation of GIBS programmes. This factor loads the following items;

- GIBS programme quality is dependable
- GIBS programme quality consistent
- GIBS programmes are innovative
- GIBS programmes have a good reputation

This factor was labelled, “Programme Quality”.

5.5.4 Factor 4: Value for money

Four items loaded onto Factor 4. It is clear from table 19 that these four items all relate to how the client perceives the price of GIBS programmes. This factor loads the following items;

- GIBS programmes are reasonably priced
- GIBS is competitively priced
- I have no problems with the prices GIBS charges
- When you consider what you get from them, GIBS' prices are good.

This factor was labelled, “Value for Money”.

5.6 Reliability

As discussed in Chapter 4, reliability is considered to be an assessment of the degree of consistency between multiple measurements of a variable. A measurement instrument that is reliable will provide consistent results when a given individual is measured repeatedly under near-identical conditions. The diagnostic measure used is the reliability coefficient that assesses the consistency of the entire scale, namely Cronbach's Alpha, which is the most widely used measure. Cronbach's Alpha values will now be provided for all 4 Factors. The limit for Cronbach's Alpha is usually 0.70 however this may be decrease to 0.60 in exploratory research (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2006, & Robinson, Shaver , & Wrightman, 1991(b))

Table 20: Cronbach's alpha

	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Factor 1: Relationship Benefits	12	.948
Factor 2: Service Quality	6	.899
Factor 3: Programme Quality	5	.879
Factor 4: Value for Money	4	.883

From table 20, it can be seen that the Cronbach's Alpha is above 0.70 for all four factors, which according to (Hair J.*et a.l,* 2006), indicates an acceptable reliability. It can also be seen in the table in Appendix 5, that, the removal of a question will not improve on the already attained Cronbach Alpha's.

5.7 Validity

Convergent validity

The factor loadings from the model are presented in table 19. All factor loadings should be statistically significant and that standardized loading estimates should be 0.5 or higher, and ideally 0.7 or higher. (Hair J. F., Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010)

5.8 Summary of the descriptive statistics

Depicted in table 21 are the means, standard deviations, medians, skewness and kurtosis for each of the 4 factors;

Table 21: Descriptive statistics of the overall dimensions

Statistics							
	N		Mean	Median	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
	Valid	Missing					
Factor 1: Relationship Benefits	118	3	3.5154	3.5000	.66932	.073	.028
Factor 2: Service Quality	121	0	3.9314	4.0000	.58849	-.992	3.322
Factor 3: Programme Quality	121	0	4.1306	4.0000	.54694	-1.080	3.183
Factor 4: Value for Money	121	0	3.1715	3.2500	.78065	-.200	-.404

From the above frequency table, it can be seen that Factor 4 had the most positive response from the sample, with one full category above the average. This was followed by Factor 3 and Factor 4. All the other sections scored above the average value with Factor 3 scoring just above the average of the other Factors with a mean of 4.1306. The skewness results were all negative and compare favourably against the normal distribution curve.

5.9 Discussion of results

The purpose of this discussion is to critically evaluate the research findings presented in the sections above. The research results will be analysed with relevance to the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 and interpreted in terms of the research question posed in Chapter 3.

5.9.1 Review of the research objectives

The aim of this research is to develop from empirical evidence a practical framework that executives could employ to effectively measure Brand Equity in a B2B environment. In order to achieve the primary objective, the secondary objectives of this study was to establish whether suitable factors, including relationship benefits, can be determined to measure Brand Equity.

The section below will provide more insights into the research question *'What are the key drivers of brand equity in a B2B services environment? Are relationship benefits a driver of brand equity?* with evidence that the research problem was answered.

5.9.1.1 Value for money

Price is often viewed as a source of meaning and is used to identify a brand. It is often used by organisations as a tactical lever that is pushed or pulled to respond to competitors' actions.

The results of the quantitative study in the previous section showed that Factor4 was retained and determined to be a suitable factor for this study. The Eigen value for the factor was greater than 1 (table 18). Although, the variance of this factor only contributed 4.265 of the total variance, including factor4 the total variance was 66.35%, another, criteria to determine the initial number of factors to retain.

The factor demonstrated that the scale showed adequate reliability (table 20) reporting a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.883 and as the limit for Cronbach's Alpha is usually 0.70 which may be decrease to 0.60 in exploratory research (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2006, & Robinson, Shaver , & Wrightman, 1991(b)), the factor, was deemed suitable. The factor loadings found in table 19 show that all factor loading onto Factor4 are statistically significant, all being highger than 0.5. It can therefore be assumed that convergent validity is present in factor4.

Factor4 was relabelled, Value for Money as explained in section 5.5.4.

In a study conducted by van Riel, de Mortanges and Streukens (2005) it was stated that the impact price has on brand equity varies depending on market characteristics and it is argued that companies use the term 'value for money' as an antecedent of dimension of brand equity instead of the actual price.

In order to determine if value for money was achieved through the purchase of a product or service in a B2B environment, the product or service needs to be purchased for a particular price. In the report written by Mudambi and Wong (1997) it was propopsed that 70% of purchasing decisions in a B2B market are determined on either lower or higher prices.

The researcher can therefore conclude that based on the fact of all criteria for retaining a Factor have been met and the literatire reviewed in Chapter 2, Value for Money can be used in measuring Brand Equity in a B2B environment. The strength of the relationship between Value for Money and Band Equity will be tested and discussed in Chapter 6.

5.9.1.2 Programme quality

Product or in the case of this study Programme Quality is defined by van Riel, de Mortanges and Streukens (2005) as the physical attributes to the product or programme.

The results of the quantitative study in the previous section showed that Factor3 was retained and determined to be a suitable factor for this study. The Eigen value for the factor was greater than 1 (table 18). Although, the variance of this factor only contributed

7.281 of the total variance, including factor3 the total variance was 66.35%, another, criteria to determine the initial number of factors to retain.

The factor demonstrated that the scale showed adequate reliability (table 20) reporting a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.879 and as the limit for Cronbach's Alpha is usually 0.70 which may be decrease to 0.60 in exploratory research (Hair et al, 1991(b)), the factor, was deemed suitable. In order to obtain a adequate reliability, two questions were removed from the original study due the high corss loadings on other factors as described in section 5.4. The Researcher has assumed that these cross loadings was a result of ambiquous questions and therefore suggestions for futher research will be described in Chapter 7.

Factor3 was relabelled, Programme Quality as explained in section 5.5.3.

These findings support research performed by Szymanski and Henard (2001) that states literature on customer satisfaction and its related body of emperical research support a positive link between product (programme) quality and several aspects of Band Equity. This link has been confirmed by emeprical studies in variuos B2B markets (Baumgarth , 2008).

The reseacher can therefore conclude that based on the fact of all criteria for retaining a Factor have been met and the literatire reviewed in Chapter 2, Programme Quality can be used in measuring Brand Equity in a B2B environment. The strength of the relationship between Programme Quality and Band Equity will be tested and discussed in Chapter 6.

5.9.1.3 Service quality

In the literature surveyed in Chapter 2, Martensen and Gronholdt (2010) define Service Quality as the gap between consumers' expectations and perceptions and (Caceres and Paparoidamis (2007) support this by defining service quality as the result of a comparison between the received service and the expected service

The results of the quantitative study in the previous section showed that Factor2 was retained and determined to be a suitable factor for this study. The Eigen value for the factor was greater than 1 (table 18). Although, the variance of this factor only contributed

8.963 of the total variance, including factor2 the total variance was 66.35%, another, criteria to determine the initial number of factors to retain.

The factor demonstrated that the scale showed adequate reliability (table 19) reporting a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.899 and as the limit for Cronbach's Alpha is usually 0.70 which may be decrease to 0.60 in exploratory research (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2006, & Robinson, Shaver , & Wrightman, 1991(b)), the factor, was deemed suitable. The factor loadings found in table 19 show that all factor loading onto Factor2 are statistically significant, all being highger than 0.5. It can therefore be assumed that convergent validity is present in factor 4. In order to obtain a adequate reliability, three questions were removed from the original study due the high corss loadings on other factors as described in section 5.4. The Researcher has assumed that these cross loadings was a result of ambiquous questions and therefore suggestions for futher research will be described in Chapter 7.

Factor2 was relabelled, Service Quality as explained in section 5.5.4.

These findings supports those of Caceres and Paparoidamis (2007) who mention that delivering quality service is considered to be an essential strategy for success and that companies that do offer superior service achieve higher than normal growth, not only in market share but in profits too by being able to offer premium price. The findings also support He and Li (2011) who add that by having a strong association dervived from service quality can possibly enable a strong brand equity.

The researcher can therefore conclude that based on the fact of all criteria for retaining a Factor have been met and the literature reviewed in Chapter 2, Service Quality can be used in measuring Brand Equity in a B2B environment. The strength of the relationship between Service Quality and Band Equity will be tested and discussed in Chapter 6.

5.9.1.4 Relationship benefits

In the literature review in Chapter 2, Relationship Benefits are defined by Sweeney and Webb (2007) as those benefits that are achieved through economic and non-economic factors or better known as functional, social and psychological benefits.

The results of the quantitative study in the previous section showed that Factor1 was retained and determined to be a suitable factor for this study. The Eigen value for the factor was greater than 1 (table 18). The variance of this factor contributed 45.849 of the total variance, significantly larger than any other factor. Including Factor1, the total variance was 66.35%, another, important criteria to determine the initial number of factors to retain.

The factor demonstrated that the scale showed adequate reliability (table 19) reporting a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.948 and as the limit for Cronbach's Alpha is usually 0.70 which may be decrease to 0.60 in exploratory research (Hair, et al 1991(b)), the factor, was deemed suitable. The factor loadings found in table 19 show that all factor loading onto Factor 4 are statistically significant, all being highger than 0.5. It can therefore be assumed that convergent validity is present in factor 4. In order to obtain a adequate reliability, one question was removed from the original study due the high cross loadings on other factors as described in section 5.4. The Researcher has assumed that this cross loading was a result of ambiquous questions and therefore suggestions for futher research will be described in Chapter 7.

Factor1 was relabelled, Relationship Benefits as explained in section 5.5.4.

The researcher can that from these results support the argument that Sweeney and Webb (2007) make in their research stating that the benefits of relationships in a B2B context almost exclusively base the benefit in economic terms. These benefits are known as overall quality, operating efficiencies, reduced transaction costs, stronger competitive advantage and business continuity. Sharma and Fisher (1997) describe these economic benefits as being "Functional" benefits.

The research conducted by Sweeney and Webb (2007) proved that both Psychological and Social Benefits enhance indivual commitment in a B2B envirnment. We know from the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 that the research conducted by Foster and Cadogan

(2000) indicates that, customers loyalty to a companies' brand is directly influenced by the customers trust, one of the dimensions used to measure Psychological Benefits, in the firm and the quality of the customers relationship with the salesperson. Research has also indicated that the cost of brand loyalty remains a valuable asset for every brand in the B2B environment when driving brand equity (Nguyen, Barrett, & Miller, 2011).

However the results from the research conducted above indicated that Psychological Benefits were not significant enough to load onto Relationship Benefits. Only one question out of a possible 5, 'There is a real sense of understanding between GIBS and our organisation' taken from the study conducted by Sweeney and Webb (2007) loaded onto Relationship Benefits, thus showing that Pyschological Benefits where not significant for this study. The Researcher will discuss the implications of this finding in Chapter 7.

5.9.2 Conclusion of discussion

The objective of this section was to answer the research question '*What are the key drivers of brand equity in a B2B services environment? Are relationship benefits a driver of brand equity'* From the discussion in sections 5.10.1.1, 5.10.1.2 and 5.10.1.3, I can confirm that Price, Programme Quality, Service Quality and Relationship Benefits are suitable drivers used to measure Brand Equity.

In order to address the primary objective of this research and develop from empirical evidence a practical framework that executives could use to effectively measure Brand Equity in a B2B environment, the second research questions will be addressed which is; *To what extent do the drivers identified in research question 1 predict brand equity in the B2B services environment? What is the contribution of relationship benefits in building brandequity?*

In order to answer this research question the following hypothesis will be tested;

Hypothesis 1: *There is a positive relationship between Price and brand equity in the B2B environment*

The null hypothesis states that price (P) does not affect the brand equity (BE) of an organization in the business to business environment. The alternative hypothesis states that Value for Money (VM) does impact the brand equity (BE) of an organization in the business to business environment.

Hypothesis 2*: There is a positive relationship between programme quality (PQ) and brand equity (BE) in the B2B environment*

The null hypothesis states that programme quality (PQ) does not affect the brand equity (BE) of an organization in the business to business environment. The alternative hypothesis states that product/progamme quality (PQ) does impact the brand equity (BE) of an organization in the business to business environment.

Hypothesis 3*: There is a positive relationship between service quality (SQ) and brand equity (BE) in the B2B environment*

The null hypothesis states that service quality (SQ) does not affect the brand equity (BE) of an organization in the business to business environment. The alternative hypothesis states that service quality (SQ) does impact the brand equity (BE) of an organization in the business to business environment.

Hypothesis 4*: There is a positive relationship between relationship benefits (RB) and brand equity (BE) in the B2B environment*

The null hypothesis states that relationship benefits (RB) does not affect the brand equity (BE) of an organization in the business to business environment. The alternative hypothesis states that relationship benefits (RB) does impact the brand equity (BE) of an organization in the business to business environment.

Chapter 6 will address the analysis performed in order to test the hypothesis mentioned above followed by the results and discussion section.

PHASE 2: HYPHOTHESIS TESTING

CHAPTER 6: RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

6.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, the descriptive and exploratory factor analysis results were discussed. The research hypotheses were then stated the view to answer the second research question stated in Chapter 3.

The present chapter deals with the results of the hypothesis testing. In this chapter, the results of the various procedures are documented and the most significant observations made.

6.2 Data analysis

In line with the exploratory results presented in the previous chapter, the procedures followed to assess reliability will not be replicated however procedures to access multicollinearity were conducted.

The final procedures carried out will determine the best fitting model incorporating both the selected work constructs and the relevant demographic variables that have loaded significantly on the dependent variable. Linear Regression estimates the coefficients of the linear equation, involving one or more independent variables that best predict the value of the dependent variable. Sometimes the set of independent variables is exactly specified and the regression model is essentially used in a confirmatory approach. This is the simplest, yet perhaps, the most demanding, approach for specifying the regression model wherein the researcher specifies the exact set of independent variables to be included. Here the researcher has total control over the variable selection (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2006)

Regression was chosen as the statistical technique used for the hypothesis testing purposes. The objective of regression is to use the independent variable whose values are known to predict the single dependent variable (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2006). In this case the hypothesis described in Chapter 5. Given that the purpose if the study was exploratory, standard linear multiple regression was selected as the optimal technique.

Additional independent variables are then selected in terms of the incremental explanatory power they can add to the regression model. Independent variables are added as long as their partial correlation coefficients are statistically significant. A general rule for the ratio of observations to independent variables is 5 to 1, although the desired level is between 15 to 20 observations for each independent variable. However, if a standard linear regression is used, the recommended level increases to 50 to 1 (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2006)

A caveat of note is collinearity (any single independent variable that is highly correlated with other independent variable). This impact reduces any single independent variable's predictive power by the extent to which it is associated with the other independent variables. As collinearity increases, the unique variance explained by each independent variable decreases and the shared prediction percentage rises i.e. it becomes increasingly more difficult to add unique explanatory prediction from additional variables. Collinearity is measured through the statistics listed below.

- The first is Tolerance – commonly used as a measure of collinearity. As the Tolerance value diminishes, the variable is more highly predicted by the other independent variables. A common cutoff threshold is a Tolerance value of 0.10.
- The second is the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) – the inverse of Tolerance. Large VIF values indicate a high degree of colinearity. Inversing the common cutoff point of Tolerance, a value of 10 or more indicates high collinearity.
- And lastly, the Condition Index is measure of relative amount of variance associated with an eigenvalue, so a large condition index indicates a high degree of collinearity. The threshold value should usually be in a range of up to 30 (Hair J. F., Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010)

Data was examined to confirm that it met the assumptions required to run a multiple regression namely linearity of the items measured, constant variance of the error terms, independence of the error terms and normality of the error term distribution. In line with recommendations made by Hair et al. (2006) the studentised residuals were plotted to determine assumption violations.

Correlation analysis is the analysis of the degree to which changes in one variable are associated with changes in another (McDaniel & Gates, 2006). It is a measure of the relation between two or more variables. Correlation coefficients can range from -1.00 to +1.00. The value of -1.00 represents a perfect negative correlation, while a value of +1.00 represents a perfect positive correlation. A value of 0.00 represents a lack of correlation. Correlations will be utilised initially to determine the zero-order correlation between the job satisfaction, organizational commitment and turnover intentions. The most commonly used measurement is the Pearson product-moment correlation, which is a measure of linear association between two variables. The correlation coefficient may be interpreted as follows illustrated in table 22.

Table 22: Interpretation of the correlation coefficient

Correlation Coefficient	Interpretation
-1.0 to -0.8	High
-0.8 to -0.6	Substantial
-0.6 to -0.4	Medium
-0.4 to -0.2	Low
-0.2 to 0.2	Very Low
0.2 to 0.4	Low
0.4 to 0.6	Medium
0.6 to 0.8	Substantial
0.8 to 1.0	High

A considerable amount of caution must be taken when interpreting correlation coefficients, because they give no indication of the direction of causality. This causality is based on two reasons:

- the third variable problem – in any bivariate correlation, causality between two variables cannot be assumed because there may be other measured or unmeasured variables affecting the results; and

- the direction of causality – correlation coefficients indicate nothing about which variable causes the other to change.

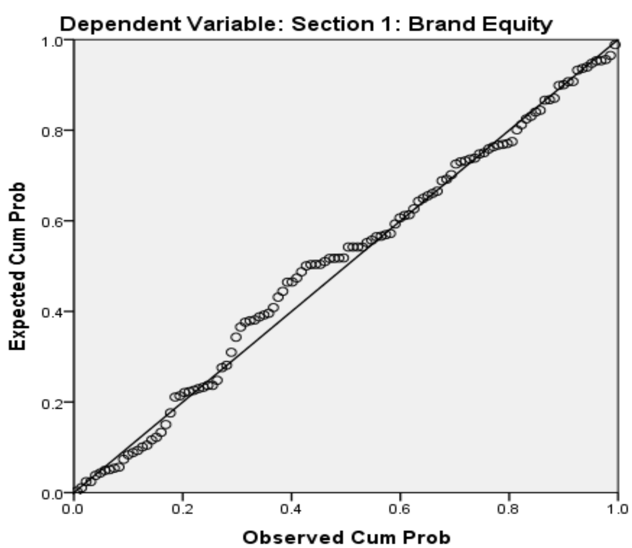
Following these analysis, mutiple regression was conducted. The overall model fit was assesed by calculating the adjusted coefficient of determination (R_2) and the F ratio to determine the practical and statistical significance of the model (Kirk, 1996). Hypothesis testing was achieved by examining the regression coeficient and standardised coeffients to determine the impact of each independent variable and assesing the results of the *t* tests to determine which variable contributions were statisitacally significant.

6.3 Results

6.3.1 Regression

The objectives of the regression analysis were to test the hypothesis presented in chapter five. The normal probability plot of the standardised residuals is shown in Figure 3;

Figure 4: Normal probability plot – Residuals



The probability plot indicates a good fit between the predicted and observed relationships between the standardised residuals. The results of the model tests for the standard multiple regression are presented in table 23.

Table 23: Standard regression outputs

R		R square	Adjusted R Square		Std. Error of the Estimate	
0.734		0.538	0.522		0.58516	
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	44.347	4	11.087	32.378	0.000[b]
	Residual	38.008	111	.342		
	Total	82.355	115			

The results of the ANOVA in table 23, indicate that the model is statistically significant (p=0.000). With reference to the R_2 shows that the model explains 52.2% of the variance when measuring brand equity in a B2B environment. In order to assess the practical significance of the R_2 Cohen's effect size was calculated as (Selya, Rose, Dierker, Hedeker, & Mermelstein, 2012)

$F_2 = R_2/(1-R_2)$

The R_2 of 0.538 was below the Cohen cut off of 0.56. Cohen, (1988) notes that tha medium effect size should have an R_2 of above 0.25 and for an effect size to be considered large, the R_2 should fall above 0.4 suggesting that at 0.538, the R_2 indicates a medium to large effect. The regression coefficients for the 4 predictor variables are shown in table 24;

Table 24: Regression coefficients for predictor variables

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-1.426	.470		-3.036	.003
	Factor 1: Relationships	.243	.112	.194	2.170	.032
	Factor 2: Service Quality	.253	.145	.174	1.742	.084
	Factor 3: Programme Quality	.604	.145	.366	4.162	.000
	Factor 4: Value for Money	.235	.077	.210	3.034	.003

Analysis of the *t* value of the variables in the equation indicated that the three variables were significant ($p \leq 0.05$) namely relationships, Programme Quality and Price. The variable, service quality, was not significant ($p > 0.05$).

6.3.2 Multicollinearity

Table 22 indicates that collinearity statistics are within an acceptable range for the model. Tolerance levels are above the 0.1 level. Hair et al. (2010) suggest that 0.1 is a common cut-off tolerance value to indicate acceptable levels of muticollinearity, while conversely, Variance Inflation Factor levels are below the level of 10. The Condition Index is slightly higher than 30. Although (Hair J. F., Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010) state that the threshold value should usually be in a range of up to 30, the condition index for Price (30.310) is acceptable for this study.

Table 24: Coefficients

		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics		Condition Index
		Beta			Tolerance	VIF	
1	(Constant)		-3.036	.003			1.000
	Factor 1: Relationship benefits	.194	2.170	.032	.522	1.917	11.448
	Factor 2: Service	.174	1.742	.084	.418	2.390	16.313
	Factor 3: Programme Quality	.366	4.162	.000	.538	1.859	24.489
	Factor 4: Value for Money	.210	3.034	.003	.865	1.156	30.310

6.3.3 Correlations

Table 23 indicated that service quality was not significant when measuring brand equity and therefore a correlation test was performed with the view to better understand the relationship between Service Quality and Programme Quality. The results of the correlations between the independent variables and dependent variable are displayed in table 25.

Table 25: Correlation matrix

		Factor 1: Relationship Benefits	Factor 2: Service Quality	Factor 3: Programme Quality	Factor 4: Value for Money	Section 1: Brand Equity
Factor 1: Relationship Benefits	Pearson Correlation	1	.667**	.546**	.337**	.580**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	118	118	118	118	116
Factor 2: Service Quality	Pearson Correlation	.667**	1	.651**	.344**	.614**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	118	121	121	121	119
Factor 3: /Programme	Pearson Correlation	.546**	.651**	1	.260**	.636**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.004	.000
	N	118	121	121	121	119
Factor 4: Value for Money	Pearson Correlation	.337**	.344**	.260**	1	.407**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.004		.000
	N	118	121	121	121	119
Section 1: Brand Equity	Pearson Correlation	.580**	.614**	.636**	.407**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	116	119	119	119	119

The correlations above are used to determine the degree to which changes in one variable are associated with changes in another. It was found that all attained constructs had a significant level of association. The strongest correlation was found between relationship benefits and service quality. All four independent variables had a significant level of association with the dependant variable, brand equity.

6.3.4 Hypothesis testing

The regression results presented in table 26 were used to determine whether or not research findings supported the hypothesis developed in chapter 5. Conclusions are shown in table 26.

Table 26: Hypothesis testing

Research hypothesis	Findings ($p \leq 0.05$)
H1: There is a positive relationship between Value for Money (VM) and brand equity (BE) in the B2B environment	Supported
H2: There is a positive relationship between programme quality (PQ) and brand equity (BE) in the B2B environment	Supported
H3: There is a positive relationship between service quality (SQ) and brand equity (BE) in the B2B environment	Not Supported
H4: There is a positive relationship between relationship benefits (RB) and brand equity (BE) in the B2B environment	Supported

6.4 Discussion of results

The purpose of this discussion was to critically evaluate the research findings presented in the sections above. The research results will be analysed with relevance to the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 and interpreted in terms of the second research question posed in Chapter 3.

6.4.1 Review of the research objectives

The primary objective of this research is to develop from empirical evidence a practical framework that executives could employ to effectively measure Brand Equity in a B2B environment. In order to achieve the primary objective, the secondary objectives of this study was to establish whether suitable factors, including relationship benefits, can be determined to measure Brand Equity. This was successfully answered in the previous chapter.

The section below will provide more insights into the research question, '*Is there is a high correlation between the drivers identified in research question 1 and Brand Equity?'* with evidence that the research problem was answered.

6.4.1.1 Hypothesis one

Hypothesis one which stated that "there is a positive relationship between Price and brand equity in the B2B environment" was supported. The degree of association between the value for money and Brand Equity was found to be significant (refer to Table 26). This was supported by the correlation analysis presented in Table 25 which indicated that there is a medium to low relationship between Price and Brand Equity. The impact that the price has on brand equity varies depending on market characteristics, it is argued that companies use value for money as an antecedent of dimension of brand equity instead of the price (van Riel, de Mortanges, & Streukens, 2005). It is however likely that the value-orientated to price would be a relevant characteristic of the brand and motivate consumers to think more about the brand and therefore increasing the brand equity of the product (Kim & Hyun, 2011).

The findings therefore support the research of Persson (2010) that's suggests by having a product or service that is premium priced offers an interesting form of brand strength. It considers how strong B2B brands have been shown to obtain price premiums and how price premiums is seen as the most useful and profitable driving measure of brand equity. Doyle (2000) argues that by having a product or service that is premium priced is the most important way in which brands create shareholder value.

6.4.1.2 Hypothesis two

Hypothesis two which stated that "there is a positive relationship between Programme Quality and Brand Equity in the B2B environment" was supported. The degree of association between Programme Quality and Brand Equity was found to be significant (refer to Table 26). This was supported by the correlation analysis presented in Table 25 which indicated that there is a substantial relationship between Programme Quality and Brand Equity. These findings support those of Szymanski and Henard (2001) that show through empirical research that there is a positive link between product quality and several aspects of brand equity. This link between product quality and brand equity was further confirmed by a study in a B2B market conducted by (Baumgarth, 2008).

Furthermore the research findings confirm those of van Riel, de Mortanges and Streukens, (2005) who found that the perception of overall quality of the brand relative to the products are an important indicator of brand equity as the company who design and produce the products would have built a corporate reputation and associated corporate brand equity. The results of study show that product quality not only contributes directly to behavioural intentions (repeat purchases) but also indirectly to corporate brand equity.

6.4.1.3 Hypothesis three

Hypothesis three which stated that "there is a positive relationship between Service Quality and Brand Equity in the B2B environment" was not supported. The degree of association between Service Quality and Brand Equity was found not to be significant (refer to Table 26). These findings however were not supported by the high correlation analysis presented in Table 25 which indicated that there is a substantial relationship between Service Quality and Brand Equity. Upon further investigation it was found the there is a substantial relationship between Service Quality and Programme Quality (table 25). The researchers believes that this contradiction in the findings is a result of the sample not being able to differentiate between Programme Quality and Service Quality as Programme Quality is assumed to be all encompassing of Service Quality. It can therefore be said that based on results in table 26 and researchers knowledge of the industry, there is a positive relationship between Service Quality and Brand Equity.

Alvarez and Galera (2001) suggest that in B2B markets, service quality including personal contact and support services, together with the products physical quality, increasingly form the basis of competitive advantage and are critical to purchasing decisions and branding. The findings in this research however contradict those of Alvarez and Galera (2001) who found that there was no significant relationship between service quality and brand equity. It must be noted that the study by Alvarez and Galera (2001) was performed in an industrial market provides an opportunity for further research.

6.4.1.4 Hypothesis four

Hypothesis Four which started that “there is a positive relationship between Relationship Benefits and Brand Equity in the B2B environment” was supported. The degree of association between Relationship Benefits and Brand Equity was found to be significant (refer to Table 26). This was supported by the correlation analysis presented in Table 25 which indicated that there is a high relationship between Relationship Benefits and Brand Equity. The research conducted by Gwinner *et al.,* (1998) developed an empirically supported typology of three relational benefits. They were defined as confidence benefits, social benefits and special treatment benefits. Sweeney and Webb (2007) defined relationships benefits as being functional, social and psychological and was. It was shown in Chapter 5 that although psychological benefits do not contribute to the formation of relationship benefits in this study, both functional benefits and social benefits do contribute to the formation of relationship benefits in a B2B environment. Research conducted by Patterson and Smith (2001) found that consumers of services place a high value on relationahip benefits that are over and above the core service of the organisation. It was found that social and functional benefits have a direct impact on brand loyalty and as disccused in the literature review in Chapter 2, brand loyalty remains a valuble asset for every brand in the B2B environment when driving brand equity (Nguyen, Barrett, & Miller, 2011). The research therefore can conclude that there is a positive relationship between relationship benefits and brand equity.

6.4.2 Conclusion of discussion

The objective of this section was to answer the research question '*To what extent do the drivers identified in research question 1 predict brand equity in the B2B services environment? And what is the contribution of relationship benefits in building brand equity?'* From the discussion in section 6.5.1, I can confirm based on the empirical research conducted above that there is a positive relationship between Price, Programme Quality, Relationship Benefits and Brand Equity. Although the initial research did not support a positive relationship between Service Quality and Brand Equity, upon further investigation, it was shown that there is a positive relationship between them and based in the substantial relationship between Programme Quality and Service Quality, respondents from this study where unable to distinguish between Programme Quality and Service Quality. These themes are consistent with those identified in the literature review in Chapter 2 and hence it is suggested that the above factors be used as input to the construction of the proposed brand equity measurement framework in Chapter 7.

Relationship Benefits has been statistically proven to be a useful predictor of brand equity for organisations in a B2B environment. To the researcher's knowledge this has not been empirically tested in previous studies and therefore the implications of these findings will be discussed in the final chapter.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

7.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to consolidate the outcomes of this study in line with its main objectives. It will also include recommendations to key stakeholders based on the research findings and propose ideas for future research.

A scan of the business environment in chapter one revealed that while brands have been developed by consumers, companies brands and their management have dominated the marketing of goods and services to consumers and the idea of measuring brand equity has been slow to take hold in B2B marketing (Bendixen , Bukasa, & Abratt, 2004). It was revealed that the sales function within any organisation plays a highly important role on how consumers, in the B2B environment, of products and services may be influenced by the benefits they receive from the relationship they have with the supplying organisation. Salespeople no longer just explain the product features and negotiate prices; they also shape perceptions as part of the interpersonal communication process (Baumgarth & Binckebanck, 2011).

A review of the literature in chapter two revealed that drivers of brand equity in the B2B environment have received little attention in the marketing literature. Calantone, Geoffrey, Di Benedetto and Anthony (1993) add that although there have been a number of brand equity frameworks published in business to consumer literature, only a small number of researches have considered brand identity in the B2B context. Therefore the development and validation of B2B a brand equity framework is of particular importance given the unique characteristics of B2B markets. These B2B characteristics include multifaceted supply chain relationships, a complex selling process to decision making unit, highly customized solutions, a smaller number of powerful clients, high value transactions and a predominance of personal selling (Coleman, De Chernatony, & Christodoulides, 2011).

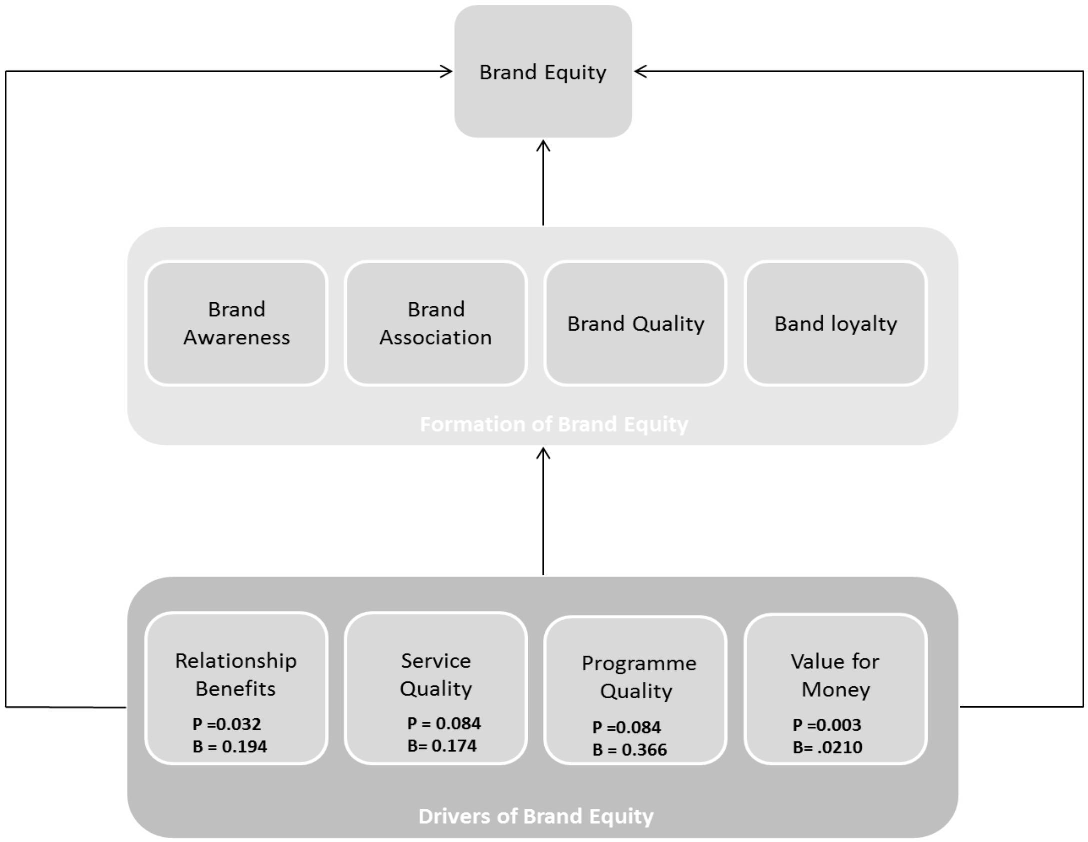
After conducting face-to-face, expert interviews with five Learning and Development Executives, an exploratory factor analysis was used to bring inter-correlated factors together under more general, underlying factors (Rietveld & Van Hout, 1993). The factors were labelled as relationship benefits, service quality, programme quality and value for money. A standard multiple linear regression and correlation between the variables was then performed to understand the relationship the variables have on brand equity. The output from the multiple linear regression together with the correlation between the variables formed the core of the proposed brand equity measure framework described in the subsequent section.

In summary the formation and enhancement of brand equity is vital for an organisations success in the contemporary business environment (Biedenbach & Marell, 2010). In B2B markets, it is increasingly difficult to gain a competitive advantage simply based on price or product and service quality and therefore implementing a B2B branding strategy that includes relationship marketing is becoming essential for organisations in a B2B services environment. The importance of this has been highlighted in this research as an organisations brand equity can improve if the receiving organisation receives benefits from having a relationship with the supplying organisation. In order for an organisation to gain a competitive advantage, developing a strategy that focuses on service quality, product quality and personal contact (relationships) will help in gaining a competitive advantage (Chen, Su, & Lin, 2011). The establishment of a good business relationship must reflect mutual benefits for both an organization and a customer and therefere the relationship benefit that consumers receive from an organisation must add value (Zineldin, 2006).

7.2 Key findings

The construction of the brand equity measurement framework unfolded as this research project progressed. The literature reviewed in chapter 2 allowed the business case organisations are faced with to be linked to theory in order for conceptual factors to be identified to from a developing brand equity measurement framework illustrated in figure 2. The results and discussion from chapters five and six were consolidated and incorporated into the diagram shown in figure 5.

Figure 5: Results of the Brand Equity study



The overruling assumption of this framework is that multiple factors should be considered simultaneously when measuring brand equity in a B2B environment. A number of studies have measured how brand awareness, brand association, brand quality and brand loyalty impact on brand equity which is referred to as the formation of brand equity in this study. However, according to Biedenbach and Marell (2010) brand equity in a B2B environment is assessed through a set of various other dimensions and due to the fact that little research has been conducted on the structural composition of brand equity and the potential hierarchical order of these dimensions, the above framework aims to add to the body of research in this regard.

Results of the hypothesis testing study indicated that independent variables, programme quality, price and relationship benefits, had strong relationships with the dependent variable, brand equity. The regression analysis found that the independent variables predicted 52% of the brand equity in organisations operating in a B2B environment. Three variables were showb to be significant in measuring brand equity in a B2B environment. The correlation between the independent variables, programme quality and service quality were shown to be significantly strong and therefore it can be assumed that executives who purchase in a B2B environment view the purchase to be all in compassing of service quality. When organisations talk about the customer experience, it includes a set of interactions between a customer and a product or in this case a programme, a company, or part of its organization, which provoke a reaction. This was confirmed in phase 1 of the study where the interviewee was quoted as saying *"The quality of the programmes we get from GIBS cannot be compared to other business schools and it is the quality of the service that we receive from everyone at GIBS that makes the whole experience valuable"* Therefore an empirical finding of the study is that service quality is an important driver of brand equity in a B2B environment.

Identifying relationship benefits as a driver of brand equity in a B2B environment is the most significant finding of this study and answers the overarching problem statement of this research study which is 'determining the role relationship benefits have on brand equity in a B2B environment'. To the researcher's knowledge, previous studies have not identified relationship benefits to be a driver of brand equity and therefore these findings are important for marketing practitioners and more importantly brand managers seeking to enhance their organisations brand equity in a B2B environment.

7.3 Management recommendations

The results of this study lead to some important managerial implications, as the drivers identified help determine the brand equity and ultimately the competitive advantage for organisations in a B2B services environment. First, drawing from the results of the hypotheses, the positive relationship between the benefits an organisation receives from having a relationship with the supplying organisation does only provide ground breaking insight for brand/marketing managers but for human resource maintenance and training that are critical in the B2B services environment. Customer relationships are a core organisational process that concentrates on establishing, maintaining, and enhancing long term associations with customers. The strategy of relationship marketing is exceptionally important to organisations in the service industry due the intangible nature of services and their high level of customer interaction. As there is a growing need to customizable offerings and services, building relationships that create value requires different competencies. It is no longer only the responsibility of the relationship seller to build relationships that creates value but rather all stakeholders from the supplying organisation.

It is common in most organisations to find sales and marketing departments represented separately as the marketing department generally focuses on building the brands awareness, association, quality and loyalty or what is referred to in this study as 'brand formation' whereas the sales department focus on the sales of the products/service. The findings on this study imply that sales and marketing divisions should in fact be seen as one of the same. Improving the benefits one receives from the supplying organization can significantly improve the brand equity of the organisation and therefore brand managers should include this as part of their branding strategy.

Relationship sellers are ultimately the most important stakeholder in driving this benefit as they often hold the key relationship and therefore human resource departments need to understand the importance of the selection criteria when recruiting for these positions. Relationship sellers operating in todays' competitive, B2B services environment require a different type of skill set that brand managers and human resource consultants should be aware off. In order for B2B service organisation to become more competitive and ultimately improve their brand equity, relationship sellers need to have the ability to identify agile organisations that have emerging demands or are in a state of flux that the service they provide will add significant value. They need to identify the unrecognizable need that the customer has before the customer has identified the problem as well as providing provocative insights about what the customer should do. Followed by having the ability to coach the customer about how to buy and support the customer through the process.

These competencies require a different type of relationship seller that is not often found in B2B service organisations. Prior research has not considered identifying relationship benefits as a driver of brand equity and therefore the reactive role of a relationship seller has not been included in the brand/marketing managers brand strategies. A key recommendation to brand managers, based on the results of this study, is to start to include the role of the relationship seller has a key driver to improving brand equity.

Product/Programme quality remains one of the key drivers of brand equity in a B2B services environment. Brand managers once again are often separated from the design and implementation of these services and it is strongly recommended that brand managers become more involved in the quality of the products and services. The results of the study highlighted that customers view programme quality as all in compassing of service quality, which indicates that not only should brand/marketing managers become more involved of the quality of the product or service but more the actual quality of all stakeholders involved in the delivery, design and service delivered to clients.

Brand/marketing managers can no longer only manage the awareness, association, quality and loyalty of their brands. Understanding the drivers, price, service and product quality and the benefits customers receive from their relationship with the organisation and relationship seller need to be carefully managed. This empirical finding changes the role of brand/marketing managers in the B2B services environment.

7.3 Recommendations for future research

The following areas are recommended for further study. These include suggestions aimed at further development of this particular research. Other proposals pertain to additional issues related to the concept of relationship benefits and brand equity.

- This study focused on the views of a limited population. Further research should be conducted on other B2B environments to better understand the impact relationship benefits have on brand equity. The researcher is under the view that the benefits one receives from having a relationship with alternative organisations operating in a B2B environment i.e. financial institutions would impact significantly on their brand equity. The study would further test the strength of this research finding
- Further research should be conducted to better understand the role psychological benefits have as predictor of relationship benefits.
- Research should be conducted to better understand the relationship that exists between product quality and service quality with the view to better understand the predictors of each variable
- Researches are encouraged to test the proposed brand equity measure framework as the validation of this framework could prove extremely valuable in better

understanding the predictors of brand equity in organisations operating in a B2B environment.

- Further research should be conducted to determine the relationships the drivers of brand equity identified in this study have on the variables contained in the what is referred to in the diagram above, as the formation of brand equity.

7.4 Conclusion

The research project has provided a comprehensive review of brand equity literature and together with the data collected proposed a brand equity measure framework. Measuring brand equity is far too complex to be explained by linear frameworks; hence brand managers and executives involved in measuring brand equity are advised to employ a multidimensional approach to viewing the measurement of the brand. Multiple factors should be considered simultaneously when measuring brand equity. The framework developed in the study provides explanations about the role and importance of each driver in measuring band equity and more importantly the role relationships and the benefits received from these relationships.

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Appendix 1: Construct and Scale Items

	Formation of Brand Equity	**Definition**	**Variable**	**Scale Items**	**Scale adapted from**
	Brand equity (BE)	A set of brand assets and liabilities linked to the brands name and symbol that add to or subtract from the value provided by the product or service to a fir or that firms customers	Dependent	1. Although another service provider has the same features as GIBS. I would prefer to use GIBS. 2. If another service provider is not different from GIBS, it seems smarter to use GIBS. 3. Although there is another service provider as good as GIBS, I prefer to use GIBS 4. Even though another service provider would be as good as GIBS, I would feel better using GIBS	(Kim & Hyun, 2011) (Aaker D. , 1996)
	Drivers of Brand Equity	**Definition**	**Variable**	**Scale Items**	**Scale adapted from**
Drivers of Brand Equity	Price	Price is used to determine the quality of the product or service and also determines the sacrifice with its purchase		5. GIBS is competitively priced 6. GIBS programmes are reasonably priced 7. I have no problems with the prices GIBS charges 8. When you consider what you get from them, GIBS' prices are good.	(Martensen & Gronholdt, 2010) (Suri, Manchanda, & Kohli, 2000)
	Product/Programme brand equity	The physical attributes to the product or service	Independent	9. GIBS programmes have a good reputation 10. GIBS design of programmes are of high quality 11. Compared to other service providers, GIBS is one of the best 12. Compared to other service providers, GIBS programms are of high quality 13. GIBS programme quality is dependable 14. GIBS programme quality consistent 15. GIBS programmes are innovative	(Martensen & Gronholdt, 2010) (van Riel, de Mortanges, & Streukens, 2005)
	Service Quality	The gap between consumers' expectations and perceptions	Independent	16. GIBS employees are competent 17. GIBS provides us with personal attention 18. GIBS employees are courteous 19. GIBS employees are reliable 20. GIBS employees are responsive to my needs	(Martensen & Gronholdt, 2010) (Chowdhary & Prakash, 2007)
	Relationships benefits	Relationship benefits are achieved through economic and non-economic factors or better known as functional,	Independent	**Psychological benefit** 21. We have peace of mind in dealing with GIBS 22. We trust GIBS	(Sweeney & Webb, How functional,

		social and psychological benefits. These are trust, convenience, competitive advantage and cost savings		23. We know what to expect of/from GIBS 24. If GIBS give us their word, we know that whatever it is, it will be done 25. There is a real sense of understanding between GIBS and our organisation **Functional benefits** 26. Having a relationship with GIBS enables us to become more competetive in the market 27. We are able to capitalize on the value GIBS offers 28. our relationship with GIBS enables us to enhance financial outcomes As a result of the relationship, we able to enhance financial outcomes 29. As a result of the relationship, we able to maximize financial outcomes 30. GIBS and our organisation complement each other in terms of expertise 31. Our relationship with GIBS enables us to proactively identify opportunities **Social benefits** 32. Our relationship with GIBS goes beyond just business 33. We have a real friendship with GIBS 34. We work on things together 35. Our relationship with GIBS enables us to share a lot together 36. We would call on GIBS if we had a problem	pschological and social relationship benefits influence individual and firm commitment to the relationship, 2007)

Appendix 2: Questionnaire - adapted from original sources

Section 1: Brand equity (BE) (Kim & Hyun, 2011)

1. Although another service provider has the same features as GIBS. I would prefer to use GIBS.
2. If another service provider is not different from GIBS, it seems smarter to use GIBS.
3. Although there is another service provider as good as GIBS, I prefer to use GIBS
4. Even though another service provider would be as good as GIBS, I would feel better using GIBS

Section 2: Brand awareness (BA) (Aaker D. , 1996)

5. I/we are aware of the GIBS competing brands
6. I/we have heard about GIBS brand
7. I/we know what GIBS brand stands for
8. I/we have an opinion about the GIBS brand
9. GIBS is the first name I/we recall when thinking training/development

Section 3: Brand Association (BAss) (Beidenbach, Bengtsson, & Wincent, 2011) (Aaker D. , 1996)

10. GIBS shows empathy
11. GIBS is flexible to our needs
12. GIBS is reliable
13. GIBS is pragmatic
14. The GIBS brand has personality that we relate to
15. The GIBS brand is interesting

Section4: Brand Quality (BQ) (Baumgarth & Binckebanck, 2011)

16. The product/service GIBS offers is important to our organisation
17. GIBS normally delivers' products/services of excellent quality
18. The price of GIBS products/services is important to us
19. GIBS products/services are highly geared to our needs

Section 5: Brand loyalty (BL) (Baumgarth & Binckebanck, 2011)

20. We intend to stay loyal to GIBS as long as possible
21. I/we recommend GIBS in talks with colleges
22. I/we would be willing to stand as a reference for GIBS
23. I/we will purchase from GIBS in the future
24. We expect to continue the business relationship for a long time

Section 6: Price (Martensen & Gronholdt, 2010) (Suri, Manchanda, & Kohli, 2000)

25. GIBS is competitively priced
26. GIBS programmes are reasonably priced
27. I have no problems with the prices GIBS charges
28. When you consider what you get from them, GIBS' prices are good.

Section 7: Product/Programme brand equity (Baumgarth & Binckebanck, 2011) (van Riel, de Mortanges, & Streukens, 2005)

29. GIBS programmes have a good reputation
30. GIBS design of programmes are of high quality
31. Compared to other service providers, GIBS is one of the best
32. Compared to other service providers, GIBS programmes are of high quality
33. GIBS programme quality is dependable
34. GIBS programme quality consistent
35. GIBS programmes are innovative

Section 8: Service Quality (Baumgarth & Binckebanck, 2011)

36. GIBS employees are competent

37. GIBS provides us with personal attention

38. GIBS employees are courteous

39. GIBS employees are reliable

40. GIBS employees are responsive to my needs

Section 9: Relationships (Sweeney & Webb, 2007) and adapted from exploratory interviews

Psychological benefit

41. We have peace of mind in dealing with GIBS

42. We trust GIBS

43. We know what to expect of/from GIBS

44. If GIBS give us their word, we know that whatever it is, it will be done

45. There is a real sense of understanding between GIBS and our organisation

Functional benefits

46. Having a relationship with GIBS enables us to become more competitive in the market

47. We are able to capitalize on the value GIBS offers

48. Our relationship with GIBS enables us to enhance financial outcomes As a result of the relationship, we able to enhance financial outcomes

49. As a result of the relationship, we able to maximize financial outcomes

50. GIBS and our organisation complement each other in terms of expertise

51. Our relationship with GIBS enables us to proactively identify opportunities

Social benefits

52. Our relationship with GIBS goes beyond just business

53. We have a real friendship with GIBS

54. We work on things together

55. Our relationship with GIBS enables us to share a lot together

56. We would call on GIBS if we had a problem

Appendix 3: Key Findings from empirical res f brand equity

	Author and Journal	Sample details	Variable1 product Quality	Variable Two Service quality	Variable three Price	Variable four Differentiation	Variable five Trust
1.	(Martensen & Gronholdt, 2010) International Journal of Quality and Service Sciences	Banking customers (BD)	1. Products and services are of high quality 2. Compared to alternative banks, DB is the best 3. Compared to alternative banks, DB products and services are of a high	1. DB employees are competent 2. DB employees give me individual attention 3. DB employees are courteous and forthcoming	1. BD is competitive 2. DB has reasonable prices	1. overall DB differs from other competing banks in a positive way 2. DB is unique compared to other banks 3. DB offers advantages that other banks cannot 4. DB creates a meaningful promise 5. DB creates positive associations and images	1. DB is trustworthy and credible 2. DB communicates openly and honestly 3. I have great faith in DB
	Author and Journal	**Sample details**	**Variable1** **product Quality**	**Variable Two** **Service quality**	**Variable three** **Product Value**	**Variable four** **Service Personnel**	**Variable five** **Information services**
2.	(van Riel, de Mortanges, & Streukens, 2005) Industrial Marketing Journal	Chemical company (1000 products) Product X Product Y	1. product X is of high quality 2. product x development lead time is excellent 3. product x is a dependable and consistent product 4. Product x is an innovative product	1. Technical support of product x is excellent 2. We are satisfied with production support of product X 3. We are satisfied with the development support for product X	1. Product x reduces production costs 2. Product x offers value for money 3. Product x reduces system costs	1. Company Y has highly skilled employees 2. Company y staff is well dressed and appear neat 3. I can trust company y staff	1. Service staff understands our needs 2. We are satisfied with the information about product x 3. on line information about product X is of good quality 4. the documentation of product x is of good quality 5. If I request supplementary info about product x, I

							receive it quickly
			Variable six **Product Brand equity**	**Variable seven** **Corporate Brand equity**	**Variable eight** **Loyalty**		
			1. Product x generally has a good reputation 2. Rate product X's reputation on a scale of 1-7 3. Product x is a well known name in the market	1. Company y is a financially stable company 2. Company y is a leading edge supplier 3. company y is a known name around the world 4.the fact that Comany y produces product x adds value 5. the fact that company y produces product x is important to me	1. Overall we are satisfied with product x 2. overall we are very satisfied with company y 3. if asked, we would recommend product x 4. if asked we would recommend company y 5. we intend to use product x again in the future 6. we intend to do business with company y in the future		
	Author and Journal	**Sample details**	**Variable1** **Perceived Quality**	**Variable Two** **Brand loyalty**	**Variable three** **Role Ambiguity**	**Variable four** **Customer employee rapport**	**Variable five** **Brand associations**
3.	(Beidenbach, Bengtsson, & Wincent, 2011) Industrial Marketing Journal	Professional services Company XXX	1. How would you evaluate overall quality of the services 2. How consistent are the services 3. How would you evaluate the services of XXX compared	1. XXX would be the first choice if the my company would need auditing services 2. I would use their services again	1. XXX employees seem to have clear rules on how to accomplish their job 2. They know exactly what is expected of	1. In thinking about my relationship with XXX employees, I enjoyed interacting with these people 2. Employees created a feeling of "warmth" in	1. XXX show empathy 2. XXX are flexible 3. XXX are reliable 4. XXX are pragmatic

			to the services competitor	recommend XXX services to others 4. I consider myself to be loyal to XXX	them 3. They know exactly what their responsibility in their work for us 4. It is clear to them what has to be done to accomplish their job	our relationship 3. Employees related well to me 4. I was comfortable interacting with XXX employees	
	Author and Journal	**Sample details**	**Variable1** **Brand image**	**Variable Two** **Company image**	**Variable three** **Relationship Quality**	**Variable four** **Relationship value**	**Variable five** **Customer loyalty**
4.	(Ching-Fu & Myagmarsuren, 2011) Total Quality Management and Business Excellence	Telecommunications services provider (TSP)	1. TSP communications programme think outside the box 2. TSP communication programmes are warm and engaging 3. TSP communication programmes are daring 4. TSP communication programmes are spirited 5. TSP communication programmes are imaginative and up-to-date	1. The TSP product/service is well managed 2. The TSP is an active sponsor of community events 3. The TSP has high ethical standards with respect to its customers and employees 4. the TSP works successfully 5. the TSP is innovative in its services 6. in my mind the image of the TSP has a good image in the minds of customers	1. The TSP gives me a feeling of confidence 2. I have a feeling that the TSP is trustworthy 3. The TSP has always been courteous and friendly 4. I have a clear commitment to the TSP 5. I certainly like the TSP 6. I have very satisfied with the TSP	1. Compared to other TSP, this TSP adds more value to the relationship 2. Compared to other TSP the relationship with this TSP is more valuable 3. Compared to other TSP, this TSP creates more value, when comparing all costs and benefits in the relationship	1. I would purchase this TSP services 2. I would recommend this TSP services to others

	Author and Journal	Sample details	Variable1 Brand relevance	 Image benefit	Variable three Information costs	Variable four Risk reduction	
5.	(Backhaus, Steiner, & Lugger, 2011) Industrial Marketing Management	20 different industries in the B2B environment	1. When purchasing, I pay attention to brand 2. The brand has a strong influence on purchase decision 3. We prefer brands, even if we pay price premium When I purchase a product, the brand plays an important role	1. When purchasing XY, we choose brands because they influence our employees public appearance 2.when purchasing XY, we choose brands that enhance our products for our customers 3. when purchasing XY, we choose brands because our customers ask for them 4. when purchasing XY, we choose brands because they represent success for our firm 5. When purchasing XY, we choose brands because they represent the values of our firm	1. When buying XY, we select brands that facilitate decision making 2. We first assess the offers by preferred brands and then look for alternative offers 3. when purchasing XY we focus on brands to ease the communication to the buying centers other members 4. when purchasing XY, we focus on brands on brands to get a quick overview of the market	1. when purchasing XY, we choose brands to ensure high-quality additional options/improvements in the future 2. When purchasing XY, we choose brands in order to avoid disappointment 3. When purchasing XY, we choose brands because they will better meet our expectations in terms of individual solutions 4. When purchasing XY, we choose brands because they will be compatible to future purchases 5. When purchasing XY, we choose brands because they are better able to meet our expectations in terms of product quality 6. When purchasing XY, we focus on brands so as to avoid aggravation and complaints	

	Author and Journal	**Sample details**	**Variable1** **Psychological benefits**	**[illegible]o** **Functional benefit**	**Variable three** **Social Benefit**		
.	(Sweeney & Webb, How functional, pschological and social relationship benefits influence individual and firm commitment to the relationship, 2007) Journal of Business and Industrial Marketing	Individual employee who had prime relationship with the supplier firm	1. We have peace of mind in dealing with them 2. We trust them 3. We know what to expect of/from them 4. If they give us their word, we know that whatever it is, it will be done 5. There is a real sense of understanding between us	1. Having a relationship with them enables us to compete in the market 2. We are able to capitalize on the value they offer 3. As a result of the relationship, we are able to maximize financial outcomes 4. We complement each other in terms of expertise 5. Our relationship sets up proactive opportunities	1. We have more than a formal business relationship with them 2. We have a real friendship with them 3. We work on things together 4. We share information		
	Author and Journal	**Sample details**	**Variable1** **Brand awareness and associations**	**Variable Two** **Perceived Quality**	**Variable three** **Brand loyalty**	**Variable four** **Brand Equity**	**Variable five** **Corporate Image**
7.	(Kim & Hyun, 2011) Industrial Marketing Journal	IT software market in Korea	1. I am always aware of X 2. Characteristics of X come to mind quickly 3. I can quickly recall the symbol or logo of X	1. The quality of X is credible 2. X must be of very good quality 3. High quality of X is consistent 4. X has high quality that other brands	1. I am satisfied with X 2. X is my favorite brand 3. I have confidence in X	1. Although another brand has same features X, I would prefer for buy X 2. If another brand is not different from X, it seems smarter to purchase X 3. Although there is another brand as good as X, I prefer to buy X	1. What offers X is a high-tech company 2. What offers X is a leading company 3. What offers X has long experience 4. What offers X is a representative of the IT software industry

Appendix 4: Correlation matrix for the 32 Drivers ale items

Anti-image Correlation

	GIBS is competitively priced	GIBS programmes are reasonably priced	I have no problems with the prices GIBS charges	When you consider what you get from them, GIBS' prices are good.	GIBS programmes have a good reputation	GIBS design of programmes are of high quality	Compared to other service providers, GIBS is one of the best	Compared to other service providers, GIBS programms are of high quality	GIBS programme quality is dependable	GIBS programme quality consistent	GIBS programmes are innovative	GIBS employees are competent	GIBS provides us with personal attention	GIBS employees are courteous	GIBS employees are reliable	GIBS employees are responsive to my needs
GIBS is competitively priced	.721a	-.599	-.175	-.115	.019	.049	-.057	.044	-.116	.166	-.033	.088	.137	-.120	-.069	.001
GIBS programmes are reasonably priced	-.599	.750a	-.240	-.142	-.055	.133	.108	.050	.010	-.073	-.075	.038	-.115	-.002	.029	.083
I have no problems with the prices GIBS charges	-.175	-.240	.787a	-.382	-.081	-.087	.097	-.029	-.136	.159	.151	-.035	-.210	.182	-.097	.015
When you consider what you get from them, GIBS' prices are good.	-.115	-.142	-.382	.879a	.157	-.172	-.088	-.120	.170	-.101	-.076	.030	.013	-.098	-.064	-.009
GIBS programmes have a good reputation	.019	-.055	-.081	.157	.943a	-.098	-.072	-.168	-.098	-.092	-.121	-.012	-.017	-.044	-.022	.007
GIBS design of programmes are of high quality	.049	.133	-.087	-.172	-.098	.927a	-.018	-.129	-.036	-.082	-.178	-.297	-.068	-.121	.040	.052
Compared to other service providers, GIBS is one of the best	-.057	.108	.097	-.088	-.072	-.018	.952a	-.231	-.129	.068	-.125	.083	-.234	.037	-.237	.033
Compared to other service providers, GIBS programms are of high quality	.044	.050	-.029	-.120	-.168	-.129	-.231	.907a	-.165	-.195	.172	.036	.051	-.006	.206	-.094
GIBS programme quality is dependable	-.116	.010	-.136	.170	-.098	-.036	-.129	-.165	.865a	-.459	-.309	.043	.220	.085	-.096	-.164
GIBS programme quality consistent	.166	-.073	.159	-.101	-.092	-.082	.068	-.195	-.459	.910a	.009	-.100	-.036	-.048	-.229	.193
GIBS programmes are innovative	-.033	-.075	.151	-.076	-.121	-.178	-.125	.172	-.309	.009	.917a	-.127	-.203	.067	.162	-.057
GIBS employees are competent	.088	.038	-.035	.030	-.012	-.297	.083	.036	.043	-.100	-.127	.943a	-.110	-.159	-.213	-.132
GIBS provides us with personal attention	.137	-.115	-.210	.013	-.017	-.068	-.234	.051	.220	-.036	-.203	-.110	.891a	-.155	-.035	-.169
GIBS employees are courteous	-.120	-.002	.182	-.098	-.044	-.121	.037	-.006	.085	-.048	.067	-.159	-.155	.943a	-.046	-.205
GIBS employees are reliable	-.069	.029	-.097	-.064	-.022	.040	-.237	.206	-.096	-.229	.162	-.213	-.035	-.046	.899a	-.336
GIBS employees are responsive to my needs	.001	.083	.015	-.009	.007	.052	.033	-.094	-.164	.193	-.057	-.132	-.169	-.205	-.336	.930a
We have peace of mind in dealing with GIBS	.179	-.154	-.012	-.028	-.057	-.120	.035	.061	.001	-.118	.153	-.106	.093	.060	.056	-.213
We trust GIBS	-.224	.166	.165	-.033	-.061	-.088	.018	.014	-.141	.032	-.041	-.007	-.186	.261	.099	.160
We know what to expect of/from GIBS	.177	-.098	.011	-.093	.043	.211	-.058	-.234	.089	.052	.018	-.021	-.092	-.264	-.118	-.089
If GIBS give us their word, we know that whatever it is, it will be done	-.100	-.058	-.076	.237	-.023	-.152	-.072	-.098	.136	-.027	-.086	.043	.170	-.206	-.151	.036
There is a real sense of understanding between GIBS and our organisation	.239	-.136	-.035	-.057	.150	-.011	-.069	-.065	.048	-.045	-.081	.157	.161	.005	-.131	-.154
Having a relationship with GIBS enables us to become more competetive in the market	-.274	.267	.189	-.225	-.221	.141	-.007	.236	-.012	-.088	-.071	.036	-.084	.117	.125	-.016
We are able to capitalize on the value GIBS offers	-.059	.121	-.081	.060	-.041	-.023	-.035	-.101	-.017	.178	.010	.134	-.164	.037	-.091	-.176
our relationship with GIBS enables us to enhance financial outcomes As a result of the relationship, we able to enhance financial outcomes	-.026	-.022	.032	.160	.065	.089	-.044	-.126	.086	-.022	-.056	.086	-.040	-.040	-.299	.106
As a result of the relationship, we able to maximize financial outcomes	-.015	-.021	-.031	-.152	-.123	-.021	.058	.219	-.122	-.172	-.044	-.104	.192	.014	.372	-.173
GIBS and our organisation complement each other in terms of expertise	-.067	-.080	.007	.096	.166	-.121	.112	-.005	-.184	.045	.160	.019	-.193	.022	.148	-.105
Our relationship with GIBS enables us to proactively identify opportunities	.140	-.018	-.163	.059	.034	.054	-.148	-.171	.205	.014	-.333	.068	.180	-.095	-.229	.197
Our relationship with GIBS goes beyond just business	-.108	-.062	-.194	.238	.120	-.282	-.093	.125	.027	-.115	.128	-.132	.209	.001	.133	-.117
We have a real friendship with GIBS	.035	-.112	.216	-.091	-.246	.173	-.005	-.072	.113	.133	.039	-.066	-.245	-.039	-.007	.063
We work on things together	-.034	.198	.036	-.057	.080	.125	.130	.058	-.050	-.132	.120	.175	-.347	-.070	-.014	.062
Our relationship with GIBS enables us to share a lot together	-.125	.050	-.007	-.031	-.070	-.006	.057	.034	-.066	.104	.031	-.264	.117	.059	-.050	.144
We would call on GIBS if we had a problem	.116	-.142	.067	.008	.115	.012	-.045	-.254	.118	.055	-.125	-.034	-.034	.001	.011	.074

	We have peace of mind in dealing with GIBS	We trust GIBS	We know what to expect of/from GIBS	If GIBS give us their word, we know that whatever it is, it will be done	There is a real sense of understanding between GIBS and our organisation	Having a relationship with GIBS enables us to become more competetive in the market	We are able to capitalize on the value GIBS offers	our relationship with GIBS enables us to enhance financial outcomes As a result of the relationship, we able to enhance financial outcomes	As a result of the relationship, we able to maximize financial outcomes	GIBS and our organisation complement each other in terms of expertise	Our relationship with GIBS enables us to proactively identify opportunities	Our relationship with GIBS goes beyond just business	We have a real friendship with GIBS	We work on things together	Our relationship with GIBS enables us to share a lot together	We would call on GIBS if we had a problem
GIBS is competitively priced	.179	-.224	.177	-.100	.239	-.274	-.059	-.026	-.015	-.067	.140	-.108	.035	-.034	-.125	.116
GIBS programmes are reasonably priced	-.154	.166	-.098	-.058	-.136	.267	.121	-.022	-.021	-.080	-.018	-.062	-.112	.198	.050	-.142
I have no problems with the prices GIBS charges	-.012	.165	.011	-.076	-.035	.189	-.081	.032	-.031	.007	-.163	-.194	.216	.036	-.007	.067
When you consider what you get from them, GIBS' prices are good.	-.028	-.033	-.093	.237	-.057	-.225	.060	.160	-.152	.096	.059	.238	-.091	-.057	-.031	.008
GIBS programmes have a good reputation	-.057	-.061	.043	-.023	.150	-.221	-.041	.065	-.123	.166	.034	.120	-.246	.080	-.070	.115
GIBS design of programmes are of high quality	-.120	-.088	.211	-.152	-.011	.141	-.023	.089	-.021	-.121	.054	-.282	.173	.125	-.006	.012
Compared to other service providers, GIBS is one of the best	.035	.018	-.058	-.072	-.069	-.007	-.035	-.044	.058	.112	-.148	-.093	-.005	.130	.057	-.045
Compared to other service providers, GIBS programms are of high quality	.061	.014	-.234	-.098	-.065	.236	-.101	-.126	.219	-.005	-.171	.125	-.072	.058	.034	-.254
GIBS programme quality is dependable	.001	-.141	.089	.136	.048	-.012	-.017	.086	-.122	-.184	.205	.027	.113	-.050	-.066	.118
GIBS programme quality consistent	-.118	.032	.052	-.027	-.045	-.088	.178	-.022	-.172	.045	.014	-.115	.133	-.132	.104	.055
GIBS programmes are innovative	.153	-.041	.018	-.086	-.081	-.071	.010	-.056	-.044	.160	-.333	.128	.039	.120	.031	-.125
GIBS employees are competent	-.106	-.007	-.021	.043	.157	.036	.134	.086	-.104	.019	.068	-.132	-.066	.175	-.264	-.034
GIBS provides us with personal attention	.093	-.186	-.092	.170	.161	-.084	-.164	-.040	.192	-.193	.180	.209	-.245	-.347	.117	-.034
GIBS employees are courteous	.060	.261	-.264	-.206	.005	.117	.037	-.040	.014	.022	-.095	.001	-.039	-.070	.059	.001
GIBS employees are reliable	.056	.099	-.118	-.151	-.131	.125	-.091	-.299	.372	.148	-.229	.133	-.007	-.014	-.050	.011
GIBS employees are responsive to my needs	-.213	.160	-.089	.036	-.154	-.016	-.176	.106	-.173	-.105	.197	-.117	.063	.062	.144	.074
We have peace of mind in dealing with GIBS	.950a	-.117	-.056	-.336	.086	-.160	-.133	-.073	.135	-.042	-.055	.044	.090	-.013	-.085	-.116
We trust GIBS	-.117	.894a	-.475	-.204	-.114	.165	-.062	-.130	.183	-.102	-.076	.006	-.082	.121	.014	-.072
We know what to expect of/from GIBS	-.056	-.475	.895a	-.094	.179	-.224	.146	.070	-.267	-.031	.197	-.178	.210	.099	-.275	.157
If GIBS give us their word, we know that whatever it is, it will be done	-.336	-.204	-.094	.935a	-.153	-.132	-.002	.158	-.057	-.004	.002	.164	-.129	-.228	.181	.040
There is a real sense of understanding between GIBS and our organisation	.086	-.114	.179	-.153	.933a	-.225	-.012	.065	-.013	-.228	.198	-.188	-.156	-.208	-.240	-.018
Having a relationship with GIBS enables us to become more competetive in the market	-.160	.165	-.224	-.132	-.225	.900a	-.075	-.121	.171	.080	-.181	-.243	.169	.025	-.079	-.237
We are able to capitalize on the value GIBS offers	-.133	-.062	.146	-.002	-.012	-.075	.951a	.056	-.325	.131	-.069	-.030	.084	.014	-.142	-.181
our relationship with GIBS enables us to enhance financial outcomes As a result of the relationship, we able to enhance financial outcomes	-.073	-.130	.070	.158	.065	-.121	.056	.920a	-.530	-.138	.002	-.018	-.022	-.073	.035	.030
As a result of the relationship, we able to maximize financial outcomes	.135	.183	-.267	-.057	-.013	.171	-.325	-.530	.888a	-.129	-.187	.065	-.089	-.111	.026	-.194
GIBS and our organisation complement each other in terms of expertise	-.042	-.102	-.031	-.004	-.228	.080	.131	-.138	-.129	.918a	-.221	.320	-.081	-.047	-.127	-.235
Our relationship with GIBS enables us to proactively identify opportunities	-.055	-.076	.197	.002	.198	-.181	-.069	.002	-.187	-.221	.905a	-.242	.027	-.208	-.120	.170
Our relationship with GIBS goes beyond just business	.044	.006	-.178	.164	-.188	-.243	-.030	-.018	.065	.320	-.242	.879a	-.430	-.117	.109	-.194
We have a real friendship with GIBS	.090	-.082	.210	-.129	-.156	.169	.084	-.022	-.089	-.081	.027	-.430	.897a	-.014	-.370	.055
We work on things together	-.013	.121	.099	-.228	-.208	.025	.014	-.073	-.111	-.047	-.208	-.117	-.014	.930a	-.245	-.018
Our relationship with GIBS enables us to share a lot together	-.085	.014	-.275	.181	-.240	-.079	-.142	.035	.026	-.127	-.120	.109	-.370	-.245	.937a	.016
We would call on GIBS if we had a problem	-.116	-.072	.157	.040	-.018	-.237	-.181	.030	-.194	-.235	.170	-.194	.055	-.018	.016	.939a

a. Measures of Sampling Adequacy(MSA)

Appendix 5: EFA - Communalities of the 32 Drivers of Brand Equity Scale items

Communalities		
	Initial	Extraction
GIBS is competitively priced	.742	.702
GIBS programmes are reasonably priced	.754	.783
I have no problems with the prices GIBS charges	.673	.647
When you consider what you get from them, GIBS' prices are good.	.635	.562
GIBS programmes have a good reputation	.593	.518
GIBS design of programmes are of high quality	.710	.619
Compared to other service providers, GIBS is one of the best	.654	.563
Compared to other service providers, GIBS programms are of high quality	.642	.534
GIBS programme quality is dependable	.721	.724
GIBS programme quality consistent	.742	.667
GIBS programmes are innovative	.658	.555
GIBS employees are competent	.739	.659
GIBS provides us with personal attention	.703	.578
GIBS employees are courteous	.674	.620
GIBS employees are reliable	.753	.624

GIBS employees are responsive to my needs	.751	.657
We have peace of mind in dealing with GIBS	.726	.622
We trust GIBS	.685	.449
We know what to expect of/from GIBS	.775	.640
If GIBS give us their word, we know that whatever it is, it will be done	.762	.651
There is a real sense of understanding between GIBS and our organisation	.795	.726
Having a relationship with GIBS enables us to become more competetive in the market	.752	.633
We are able to capitalize on the value GIBS offers	.695	.581
our relationship with GIBS enables us to enhance financial outcomes As a result of the relationship, we able to enhance financial outcomes	.704	.611
As a result of the relationship, we able to maximize financial outcomes	.832	.749
GIBS and our organisation complement each other in terms of expertise	.726	.765
Our relationship with GIBS enables us to proactively identify opportunities	.723	.630
Our relationship with GIBS goes beyond just business	.764	.744
We have a real friendship with GIBS	.789	.678
We work on things together	.777	.712

Our relationship with GIBS enables us to share a lot together	.826	.773
We would call on GIBS if we had a problem	.680	.586
Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring.		

Appendix 6: EFA - Rotated Factor Matrix

	Factor				
	1	2	3	4	5
We work on things together	0.80	0.25			
Our relationship with GIBS enables us to share a lot together	0.77	0.37	0.12	0.19	
There is a real sense of understanding between GIBS and our organisation	0.77	0.33	0.14		
We have a real friendship with GIBS	0.74	0.31		0.17	
As a result of the relationship, we able to maximize financial outcomes	0.69	0.13	0.40	0.22	0.22
Our relationship with GIBS enables us to proactively identify opportunities	0.69	0.16	0.32	0.12	-0.12
GIBS and our organisation complement each other in terms of expertise	0.67	0.21	0.15	0.17	0.47
We would call on GIBS if we had a problem	0.67	0.22	0.27		
our relationship with GIBS enables us to enhance financial outcomes As a result of the relationship, we able to enhance financial outcomes	0.66	0.14	0.31		0.22
Our relationship with GIBS goes beyond just business	0.66	0.26	0.17	0.20	-0.42
Having a relationship with GIBS enables us to become more competetive in the market	0.65	0.28	0.29		-0.22
We are able to capitalize on the value GIBS offers	0.59	0.32	0.33	0.14	
We trust GIBS	0.42	0.40	0.31		0.14
GIBS employees are courteous	0.29	0.69	0.19	0.13	
GIBS employees are responsive to my needs	0.27	0.67	0.35	0.11	
GIBS employees are competent	0.23	0.66	0.40		-0.10
GIBS employees are reliable	0.24	0.64	0.35	0.14	-0.11
We know what to expect of/from GIBS	0.38	0.64	0.27		0.11
GIBS provides us with personal attention	0.37	0.62	0.12	0.16	0.13
If GIBS give us their word, we know that whatever it is, it will be done	0.49	0.54	0.34		
We have peace of mind in dealing with GIBS	0.42	0.53	0.40		
Compared to other service providers, GIBS is one of the best	0.28	0.49	0.48		-0.11
GIBS programme quality is dependable		0.16	0.82	0.10	0.12
GIBS programme quality consistent	0.22	0.32	0.72		
GIBS programmes are innovative	0.31	0.25	0.61	0.14	
GIBS design of programmes are of high quality	0.15	0.50	0.57		
GIBS programmes have a good reputation	0.23	0.37	0.55		-0.12
Compared to other service providers, GIBS programms are of high quality	0.22	0.43	0.53		0.13
GIBS programmes are reasonably priced	0.16			0.87	
GIBS is competitively priced	0.18			0.82	
I have no problems with the prices GIBS charges		0.14	0.10	0.78	
When you consider what you get from them, GIBS' prices are good.	0.19	0.34	0.15	0.63	

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.