Perceptional components of brand equity: Configuring the symmetrical and asymmetrical paths to brand loyalty and brand purchase intention

Abstract

This research investigates the impact of brand perception on brand loyalty and brand purchase intention using the lenses of complexity theory. First, the study conceptualizes and operationalizes perceptional and behavioral components of brand equity. It then examines the dimensions of brand perception, and by assessing the consequences of favorable brand perception, the study enables a better understanding regarding whether a brand marketing approach helps to improve marketing performance. The research was conducted using a mixed methodology, beginning with interviews in order to gain a better understanding of the relationship between the dimensions of brand perception. These were followed by a questionnaire survey, and the resulting data were analyzed through content analysis and fuzzy-set qualitative comparative analysis (fsQCA). The results indicate that brand awareness, perceived quality, brand association, brand fondness, brand image, and product country image have a strong impact on the management of brand perception. The finding illustrates that it is the combinations of various perceptional elements of brand equity rather than any single factor that have strong impacts on brand loyalty and brand purchasing intention. The results support the importance of brand perception for the fashion industry, which needs to be more interactive in order to increase their customers' brand loyalty and brand purchasing intention.

Introduction

Perceptional and behavioral components of brand equity are significant elements of branding and have been extensively discussed in the marketing domain (Cobb-Walgren et al., 1995; Ailawadi et al., 2001; Keller and Lehmann, 2006). Some of these authors have based their arguments on functional and symbolic attributes and responsibilities of a brand (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993; Yasin et al., 2007), and refer to the way consumers perceive a brand and the benefits they receive from consuming it. Studies like Cobb-Walgren et al. (1995) reviewed the categories that were similar in physical attributes but varied significantly in the advertising support used by them to create psychological differences. The brands considered by Cobb-Walgren et al. (1995) were not similar in respect of functional and financial risk to the elements that had an impact on brand equity. Brand perception is also considered as the added value given by current and potential consumers to the brand name, symbols and personality (Cornwell et al., 2011). The management of brand perception is a significant marketing strategy, which can position a brand uniquely in consumers' minds, and often results in sales, margins, profitability, and ongoing interest from stakeholders (Jung and Sung, 2008; Yoo and Donthu, 2001).

Brand equity has been explained as the added value that a brand name gives to a product; it is considered to be directly related to marketing concepts and is multi-dimensional in nature (Cobb-Walgren et al., 1995; Huang and Sarigollu, 2012; Jung and Sung, 2008; Yasin et al., 2007). Although brand equity has been defined in a unique manner for each of its stakeholder groups by previous studies (Aaker, 1991; Cobb-Walgren et al., 1995; Delassus and Descotes, 2012), we have adopted the six elements of brand perception given in the literature, which are brand awareness, perceived quality, brand association, brand fondness, brand image, and product country image. However, there is limited study of the perceptional and behavioral components of brand equity, specifically in the retail setting in a less explored context such as Latin America. Given the importance of brand perception, it is desirable to investigate it in different markets to add to previous studies. In addition, the novelty of this study is the combination of in-depth interviews and a fuzzy-set theoretic approach.

This research uses definitions of Cobb-Walgren et al. (1995), builds on complexity theory, and aims to achieve three objectives: (i) explore previous literature to assess the import of brand perception, (ii) identify dimensions that build brand perception and are most likely to

exert influence upon it, and (iii) develop and assess a conceptual framework concerning relationships between brand perception, its dimensions, and its consequences. In order to achieve these objectives, two research questions are: (i) what are the configuration factors that influence brand behavior favorably? and (ii) what are the main influences of brand perception on behavior elements of brand equity, such as brand loyalty and brand purchasing intention? The researchers conducted in-depth interviews and a survey to collect data from consumers of an international brand in Latin America, and this study used content analysis and fuzzy-set qualitative comparative analysis (fsQCA) (Ragin, 2006, 2008) to analyze data. fsQCA has received increased attention as it gives an opportunity to the researchers to gain a deeper and richer perspective on the data, together with complexity theory (Foroudi et al., 2016; Gupta et al., 2016; Leischnig and Kasper-Brauer, 2015; Mikalef et al., 2015; Ordanini et al., 2013; Woodside, 2014; Wu et al., 2014).

This study calls on managers to consider the role of brand perception on (re)shaping consumers' decision making. More specifically, it provides practitioners with a better understanding of brand perception within retail settings, specifically in a Latin American setting. The benefits from this study that managers can bring to a company translate into actual accurate and measurable business benefits. This study helps managers to expand their opportunities, and to facilitate a company's long-term development and expansion into new market places and geographies. In addition, mangers can use our study as a guideline to improve their negotiation power with vendors, distributors, and manufacturers. For instance, when suppliers identify that customers are loyal and are willingly looking to purchase products, they become more interested to work with the company and the company will be in an enviable bargaining position. In addition, the results of our study enable the mangers to understand the benefits of perceptional and behavioral components of brand equity to produce a higher margin on sales and reduce marketing, branding, and advertising costs.

Mexico, Latin America, is one of the greatest open economies in the world, and this has created a suitable arena for retailing to grow. The analysis of this study could offer understandings beyond those of earlier studies, where most of the studies' samples are from developed economies (Martin and Javalgi, 2016). This investigation fills a gap of the under-investigated area of literature surrounding perceptional and behavioral components of brand equity from Latin America. Therefore, by examining perceptional and behavioral components of brand equity in Latin America, specifically in Mexico, this investigation offers a

distinctive setting for the better understanding of the main configuration factors that favorably influence brand behavior.

This paper is structured as follows. The existing literature on customer brand perception is revised. The conceptual framework and research tenets are presented. Then, method and methodology employed in this study are explained, followed by the empirical findings and discussion of the results. Finally, the conclusions of this study highlight the theoretical and practical implications.

Customer brand perception: The construct

Significant attention has been devoted to this subject. Consumers prefer the products corresponding with their image, and they express their personality or characteristics through the products corresponding with their self-image (Foroudi et al., 2017; Sirgy, 1982). When the consumers perceive that the brand is of high quality, they have increasing fondness and associate with the brand and consequently, the formation of loyalty increases. Brand perception factors are highly related with self-concept, and brand perception rests on consumers' perception of the brand (and its associated utility) rather than any objective indicators (Cobb-Walgren et al., 1995; Voorhees et al., 2015). Several authors who have discussed this are broadly in line with Aaker's (1991) generalizable definition that brand equity is "the group of features and responsibilities related to a brand" (p. 15). Other authors (Broyles et al., 2010; Cornwell et al., 2011) used Aaker's (1991, 2009) definition as a reference point for their own incremental definitions. It has to be said that most definitions are markedly similar. There are two branches of brand perception to analyze: the perspectives of retailers or producers, and the consumer perspective.

According to Broyles et al. (2010), for the retailer or producer (seller), brand perception management is an opportunity to add value to the product and then to generate higher revenues or profit margins. Consumer-based perception is studied from the customer's ideals, perceptions and attitudes, appealing to which will make the customer more likely to choose a particular brand over a competitor's or pay a premium price. These branches are linked; high-equity from a consumer perspective will generate positive reactions to the brand, and therefore, positive financial results. Brand equity has both tangible and intangible qualities. According to Chang and Hung (2013), a combination of diverse marketing activities can influence a consumer's perception towards the image of the brand, thus impacting on

consumer's perception of the degree of brand equity. Delassus and Descotes (2012) point out that brand equity is composed of two essential aspects: the symbolic and the functional. The symbolic aspect comprises the non-physical aspects such as brand image, perceived quality, brand associations, and brand awareness. The functional aspect comprises the physical aspects and consumer satisfaction, that is, whether the product fulfils consumer needs or not.

Marketing activities can generate perceptional and behavioral components of brand equity. Researchers note a wide variety of factors that build perceptional components of brand equity. Nevertheless, all concur that a common factor in achieving positive brand perception is the marketing communication plan. It has been stated that high brand perception is the result of effective marketing strategies (Delassus and Descotes, 2012; Tuominen, 1999), and that marketers are responsible for building brand dimensionality. Marketers also contribute in building brands' beliefs and ideals, thus generating positive associations in consumers' minds and creating a positive attitude towards the brand.

Perceptional components of brand equity

Brand association - is an important ingredient of brand perception, and a perceptual component of brand equity (Aaker, 2009; Chen, 2001; Keller, 1993). There is a strong connection between awareness and association; some argue that the former precedes the latter (Dew and Kwon, 2010). Aaker (1991) and Keller (1993) agree that brand association refers to all the thoughts in consumers' minds related to a brand. Brand association also refers to the intangible characteristics of a product, for instance, its distinctiveness among a variety of brands, innovation, participation of the brand in the market, and prestige (Yasin et al., 2007). Brand associations arise from brand knowledge and brand image (Cheng-Hsui, 2001; Cobb-Walgren et al., 1995). Keller (1993) argues that brand knowledge is like a collection of pieces in the consumers' minds that activate and generate associations. Associations can be divided into three types: associations with emotional attributes, associations with functional attributes of a product, and attitudinal associations. So, establishing the brand association and brand relationship quality requires consideration of brand fondness, which represents feelings that can be associated with the act of liking.

Perceived quality - is an important element of brand perception. It refers to intangible perceptions, judgments, thoughts, and beliefs about the quality of a product (Ramaseshan and Tsao, 2007). According to Lassar et al. (1995), brand perception is the result of the mix of

desirability and perceived quality. Some authors (Datta et al., 2017) describe perceived quality as a physical attribute. Furthermore, perceived quality is linked to price. That is to say, when consumers see higher prices for similar products, the perceived quality may be higher. Perceived quality is a driver for positive attitudes towards the brand (Fatima et al., 2013). In other words, the higher the perceived quality, the more opportunity for positive associations the brand has. Furthermore, consumers tend to choose those products that make them feel secure. Aghdaie et al. (2012) suggest that perceived quality should be reinforced and used as a competitive advantage. To reinforce perceived quality, it is suggested that warranties, prices, and brand information be used as tools to attach quality to the brand. Perceptions of brand quality are based on price, appearance, characteristics, and features (Ramaseshan and Tsao, 2007). Additionally, marketing activities will influence the evaluation of quality. Aghdaie et al.'s (2012) research concluded that perceived quality is connected to perceived personality.

Brand awareness - is the presence that a brand has in the consumers' minds (Cornwell et al., 2011). The importance of brand awareness for brand equity is proportional to the level of awareness that the brand generates (Yasin et al., 2007). That is to say, the higher the level of awareness, the higher the brand perception. When consumers are aware of a brand, it is more likely to be chosen over other brands with lesser awareness. Brand awareness involves two main elements: recalling and recognizing (Keller, 2008). Brand recall refers to the ability of the consumers to correctly generate and retrieve the brand in their memory (Keller, 1993). Brand recognition is when consumers differentiate a brand when there are other options (Cobb-Walgren et al. 1995; Homburg et al., 2010). At the same time, these facts are interrelated because if customers are capable of recalling the brand outside the store, they will be able to recognize the brand at the point of purchase. A brand can be identified by its name, package, location or shape, and its potential to affect buying intentions, whereas brand recall is not necessary to create buying intentions. Yasin et al.'s (2007) study has shown that when a brand is recalled and recognized, it has more likelihood of being selected. It is known that brand awareness is essential to building brand perception (Aaker, 2009; Keller, 1993; Macdonald and Sharp, 2000).

Brand image - is an important element of brand perception (Keller, 1993). Authors (Aaker, 1991; Kotler, 1998) agree that brand image refers to the associations within consumers' minds, beliefs built around the brand, uniqueness that differentiates brands from others,

personal symbolism that buyers associate with a brand, and general brand impressions about the brand, more than the product. Additionally, brand image can be seen as a communication tool (direct and indirect) and can be evaluated in terms of identity (Radon, 2012). Gummerus et al. (2011) suggest that brand image should be based on attributes, individual perceptions, personal values, experiences, type of brand, and background. Keller (1993) proposed three dimensions for brand image: attributes, benefits, and attitudes. A brand with a strong brand image can build a point of differentiation for consumers and generate higher financial incomes (Hussey and Duncombe, 1999). On the other hand, brands with a weak image produce the opposite effects (Cobb-Walgren et al. 1995; Ewing et al., 2011).

Brand fondness - is essential because it allows identification of which aspects are important for consumers in terms of perceptions and purchase intentions (Jung and Sung, 2008). Companies realized that without creating brand fondness, the *'brand's raison d'etre is jeopardized'* (Bengtsson, 2003). Consumer behavior is composed of motivations, decision making, brand loyalty, preferences, brand awareness, and associations. Brand fondness is defined mainly by consumers' emotions. Consumers tend to take decisions as a result of emotional effects and the circumstances under which the purchase takes place (Watson and Spence, 2007). Marketing has paid attention to this factor and used emotions in engaging potential consumers in marketing plans and advertisements (Jung and Sung, 2008). Marketing's emotional messages can influence behavior and are considered to be persuasive buying drivers. In addition, Watson and Spence (2007) argue that the marketer should understand the emotional effects in a culture and consider the impact these emotions might have on consumers. Forehand et al. (2012) concluded that consumer behavior is directly linked to identity. Culture is one of the most important aspects that determine brand fondness and consumer behavior. People of the same culture also share language, behavioral patterns, and values (Cobb-Walgren et al., 1995; Nayeem, 2012). Hence, it is easier to build communication at a general, rather than at an individual level (Nayeem, 2012). However, buying intentions and the reasons that consumers choose a specific product reflect their behavior, either individually or as a group.

Product country image - also influences consumer perception. In fast growing global markets, product country of origin plays a key role in brand image perception and the success of a brand may depend on this. Some consumers make purchasing decisions based on the country the brand comes from (Yasin et al., 2007). Although product country image tends to

be a factor determining brand perception (Pappu et al., 2006; Yasin et al., 2007), it can be said that country of origin is a natural requirement for creating an image. Jaffe and Nebenzahl (1997) suggest that country of origin should be used as a marketing strategy for creating brand image. Finally, product country image can create positive beliefs and ideals for a brand.

Conceptual framework and research Tenets

The current paper aims to investigate customers' perceptional and behavioral components of brand equity by presenting configurations of causally interconnected structures of sets of research constructs. The proposed conceptual framework tests whether inter-consumer perceptions contribute to brand perception, and complexity theory was employed to integrate the principle of equifinality (Woodside, 2014). By doing so, the research addresses a gap in the literature, specifically a relative lack of studies empirically assessing the influence of Latin American customers on brand perception. It is well established that brand awareness, brand fondness, brand image, product country image, perceived quality, and brand association build brand perception. It can also be described by other sets of causal conditions that combine in adequate configurations (Pappas et al., 2015; Woodside, 2014). This study goes further by examining the attitudinal and behavioral consequences of brand perception (such as loyalty and brand purchasing intention). Figure 1 presents the foundational complex model utilized here:

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Brand equity persuades, retains, and involves consumers, generates higher profits and higher margins (Jung and Sung, 2008), and influences buying decisions which positively impact on company equity value (Yoo and Donthu, 2001). That is to say, strong perceptional and behavioral brand equity help companies achieve successful financial returns over the long term. In addition to these positive effects, the literature also reveals that low or negative brand perception has a concomitant effect upon brand loyalty.

Complexity theory integrates the principle of equifinality, according to authors (Fiss, 2011; Woodside, 2014), the results of interest can similarly be described by alternative sets of causal conditions which combine in appropriate configurations. Brand awareness, brand fondness, brand image and product country image, perceived quality, and brand association

are essential causal conditions to recognize customers' perceptions in personalized retail environments, and may be combined in different configurations in order to describe them. Therefore, configurations may include combinations of brand perception elements, leading to the following Tenet,

> *Tenet 1: No single best configuration of customers' perceptions leads to brand purchasing intention, but there exist multiple, equally effective configurations of causal factors.*

From perceptual to behavioral components of brand equity

In a highly competitive market, brand loyalty plays a fundamental role in brand perception. Loyalty refers to consumers' attachment to the brand. It has two dimensions: attitude and behavior (Zhang et al., 2014). Attitude refers to satisfaction; behavior refers to trends and buying behavior. The level of loyalty is high when consumers interact actively with the brand (Shang et al., 2006). Brand loyalty develops brand strengths, creates opportunity to engender repurchase intentions, and makes the brand less susceptible to competitors (i.e. raises barriers to entry) (Matzler et al., 2008). Aurand et al. (2004) argued that during the previous decade, firms recognized the importance of brand strength for creating customer loyalty and gaining a stronger position relative to competitors. According to Nenycz-Thiel et al. (2013), the first step in creating strong brand loyalty is market penetration. This means that all loyal customers must have experienced the product at least once. Matzler et al. (2008) found that consumer satisfaction and behavior have a positive relation with brand loyalty.

According to the above discussion, brand purchasing intentions are the most important outcome expected from brand perception. High brand perception is associated with an ability to influence brand purchasing intention and preferences of customers (Pappu et al., 2005). Consumers tend to base decisions on their previous experience with the product rather than on extensive evaluations of product features. Consumers also tend to evaluate the product based on their ideals and upon perceived product characteristics (Cobb-Walgren et al., 1995; Yasin et al., 2007). Additionally, marketing activities are fundamental for buying decisions, especially advertising, which sets up communication between the brand and the consumer (Shukla, 2011). One essential aim of marketing activities is to develop a strong marketing mix plan (Yasin et al., 2007). Preference, purchase intentions, and buying decisions will all follow as a result. Thus, to understand consumer decision-making it is important to

understand the factors that drive the consumer, both positively and negatively. Hence, configurations may include combinations of brand perceptions, leading to the following Tenet,

Tenet 2: Configurations that lead to high brand loyalty and brand purchase intention will require the presence of at least one brand perception causal condition.

Methodology

In this research, we use a mixed method approach combining qualitative in-depth interviews with fuzzy set-theoretic analysis. The purpose of the qualitative study was to uncover patterns, themes, and categories in order to make judgments about what is really significant and meaningful about perception components of brand equity in the research setting. Fuzzy set-theoretic approach was used to investigate the causal effect of brand perception on brand loyalty and brand purchase intention (Ragin, 2008). The advantages of adopting the fuzzy set-theoretic approach are the notion of its capability to deal with causal-asymmetry, as well as equifinality (Woodside, 2014). According to Fiss (2011), "it provides a theoretical underpinning for the persistence of a variety of design choices that can all lead to a desired outcome" (p. 394). Given the multi-faceted and varying conditions of brand loyalty and purchasing intentions, this paper therefore adopts such an approach rather than the traditional correlation/regression-based approach.

Data collection

Perceptional and behavioral components of brand equity are defined as the mix of features and responsibilities related to a brand which could be tangible or intangible (functional and symbolic) (Aaker, 1991; Cobb-Walgren et al., 1995; Keller, 1993; Yasin et al., 2007). Brand perception can also be considered as the added value given by current and potential consumers to the brand name, to its symbols, and to the brand personality (Cornwell et al., 2011). Therefore, brand perception plays a significant role in generating higher profits, cash flow, higher profit margins and interest from stakeholders (Jung and Sung, 2008; Yoo and Donthu, 2001). As such, the idea of brand perception could not be assessed without referencing specific companies and asking for consumer feedback. Hence, a specific company is referenced on the evaluation questionnaires (Elsbach and Bhattacharya, 2001) for assessing brands. The company was chosen via in depth assessment brand presence in a

major Latin American country, namely Mexico. In the Inditex Report (2013), Mexico was reported as the main market in South America and the specific chosen company or brand had 246 stores across the country.

A convenience sample of 321 adult consumers participated in the research over a three-month period. The data were collected in Mexico City, the capital of Mexico and the largest city in the country. Male and female consumers who were at least 19 years old and who had graduated from high school were considered eligible for this research (Churchill, 1999). Of 308 usable responses, 56.8% were completed by males; 56.5% of respondents were between the ages of 19 and 29 and 16.9% were between the ages of 30 and 39. 16.6% of the respondents were lawyer, dentist, or architect. 16.2% were office/clerical staff and 16.2% were students. 60% were holding undergraduate degrees and 20% had postgraduate degrees, which is representative of the overall population (Churchill, 1999). The respondents' characteristics are illustrated in Table 1.

<<<Insert Table 1>>>

Measures

For the survey instrument, questions were derived from established scales from previous research. However, this study generated 20 interviews with retailers, designers, marketers, and also postgraduate students, all of whom were aware of, or had direct involvement with the brand. The interviews' approximate duration was between 20 and 120 minutes (total of 1079 minutes). The details of in-depth interviews with managers and consultants are illustrated in Table 2.

Specifying the content domain is achieved through the literature, the qualitative studies, and the survey instrument (Churchill, 1979). Hence data triangulation added to data richness and increased the validity of the findings (Churchill, 1979; Saunders et al., 2007). Brand awareness, brand fondness, image, and product country image were adopted according to the context. The measurements for brand loyalty, perceived quality, brand associations, and brand purchasing intention were also obtained from extant scales. The list of items was examined for inter-judge reliability by seven academics in the arena of marketing and branding. Then, we incorporated their comments on the appropriateness of the items and checked the clarity of wording. In addition, they were requested to comment on the

importance of each statement and to indicate which items should be retained (Foroudi et al., 2017; Lichtenstein et al., 1990). All items were assessed on seven-point Likert scales, ranking from 1="strongly disagree" to 7="strongly agree". The items employed to conduct the investigation are described in Table 3.

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Table 4 indicates factor loadings and reliabilities of the constructs. As an initial examination of their performance within the sample, the primary measures were subjected to a series of factor and reliability analyses. All a priori scales showed acceptable reliability (Cronbach's alpha >.906) (Nunnally, 1978). However, items such as BA6 ('I can quickly recognize the symbol or logo of X') and BA7 ('some characteristics of X come to my mind quickly') were removed due to multiple loadings on two factors. BA1 ('I am interested in X'), CF1 ('I think other people like X'), BI2 ('I like the brand compared to other companies in the same sector'), BI6 ('The image of X is consistent with how I like to see myself'), PCI1 ('The country from which X originates is a country that is innovative in manufacturing'), BL3 ('I enjoy purchasing from this brand'), BL5 ('X would be my first choice of fashion items'). PQ1 ('X is a quality brand'), PQ5 ('It is likely that X items are of very consistent quality'), and BAS5 ('I would feel proud to own products of X') were also dropped during structural equation modelling due to problematic cross-loadings on extra factors. The remaining items loaded considerably on the intended constructs, with composite reliabilities ranging from .93 to .98. The constructs' correlation matrix is also presented in Table 4.

Discriminant validity was examined through confirmatory factor analysis and measured by average variance extracted (AVE) for each construct, and compared with the square correlation between them (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). Based on the recommendations of Dillon and Goldstein (1984) and Fornell and Larcker (1981), the variance extracted for each construct was compared to the square of each off-diagonal value within the Phi matrix for that construct. The results show that the average variance extracted (AVE) for each construct ranged from .64 to .8, and the items represent a distinct underlying concept. A good rule of thumb is that an AVE of .5 or higher indicates adequate convergent validity.

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Analysis and results

Insights from in-depth interviews

It is important to know whether the brand image influences consumers' buying decisions. Therefore, participants were asked if they "bought X products because of the brand image". A participant responded, *"yes I used to buy in X because of the brand image, especially in those times where the brand was perceived as the trendy shop in Mexico… at the beginning I bought in X because it was a trendy brand, afterwards I like the brand"*. This is consistent with Matzler et al. (2008) who found that satisfaction and consumer behavior have a positive relationship with brand loyalty. In other words, cultural and social context, lifestyles, emotions, and beliefs are key factors for loyalty.

In addition, the logo seems to play a fundamental role for the brand image because it is often the item noted about the brand by consumers (Matthiesen and Phau, 2010). Therefore, respondents in the qualitative phase were asked to describe X's logo, and the results are marked, i.e. 20 out of 20 participants could describe the logo accurately. Thus, the brand logo has a strong presence in the Mexican market. The logo was mainly described as *'typographic'*, *'minimalistic, typography well-known', 'simple'* and *'elegant'*. Although the logo plays a fundamental part, the findings also indicated that consumers specifically do not feel any special attachment to it, in fact some respondents feel *'indifferent'* to it. The logo characteristic can be employed for further study.

The comments from the qualitative study denote that there is a strong relationship between brand image and perceived quality. Continuing with brand image, some comments emphasized that they felt comfortable with the X brand image. Those comments support the theory proposed by Radon (2012), who stated that brand image is a communication tool. The following statements are a clear example of how the consumers feel towards X's image, *"I feel good, its image is always impeccable, and they keep the same style in every city and town where they have stores"*.

The findings reveal that the main associations that consumers have with X are: 'fashion', 'trendy', 'affordable', 'variety', 'designs' and 'fast-fashion'. The majority of associations are positive. Based on the literature, with positive experiences, the brand creates positive

associations and favorability; with positive associations, the brand gets a unique position in the market. Consumers base future buying decisions on previous experiences with the brand:

> *"So far I haven't had any bad problem with the brand to stop buying it… because every time that I have had a problem with the brand I also have had positive answers from the staff".*

On the other hand, consumers who do not trust X explained that the main reason is because the quality of the products that they have bought has been low. It is important to understand consumers and their expectations of a brand. The findings from the qualitative study indicate that the main expectations for the brand are quality, fashion, design, and image. The following comments illustrate consumers' expectations, *"I would like to see more quality on their items, more daring designs, and more accessories".*

The results from the qualitative data demonstrated that perceived quality has an impact on brand perception (Fatima et al., 2013). In this case the opinions about X's quality are diverse. Following the theory that perceived quality can be linked to the product's price, respondents highlighted this relationship as *"prices are fair, but sometimes they are really expensive and once you have laundered them they become ugly".*

The following quotes demonstrate that some consumers feel satisfied with the brand: *"I expect what it already gives me, good taste of fashion and affordable prices".* Perceived quality should be used as a competitive advantage because consumers tend to choose those products that make them feel secure (Aghdaie et al., 2012). For that reason, it was important to discover if X's consumers think that they receive products that are good value for their money. The following comment illustrates what consumers think about X's prices,

> *"Yes, because you can find items with different prices, since the basics cost less [than] 200 pesos except coats which are really expensive. Obviously, the quality of a 150 pesos shirt should be much lower than the quality of 1800 pesos coat".*

Regarding the consumers' perception of the brand from a different country, comments made by interviewees were quite informative. *"If the products were from other European countries, my perception would be better. If they were made in China, my perception would be worse… The quality of every country is different. However, I believe that Europe has higher quality standards".* Participants also commented on the reason why product country

image did not influence their buying decisions, for example, *"I base my decisions on my test and my personality"* and *"I don't tend to buy clothes because of political and social aspects."* This comment supports the quantitative results.

This study confirmed two main consequences of perceptional components of brand equity: loyalty and brand purchasing intention. It is important to generate brand loyalty in order to make the brand less vulnerable to competition (Aurand et al., 2004). For this reason, this study considered it necessary to understand the reasons why people chose to shop at X rather than other options (Hansen and Jensen, 2006). Design, price, variety, and fashion trends were the most common answers. Some of the reasons why consumers are not willing to pay higher prices are mentioned in the following statements,

> *"I think their prices are fair enough for the quality of their items. In the case that they increase their prices I would prefer to buy other brands instead, like Tommy or Springfield…I believe that one of the marketing strategies of X is affordable fashion"*.

Brand purchasing intention is the most important outcome expected from brand perception. To understand the brand purchasing intention process it is important to understand the factors that drive consumers, either positively or negatively (Book et al., 2016). The results show that a significant number of participants (65%) stated that X would be within their three main options for buying clothes. These findings contradict the findings about brand loyalty, where 65% of consumers did not recognize themselves as loyal to the brand. According to Durvasula et al. (1997), it is important to identify how the brand is judged in order to generate a consumer's decision-making. The following comments made by participants illustrate why they prefer X among different options, *"X has been within my first options for ages because it always has some stuff that I like a lot…Because I like fashion a lot and it's for sure that in X, I will always find trendy clothes"*.

Contrarian case analysis

Performing contrarian case analysis specifies the key associations between the variables and illustrates the variables which impact on the results positively or negatively; it means that substantial numbers of cases in the research sample validate this association (Woodside, 2014). According to authors (Pappas et al., 2015; Woodside, 2014), contrarian analysis should be examined to realize the relationships between the factors, as two factors may relate

positively, negatively, and not all in the same set of data, regardless of the main effect of one on the other, and the results support the need to implement configural analysis for their explanation. As Table 5 illustrates, this study employed contrarian case analysis by using quintiles on all variables and by performing cross-tabulations using the quintiles.

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Reliability and validity of the measures

The confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to allow a stricter assessment of construct uni-dimensionality; the examination of each subset of items was internally consistent and validated the constructs on the basis of the measurement models (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988). The measurement model was used to explain the causal relations among the observed indicators (variables) and respective latent constructs (variables) (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988), according to the uni-dimensionality assumption. Uni-dimensionality is assessed by the overall fit of the confirmatory model (Garver and Mentzer, 1999). Uni-dimensionality refers to a set of indicators that has only one underlying construct (Hair et al., 2006). Confirmatory factor analysis examines another important property, the uni-dimensionality of scale originality, and is developed by exploratory factor analysis (Steenkamp and van Trijp, 1991). A confirmatory measurement model was used during this stage to classify the strong association between observed variables and respective constructs (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988) to ensure that the standardized factor loading values were greater than 0.6. Confirmatory factor analysis was computed in order to examine whether each subset of items is internally consistent. In addition, the validity and reliability of the construct is significant for further theory testing. After EFA, CFA allows the computation of an additional estimation of a construct's reliability, namely composite reliability (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988; Hair et al., 2006).

The measurement model (inner-model) was examined by using AMOS 16, carried out to identify the causal associations between observed items (variables) and the latent (unobserved) construct. The validity of the construct was tested by confirmatory factor analysis in this stage (Hair et al., 2006). The items measured were uni-dimensional, and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) provided an acceptable fit (Df=1.494; GFI=.869; NFI=.935; CFI=.978; AGFI=.849; IFI=.978; TLI=.976; RFI=.930). Reliability was assessed with Cronbach's alpha. As illustrated in Table 4, Cronbach's alpha was higher than .929 for

all measures, representing adequate internal consistency (Bagozzi and Yi, 1988). In addition, the reliability of measures using composite reliability (rho) was examined; they were greater than the recommended value (.98>.7) and suggested a satisfactory level of reliability (Bagozzi and Yi, 1988; Hair et al., 2006). Convergent validity was checked with the values of CFA loadings and standard errors. All item and construct loadings were noteworthy (t-value/CR>1.96).

Results from the fsQCA

In order to analyze the data by fsQCA, the conventional variables are transformed into fuzzy set membership scores, i.e. the process of calibration. This research was following the principle of calibration recommended in Wu et al. (2014), adjusting extreme scores ignored by the respondents. In this case, only a few cases out of the total sample scored less than 3 on a 7 point Likert-scale. The current study, therefore, set 7 as the threshold for full membership (fuzzy score=.95), and 5 as the cross-over point (fuzzy score=0.50), 3 as the threshold for full non-membership (fuzzy score=.05), 1 as the minimum score (fuzzy score=.00). This paper applies fsQCA 2.5 software to identify which configurations exhibit high scores in the outcome (Ragin, 2006). Following Fiss (2011), the research uses 3 as the minimum for frequency and .90 as the cut-off point for consistency. Then the intermediate solution was compared with the parsimonious solution to find the core conditions, and peripheral conditions.

Table 6 presents the results of fsQCA analysis using brand loyalty as outcome. Black circles indicate the presence of a condition, and circles with "X" indicate its absence. Large circles indicate core conditions, small ones indicate peripheral conditions. Blank spaces indicate "don't care." Table 6 depicts 9 solutions. The overall solution consistency is .81>.75 threshold. The solution coverage is .78, indicating a large proportion of the outcome is covered by the nine solutions.

Table 6 also provides the solution coverage, unique solution coverage, and solution consistency for each of the nine solutions. Solution 1 suggests that joint high scores of brand fondness, product country image, and brand associations, coupled with a low score of brand image, predict high brand loyalty. The solution indicates a set of loyal customers who are passionate about the brand and less concerned about the brand image. Solutions 2 and 3 are

quite similar but with the absence of perceived quality, and high scores for three other brand dimensions predicting high scores of brand loyalty. Solutions 4 to 6 can be grouped together. Solution 4, for example, suggests that high scores of brand awareness, brand fondness, product country image, perceived quality, all predict high brand loyalty. Solution 5 suggests that high scores of brand fondness, brand image, perceived quality, and brand association predict brand loyalty. On the other hand, Solutions 7 to 9 provide the antidote to Solutions 4 to 6, indicating the joint absence of key brand dimensions predicts brand loyalty.

We have also calculated the results using brand purchasing intention as outcome. The solutions obtained are exactly the same as Table 6, except for slight changes in consistency and coverage scores. Therefore, the results are not reproduced here. The findings provide support for both tenets; i) No single best configuration of customers' perceptions leads to high brand purchasing intention, but there exist multiple, equally effective configurations of causal factors. ii) Configurations that lead to high brand loyalty and brand purchase intention will require the presence of at least one brand perception causal condition.

<<<Insert Table 6>>>

Testing for predictive validity

Authors recognize the importance of predictive validity, to understand how well the model predicts the dependent variable in additional samples (Gigerenzer and Brighton, 2009; McClelland, 1998; Pappas et al., 2015; Woodside, 2014; Wu et al., 2014), as achieving only a good model fit does not essentially mean that the model offers good predictions. As Table 7 illustrates, to investigate for predictive validity, this study split the sample into a modelling subsample and a holdout sample, and it shows that the patterns of complex antecedent conditions are consistent indicators of high scores in brand loyalty and purchase intention using the subsample. Figure 2 shows that an examination of the model 1 predictions indicates a highly consistent model (.85) and high coverage (.51). In addition, a predictive examination of all models recommends that the highly consistent models for the subsample have high predictive abilities for the holdout sample, and vice versa.

<<<Insert Table 7>>>
<<<Insert Figure 2>>>

Discussion

This study employed a mixed-method approach by combining qualitative study, CFA, complexity theory, and fsQCA; in the fashion industry "dominant logic is a fit-like-a-glove union for advancing theory, method, and practice in service research" (Wu et al., 2014, p. 1667). This research has investigated dimensions that constitute perceptional components of brand equity (brand awareness, perceived quality, brand association, brand fondness, brand image, and product country image) and has examined the attitudinal and behavioral components of brand equity on Latin American consumer perceptions (brand loyalty and brand purchasing intention).

Based on the findings from solution 1 (brand fondness*brand image*~product country image*brand association ≥ brand loyalty and brand purchase intention) (Table 6), the combination of brand fondness, product country image and brand association have an influence on brand loyalty and brand purchasing intention, however brand image has a negative influence on brand loyalty and brand purchasing intention. Brand fondness is the set of features that affect how consumers interact with the brand, also the consumers' reactions and perceptions towards it (Jung and Sung, 2008). Regarding what thoughts the consumers have about X, respondent comments reflect that both positive and negative perceptions exist about the brand. This is consistent with the findings of Watson and Spence (2007) that emotions are linked to brand fondness.

Solution 2 (brand awareness*brand fondness*perceived quality*~brand association ≥ brand loyalty and brand purchase intention) and solution 3 (brand awareness*brand image*product country image*perceived quality ≥ brand loyalty and brand purchase intention) are similar to solution 1. Grouping of brand awareness, brand fondness, and brand association has impacts on brand loyalty and brand purchasing intention even though consumers have not perceived quality for the brand. Brand awareness, being a central element of brand perception, exerts a significant impact on consumer minds (Cornwell et al., 2011) by influencing the level of recall and recognition when awareness is high (Yasin et al., 2007). The level of brand perception is directly related to the level of awareness, the higher the level of awareness, the higher the brand perception (Yasin et al., 2007).

This study supported the theories mentioned by Yasin et al. (2007) that 'the higher the recall level - the more positive the brand awareness'. According to Pappu et al. (2005), perceptions and thoughts towards a brand have a significant impact for the brand perception, whether they are negative or positive. Views were mixed. While some were positive, one respondent stated, *'I think X makes tacky clothes',* supporting the fact that negative perceptions impact future buying intentions. Brand awareness is a driver of buying intention and the characteristics of the brand as perceived by consumers lead directly to brand fondness.

Solution 4 (brand awareness*brand fondness*product country image*perceived quality ≥ brand loyalty and brand purchase intention) and solution 6 (brand awareness*brand image*product country image*brand association ≥ brand loyalty and brand purchase intention) can be gathered together. Most of the respondents who think that X is not good value for money referred to the quality of the products as the main reason, for example: *"the items are low quality"* and *"most of the clothes are made for only wearing three to four times".* The following comment supports the theory that quality in the products is essential, as well as quality of the service, *"... that the sales are more organized because during the sales the shops look like street markets with unorganized clothes everywhere".*

Solution 5 (Brand fondness*brand image*perceived quality*brand association ≥ brand loyalty and brand purchase intention) advises that high scores of brand fondness, brand image, perceived quality, and brand association predict loyalty and brand purchase intention. Brand image is the set of associations and beliefs built around the brand and general impressions of it (Aaker, 1991; Kotler, 1998). It is another key factor in brand perception, as consumers tend to analyze information about a brand before making buying decisions; it directly influences consumer preferences (Ataman and Ülengin, 2003). Therefore, brand image is the level of uniqueness that a brand has in comparison to others (Aaker, 1991; Kotler, 1998). The findings are consistent with those of other researchers when they refer to brand image as the set of preconceptions that consumers have toward a brand (Aaker, 1991; Kotler, 1998). The respondents were required to say what their perceptions of X were. They described X's image in terms like *'elegant, with class and with style', 'fashionable', 'basic', 'normal and overvalued'* and *'trendy'*. Two respondents stated,

> *"It is always fashionable, but sometimes the quality of the products is not the best… It is a clothes shop that sells some things with good quality, it is always on*

the frontline and it fits to my personality, however, it is little bit serious and cheap".

However, solution 7 (brand awareness*~brand fondness*~brand image*~product country image*~brand association ≥ brand loyalty and brand purchase intention), solution 8 (brand awareness*~brand fondness*brand image*~perceived quality*~brand association*~), and solution 9 (brand awareness*~brand fondness*~brand image*product country image*~perceived quality*~brand association ≥ brand loyalty and brand purchase intention) provide the explanation to solutions 4 to 6, showing that the combined absence of main brand dimensions predicts brand loyalty and brand purchase intention. Remarkably, however, results of the quantitative test demonstrated that product country image bears no relation to brand perception. For example, a Spanish brand 'X' was marketed throughout the Mexican stores; perceptions of this product country image were both positive and negative. The financial crisis was cited mainly as being associated with product country image. *"The Spanish economy is contracting/decreasing, and levels of unemployment are increasing".* In contrast, the following comments suggest that Spain is associated with good standards of design and famous fashion designers.

> *"They have really well-known fashion designers like Rosa Clará and Agatha Ruíz de la Prada… Spain has been pioneers of the marketing strategy named fast fashion, which is the main strategy of X".*

Conclusion

The major contribution of this paper is to address gaps in earlier research concerning (i) what are the configuration factors that influence brand behavior favorably? and (ii) what are the main influences of brand perception on behavior elements of brand equity such as brand loyalty and brand purchasing intention. The findings of this research propose an optimistic response to both queries. First, understanding and management of perceptional and behavioral components of brand equity appear to be favorable vehicles for marketing resources of organizations, which lead managers to expand their opportunities. Also, it enables an organization's long-term expansion into new markets by creating robust perception based promises with the organization. Second, it elucidates managerial and theoretical implications to reinforce the understanding and management of perceptional and behavioral components of brand equity.

Theoretical contribution

What determines brand equity is an important issue in marketing literature in general and brand management literature in particular. Although studies like Cobb-Walgren et al. (1995) made an attempt to measure brand equity from the perspective of each and every stakeholder group, they have failed to dig deep into the visual and psychological aspect of a brand by looking at perceptual and behavioral components. Past research (Delassus and Descotes, 2012; Huang and Sarigollu, 2012; Jung and Sung, 2008; Yasin et al., 2007; Yoo et al., 2000) tends to mix various determinants of brand equity together. This study is among the first to examine the relationships among perceptional and behavioral components of brand equity elements via a mixed methodology in a Mexican setting.

In the research framework, the main factors influencing brand perception formation are identified, as are the main consequences of a given brand perception in the eyes of consumers. Brand perception is defined in terms of the associations and beliefs customers have about the brand (Keller, 2003). This paper employs complexity theory and takes a configurational approach towards the individual determinants and consequences of brand perception in the eyes of consumers. It allows the simultaneous modelling of multiple layers and also answers the set of interconnected research questions in a single accurate model in a systematic manner. Concerning the methodology, this study is one of the earliest to apply a configural examination based on individual-level data that conceptualizes and operationalizes brand perception in a Mexican setting. In addition, this study used fsQCA which has received increased attention in recent studies by scholars (Foroudi et al., 2016; Pappas et al., 2015; Woodside, 2014; Wu et al., 2014).

This study conceptualizes and operationalizes perceptional and behavioral components of brand equity in a Mexican setting. Based on the research findings, the elements influencing brand perception are brand awareness, brand fondness, brand image, product country image, perceived quality, and brand association. Given the significance of branding in modern marketing, brand perception is a significant element of marketing strategy that has the ability to set a brand in a distinctive place within the consumer's mind and gain competitive advantage over the competitors (Yasin et al., 2007). The results of this study are helpful in investigating the concept in relation to its dimensions and consequences, in order to provide more knowledge in the area as well as to add information to previous studies.

Nonetheless, a contribution to knowledge is made with regard to an identifiable gap in the literature, namely brand perception in the specific context of Mexico. Another significant contribution from this research is the proposed conceptual framework that suggests studying brand perception from its dimensions and consequences to assess the impact this has on Mexican consumers.

Managerial implications

Based on the theoretical contributions, this research offers managerial contributions for marketers and fashion marketers that aim to explore more about brand perception. This study also offers significant insight into the fashion industry, providing tools to understand the role of brand perception in the fashion industry and help mangers, policy makers, and marketers to understand the role of brand perception on Mexican consumers. The findings obtained in this research have important managerial implications, illustrating as they do a general picture of the whole situation in which brand perception is built by brand awareness, brand fondness, brand image, product country image, perceived quality, and brand association. Our study demonstrates a clear understanding of the dimensions that develop positive brand perception in order to generate positive outcomes.

This article contributes to the growing research on perceptional and behavioral components of brand equity and helps managers to understand their company and their competitors to increase the degree of loyalty and increase (re)purchasing intent and intention. The perceptional components of brand equity are important to the extent perceived by managers; it results in distinct managerial actions, and its effectiveness generates innovative opportunities in the market. Our study is beneficial to brand managers as it enables them to understand what the brand means to consumers.

Furthermore, brand awareness was found to be a significant influence on perception of brand equity. From this result, managers should place more emphasis on the significance of brand recall and brand recognition to create favorable brand perception. Although Latin America is a significant world player between emerging economies and plays a chief role in worldwide trade and investment activities (Martin and Javalgi, 2016), it has not attracted many previous researchers. This study fills a gap of the under-explored area of literature surrounding perceptional and behavioral components of brand equity from Latin America.

Mexican consumers are aware that when they are paying for 'fast fashion' they have purchased items that may rapidly be out of season. It may thus be concluded that even when quality is an important factor for the Mexican consumer, it is not the main driver for buying. Mexican consumers tend to evaluate quality based on the products as well as on the quality of the customer service and the quality of the shops. This means that they tend to see the quality of the brand as a whole - i.e. a store brand. In conclusion, this research found brand purchasing intention to be the most important outcome relative to brand equity. After the analysis, it was possible to support this fact. The general outcomes from each of the constructs in both the qualitative and quantitative aspects of the research were positive. The correlations between each of the constructs were positive and it was concluded that each of the constructs has a strong role within the brand perception and generates buying intentions. The companies should pay more attention to such activities to make sure that the brand can express a distinct, consistent message and convey its value to the consumers.

Future Research Directions and Limitation

This study represents a preliminary foray into the conceptualization of perceptional and behavioral components of brand equity and some of its antecedents and outcomes, although the findings are not without limitations. First among these is the sample selected for conducting this study. This research was carried out in one single setting - i.e. Mexico City, Mexico. The findings could have been different in another Latin American country or city. For this reason, it would be suggested that a future study should conduct this research in different Latin American countries in order to compare the results. This study selected an international brand which has the most stores around Mexico. The results might be different for a brand with less presence, or a national brand. Hence, further research would be recommended to compare the results with a national brand or a brand with fewer stores in Mexico.

By employing multiple regression analysis, and complexity theory and configural analysis, this research is different to the majority of earlier study on the fashion industry. Nevertheless, additional research is required in many settings to improve their usefulness (Foroudi et al., 2016; Gupta et al., 2016; Pappas et al., 2015; Wu et al., 2014). Another limitation of this study concerns the number and type of brand used. Future empirical study should be

conducted to replicate this study with two or more different brands. This may therefore lead to reservations about the generalizability of the research findings (Churchill, 1999).

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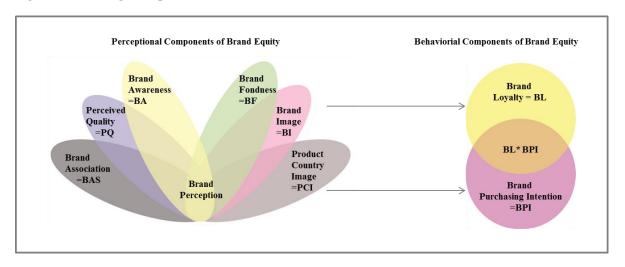
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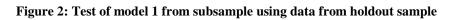
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Figure 1: Modeling multiple realities

Figure 2: Test of model 1 from subsample using data from holdout sample

Table 1: Respondents' characteristics

	Frequency	Percent		Frequency	Percent
Gender			**Occupation**		
Female	133	43.2	Top executive or manager	23	7.5
Male	175	56.8	Owner of a company	31	10.1
Education			Lawyer, dentist or architect etc.	51	16.6
19 to 29	174	56.5	Office/clerical staff	50	16.2
30 to 39 years	52	16.9	Worker	19	6.2
40 to 49 years	44	14.3	Civil servant	18	5.8
50 to 59 years	34	11.0	Craftsman	17	5.5
60 and above	4	1.3	Student	50	16.2
Degree			Housewife	39	12.7
Undergraduate	185	60.1	Retired	10	3.2
Postgraduate	62	20.1			
PhD	14	4.5			
Diploma	47	15.3			

Table 2: The details of in-depth interviews with managers and consultants

Interview Date	Interview position	Interview approx. duration
08.09.2015	Chairman	30 min.
12.08.2015	Marketing Manager and PhD Student	60 min.
06.08.2015	Managing Director	32 min.
27.08.2015	Brand Manager and MBA student	45 min
05.08.2015	Industrial Design Manager	90 min.
05.08.2015	Communication and Design Manager	40 min.
29.07.2015	Communication Manager	90 min.
13.10.2015		90 min.
18.09.2015	Design Consultant and Senior Lecturer	120 min.
08.08.2015	Design Consultant and Professor	30 min.
07.10.2015	Industrial Design Manager	60 min.
08.11.2015		20 min.
06.09.2015	Design and Communication Consultant	60 min.
08.10.2015		22 min.
06.07.2015	Design Strategy Manager and MBA student	30 min.
03.08.2015		60 min.
07.08.2015	Retail Manager	90 min.
27.08.2015	Retail Manager and MBA student	30 min.
05.10.2015		35 min.
20.10.2015		45 min.

Topics discussed

- The understanding of brand perception and brand equity
- Perceptional components of brand equity
- Behavioral components of brand equity
- Their perception of what they understand as the brand equity and its influences on brand loyalty and brand purchasing intention.
- Discussion of brand association, perceived quality, brand awareness, brand fondness, brand image, and product country image

Source: The researchers

xxTable 3:The main constructs and measurement items

	Main Constructs	References
	Brand awareness (BA) (Cronbach's alpha = 0.939)	
BA1	I am interested in X	Aaker (1991); Cornwell et al. (2011); Yoo and Donthu (2002); Supported in qualitative study
BA2	Compared to other people I know more about X	
BA3	When I think of fashion items, X is one of the brands that come to mind	Boo et al. (2009); Buil et al. (2013); Kaplanidou and Vogt (2003)
BA4	X is a brand of fashion I am very familiar with	Buil et al. (2013); Kaplanidou and Vogt (2003)
BA5	I know what X looks like	
BA6	I can quickly recognize the symbol or logo of X	Buil et al. (2013); Yoo and Donthu (2001); Supported in qualitative study
BA7	Some characteristics of X come to my mind quickly	Boo et al. (2009); Buil et al. (2013); Kaplanidou and Vogt (2003); Pappu et al. (2006); Yoo and Donthu (2001); Supported in qualitative study
	Brand fondness (CB) (Cronbach's alpha = 0.934)	
CB1	I think other people like X	Lee and Ganesh (1999)
CB2	I would be satisfied with owning one	
CB3	I would recommend X to others	
CB4	X reflects my personal lifestyle	Ekinci et al. (2011)
	Brand image (BI) (Cronbach's alpha = 0.906)	
BI1	I like the brand	Foroudi et al. (2014); Melewar et al. (2017); William and Moffit (1997)
BI2	I like the brand compared to other companies in the same sector	Foroudi et al. (2014); Melewar et al. (2017); William and Moffit (1997)
BI3	I think other consumers like the company as well	Foroudi et al. (2014); Melewar et al. (2017); William and Moffitt (1997)
BI4	The brand's logo communicates about the company to its customers	Henderson and Cote (1998); Foroudi et al. (2014); Melewar et al. (2017); and also supported by the qualitative study
BI5	The company's logo enhances the company's image	Brachel (1999); Delassus and Descotes (2012); Foroudi et al. (2014); Henderson and Cote (1998); Melewar et al. (2017); Yasin et al. (2007); and also validated by the qualitative study
BI6	The image of X is consistent with how I like to see myself	Boo et al. (2009); Ekinci et al. (2011); Grace and O'Cass (2005)
	Product country image (PCI) (Cronbach's alpha = 0.927)	
PCI1	The country from which X originates is a country that is innovative in manufacturing	Yasin et al. (2007); Supported in qualitative study
PCI 2	The country from which X originates is a country that is good in designing	
PCI 3	The country from which X originates is a country that is creative	
PCI 4	The country from which X originates is a country that is prestigious	
	Perceived quality (PQ) (Cronbach's alpha = 0.974)	
PQ1	X is a quality brand	Delassus and Descotes (2012); Supported in qualitative study
PQ2	X items are worth their price	

PQ3	The quality of the products of X seems coherent with their price	
PQ4	X proposes a large choice of fashion items	
PQ5	It is likely that X items are of very consistent quality	Aaker (1991); Boo et al. (2009); Yoo and Donthu (2001; 2002); Sweeney and Soutar (2001)
PQ6	It is likely that X offer excellent features	Aaker (1991); Yoo and Donthu (2001; 2002)
PQ7	It is likely that X are very reliable	
Brand associations (BAS) (Cronbach's alpha = 0.934)		
BAS1	I can recognize X among other competing brands	Yoo and Donthu (2002); Supported in qualitative study
BAS2	Some characteristics of X come to my mind quickly	Aaker (1991, 1996); Pappu et al. (2006); Supported in qualitative study
BAS3	I like the company which makes X	
BAS4	I trust the company which makes X	
BAS5	I would feel proud to own products of X	
Brand loyalty (BL) (Cronbach's alpha = 0.930)		
BL1	Compared to other brands that have similar features, I am willing to pay a premium (higher) price for X	Yasin et al. (2007); Supported in qualitative study
BL2	I will not buy other brands if X is available at the store.	Yoo and Donthu (2001)
BL3	I enjoy purchasing from this brand	Back and Parks (2003); Baloglu (2002); Boo et al. (2009)
BL4	I consider myself to be loyal to X	Boo et al. (2009)
BL5	X would be my first choice of fashion items	Boo et al. (2009); Keller (2003); Odin et al. (2001); Yoo and Donthu (2001; 2002); Yoo et al. (2000); Supported in qualitative study
BL6	I would advise other people to visit this destination	Boo et al. (2009); Ekinci et al. (2011)
Brand purchasing intention (BPI) (Cronbach's alpha = 0.962)		
BPI1	If I have to choose among brands, X is definitely my choice	Yasin et al. (2007); Supported in qualitative study
BPI2	If I have to buy a fashion item, I plan to buy X even though there are other brands as good as X	
BPI3	If there is another brand as good as X, I prefer to buy X	
BPI4	I make my purchase selection of fashion items according to my favorite brand name, regardless of price	

Table 4: Factor loadings, descriptive statistics, reliabilities, and correlation matrix

Construct								Squared multiple correlations				Average variance extracted			
Standard factor loading				Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Value							
						BPI	BAS	PQ	BL	PCI	BI	BF	BA		
Brand purchasing intention (BPI) @ .950				CR = .94											
				.513											
BPI1	<---	BPI	.889	1.000							.806				
BPI2	<---		.907	1.051	.038	27.724	***				.876	80.85%			
BPI3	<---		.879	.916	.077	11.902	***				.727				
BPI4	<---		.921	1.004	.079	12.733	***				.816				
Brand association (BAS) @ .952				CR = .94											
				.555	.285										
BAS1	<---	BAS	.923	1.000							.887				
BAS2	<---		.912	1.055	.030	34.622	***				.906	64.34%			
BAS3	<---		.844	.925	.039	23.424	***				.719				
BAS4	<---		.906	.937	.032	29.155	***				.828				
Perceived quality (PQ) @ .971				CR = .98											
				.108	.055	.06									
PQ7	<---	PQ	.948	1.000							.905				
PQ3	<---		.960	1.020	.026	38.637	***				.922				
PQ4	<---		.921	1.010	.029	35.378	***				.898	88.64%			
PQ6	<---		.939	.968	.031	31.568	***				.831				
PQ2	<---		.939	1.007	.033	30.410	***				.906				
Brand loyalty (BL) @ .929				CR = .93											
				.505	.259	.281	.055								
BL1	<---	BL	.887	1.000							.766				
BL2	<---		.885	1.027	.047	22.002	***				.811	77.42%			
BL4	<---		.892	1.109	.052	21.222	***				.767				
BL6	<---		.855	.952	.048	19.805	***				.725				
Product country image (PCI) @ .939				CR = .96											
				.109	.056	.06	.012	.055							
PCI2	<---	PCI	.937	1.000							.826				
PCI3	<---		.931	1.062	.044	23.929	***				.780	88.69%			

	Path	Factor										
PCI4	<---		.957	1.098	.039	28.306	***	.919				
Brand image (BI) @ .954					CR = .94							
					.623	.32	.346	.067		.315	.068	
BI1	<---	BI	.913	1.000				.849	79.32%			
BI3	<---	BI	.847	.903	.037	24.458	***	.771	79.32%			
BI4	<---	BI	.905	1.019	.033	30.760	***	.899	79.32%			
BI5	<---	BI	.896	.918	.033	28.064	***	.842	79.32%			
Brand fondness (BF) @ .947					CR = .95							
					.337	.173	.187	.036		.171	.037	.21
BF4	<---	BF	.935	1.000			***	.892	86.25%			
BF3	<---	BF	.932	.985	.033	29.993	***	.865	86.25%			
BF2	<---	BF	.919	.921	.034	27.399	***	.811	86.25%			
Brand awareness (BA) @ .962					CR = .94							
					.648	.333	.36	.07		.328	.071	.404	.219
BA4	<---	BA	.881	1.00			***	.794	80.70%			
BA3	<---	BA	.906	1.01	.06	16.97	***	.848	80.70%			
BA5	<---	BA	.911	1.02	.03	34.56	***	.909	80.70%			
BA2	<---	BA	.895	1.09	.05	18.76	***	.839	80.70%			

Table 5: Results from the contrarian case analysis

			Percentile Group of Brand Loyalty					
			1	2	3	4	5	Total
Percentile Group of BA	1	Count	15	17	12	6	7	57
		% within Percentile Group of BA	26.3%	29.8%	21.1%	10.5%	12.3%	100.0%
	2	Count	12	13	18	7	8	58
		% within Percentile Group of BA	20.7%	22.4%	31.0%	12.1%	13.8%	100.0%
	3	Count	15	11	8	13	15	62
		% within Percentile Group of BA	24.2%	17.7%	12.9%	21.0%	24.2%	100.0%
	4	Count	4	3	8	10	13	38
		% within Percentile Group of BA	10.5%	7.9%	21.1%	26.3%	34.2%	100.0%
	5	Count	6	11	16	24	36	93
		% within Percentile Group of BA	6.5%	11.8%	17.2%	25.8%	38.7%	100.0%
Total		Count	52	55	62	60	79	308
		% within Percentile Group of BA	16.9%	17.9%	20.1%	19.5%	25.6%	100.0%

Table 6: Configurations predicting brand loyalty and brand purchase intention *

	Solutions								
VARIABLES	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*	*8*	*9*
Brand awareness		●	●	●		●	⊗	⊗	⊗
Brand fondness	●	●		●	●		⊗		⊗
Brand image	⊗		●		●	●	⊗	⊗	
Product country image	●		●	●		●	⊗		⊗
Perceived quality		⊗	⊗	●	●			⊗	⊗
Brand association	●	●			●	●	⊗	⊗	●
Raw coverage	.27	.36	.38	.45	.44	.52	.14	.17	.14
Unique coverage	.01	.03	.01	.04	.04	.05	.01	.01	.01
Consistency	.90	.87	.85	.89	.90	.86	.87	.85	.96
Overall solution coverage	.78								
Overall solution consistency	.81								

*Black circles indicate the presence of a condition, and circles with "X" indicate its absence. Large circles indicate core conditions; small ones, peripheral conditions. Blank spaces indicate "don't care."

Table 7: Complex configurations indicating high intention to purchase for subsamples 1 and 2

Models from subsample 1	Coverage		Consistency
	Raw coverage	**Unique**	**Consistency**
1.bas*pci*ba*bi	0.524271	0.074508	0.862036
2.bas*bf*ba*bi	0.521946	0.040306	0.871542
3.pci*bf*ba*bi	0.502374	0.054258	0.874368
4.~bas*~pq*bf*~ba*bi	0.174402	0.011433	0.814112
5. bass*pci*bf*~ba*~bi	0.202112	0.005910	0.923418
6. bass*pq*pci*bf*~bi	0.230985	0.024222	0.903715
7. bas*pq*~pci*bf*bi	0.222943	0.006201	0.917098
8. bas*pq*~pci*~bf*~ba*~bi	~ 0.122275	0.002616	0.870946
9. bas*~pq*~pci*~bf*~ba*bi	0.139425	0.011530	0.942988
Solution coverage:	0.770759		
Solution consistency:	0.808106		