SCHOOL OF BRAND LEADERSHIP

Name: Modise Nalane

Student Number: [redacted]

Programme: BA Honours in Strategic Brand Communications

Module: Research Methodology

Lecturer: Helena van Wyk

Supervisor: Marleen Rolland

Date of submission: 31 August 2020

Word Count: 10 659

Title: An exploration of the effects of B2B brand alliances on building brand equity through business networking events: Black Business Council and Business Members.

I hereby declare that the Research Report submitted for the Strategic Brand Communications Honours degree to The Independent Institute of Education is my own work and has not previously been submitted to another University or Higher Education Institution for degree purposes.

ABSTRACT

The importance of corporate brand building for Business-to-Business (B2B) is increasing, with business strategies requiring relentless redevelopment, due to the effects of globalisation; hyper-competition; multiplying of comparable products and services; ever-growing complexity and elevated price pressures. Historically, black businesses have been marginalised within the South African economy, stemming from institutional blockages thus, The Black Business Council (BBC) has taken up the mandate to partner with black owned businesses and associations to build up collective brand equity. The research used was an interpretive research design, with non-probability sampling employed. Qualitative data was collected by means of semi-structured individual interviews. And subsequently, data was analysed using the thematic analysis method. B2B brands hold significant financial value for an organisation. They assist to create synergies with alliance partners and customers alike, and findings show that BBC member organisations confirm that the BBC does indeed yield spill-over brand equity for member organisations.

Table of Contents

1. Chapter 1: Introduction

The evolution of brand has resulted in a brand being viewed as a differentiator and quality marker to that of a key business asset. Thus, establishing a strong brand, and the ongoing iterative development of brand equity are essential for attaining success in the contemporary business environment (Shariq, 2018). The importance of corporate brand building for Business-to-Business (B2B) is increasing, with business strategies requiring relentless redevelopment, due to the effects of globalisation; hyper-competition; multiplying of comparable products and services; ever-growing complexity and elevated price pressures (Ćorić & Jelić, 2015). According to Villaseñor-Román & Schmitz (2018) brand equity is the commercial value drawn from the perception consumers have regarding the brand name of a distinct product or service. In relation, Keller's Customer Based Brand Equity Model (CBBE) is a measurement tool of brand equity, used to value the activities of brand building and management. It has traditionally been used to measure brand equity in consumer driven markets, with varying studies conducted to align it to the B2B market (Rekhi & Kumar, 2017).

1.1 Background and orientation

Essentially, having a business in operation is a predetermining requirement to building brand equity. Historically, black businesses have been marginalised within the South African economy, stemming from institutional blockages and policy defined legislation under the former Apartheid Government (Bain, Venter, & Mosala, 2017). This period led to subsequent racial prejudices that have limited the ability of Black Owned Businesses and Associations to vigorously build and maintain brand equity (Gradin, 2018). As a lobby group, The Black Business Council (BBC) has taken up the mandate to partner with black owned businesses and associations to build up collective brand equity for this grouping. B2B brand alliances are an important factor in establishing strong and relevant networks which can positively affect the brand equity, as well as financial security of a firm (Ma, Cheng, Bu, & Jiang, 2018). The BBC to this effect, makes use of B2B brand alliances to enhance co-creational brand equity for itself and member organisations through engagements, such as corporate networking events (BlackBusinessCouncil, 2020).

1.2 Rationale and relevance

Economic opportunities are a necessity to achieve upward mobility for individuals, and to build a holistic advancement of society (WorldEconomicForum, 2020). The political shift to Post-Apartheid South Africa was an opportunity to create in-roads for the previously oppressed masses, to freely and openly engage in wealth creation (Lephakga, 2017). South Africa to date still experiences high levels of economic inequalities divided through racial lines (Goodman, 2017). Thus the focus of this study will be placed on the exploration of the BBC's activities in providing members access to opportunities to enhance their brand equity. The BBC has a mandate to enhance the brand equity and market competitiveness of its brand alliance members, thus forming the basis of exploration for this study.

1.3 Problem statement

Ćorić & Jelić (2015) note that performance measurement for B2B brand alliances, improve corporate reputation, build competitive advantage & increase customer awareness to develop mutual brand equity for partners. The study will explore the measurement of brand alliances as key factors in building and maintaining brand equity. This study aims to unpack the relationship between the BBC and its members.

1.3.1 Why is the problem worth investigating?

The business environment is an ever evolving landscape, with business requiring re-development and network relations to remain sustainable and competitive in the market to build meaningful brand equity. Black Business has not had the tools to live up to these requirements, and thus looking into the study of brand based performance and the effects surrounding this concept, will allow the researcher to provide documented evidence to add to the knowledge required to change these circumstances.

1.3.2 Research questions

a) What are the advantages/disadvantages of BBC networking events for building brand equity for members?
b) What contributions to brand value does a brand alliance with the BBC offer its members?
c) Using the performance block of Keller's Customer Based Brand Equity Model as reference, does a brand alliance with the BBC build brand equity for partner organisations?

1.3.3 Research objectives

a) To analyse what advantages/disadvantages BBC networking events have on building brand equity for members.
b) To determine what contributions to brand value, a brand alliance with the BBC offers its members.
c) To evaluate whether a brand alliance with the BBC builds brand equity for partner organisations using the performance block of Keller's CBBE framework.

1.4 Purpose statement

This study will therefore conduct a qualitative research study amongst BBC member organisations, to assess whether forming a brand alliance with the BBC will derive benefits of brand equity spill-over for BBC member organisations, measured against the performance block of Keller's Customer Based Brand Equity Model.

1.5 Conceptualization (of key concepts)

All key concepts have been identified and have been defined appropriately with their relevance to the research clearly stated. Only authoritative sources were used for the conceptualisation of this paper.

a) Keller's CBBE Model: Brand Performance Block

This concept will focus on describing the performance block and its relation to the B2B environment

b) Brand Value: The effects and benefits of brand building

This concept will guide the reader to understand how the brand can be determined and measured as a financial asset of the firm.

c) Brand Alliances: Corporate Brand Strategy

This concept will give an understanding of the primary concept under study, with a link to the effects of the corporate brand in determining brand alliance formations.

d) Experiential Networking Events

This concept will be unpacked to understand the value add nature of networking events as crucial brand building elements

1.6 Overview of Research Methodology

The research used was an interpretive research design, with non-probability sampling employed. Qualitative data was collected by means of semi-structured individual interviews. And subsequently, data was analysed using the thematic analysis method. A detailed discussion on the comprehensive methodology is presented in Chapter 3.

1.7 Structure of the paper

In the following sections the study will first present the theoretical background of the concept of B2B brand equity using Keller's CBBE model in relation to key concepts including, brand value, brand alliances and the Black Business Council. Thereafter the paper will discuss the research methodology, including the paradigm, research design, data collection and analysis, from which findings will be presented. The anticipated contribution will be presented thereafter, and finally the ethical considerations, as well the conclusion of the paper will follow.

2. **Chapter 2:** Literature review

2.1. Keller's Brand Equity Model: Performance in the Corporate Environment

Defining and measuring brand equity, is a task that marketers have been taking on for decades. The reasons behind this have been to investigate the value of branding on the overall perceptions of consumers, and how to translate that into economic value for organisations (Keller & Brexendorf, 2019). According to Aaker (1991), brand equity is a collection of brand assets and liabilities related to a brand. Farjam & Hongyi (2015) further state that brand equity is the enrichment that a brand name imparts on a product/service, based on its perceived value and attractiveness. Davcik and Sharma (2015) considered brand equity to be the worth of a brand, embedded in a consumer's mind, and materialised in hers/his subsequent assessments and anticipations. Brand equity has commonly been defined and measured through Aaker (1991), who presents a dominant framework to conceptualise brand equity. This covers the following assets or liabilities: brand loyalty, brand awareness, perceived quality, as well as brand associations.

An equally dominant framework in literature though, is Keller's Consumer-Based Brand Equity Model (CBBE) (Christodoulides, Veloutsou, & Chatzipanagiotou, 2016). This model, in contrast to Aaker is made up of a set of both functional and emotive building blocks to measure brand equity, and thus gives more relatable features to the influences of brand for B2B stakeholders (Gaetano & Raffaele, 2016).

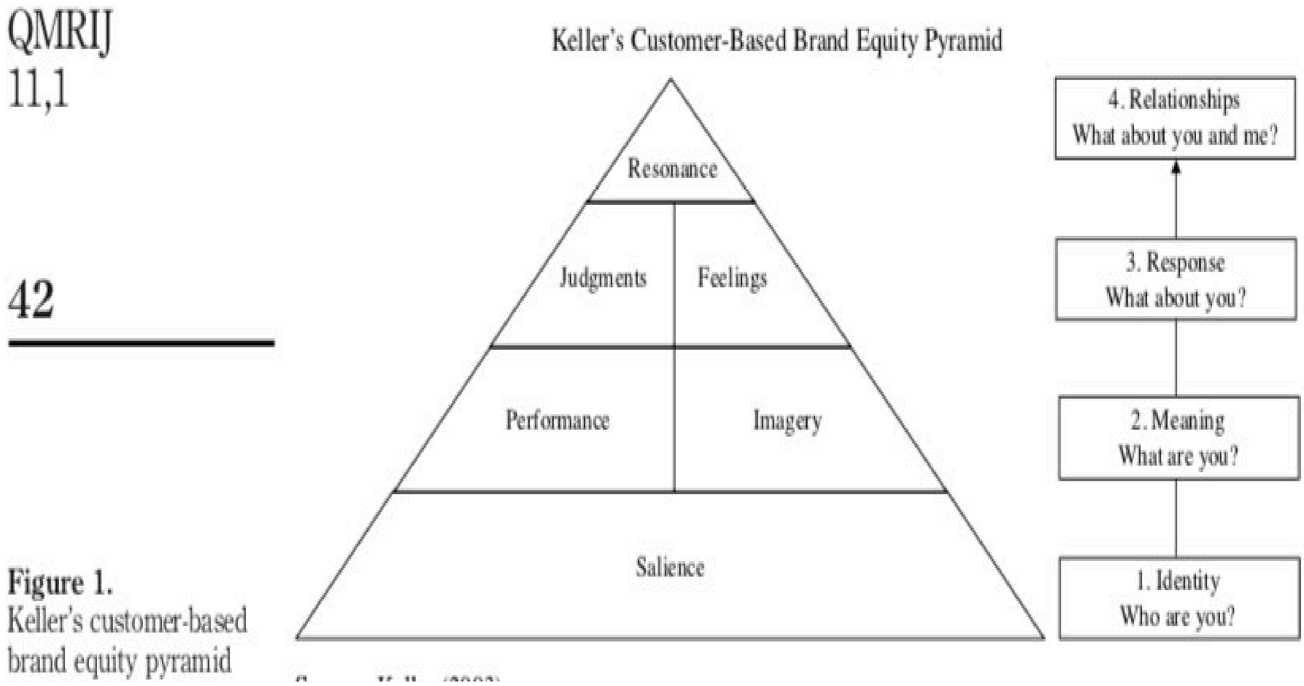

Figure 1: Theoretical Construct of Customer – Based Brand Equity Model by Keller.

To unpack the need and relation of brand in the B2B environment, this paper will focus on the performance block of Keller's Brand Equity Model. According to Keller (1993), performance is made up of five categories: characteristics and features of the product; serviceability, reliability, and durability of the product; effectiveness and efficiency in service activities; style and design; and ultimately price. These are functional applications which can be measured and are relatable to the subsequent concept in this literature review: brand value. Performance, according to Jain (2017), is defined by how effective the product or service is in satisfying the fundamental needs and desires of the customer. This concept is of importance to business practitioners who seek to enhance the financial value and performance of their firms, as will be unpacked in the section to follow. Performance measurement is an activity that sustains an organisation's competitiveness and improves the value of its activities (Leyer, Moormann, & Heckl, 2015). Thus, the performance measurement of a brand's activities will allow it to build iterative enhancements of its overall strategy, as well as greater opportunities to leverage for investment. Essentially, the value of performance underpins the subsequent concept of brand value, its relation to brand equity and its relevance to the B2B stakeholder.

2.2. Brand Value: The effects and benefits of brand building

The theme of Brand Equity has presented a contentious variable of measurement under accounting standards, and how organisations report its value on the balance sheet (Davcik , Vinhas da Silva, & Hair, 2015). Brand is effectively an intangible asset for a company to leverage in order to achieve and increase future profits, effectively needing to be positioned as a source of revenue for the company (Rovedder de Oliveira, Silveira, & Luce, 2015). According to Tiwari (2010, as cited in, Carlbäck, 2019), and for the purposes of this paper, Brand Value is essentially, “the net present value of future cash flows from a branded product, minus the net present value of future cash flows from a similar unbranded product,” or, more succinctly how the worth of the brand is measured by investors, shareholders and company management.

Under current International Accounting Standards (IAS), an asset is deemed to be identifiable if there are held rights over it: basically, if there are legal protection measures in place for these. Based on the IAS stance, an intangible asset may be recorded if: “the recorder controls, holds the aforementioned legal rights; it is transferable (separable); it is the source of specific future revenue extending beyond the yearly accounting period,” (Deloitte, 2018). Financial analysts prefer to back organisations with strong brands, because they provide less risk than weaker brands. Therefore, the financial analyst and the consumer will place the same value on brand preference in their decision-making model. Furthermore, balance sheets are a reflection of bad management choices from the past, whereas the brand represents a potential source of future based profits (Jiang & Wang, 2019).

2.2.1. Intangible assets: brand equity & goodwill

The economic valuation of a company is based on the tangible and intangible assets it possesses (Pinto, 2020). The most noteworthy intangible economic asset is goodwill. Much like brand equity, goodwill has a been a contentious topic amongst accountants, on how to determine its value. Defined, goodwill is an intangible asset that is linked to the acquisition of one enterprise by another. More specifically, this includes elements such as the value of brand name, secure customer base, great customer and employee relations, as well as patented technologies (Garcia, Katsuo, & Mourik, 2018). Research surrounding the significance in worth of goodwill as an asset, has proven that it serves as a valuable asset for any enterprise, and the elements that build it, are worth focusing on rigorously (Kimbro & Xu, 2016). The element of goodwill provides a good basis to assist corporate managers from all functions to understand that the application in establishing and driving brand focused activities both internally and externally will have a tangible effect on the balance sheet of the firm. “Accounting goodwill is the monetary value of the psychological goodwill that the brand has created over time through communication investment and consistent focus on product satisfaction, both of which help build the reputation of the name” (Deloitte, 2019). These are principals which align to brand building activities for the enhancement of an organisation’s brand equity, and ultimately create the tie to brand value.

2.2.2. Book value vs market value and the importance of brand building

Additionally, for a brand to be measured financially, there needs to be a look into the tangible book value of a business compared to the relative market value for which it can be sold. These variables often have a marked difference in monetary value, with market value registering as significantly higher than the book value of an organisation, according to Keller (2008 as cited in, Trent & Mohr, 2017). This difference indicates that the brand can be a strong asset in the valuation of a firm and thus enable greater access to capital markets. To this point, brand equity building should be a desired achievement for any business to competitively participate in the marketplace.

The assessment of market value highlights the increasing importance of brand and innovation management, with firms having become exceedingly reliant on powerful brands and product innovations to achieve competitive advantage and drive growth (Brexendorf, Bayus, & Keller, 2015).

Furthermore, attracting capital, be it from equity or debt investments, is operationally the charge of a finance manager, but the importance of brand equity to the balance sheet, highlights the need for greater synergies with marketing & brand managers (Manuel , Iglesias , & Ind , 2017). Defining brand value in relation to brand equity building, assists the researcher in communicating the value of a brand to corporate stakeholders during the data collection period.

2.3. Brand Alliances: effects on brand equity & value building

The impact of globalisation is forcing organisations to re-evaluate their hierarchical and rigid internal and external forms of market engagement. In this new data-driven world of hyper-competition, organizations require structures wherein innovation and brand management are centrally placed. Furthermore, organisations are taking on an ever-increasing size of strategic alliance partners to enhance the efforts of the firm in various essential aspects (i.e., gaining access to new markets or developing new products) (Thomaz & Swaminathan, 2015).

The value of brand is in its ability to build stakeholder networks and sales assets thus supporting the relevance of building brand alliances (Ahirrao & Patil, 2017). According to Redler (2016), brand alliances can be considered as a unique version of a brand combination, wherein they signify elements of external, future orientated, simple, as well as complex groupings of brands, with similar levels of ability in value creation. Ma, Cheng, Bu & Jian (2018), further state that brand alliance strategies are taken on by enterprises who seek to enhance perceptions surrounding the value of their brands, and standing in the market, as well as to attain greater share of their market. This is essentially leads to a spill-over effect which refers to the element where brands can enhance or improve organisational reputation and market opportunities via beneficial brand building activities with a partner brand (Schlegelmilch, 2016).

For B2B alliance partners, the purpose of brand would be to invest in stakeholder relationships which align to, and enhance the company values, when communicating with both internal and external stakeholders (Charlton & Cornwell, 2019). Just as in B2C, brand value in B2B encompasses functional and rational elements such as quality, technology, and reliability, but it as well comprises emotional elements such as reduction of risk, reassurance, trust, and credibility (Gomes, Fernandes, & Brandão, 2016). To this end, Zulfikarijah, Wastono, & Masudin (2018), reflect on the theory of planned behaiviour (TPB) as the attitudes and supplementary social psychological variables influencing the manager's choice preferences as part of their decision making activity. These components will ultimately influence the manager's decision as to which partners to choose when forming a brand alliance for their organisation. Furthermore, these components draw relation to the measurement of authenticity, from a brand's purpose and activities, which ultimately influence the decision making process.

According to Beckman (2017) brand authenticity is essential in influencing B2B marketing decions, including the choice of brand alliance's. Morhart, Malar, Guevremont, & Girardin, (2015) define perceived brand authenticity (PBA) "as the extent to which consumers perceive a brand to be faithful toward itself (continuity), true to its consumers (credibility), motivated by being considerate and responsibile (integrity), and able to support consumers in being true to themselves (symbolism)." These represent a scale against which a marketing manager should base their decision to enter into a brand partnership.

According to Belleme (2017), in order to enter into an alliance with a partner, a checklist is required to inform an organisation's brand strategy on the ideal partners as expressed in table 1:

Checklist
• **Define your brand/marketing objectives that can be supported by an alliance**
• **Build a list of partners**
• **Reach out to prospective partners**
• **Confirm partner participation**
• **Launch alliance**
• **Track results**

Figure 2: Brand Alliance Checklist

Brand Alliances are underpinned by and established through the corporate brand strategy. The corporate brand strategy provides a roadmap for the brand building activities that an organisation will make use of for a specified period. These activities are linked to the organisation's financial objectives to build performance measured value. Therefore, understanding the nature of corporate brand strategy is a necessity to measuring the value of brand alliance formations.

2.3.1. Corporate Brand Strategy: Performance measurement

Brands are complex entities. Ironically though, they require simple and refined messages founded on a value driven approach with a cohesive and articulate marketing strategy, entailing uniformity for both internal and external use (Christodoulides, Cadogan & Veloutsou, 2015). Hence, a strong brand has a clear identity that resonates with external and internal stakeholders alike (Anber , 2017). According to Koporčić, Rešetar, & Tolušić (2017), corporate branding can also be described as a: "systematically planned and implemented process of creating and maintaining a favourable reputation of the company with its constituent elements, by sending signals to stakeholders using the corporate brand." Corporate branding to this effect is a chosen strategy of brand architecture, wherein a company defines the way in which they craft their brand presence in the market (Brexendorf, Bayus, & Keller, 2015).

The corporate brand can be regarded as an intangible asset of a company, and thus a holistic approach to brand management is required, with all members of the organisation acting in accordance with the desired brand objectives (Kuuru & Tuominen, 2016). Based on the brand's classification as an asset for professional business interests, the brand strategy requires continuous evaluation of the performance of its tactics and activities to deliver brand equity.

The corporate brand, further functions as the character association for the corporation. It is the inclusive centre point for the corporation's activities, and captures the corporate vision, values, personality, positioning, and image amid various other dimensions (Ogbuanu, Dr Kabuoh, & Ajike, 2015). The external activities of the brand's strategy will be assessed by the performance of its brand investment strategy, i.e. investing in an annual membership fee to keep a brand alliance with the BBC. The asset nature of a brand is seen through the benefits it derives for a firm, which include raising the perceived quality of its products and/or services, affording add on price premiums and creating competitive advantage in the market (Changa, Wangb , & Arnett, 2018). According to Thomaz & Swaminathan (2015), the declaration of an alliance should present information for an organisation's whole market, on the firm's capacity and strategies to produce future profits. This impacts on brand spill-over, wherein influence is leveraged over consumer perceptions and attitudes when evaluating a brand alliance, which ultimately affects the value of an organisation's brand equity, by either increasing or decreasing it (Ma et al.,2018). This variable is a strong determinant for entering into a brand alliance in the B2B market because it will have an effect on the corporate reputation of each partner, either positively or negatively, based on the associated perceptions surrounding the brand alliance.

2.3.2. Brand Alliances: networking events & brand building

According to consumer culture theory, firms often use brands as symbolic sources for their consumer base to develop their unique identities in meaningful ways as opposed to mere utilitarian approaches Arnould & Thompson (2015). This approach, thus requires a look at experiential marketing as a concept for brand building. Experiential marketing is defined as 'the practice of promoting the interests of an organization and its brands by, associating the organization with a specific activity' (Smilansky, 2018). Smilansky (2018), further states that it includes customer involvement with the brand, offers first-hand brand experiences, and is recognized as an opportunity to provide brand equity and increase sales for stakeholders. A tool aligned to this theory, are corporate networking events, which solidify brand alliances and build on corporate reputation.

Business networking events are an essential tool to building relevant networks and communicating a brand's strategy and direction to selected partners who can be leveraged to build sustainable value and competitive advantage. Additionally, networking events allow for engagements in professionalism, knowledge attainment, reputational advancement as well as the attainment of innovation building practices and relationships (Theaker, 2016; Mone, Schlegelmilch, & Mitchell, 2015). These elements ultimately reflect the importance of this tool in the brand building process. Networking events allow partner brands to draw significant value, as they foster an environment for social engagement and drive behaviours worthwhile to develop connections and allegiance, whilst ultimately, heightening the value of the network relationship (Sarmento, Simões, & Farhangmehr, 2015).

This is a testimonial that gives anecdotal evidence to the impact that networking events can have in providing essential tools for brand building to the members of the US Black Chambers advocacy group.

Greater Southwest Black Chamber of Commerce

Greater Southwest Black Chamber of Commerce

Several weeks ago I attended one of the most impacting conferences hosted by The Coalition Building Across Diverse Chambers Program. January 13-14, I had the opportunity to be a part of an intense two day chamber coalition workshop. By attending this workshop it has helped lead our chamber in the pathway of setting more creative goals and reinforcing priorities for the year to come. The information that was presented was very useful and our chamber was able to put these ideas into practice immediately upon returning to our office. The workshop was so positive that we proudly hang our Certificate of Completion boldly on our wall of fame.

Linda S. Gray,,
Greater Southwest Black Chamber of Commerce, Lancaster TX

(UsBlackChambers, 2020)

Networking events should, effectively represent the core values of an organisation, and thus the performance of these events as brand building tools needs to be measured to ensure that these values are lived up to. Thus the measure of authenticity may be a tool used to achieve this, measured against the principles of PBA: Continuity; Credibility; Integrity; & Symbolism.

2.4. The Black Business Council

2.4.1. Socio-political and economic history of S.A

Apartheid in South Africa was a coordinated structure of segregation on the basis of race, primarily targeted towards African people (Maylam, 2017). The country's complicated socio-economic history had established extensive rates of unemployment, poverty, inequality as well as a lack of required competencies to compete in a well-established landscape of business (Goodman, 2017). Under the capitalist system, one requires an asset base in order to compete in the economy; underpinned by the history of South Africa, the black community have no asset base and consequently cannot compete on equal footing (Gradín, 2018). This effectively hampers any ability to create meaningful enterprises with the ability to generate brand equity, and ultimately brand value. The introduction of Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) and affirmative action were means to equalise many years of dispossession and economic alienation during racial apartheid and preceding colonial years (Lee & Mondi, 2017). These initiatives are championed by the Black Business Council.

2.4.2. Rise and Purpose of The Black Business Council

The Black Business Council (BBC) is an umbrella organisation, which has two membership tiers between, business and professional based associations that represent small to medium businesses and black professionals alike. The second tier is made up of large & medium corporate companies, wherein the the 2020 corporate membership base is made up of Exxaro, Sanlam, Zungu Investments, Pamodzi Group, AV Lightsteel and African Rainbow Minerals are included, to name a few (BlackBusinessCouncil, 2020). The business and professional division of associations is composed of NAFCOC, African Cooperatives for Hawkers and Informal Business (ACHIB), and the Foundation of African Business and Consumer Services (FABCOS), the Black Lawyers Association (BLA), Association of Black Accountants of South Africa (ABASA), Black Management Forum (BMF) and the Association of Black Securities and Investment Professionals (ABSIP) (BlackBusinessCouncil, 2020).

The Black Business Summit is the flagship event of the BBC, and offers a focused platform to build brand equity, whilst articulating brand value as well as the importance of brand alliances to achieve competitive advantage to corporate stakeholders. The 2020 edition hosted a wide array of stakeholders, including political party leaders, government officials and business leaders from across all sectors

(BlackBusinessCouncil, 2020) More recently, a press release was put out by the BBC that they would be partnering with Ubank Limited to launch a R1 Billion Township and Rural Economy Fund (BlackBusinessCouncil, 2020).

3. Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.1 Research Paradigm

Each research paradigm has its own particular hypotheses, approaches, methods, and limitations, additionally differing in their evaluation processes of the ensuing research (Ponelis, 2015). For the purposes of this paper, the chosen paradigm will fall under interpretivism.

Effectively, research comprises the comprehensive study of a subject (i.e. an individual, groups of individuals, societies, or objects) to uncover evidence or to accomplish a fresh interpretation of the subject (Neubauer, Witkop, & Varpio , 2019). Interpretivism aligns to this point, in that all cultural and historical experiences are diverse and distinctive, requiring an exploration of the distinctively defined, noteworthy contexts in which it is entrenched (Hannes Nel, 2018). The primary goal of this paradigm is to gain an understanding into a phenomenon (Dudovskiy, 2018).

This study effectively moved into a realm where the researcher was required to understand and describe the meaningful brand alliance activities that the BBC undertakes to build brand equity. This includes the effect of BBC networking events on building brand equity for BBC member organisations. Effectively, this would allow the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon surrounding brand equity building, through corporate brand alliances. The ontology of this paradigm looked to understand the relationship between brand and the extent of its influence on building brand value for corporate organisations, as ontology effectively relates to reality being formed by the interactions of people (Hashemnezhad 2015). The epistemology of a researcher is effectively their theory of knowledge, serving to determine the means by which the study of the social phenomena will take place (Bradway, Sefcik, & Kim, 2017). The epistemological position regarding this particular study can be formulated as follows: data are contained within the perspectives of the sample group involved as members of the BBC, based on this, these participants were be involved in the collection of data.

Furthermore, the phenomenological methodology chosen, gathered data, regarding the perspectives of research participants about the phenomenon of the effects of a brand alliance with the BBC and whether it yields spill-over brand equity for members (Alase , 2017).

Proponents of positivism take on the notion that reality is defined, and quantifiable, with there being only one truth (Pawlikowski, Rico , & Sell, 2018). Furthermore, the positivist paradigm is based on the notion that there is only one concrete reality is existence (Gemma, 2018). These notions are why this paradigm was not suited to this study, because the BBC as an entity is influenced by a variety of socio-economic variables and stakeholders, making reality a lot more fluid.

Critical realism (CR) on the other hand, seeks to contest hegemonic activities and the influential powers that be, by examining exploitation and various means to confronting oppression (Thompson, 2017). The views of CR are more akin to those of a political party or a social movement. In this instance, even though BBC does share the purpose of challenging the hegemony, by nature of its ties to the corporate sector, it will as well assume the character trait of proficiency, which requires a balanced perspective such as interpretivism.

3.2 Research approach

For the purposes of this study, the researcher made use of qualitative research methods, which will be discussed further under the heading, data collection methods. In line with the chosen paradigm, there is an overarching qualitative approach, as a result of the researcher having sought to understand the experience and attitudes of the population sample that was placed under study (Silverman, 2016). The research design took on a 'phenomenological' approach.

"Phenomenology, studies structures of conscious experience as experienced from the first-person point of view, along with relevant conditions of experience," (Smith, 2018). The choice to use hermeneutic phenomenology, was been made after an exploration of descriptions between hermeneutic phenomenology and phenomenology put forth by philosophers Edmund Husserl, commonly referenced as the father of phenomenology; and Martin Heidegger & Hans-Georg Gadamer, who both had a core focus on hermeneutic phenomenology (Stephenson, Giles, & Bissaker, 2018).

The set of elements under hermeneutic phenomenology allowed for an exploration into the history or background of a person, including the influences derived from their culture, which in itself constructs paradigms to interpret and understand realities (Gemma, 2018). In relation to the subject under research, the BBC's mission to advance the interests of black business in the South African economy, has to be looked at in relation the socio-political history of South Africa and its influences on the population sample. Member organisations of the BBC will by factual assumption share a strong sense of alignment to the vision of the BBC, which is to create a racially transformed economy (BlackBusinessCouncil, 2020). Subsequently, these influences were taken into account when researching the particular reasons member organisations have, for taking on a brand alliance with the BBC.

3.3 Research design

Building onto the chosen research design, this study made use of a deductive approach to researching the topic. The process of deductive reasoning, will have the researcher build a hypothesis (or hypotheses), centred on prevailing theory from varying sources, subsequently leading the researcher to build a research strategy to assess the validity and value of this hypothesis (Decarlo, 2018).

In keeping consistency with this approach, this paper took on a descriptive methodology. Reasoning for this, is that in line with the deductive method, there is a large amount of prevailing theory that is relevant to the framework chosen for this study, as well its relation to two of the key concepts that underpin the study. Qualitative descriptive research is recognised as notable and fitting for research questions concentrated on detecting the who, what, and where of incidents or experiences. It further assists the researcher to obtain insights from respondents with regards to an inadequately understood phenomenon (Willis, Sullivan-Bolyai, Knafi, & Cohen, 2016).

In line with this point, there is a lack of empirical evidence to support the claim that forming an alliance with the BBC yields spill-over brand equity for member organisations, and thus the need for research into the matter. Nassaji (2015) further states that the primary aim of descriptive research is the description of a phenomenon and its characteristics. This research approach requires greater investigation into the 'what' as opposed to the how or why a phenomenon has occurred. This falls in line with the purpose of the paper, to provide an assessment of whether or not forming a brand alliance with the BBC yields spill-over brand equity for member organisations.

Furthermore, this study followed a cross-sectional design. During this cross-sectional study, the researcher has assessed the results and the experiences of the study participants at the same time (Jones & Bell, 2015). According to Setia (2016) "unlike in case–control studies (participants selected based on the outcome status) or cohort studies (participants selected based on the exposure status), the participants in a cross-sectional study are just selected based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria set for the study." Upon selection of the participants, the researcher has effectively followed the study to examine the experiences and the findings.

3.4 Population and Sampling

The unit of analysis chosen for this study is the BBC itself, as it forms the common focus of the study. Further to this, the population drawn for this study consisted of the member organisations of the BBC across South Africa, who make use of BBC networking events. The reason for the chosen set of parameters is that the BBC have membership from large business and professional organisations, thus they have a national footprint.

These organisations are split between professional associations and corporate members, thus resulting in the use of a non-probability quota sampling method to derive a sample grouping, split between participants from both tiers of the BBC's membership, and thus representative of the greater population. The aim of proportional quota sampling is to have a resultant sample, through which the strata (groups) under study (e.g. business associations vs corporate members) are proportionate to the population under study (Sharma, 2017). Purposive sampling in contrast has a major impediment, wherein the researcher needs to put in place specific characteristics of the quota to base the study on. These will include characteristics such as, religion, age, education or gender (Taherdoost, 2016).

Befitting to the study, is that quota sampling is not concerned with having a numeric value that will match the proportionate number of the population. Rather, focus is on the need to have sufficient proportion of subjects to ensure that small groups of samples are amply represented, as this case for the BBC's membership cohort (Bala & Etikan, 2017). To this end, the phenomena under study will be based on an exploration of the effects of establishing a brand alliance with the BBC. And whether the associated benefits lead to greater brand equity for all member organisations, focusing on how this relates to Keller's performance block to measure the perceptions of the sample group.

The sample framework thus included managers in communications, brand and stakeholder affairs of BBC member organisations, part of top-tier management holding executive level education, who are as well in charge of influencing and drafting brand strategy and managing stakeholder relationships, especially that with the BBC.

3.5 Data collection

For this study, empirical quantitative testing is beyond scope. The reason behind this, is that the data to be collected will be limited to the attitudes and subjective norms of organisational managers influencing the intentions behind entering into a strategic partnership/alliance. Consequently, the study is aligned to a qualitative approach, where the first phase of data collection will incorporate the use of unobtrusive research. Additionally, field research will be used, in the form of in-depth interviews with the Communications and Marketing managers from BBC member organisations.

The use of these collection methods will be detailed below:

Unobtrusive research: Unobtrusive research techniques encompass the study of social behaviour without interfering with the subjects under study, in order to make means of eliminating bias, and to endorse conceptual and contextual analysis (Decarlo, 2018)**.** As stated before, the sample for this study will consist of top-level managers whose time will need to be concisely used. Thus, the first phase of research was done, so as to gain an understanding of the subject matter, that will ultimately guide the content of the field research. Unobtrusive research techniques are non-reactive with information regarding the respondent, obtained via public access documents. Effectively, these documents may include published articles, books, archival records, published statistics, judicial records, election or census results, crime statistics and educational data, institutional publications, solicited and unsolicited documents, statutory, regulatory or policy documents, newspaper editorials, data published by private sector organisations, historical documents and medical or other scientific records also form part of this type of recorded data (Auriacombe, 2016). In this regard, there is no direct interaction connecting the researcher and the subject, the research as well, effectively provides evidence of human behaviour that can be investigated via content analysis (Watson, 2018).

Field (In-depth interviews): Under the current global social distancing conditions, in-depth interviews were conducted using Microsoft teams with key role players from the respective member organisations of the BBC. Prior to the interviews, participants were contacted via e-mail with a cover letter and consent form explaining their rights as participants. Thereon, each participant was assigned a pseudonym or code (Alase , 2017). This method took on a semi-structured approach, with a conversational engagement being the use tactic. Additionally, particular themes were encompassed by pre-established questions, permitting the researcher to fine-tune the focus of the interview if necessitated, based on the contextual narrative of the participant's experience. This collection method wa chosen to fall in-line with the quota purposeful sampling method. This method determines a specific targeted grouping, with unique and shared characteristics (Decarlo, 2018). It as well accommodates the broad population group under study, whose characteristics and contextual relationship with the BBC require a keen understanding of this experience. This approach assisted the researcher to fully embed the hermeneutic research design in the study, by exploring the experiences and attitudes of the population sample based on the relationship formed via brand alliance with the BBC.

3.6 Data analysis

Essentially, there are four key steps most qualitative data analysis approaches have in common: Data collection, data reduction, data displays and conclusion drawing/verification. Through data collected by conducting interviews or observation, the amount can be overwhelming and therefore needed to be documented. Thereafter, the data was be reduced to manageable amounts that still produced meaningful results. Categorizing or coding the data are means to arrange and formulate the data to make it workable for the analysis (Linneberg & Korsgaard, 2019). Thus, when preparing coding, it was essential to guarantee that examination and the resultant conclusion are reliable. The coded data has given the researcher the opportunity to extract conclusions that are presentable during findings. The purpose of the analysis is in probing relationships. At this stage, the researcher ceases to merely describe, and begins to explain why things are in the state in which they are. In display of the data, there needs to be clarity for the reader. And in finality the research process draws a conclusion. The conclusion will contain information regarding creditability of the informant (Graue, 2015)

During the overall stage of data analysis, there is a process of iterative or forward-backward interchanges between data, the researcher's prior knowledge and experiences, as well as prior research on the phenomenon under study. Further, evaluation of code clusters relational to the entire data were undertaken to assist in building new arrangements of phenomena (Corrine, 2016).

For this research paper, qualitative content analysis to use for unobtrusive data collection. According to Snelgrove & Vaismoradi (2019) content analysis was initially a purely quantitative technique, though now it has also been applied in qualitative data analysis. Bengtsson (2016) defines it as a methodology approach to documents wherein emphasis is placed on the position of the researcher in the development of the meaning of and within texts. Importance is placed on permitting categories to form out of data and in identifying the importance of grasping the value of the context in which a variable being studied (and the categories stemming from it) materialised. This process follows six steps, namely; preparation of data; defining the coding unit under analysis; develop categories; test categories; code all of the relevant text; assess coding consistency; draw conclusions; and finally, report on findings. Data has been collected for the researcher to gain familiarity with the data, with a set of codes drawn under the following: brand performance; brand alliances; corporate brand strategy; brand value (financial); brand equity; and black business.

Data on the subject matter will be collected via in-depth interviews, for which data analysis to unpack the researcher's findings will subsequently be thematic content analysis. Thematic analysis describes an iterative process in terms of how the researcher will move from a pool of data to an ordered map of the most imperative themes in the data. The process contains six steps: researcher familiarises his/herself with the data; preliminary codes are assigned to the data for the content to be described; there is a subsequent search for patterns or themes within the codes spanning the different interviews; themes are then reviewed; definitions and names are assigned to the themes; and finally, a report is produced (Nolen & Castleberrya, 2018). For the purposes of this proposal the researcher has covered all 6 steps with a coding method that was thus formulated to effectively analyse the content. Audio recordings were be available, for the necessity of performing transcription, allowing the researcher to work with the data produced. In this phase, the researcher worked through all the available data from each interview and took notes, formulating preliminary ideas for codes that can describe the content.

As this study follows a deductive approach the researcher has put together a defined set of codes which were be assigned to the new qualitative data to be collected.

Code	Definition
Continuity	A brand's endurance, historic record and its capability to rise above trends. (Charlton & Cornwell, 2019).
Credibility	At its core, focused on whether or not a brand adequately supplies value from its promises. (Charlton & Cornwell, 2019).
Integrity	Includes an impression of integrity grounded on virtue uncovered in the brand's intents and through the values it communicates. (Charlton & Cornwell, 2019).
Symbolism	A brand's potential to serve as a resource for identity construction by providing self-referential cues representing values, roles and relationships (Charlton & Cornwell, 2019).
Professional Value	"This is generally acquired only in the context of networking events and can be seen as a form of functional value as it translates into benefits for the individual within the organization such as: gaining new customers, business partners, suppliers which are mediated by that individual."

Brand Alliances	Brand alliances can be considered as a unique version of a brand combination, wherein they signify elements of external, future orientated, simple, as well as complex groupings of brands, with similar levels of ability in value creation. (Redler, 2016)
Reputation Value	"This is the value which organizations or individual derive by doing business with firms with high brand equity which in turn reflects well on all their business partners." (Schlegelmilch, 2016)
Relationship Value	"This is based on an individual level and as a distinct and separate psychological construct within the overall value exchange process and define it as 'the value of knowing the person with whom you on behalf of your company are transacting'." (Schlegelmilch, 2016)
Corporate Reputation	"CR is a collective representation of past actions and results of a company, and describes its ability to distribute the value created between different stakeholders. CR also measures the relative status of a company, both internally with employees and externally with stakeholders within a competitive and

Networking Events	**Experiential activations used as brand building activities to expand stakeholder networks and communicate business strategies to potential customers. (Theaker, 2016)**
Brand Equity	Brand equity is the enrichment that a brand name imparts on a product/service, based on its perceived value and attractiveness. Farjam & Hongyi (2015)

3.7 Limitations & Delimitations

A) Delimitations

This study will confine itself to observing texts focused on the brand alliance phenomenon regarding the BBC, as well as interviewing communications and marketing managers of BBC member organisations across South Africa.

B) Limitations

1) It is impossible to prevent the data analysis of a qualitative study to be influenced by interpretations of the researcher.

2) The quota sampling procedure decreases the generalisability of findings. This study will not be generalisable to all areas of business organisations.

3) The data analysis methodology is a section of potential limitation. Generally qualitative methodologies cannot be truly replicated (as in controlled experimental conditions) and are subsequently incapable of conclusive verification *per se.*

4) COVID-19 presents a limitation, wherein prior to the outbreak, face to face interviews would have been the conventional tool for interview purposes

a) Resolve: The online tool, Microsoft Teams has been relied upon for data collection methods.

The nature of this study required the researcher to interview 6 senior level managers and executives with the requisite knowledge of and experience in relations with the BBC. Based on the nature of their positions though, the task of fitting into their diaries was challenging based on the timeframe given for data collection proving to be too limited to meet with all of the chosen participants.

b) Resolve: The research approach of this paper was laid down to perform quota sampling, based on the BBC having two tiers to its membership base. Member organisations are split between professional associations and corporate members, thus resulting in the use of a non-probability quota sampling method to derive a sample grouping, split between participants from both tiers of the BBC's membership. Thus, presenting a representative sample of the greater population. The researcher was able to interview two of the proposed six participants, who each respectively represented the two tiers of the BBC membership: professional associations and corporate businesses.

4. Chapter 4: Findings and Discussion

This chapter details the findings from the data collection described in Chapter 3. Data was analysed using the thematic analysis method, and the findings are discussed below.

The research conducted for this paper was based on exploring the effects of B2B brand alliances on building brand equity through business networking events, with specific focus on the Black Business Council and its member organisations. The findings for this research will be presented as four key themes to understanding the data and deriving insights based on the broader context of the research problem.

Category		
Themes	Frequency	Verbatim
Innovation value	18	"To derive business leads from each event, as well as greater brand recognition from alliances."
Shared Brand Equity	26	"I do believe that that BBC, still lives up to its expectations to deliver brand equity to partners despite its constraints."
Value Driven Brand Management	15	"They must support organisations that support transformation of the economy by assisting small businesses as well as previously disadvantaged black businesses."
Brand Performance Management	14	"How we view our return on investment will be different to how an external person would view it. But what I can for sure say, is that through our alliance with the BBC we are able to have meaningful engagement with government, the presidency and many other key players we would not otherwise be able to reach on our own."

For the purposes of distinguishing the verbatim quotes of the participants they will be defined by the following descriptors:

Participant 1 (P1)	Representative of a Black Professional Association.
Participant 2 (P2)	Representative of a Corporate Company

4.1. Findings

1) Values driven brand management – Brand Alliance determinants

Literature states that B2B decision-making practices will commonly have a greater degree of complexity in comparison to B2C markets, wherein they comprise a greater number of people, are more process driven, and involve buyers, who have extensive knowledge of the products and services they are purchasing. Thus, corporate brand strategies are essential to mutually beneficial brand alliances as they offer a layout of the brand building activities that an organisation will makes use of for a specified period. (P1) stated, *"we use our values and also our strategy in terms of what our focus is, at that particular point in time And then from that point of view, we are then able to tap into our target areas where we would like to collaborate with potential stakeholders."* These activities are linked to the organisation's financial objectives to build performance measured value.

Keller's Performance block presents an understanding of brand equity that shows characteristics that are aligned to the nature of the B2B environment, which emphasises the need for, consistent product reliability; high-level customer service; and value for money (Chang , Chiang , & Han, 2015). In addition, there tends to be less customers and more reliance on personal contact, as a result, relational ties play an important role in buying decisions (Duncan & Moriarty, 1998). In addition, customers and suppliers often develop close relationships in which they participate in the development and implementation of each other's strategies (Yi & Gong, 2013).

To reinforce the focus on synergized strategies (P1) was asked 'What factors does your organisation consider in the decision to enter into a brand alliance?', wherein (P1) responded by saying, *"they themselves have to be aligned to our own mission and vision statement as an organization."*

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) is used to assess what an individual's intention to engage in a behaviour at a specific time and place might be. The fundamental element that underpins this model is behavioural intent; behavioural intentions are swayed by the attitudes regarding the outcome that said behaviour will have on the expected result and the subjectivity involved in the evaluation of the risks and benefits of the result (Zulfikarijah, Wastono, & Masudin, 2018). A focus on the human-centric values of an organisation and its representatives influence the decisions to partner with said brand in the formation of an alliance. (P2) gave an understanding of what their organisation looks at in determining their criteria for alliance formation, *"The organisation must share in the same value system as our organisation."* (P1) reinforces the perspective of TPB by stating, "We are advocating for the cause of black business and black professionals aligned to the BBC and it shall remain this way even for years to come." The emotive nature of this response verifies, that values driven attitudes are a determinant to understanding the decision-making process behind forming brand alliances.

Symbolism has become a key element in influencing customer perceptions regarding brands and allowing them to develop identities to which they can align and resonate Arnould & Thompson (2015). (P1) gave an indication of the value they hold towards symbolism and how it impacts their views of an organisation they would partner with, "they must support organisations that support transformation of the economy by assisting small businesses as well as previously disadvantaged black businesses." And this impacts on how they seek to be viewed in turn, (P2) "our alliances should showcase our organisation as a good corporate citizen."

As part of the thematic data analysis process, symbolism was a term chosen as part of the coding process. Symbolism is a brand's potential to serve as a resource for identity construction by providing self-referential cues representing values, roles and relationships (Charlton & Cornwell, 2019). The below table represents anecdotal evidence that shows the effects that symbolic representation has on the decision-making process.

Verbatim
"They have to talk to the to the mandates, and it's on that basis that we create partnerships and build up alliances as well. We look into those synergies that exist."
"Looking to where we want to be, and who we are, and it's obvious that on this basis is how we look out for partnerships."
"Our organisation is one of the founding members of BBC.Our relationship with them is strong because we are advocating for the very same thing."
"We always identify ourselves with them because the principles that we fight for are pretty much the same."
"When you talk to an organization that espouses the same values as you, and when you measure the work that they are doing vis a vie to what you are doing, we are inclined to form an alliance."

For B2B alliance partners, the function of brand is in the investment of networking relationships which have synergies, that provide enrichment to company values, in communicating to both internal and external stakeholders (Charlton & Cornwell, 2019). Therefore, for the BBC to continue their development of brand equity, a truly values driven approach to brand management needs to be continuosly adhered to.

2) Brand Performance Outcomes – Brand Alliance ROI, Brand Recognition

The corporate brand is understood to be an intangible asset of an organisation, and thus an all-inclusive approach to brand management is essential, wherein all members of the organisation act in accordance with the desired brand objectives (Kuuru & Tuominen, 2016). (P2) gives an indication of their views with respect to their own alliance and the output of the managing team of their alliance partner, “BBC thus far has shown themselves to have great relationship building skills and processes at their disposal.”

(P1) stresses a particularly challenging phenomenon, “as a black organization, you know, it's not always easy for one to remain sustainable and relevant as well.” This speaks directly to the problem identified in this paper, that of black businesses struggling to remain sustainable and thus being unable to build sustained brand equity. Literature states that, market valuations are influenced by intangible assets such as brand, and thus highlights the growing importance of brand and innovation management, with powerful brands being key driver to achieving sustained competitive advantage (Brexendorf, Bayus, & Keller, 2015). (P1) duly references the effects that BBC management has had in the past 9 years, by succinctly sharing their opinion to be, that “under the leadership of President Sandile Zungu, the BBC has really grown its brand equity.”

Brand performance requires for the brand strategy to be continuously re-evaluating of the performance of its tactics and activities to deliver brand equity at any particular time. (P2) goes onto state, *“because our relationship with them is good, they can engage with us at any time for assistance and partnership in activities, but we would prefer slightly better lead times to help us prepare for each event they may have planned, i.e. a scheduled calendar.” (P1) as well contends, that “there's a need for a BBC and there's a need for a stronger BBC actually.”* Their views acknowledge the strides and efforts made by the BBC in their brand building activities, but they acknowledge that more can be done to expand and refine these to achieve even greater levels of brand equity, which ultimately is passed on and shared with its members.

3) Shared brand equity – Value from networking events (Corporate reputation, and reputation value)

Brand value is an asset built on stakeholder networks and sales assets that increase company market value and impact the goodwill accounted for on a company's balance sheet, thus strengthening the relevance of building brand alliances (Ahirrao & Patil, 2017). (P2) states that their financial services firm *"sponsored the breakfast session at the 2020 BBC Summit, this brought the organisation closer the Finance Ministry and was a great platform to shine a good light on the organisation with the national treasury."* This shows the value that brand building activities such as sponsorships can have in creating relationships that are aligned to generating future work relations, which can subsequently lead to future revenue generating benefits.

This essentially leads to a spill-over effect which refers to the element where brands can enhance or improve organisational reputation and market opportunities via beneficial brand building activities with a partner brand (Schlegelmilch, 2016). To this end, upon being asked 'What is your understanding of shared brand equity in a brand alliance?' (P1) answered to say, "this is the shared value each organisation receives from a mutually beneficial partnership/alliance." Also, we are able to participate and input in the policy making process through our BBC partnership which offers sit ins at NEDLAC." NEDLAC is The National Economic Development and Labour Council which performs as a vehicle through which Government, labour, business and community organisations engage to cooperate, by way of problem-solving and negotiatory discussions on economic, labour and development matters as well as associated trials faced by the country (Nedlac, 2020).

According to Sandhe (2015), as part of Keller's performance block an organisation's objective should be to generate brand loyalty and resonance through the consumers' experience of the product which ought to at the least, meet, if not exceed, their expectancies. (P1) expressed that their experience of the BBC has indeed matched up to its expectations, *"I do believe that that BBC, still lives up to its expectation despite its constraints."* Further to this, B2B brands also have financial value for the company. They help to attract customers, to shift tight purchasing decisions in a desired direction, and increase customer loyalty (Zhang , Jiang , Shabbir , & Du, 2015).

Firstly, a grouping of people who deal in the exchange of information, contacts, and experience for professional or social purposes is a network Zhang, Jiang, Shabbir & Du (2015). And Business networking events are an effective platform to developing important networks, as well as a means to communicate the strategy led direction of a brand, to its chosen partners who may be leveraged to develop consistent value and market competitiveness. Furthermore, networking events present the opportunity for engagements in professionalism, knowledge attainment, reputational advancement as well as the attainment of innovation building practices and relationships (to Theaker, 2016; Mone, Schlegelmilch, & Mitchell, 2015). (P2) has positive views about the nature of BBC networking events, stating that they are afforded "meaningful engagements with government, the presidency and many other key players."

Networking events afford alliance partners to derive substantial value, as they develop an environment for social encounters which drive worthwhile behaviours and decisions to develop connections and allegiances, whilst ultimately, enhancing the value of the network relationship (Sarmento, Simões, & Farhangmehr, 2015). (P1) commented on the effects of the flagship BBC Summit as "successful two-day conferences in 2019 & 2018," and further stating, "those are very powerful platforms, and I do believe that we need those platforms to showcase black business standards, and to showcase black professional standards." This statement affirms the importance of this study in its endeavours to add towards the body of knowledge around brand equity, and the subsequent need for focus on this element in the development of black businesses and professionals alike.

4) Innovation Value – Business leads, Professional value, Brand Equity Enhancement

Innovation value is an asset that results from networking activities which yield results such as obtaining access to new markets and technologies; speeding products to market; pooling complementary skills; acting as a key vehicle for obtaining access to external knowledge." (Schlegelmilch, 2016) Linked to this point, (P2) attests to this when asked the question, *"Why did your organisation choose to enter into a brand alliance with the BBC?",* responding to say, *"to create better relations with government stakeholders and boost our corporate reputation."*

The external activities of the brand's strategy will be assessed by the performance of its brand investment strategy, i.e. investing in an annual membership fee to keep a brand alliance with the BBC. The asset nature of a brand is seen through the benefits it derives for a firm, which include raising the perceived quality of its products and/or services, affording add on price premiums and creating competitive advantage in the market (Changa, Wangb, & Arnett, 2018). In accordance with these sought-after benefits, ultimately member organisations of the BBC, should be reviewing the performance of their individual brand alliances against the measure of spill-over brand equity. Spill-over effect of brand equity, is the element where brands can enhance or improve organisational reputation and market opportunities via beneficial brand building activities with a partner brand (Schlegelmilch, 2016). This variable is a strong determinant for entering into a brand alliance in the B2B market. Anecdotal evidence suggests that BBC are living up to this expectation and delivering on their promised benefits, (P2) states, "*as a financial services institution, this alliance has brought our organisation closer to the Finance Ministry and was a great platform to shine a good light on our organisation with the national treasury."*

(P1) goes onto state "how we view our return on investment will be different to how an external person would view it. But what I can for sure say, is that through our alliance with the BBC we are able to have meaningful engagement with government, the presidency and many other key players we would not otherwise be able to reach on our own." This is another positive affirmation that an alliance with the BBC does offer spill-over brand equity to partners, which bodes well for the organisation in its attempts to reach state of brand resonance amongst its member organisations. All blocks in

Based on the categorisation of brand as an asset for professional business interests, the brand strategy requires a constant evaluation of the performance of its tactics and activities in delivering brand equity. This effect is influenced by the ever-growing levels of hyper-competition in a globalised world thus questions such as, *"are there any specific outcomes your organisation expects from BBC events? Please describe these outcomes,"* had to be asked. (P2) duly responded by stating the following, *"to derive business leads from each event, as well as greater brand recognition from sponsorships."*

Validity and reliability

To ensure the validity and reliability of the data collection process a series of strategies was be implemented to ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of this study. These included: the researcher accounting for personal biases which may influence findings. There was an acknowledgment of biases in sampling as well as enduring diagnostic reflection of methods to create assurances of the necessary depth and applicability of data collection and analysis. A thorough record keeping procedure was put in place, to demonstrate a clear assessment path and certifying readings of data as dependable and clear.

To ensure diverse perspectives are included, the researcher formed a comparison of similarities and disparities throughout the data from participant's accounts. The researcher has included full and precise descriptions of participants' responses in support of the findings. And finally, respondent validation, included participants being invited to provide commentary on the interview transcripts, as an assessment of the final themes and concepts in terms of their adequacy in reflecting the phenomena being investigated.

5. Chapter 5: Conclusion

In conclusion this study has covered the following sections, a presented theoretical background of the concept of B2B brand equity using Keller's CBBE model in relation to key concepts including, brand value, brand alliances and the Black Business Council. Subsequently the paper has discussed the research methodology, including the paradigm, research design, data collection and analysis, from which findings have been presented. Following this the anticipated contribution has be presented thereafter, and finally the ethical considerations, are to follow in the below conclusion to the paper.

5.1 Concluding answers to the research questions

a) What are the advantages/disadvantages of BBC networking events for building brand equity for members?

   This paper through its findings has come the conclusion that the advantages of BBC networking events far outweigh any possible disadvantages. Participants in this study gave positive reviews on the value their respective organisation's are able to derive from these events.

b) What contributions to brand value does a brand alliance with the BBC offer its members?

   The most critical contributions that a brand alliance with the BBC offers is the opportunity to interact with key stakeholders in every sector of the economy, who form as important stakeholder networks for member organisations. These networks ultimately provide the potential for future revenue generation via way of deal makings and enhancements of corporate reputation.

c) Using the performance block of Keller's Customer Based Brand Equity Model as reference, does a brand alliance with the BBC build brand equity for partner organisations?

The performance block has presented a functional aspect of the Keller's Customer Based Brand Equity Model, which is most applicable in its relation to the B2B market, whose business and brand outlook is based on performance driven value. Based on anecdotal evidence, the BBC at this time does provide shared brand equity to its members.

5.2 Implications of findings for future practices

Brexendorf, Bayus, & Keller (2015), state that the pursuit for brand leadership and innovation excellence are both evidently critical management objectives and differentiators for numerous firms, with the relationship between branding and innovation still relatively under-researched, at the time of writing. The researcher's aims, have been to expand on the body of knowledge surrounding Keller's Customer Based Brand Equity Model by applying it to the B2B market, with the purpose of highlighting the effects that brand performance can have on building brand equity. The performance block is a stepping stone towards the achievement of brand resonance, and is a desire of all organisations with respect to engagements with their target markets.

Future studies can expand on the exploration of this topic to reveal other methods that provide additional descriptive capability. As an example, studies can explore whether factors, such as top management team structures are affected by theory of planned behaviour and how internal & external corporate strategies may impact a firms' brand alliances. Thirdly, although the firms used in the sample frame are from a variety of industry sectors, they lack diversity in terms of size of enterprise, wherein the accessible population was made up of big business and couldn't address the views of small-to-medium enterprise. This could be a source of bias in the data. Future research could be made use of, to corroborate the external validity of the research findings by using a larger number of participants. Additionally, this study advocates that the relationships entrenched in B2B brand development are critical to adding business value. Future research may assess if indeed, branding intermingles with related strategic programs, including customer relationship management activities.

5.3 Conclusions (critically evaluate your study and findings)

B2B brands hold significant financial value for an organisation. They assist to create synergies with alliance partners and customers alike, to shift tight purchasing decisions onto a desired course, and enhance loyalty. Thus, a focus on developing a brand strategy based on authenticity with performance related measures, may enhance the BBC's ability to derive financial value from increased memberships, as well a provide positive brand equity spill-over. These activities set the scene for further assessment as to whether a brand alliance with the BBC does indeed yield spill-over brand equity for member organisations. ultimately there might be a need to create an assessment of these networking events against Keller's performance block to gauge its effectiveness in delivering spill-over brand equity for BBC members.

Based on the differing findings in aforementioned studies, this study has sought to probe the ties between B2B brand alliances and performance, with future research urged to delve deeper into finding if these differing results are at the least to some extent as a result of a lack of interceding effects, including the prospective roles of brand positioning and corporate reputation.

5.4 Ethical considerations

In order to ensure ethical research, the researcher has submitted an ethical clearance letter to the IIE ethics board for review of study. This is a necessary required approval to validate the nature of the study. Subsequent to this, participants were invited via mail to participate in the study, with all consent requirements clarified regarding the confidentiality of their statements during the proposed interview. All participants were be provided with a consent form, supplied by VEGA, with a note that all information garnered will be used specifically for the purposes of informing this study. All interviews will be conducted via voice recording, as a documented means of proof of answers from participants. Thereafter, access to these recordings as well as the transcripts have been provided to the participants for their final validation of the proceedings and their statements. This is to protect the reputations of those involved in the study (Fujii, 2017).

Participants were as well be informed of the subsequent storage methods of this collected data to ensure confidentiality. The recordings will be stored on the researcher's password protected laptop for the duration of 5 years. Effectively because the laptop in question is a work provided laptop, thus does not guarantee that the researcher will be using this device over the aforementioned 5-year period. Based on this consideration, if the researcher is to no longer make use of the device in question, all data related to this study will be removed and transferred to a more reliable device. Access to this information will only be afforded to the researcher, the VEGA assigned supervisor and members of the ethical clearance board of the IIE, to ensure that only trustworthy representatives have access to this information. These codes are based on the principles of the researcher, rather than detailed specifications. This is a point of ethics for which Hammersley (2015) states as fundamental to assign for relevance to any study, because of the relative nature of each researcher's focus and parameters.

Bibliography

Aaker, D. A. (1991). *Managing Brand Equity.* California: Free Press.

Ahirrao, M. B., & Patil, D. S. (2017). Customer Based Brand Equity: A Review of Literature. *International Journal of Creative Research Thoughts*, 1-12.

Akroush, M. N., & Awwad , A. (2016). New product development performance success measures: an exploratory research. *EuroMed Journal of Business* , 2-29.

Alase , A. (2017). The Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA): A Guide to a Good Qualitative Research Approach. *International Journal of Education & Literacy Studies*, 9-19.

Anber , M. A. (2017). The Impact of Brand Experiences, Brand Equity and Corporate Branding on Brand Loyalty: Evidence from Jordan. *International Journal of Academic Research in Accounting, Finance and Management Sciences*, 58–69.

Auriacombe, C. J. (2016). Towards the construction of unobtrusive research techniques Critical considerations when conducting a literature analysis. *African Journal of Public Affairs*, 1-19.

Bain, E. G., Venter, J. C., & Mosala, S. J. (2017). South Africa's Economic Transformation Since 1994: What Influence has the National Democratic Revolution (NDR) Had? *The Review of Black Political Economy*, 327–340.

Bala, K., & Etikan, I. (2017). Sampling and Sampling Methods. *Biometrics & Biostatistics International Journal*, 1-3.

Beckman, T. (2017). Authenticity in B2B Relationships: Do Channel Members Really Care? *IAFOR Journal of Business & Management*, 6-20.

Bengtsson, M. (2016). How to plan and perform a qualitative study using content analysis. *NursingPlus Open*, 8-14.

Berman , E. A. (2017). Explor An Exploratory Sequential Mix y Sequential Mixed Methods Appr ed Methods Approach to Understanding Researchers' Data Management Practices at UVM: Integrated Findings t ated Findings to Develop Resear elop Research Data Ser ch Data Services. *Journal of eScience Librarianship*, 1-24.

BlackBusinessCouncil. (2020, May 18). *About Us*. Retrieved from blackbusinesscouncil.africa: https://blackbusinesscouncil.africa/About_BBC.html

Bradway, C., Sefcik, J. S., & Kim, H. (2017). Characteristics of Qualitative Descriptive Studies: A Systematic Review. *Library of Medicine*, 23-42.

Brexendorf, T. O., Bayus, B., & Keller, L. K. (2015). Understanding the interplay between brand and innovation management: findings and future research directions. *Journal of the Academic Marketing Science*, 1-10.

Burton, R. M., Cardinal, L. B., & Turner, S. F. (2015). Research Design for Mixed Methods: A Triangulation-based Framework and Roadmap. *Organizational Research Methods*, 1-25.

BusinesLeadershipSA. (2020, May 22). *Membership Criteria*. Retrieved from BLSA.org.za: https://blsa.org.za/about-us/membership-criteria/

BusinessUnitySA. (2020, May 22). *About BUSA*. Retrieved from busa.org.za: https://www.busa.org.za/about-busa/

Carroll, C. E. (2015). *The Handbook of Communication and Corporate Reputation.* New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons.

Changa, Y., Wangb , X., & Arnett, D. B. (2018). Enhancing firm performance: The role of brand orientation in business-to- business marketing. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 1-9.

Chang , A., Chiang , H.-H., & Han, T.-S. (2015). Investigating the dual-route effects of corporate branding on brand equity. *Asia Pacific Management Review*, 1-10.

Charlton, A. B., & Cornwell, T. B. (2019). Authenticity in horizontal marketing partnerships: A better measure of brand compatibility. *Journal of Business Research*, 279–298.

Christodoulides, G., Veloutsou, C., & Chatzipanagiotou , K. (2016). Decoding the complexity of the consumer-based brand equity process. *Journal of Business Research*, 1-8.

Ćorić , S. D., & Jelić, D. (2015). Applicability of Keller's brand equity model in the B2B chemical market. *Economic Research-Ekonomska Istraživanja*, 1006-1017.

Corrine, G. (2016). *Becoming Qualitative Researchers: An Introduction, 5th Edition.* Washington: Institute of Education Sciences.

Crossman, A. (2020, March 19). *Understanding Purposive Sampling*. Retrieved from thoughtco.com: https://www.thoughtco.com/purposive-sampling-3026727

Davcik , N. S., Vinhas da Silva, R., & Hair, J. F. (2015). Towards a unified theory of brand equity: conceptualizations, taxonomy and avenues for future research. *Journal of Product & Brand Management* , 3-17.

Davcik, N., & Sharma, P. (2015). Impact of product differentiation, marketing investments and brand equity on pricing strategies. *European Journal of Marketing*, 760–781.

Deloitte. (2019, June 17). *Goodwill and impairment*. Retrieved from iasplus.com: https://www.iasplus.com/en/meeting-notes/iasb/2019/june/goodwill

Deloitte. (2020, June 15). *Conceptual Framework for Financial Reporting 2018*. Retrieved from iasplus.com: https://www.iasplus.com/en/standards/other/framework

Decarlo, M. (2018). *Scientific Inquiry in Social Work.* Virginia: Creative Commons. Exploratory Research. *Social and Behavioral Science*, 639-646.

Diamond, N., & Bellin, J. (2019). *CMO WAY BEYOND MARKETING.* Dublin: Accenture Insights.

Dudovskiy, J. (2018, January 31). *Interpretivism (interpretivist) Research Philosophy.* Retrieved from Research-methodology.net: https://research-methodology.net/research-philosophy/interpretivism/

Farjam, S., & Hongyi, X. (2015). Reviewing the Concept of Brand Equity and Evaluating Consumer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) Models. *International Journal of Management Science and Business Administration*, 14-29.

Fujii, L. A. (2017). *Interviewing in Social Science Research: A Relational Approach.* Abingdon: Routledge.

Gaetano, A., & Raffaele, D. (2016). *Global Branding and Country of Origin: Creativity and Passion.* Abingdon: Routledge.

Galán-Valdivieso, F., Fernández-Gámez, M. A., & Gil-Corral, A. M. (2015). Corporate reputation and market value: Evidence with generalized regression neural networks. *Expert Systems With Applications*, 1-8.

Garcia, C., Katsuo, Y., & Mourik, C. v. (2018). Goodwill accounting standards in the United Kingdom, the United States, France, and Japan. *Journal of Accounting History*, 1-24.

Goodman, P. S. (2017, Oct 24). *End of Apartheid in South Africa? Not in Economic Terms.* Retrieved from The New York Times: https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/24/business/south-africa-economy-apartheid.html

Gradin, C. (2018). Occupational segregation by race in South Africa after apartheid. *Journal of Development Economics*, 553-576.

Gemma, R. (2018). Introduction to positivism, interpretivism and critical theory. *Nurse Researcher*, 41-49.

Gomes, M., Fernandes, T., & Brandão, A. (2016). Determinants of brand relevance in a B2B service purchasing context. *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, 193–204.

Graue, C. (2015). QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS. *International Journal of Sales, Retailing and Marketing*, 5-14.

Hammersley, M. (2015). On ethical principles for social research. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 433-449.

Hannes Nel, B. (2018, September 17). *The Nature and Elements of Research Paradigms: Interpretivism.* Retrieved from iNtgrty: Publishing and the Mentoring Network Journal: http://www.intgrty.co.za/2018/09/17/the-nature-and-elements-of-research-paradigms-interpretivism/

Hashemnezhad , H. (2015). Qualitative Content Analysis Research: A Review Article. *Journal of ELT and Applied Linguistics*, 54-62.

HavasMediaGroup. (2019, February 21). *Building meaningful is good for business: 77% of consumers buy brands who share their values*. Retrieved from havasmedia.com: https://havasmedia.com/building-meaningful-is-good-for-business-77-of-consumers-buy-brands-who-share-their-values/

Jain, R. (2017). BASIC BRANDING CONCEPTS: BRAND IDENTITY, BRAND IMAGE AND BRAND EQUITY. *International Journal of Sales & Marketing Management Research and Development*, 1-8.

Jiang, W., & Wang, K. (2019). Brand Equity and Firm Sustainable Performance: The Mediating Role of Analysts' Recommendations. *Economic and Business Aspects of Sustainability*, 1-24.

Jones, K., & Bell, A. (2015). Explaining Fixed Effects: Random Effects Modeling of Time-Series Cross-Sectional and Panel Data*. *Political Science Research and Methods*, 133-153.

Keller, K. L., & Brexendorf, T. O. (2019). Measuring Brand Equity. In K. L. Keller, & T. O. Brexendorf, *Handbuch Markenführung* (pp. 1409-1439). Wiesbaden: Springer Gabler.

Kenton, W. (2018, February 7). *Brand Recognition*. Retrieved from investopedia.com: https://www.investopedia.com/terms/b/brand-recognition.asp

Kenton, W. (2019, May 10). *Sales Leads*. Retrieved from Investopedia.com: https://www.investopedia.com/terms/s/sales-lead.asp#:~:text=A%20sales%20lead%20is%20a,parties%2C%20and%20other%20marketing%20efforts.

Keohane, K. (2016, September 6). *5 Brand Positioning Models*. Retrieved from brandingstrategyinsider.com: https://www.brandingstrategyinsider.com/5-brand-positioning-models/#.XsAlKBMzYfM

Kimbro , M. B., & Xu, D. (2016). The Accounting Treatment of Goodwill, Idiosyncratic Risk, and Market Pricing. *Journal of Accounting, Auditing & Finance*, 1-23.

Koporčić, N., Rešetar, Z., & Tolušić, Z. (2017). THE IMPORTANCE OF CORPORATE BRANDS FOR DECISION MAKING IN THE BUSINESS-TO-BUSINESS CONTEXT. *PRELIMINARY COMMUNICATION*, 429-440.

Kuuru , T. K., & Tuominen, P. (2016). Creating a Conceptual Framework for Corporate Brand Positioning. *Eurasian Studies in Business and Economics*, 177-195.

Leyer, M., Moormann, J., & Heckl, D. (2015). Process Performance Measurement. *International Handbooks on Information Systems*, 227-241.

Linneberg, M. S., & Korsgaard , S. (2019). Coding qualitative data: a synthesis to guide the novice. *Qualitative Research Journal* , 1-27

Lephakga, T. (2017). Colonial Instituitionalisation of Povery Among Blacks in South Africa. *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae*, 1-15.

Mail&Guardian. (2011, July 4). *Black Management Forum leaves Business Unity SA*. Retrieved from Mail&Guardian.co.za: https://mg.co.za/article/2011-07-04-bmf-leaves-busa/

Ma, B., Cheng, F., Bu , J., & Jian, J. (2018). Effects of brand alliance on brand equity. *Journal of Contemporary Marketing Science*, 22-33.

Manasia, L. (2015). Enjoyment of Learning in Upper Secondary Education. An estimation model. *Journal of Business Research*, 1-9

Manuel , A., Iglesias , O., & Ind , N. (2017). The Organic View of the Brand: A Brand Value Co-creation Model. *Advances in Corporate Branding*, 148-174.

Maylam, P. (2017). *South Africa's Racial Past: The History and Histiriography of Racism, Segregation, and Apartheid.* New York: Routledge.

Morhart, F., Malar, L., Guevremont, A., & Girardin, F. (2015). Brand authenticity: An integrative framework and measurement scale. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 200-218.

Mohan, M., Brown, B., Nyadzayo, M. W., & Casidy, R. (2018). The relative influence of functional versus imagery beliefs on brand sensitivity in B2B professional services. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 26-36.

.
Mone, S. D., Schlegelmilch, B. B., & Mitchell, V. W. (2015). Why should I attend? The value of business networking events. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 1-9.

Nassaji, H. (2015). Qualitative and descriptive research: Data type versus data analysis. *Language Teaching Research*, 129 –132.

Neubauer, B. E., Witkop, C. T., & Varpio , L. (2019). How phenomenology can help us learn from the experiences of others. *Perspectives on Medical Education* , 90-97.

(Nedlac), T. N. (2020, August 4). *About Us*. Retrieved from Nedlac.org.za: http://nedlac.org.za/

Nolen, A., & Castleberrya, A. (2018). Thematic analysis of qualitative research data: Is it as easy as it sounds? *Currents in Pharmacy Teaching and Learning*, 1-9.

Ogbuanu, B. K., Dr Kabuoh, M. N., & Ajike, E. O. (2015). Corporate Branding as a Strategic Tool in a Competitive Market. *Social Science and Law Journal of Policy Review and Development Strategies*, 19-27.

Pinto, J. E. (2020). *Equity Asset Valuation.* New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons.

Ponelis, S. R. (2015). Using Interpretive Qualitative Case Studies for Exploratory Research in Doctoral Studies: A Case of Information Systems Research in Small and Medium Enterprises. *International Journal of Doctoral Studies*, 535-550.

Pawlikowski, P., Rico , N., & Sell, S. V. (2018). Positivism: A Concept Analysis. *International Journal of Nursing & Clinical Practices*, 1-5.

Redler, J. (2016). BRAND ALLIANCE. BUILDING BLOCK FOR SCIENTIFIC ORGANISATIONS´ MARKETING STRATEGY. *Scientific Marketing* , 59-94.

Rekhi, S., & Kumar, P. (2017). The Impact of Brand equity on Business and customer perception. *International Research Journal of Management and Commerce*, 685-694.

ResearchMethodology.com. (2019, January 31). *Qualitative Data Analysis*. Retrieved from ResearchMethodology.com: https://research-methodology.net/research-methods/data-analysis/qualitative-data-analysis/

Rovedder de Oliveira, M. O., Silveira, C. S., & Luce, F. B. (2015). Brand equity estimation model. Journal of Business Research, 1-9.

Sandhe, A. A. (2015). AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF BRAND EQUITY OF A COMMERCIAL BANK IN VADODARA, INDIA. *INDEPENDENT JOURNAL OF MANAGEMENT & PRODUCTION* , 289 -302.

Smilansky, S. (2018). *Experiential Marketing: A Practical Guide to Interactive Brand Experiences.* London: Kogan Page Limited.

Sarmento, M., Simões, C., & Farhangmehr, M. (2015). Applying a relationship marketing perspective to B2B trade fairs: The role of socialization episodes. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 131–141.

Schlegelmilch, B. B. (2016). Global Branding and Communication. *Global Marketing Strategy*, 153-176.

Setia, M. S. (2016). Methodology Series Module 3: Cross-sectional Studies. *Indian Journal of Dermatology* , 261-264.

Shariq, M. (2018). BRAND EQUITY DIMENSIONS-A LITERATURE REVIEW. *International Research Journal of Management and Commerce*, 312-330.

Sharma , G. (2017). Pros and cons of different sampling techniques. *International Journal of Applied Research* , 749-752 .

Silverman, D. (2016). *Qualitative Research.* California: SAGE.

Stephenson, H., Giles, D., & Bissaker, K. (2018). The power of hermeneutic phenomenology in restoring the centrality of experiences in work-integrated learning. *International Journal of Work-Integrated Learning*, 261-271.

Swatuk, L. (2019). *Bridging The Rift: The New South Africa In Africa.* Abingdon: Routledge.

Taherdoost, H. (2016). Sampling Methods in Research Methodology; How to Choose a Sampling Technique for Research. *International Journal of Academic Research in Management* , 18-27.

Theaker, A. (2016). *The Public Relations Handbook.* Abingdon: Routledge.

Thomaz, F., & Swaminathan, V. (2015). The Impact of Marketing Alliances on Firm Risk and the Moderating Role of Network Density. *Journal of Marketing*, 1-45.

Thompson, C. J., & Arnould, E. J. (2015). Introduction: Consumer Culture Theory: Ten Years Gone (and Beyond). *Consumer Culture Theory*, 1-21.

Thompson, M. J. (2017). *Introduction: What Is Critical Theory?* New Jersey: William Paterson University.

Trent, L., & Mohr, J. (2017, July 2). *Marketers' Methodologies for Valuing Brand Equity Insights into Accounting for Intangible Assets*. Retrieved from CPAJournal.com: https://www.cpajournal.com/2017/08/02/marketers-methodologies-valuing-brand-equity/

UsBlackChambers. (2020, August 4). *Testimonials*. Retrieved from Us Black Chambers: https://usblackchambers.org/five-pillars-of-service/

Villaseñor-Román, N., & Schmitz , A. (2018). Do Brands Matter in Unlisted Firms? An Empirical Study of the Association between Brand Equity and Financial Performance. *Administrative Sciences*, 1-12.

Willis, D. G., Sullivan-Bolyai, S., Knafi, K., & Cohen, M. Z. (2016). Distinguishing Features and Similarities Between Descriptive Phenomenological and Qualitative Description Research. *Western Journal of Nursing Research*, 1-20.

WorldEconomicForum. (2020). *Global Social Mobility Index 2020: why economies benefit from fixing inequality.* Geneva: World Economic Forum.

WorldEconomicForum. (2020). *The Global Social Mobility Report 2020 Equality, Opportunity and a New Economic Imperative.* Geneva: World Economic Forum.

Yi, E. (2018, July 23). *Themes Don't Just Emerge — Coding the Qualitative Data*. Retrieved from medium.com: https://medium.com/@projectux/themes-dont-just-emerge-coding-the-qualitative-data-95aff874fdce

Zhang , J., Jiang , Y., Shabbir , R., & Du, M. (2015). Building industrial brand equity by leveraging firm capabilities and co-creating value with customers. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 1-12.

Zulfikarijah, F., Wastono, T., & Masudin, I. (2018). The effect of managerial intention and initiative on green supply chain management adoption in Indonesian manufacturing performance. *International Journal of Logistics Research and Applications*, 1-15.

Appendices:

A: Ethical Clearance Form

THE INDEPENDENT INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

15 July 2020

Student name: Modise Nalane

[redacted]

Campus: Vega Bordeaux

Re: Approval of Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Strategic Brand Communication Proposal and Ethics Clearance

Your research proposal and the ethical implications of your proposed research topic were reviewed by your supervisor and the campus research panel, a subcommittee of The Independent Institute of Education's Research and Postgraduate Studies Committee.

Your research proposal posed no significant ethical concerns and we hereby provide you with ethical clearance to proceed with your data collection.

There may be some aspects that you still need to address in your proposal. If this is the case, feedback will be provided to you in writing. You will need to address these aspects in consultation with your supervisor.

In the event of you deciding to change your research topic or methodology in any way, kindly consult your supervisor to ensure that all ethical considerations are adhered to and pose no risk to any participant or party involved. A revised ethical clearance letter will be issued in such instances.

We wish you all the best with your research!

Yours sincerely,

[redacted]

Marleen Rolland
Supervisor

Campus Postgraduate Coordinator – RESM8419

ADvTECH HOUSE Inanda Greens
54 Wierda Rd West
Wierda Valley 2196
P.O. Box 2369
Randburg 2125

CONDITIONS TO BE FULFILLED IN RELATION TO RESEARCH
Permission is granted to proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below being met and may be withdrawn should any of these conditions be flouted. ***Please note:*** The panel has not considered the merits, accuracy or ethical soundness of the research. The only merits examined are the use of The IIE as a sample. Permission is granted subject to the following conditions: 1. The researcher(s) will need to obtain informed consent in writing from all of the participants in his/ her sample if the study is not anonymous. 2. The researcher(s) may only use the data collected for research purposes and in no other way. 3. Photographs of human subjects may only be taken if relevant to the research, informed consent was obtained, and even with informed consent, the photographs may not be published on any online platforms. 4. The researcher is responsible for supplying and utilising his/her own research resources, such as stationery, photocopies, transport, faxes and telephones and should not depend on the goodwill of the institutions and/or the offices visited for supplying such resources. 5. No names or identifying information of participants may be used within the research and the research must be voluntary. 6. Please make it clear that the information will not be used punitively in any way and participants may in no way be counselled/advised based on this.

The Independent Institute of Education Pty Ltd, its associated companies, employees, contractors, representatives and directors, are indemnified against all claims which may arise in connection with or as a result of any loss, damage or injury to you as a researcher entering into an agreement with a participant in the course of your research, provided that such loss, damage or injury is caused by the gross negligence or intentional act(s) or omission(s) of The Independent of Institute Education Pty Ltd, its associated companies, employees, contractors, representatives and directors.

Wishing you the very best of luck.

Yours sincerely,

[redacted]

Campus Postgraduate Coordinator – RESM8419
Dr. Ria van Zyl
National Post-graduate Coordinator – IIE-Vega
The Independent Institute of Education

B: Informed Consent Form (qual data)

vega

SCHOOL OF BRAND LEADERSHIP

ANNEXURE A

EXPLANATORY INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS

To whom it may concern,

My name is Modise Nalane and I am an Honours student at the Vega School of Branding. I am currently conducting field research under the supervision of Helena Van Wyk. My topic being: ***'An exploration of the effects of B2B brand alliances on building brand equity through business networking events: Black Business Council and its Business Members.'***

I would like to invite you to participate in my study. In order to explain to you what your participation in my study will involve, I have formulated questions that I will try to fully answer so that you can make an informed decision about whether or not to participate. If you have any additional questions that you feel are not addressed or explained in this information sheet, please do not hesitate to ask me for more information. Once you have read and understood all the information contained in this sheet and are willing to participate, please complete and sign the consent form below.

What will I be doing if I participate in your study?

I would like to invite you to participate in this research because it will inform the strategy of my proposal. If you decide to participate in this research, I would like to send you a list of questions to identify the sentiments of your institution towards the referred topic.

You can decide whether or not to participate in this research. If you decide to participate, you can choose to withdraw at any time or to decide not to answer particular interview questions.

Are there any risks/ or discomforts involved in participating in this study?

Whether or not you decide to participate in this research, there will be no negative impact on you. There are no direct risks or benefits to you if you participate in this study. If you find at any stage that you are not comfortable with the line of questioning, you may withdraw or refrain from participating.

Do I have to participate in the study?

Your inclusion in this study is purely voluntary;

If you do not wish to participate in this study, you have every right not to do so;

Even if you agree to participate in this study, you may withdraw at any time without having to provide an explanation for your decision.

Will my identity be protected?

I agree to protect your identity. I will not use your name in any research summaries to come out of this research and I will also make sure that any other details are disguised so that nobody will be able to identify you. I would like to ask your permission to record the interviews, but only my lecturer and I will have access to these recordings. Only myself, my supervisor and upon request, the VEGA IIE Ethics committee will have access to the recordings. I would like to use quotes when I discuss the findings of the research but I will not use any recognisable information in these quotes that can be linked to you.

What will happen to the information that participants provide?

Once I have finished all interviews, I will write summaries to be included in my research report, which is a requirement to complete my BA Honours in Brand Strategy. You may ask me to send you a summary of the research if you are interested in the final outcome of the study.

What happens if I have more questions about the study?

Please feel free to contact me or my lecturer should you have any questions or concerns about this research, or if there is anything you need to know before you decide whether or not to participate.

You should not agree to participate unless you are completely comfortable with the procedures above.

My contact details are as follows:

[redacted]

The contact details of my lecturer are as follows:

Helena Van Wyk [redacted]

[redacted]

The contact details of my supervisor are as follows:

Marleen Rolland Contact: [redacted]

C: Interview Schedule (qual data)

Section One	
Introductory remarks	
Introduce yourself and provide information that may be relevant to the interviewee & provide a brief description of your research	Good morning, my name is Modise Nalane and I am a VEGA honours student. My research focus is in the assessment of the effects of B2B brand alliances on building brand equity through business networking events: Black Business Council and Business Members. To set the stage, I will define the following terms: • **Brand equity:** brand equity is the enrichment that a brand name imparts on a product/service, based on its perceived value and attractiveness. • **Brand performance:** performance is made up of five categories: characteristics and features of the product; serviceability, reliability, and durability of the product; effectiveness and efficiency in service activities; style and design; and ultimately price. • **Brand value:** how the worth of the brand is measured by investors, shareholders and company management • **Brand alliances:** brand alliances can be considered as a unique version of a brand combination, wherein they signify elements of external, future orientated, simple, as well as complex groupings of brands, with similar levels of ability in value creation.

Establish purpose of project	I am interested in understanding if being an alliance member of the Black Business Council builds tangible brand equity for an organisation.
Establish how you will use this information	I will use this information to highlight any iterative enhancements that the BBC can make to its brand strategy, in order to pass on value to its members.

Section 2: The body of interview	Research question
Set the stage for the interview: ask a few questions to establish credibility: **1. Biographical questions** **2. Background questions**	How long have you been working at organisation X? How many years of experience do you have in Comms and Marketing? How long has your business been a member of the Black Business Council?
Central questions: These questions should cover all the **main themes or concepts of your study. This can also be** **guided by your theoretical framework: Keller brand equity model**	
Keller's CBBE Model - Brand Performance:	
1. What is your understanding of brand performance?	Research Question 3
2. How does your organisation measure the performance of its brand strategy?	Research Question 3
3. How would you describe the current state of your organisation's brand performance?	Research Question 3

4. In what ways has a membership with the BBC improved your organisation's brand performance? If none, why is that?	Research Question 3
5. How would you describe the importance of brand management in improving overall company performance?	Research Question 3
Brand Value:	
6. What brand value benefits has the BBC fulfilled since the beginning of your alliance? I.e. Participation in committees and task teams involved at the coalface of the legislative process in South Africa. **(BBC membership benefit)**	Research Question 2
7. Based on learnings from your career what value do networking events give an organisation?	Research Question 2
Brand Alliance:	
8. What factors does your organisation consider in the decision to enter into a brand alliance?	Research Question 2
9. How does your organisation measure the performance of your chosen brand alliances?	Research Question 3
10. Why did your organisation choose to enter into a brand alliance with the BBC?	Research Question 3
11. Describe the business value your company derives from a brand alliance with the BBC? i.e. improved corporate reputation, market competitiveness, etc.	Research Question 3
12. Which BBC events has your organisation attended since the start of your alliance?	

13. Are there any specific outcomes your organisation expects from BBC events? Please describe these outcomes? 14. What is your understanding of shared brand equity in a brand alliance? 15. Has the BBC's brand performance during your alliance delivered on shared brand equity? If yes, please explain how? 16. What additional outcomes would require from your organisation's brand alliance with the BBC? 17. Have you been able to create valuable networks, local and international since your alliance with the BBC began? And how have they been beneficial to your organisation?	Research Question 2 Research Question 3 Research Question 3 Research Question 3 Research Question 3 Research Question 3
Section three: Closing remarks	
Establish that the interview is coming to an end	
Provide the participant with a specific example of how their insights have contributed towards your data or insight.	Thank you for agreeing to speak to me today, I had not thought about XXX .
Thank them for their time	