



Title: Investigating what digital brand strategies academic books use to position their brands in the online learning context to create brand resonance

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ABSTRACT

The study's focus was to investigate what digital brand strategies academic books used to position their brands in the online learning context to create brand resonance. This study is needed because most of the digital academic book's brands' functionalities can be very similar or identical which can then confuse the consumer and make it hard for the consumer to differentiate differences between different brands which can make it difficult for these brands to create a competitive advantage in the market (Business knowledge, 2020). Therefore, the researcher aims to understand knowledge around this phenomenon and for the researcher to investigate the different strategies academic book brands use to position themselves which make them stand out from their competitors. Keller model of Brand Equity (1994) guided the study's theoretical framework.

This study used qualitative techniques as this assisted the researcher in gaining in-depth understanding of the phenomenon through participants, thoughts, opinions, and feelings of the participants (in sight,2017). The research was anchored in the interpretivism paradigm, because interpretivism can be described as a reality being fluid, and therefore how the online books will be experienced can be seen as subjective (Du Plooy-Cilliers,2017).

The data collection method was field research as in-depth interviews with academics and Van Schaik Brand manager were conducted by the researcher.

The key finding identified by the researcher was that Van Schaik does not use different strategies to position their online academic books, strategies used for their hardcover books will be the same strategy used for their digital academic book. They create brand resonance not through their strategies but through creating relationships with academics through personal visits, cold calling, and emails. they do not market to students or institutions but only to academics who then would recommend their material to their institutions and students.

Table of Contents

ABSTRACT	ii
1. Chapter 1: Introduction	1
1.1. Background and orientation (contextualization)	1
1.2. Rationale	1
1.3. Problem statement	2
1.3.1. Why is the problem worth investigating?	2
1.3.2. Research questions	2
1.3.3. Research objectives	2
1.4. Purpose statement	3
1.5. Conceptualization of the study's key concepts	3
1.6. Overview of Research Methodology	3
1.7. Structure of the paper	4
2. Chapter 2: Literature Review	5
2.1. Introduction:	5
2.2. Theoretical Foundation:	5
2.3. Literature review and conceptualization:	6
2.3.1. Brand Differentiation:	6
2.3.2. Brand Equity:	7
2.3.3. Brand Positioning:	9
2.3.4. Online Learning Environment:	10
3. Chapter 3: Research Methodology	13
3.1. Introduction:	13
3.2. Research paradigm	13
3.3. Research approach	15
3.4. Research design	15
3.5. Population and sampling	16
3.6. Data collection:	17
3.7. Data analysis	18
3.8. Limitations and delimitations	20
4. Chapter 4: Findings and Discussion	22
4.1. Introduction:	22
4.2.1. Group 1: Van Schaik Brand Manager	22

Category 1: Salience:	23
Category 2: Brand image	25
Category 3: Brand Response	26
Category 4: Brand Resonance	27
Conclusion of finding Group 1: van Schaik Brand Manager.	30
4.2.2. Group 2: Academic	30
Category 1: Salience	30
Category 2: Brand Image	32
Category 3: Response	34
Category 4: brand resonance	35
Conclusion	36
4.3. Validity and reliability / trustworthiness	36
5. Chapter 5: Conclusion	38
5.1. Concluding answers to the research questions	38
5.2. Implications of findings for future practices	40
5.3. Conclusions	40
5.4. Ethical considerations	41
6. REFERENCES:	43
Appendices:	Error! Bookmark not defined.
A: Ethical Clearance Form:	Error! Bookmark not defined.
B: Informed Consent Form (qual data):	Error! Bookmark not defined.
C: Questionnaire (quant) / Interview or Focus group Schedule (qual data):	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Annexure C-Interview Schedule For Academics :	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Annexure D-Interview Schedule For Van Schaik Brand Manager:	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Annexure E- example of Transcriptions and themes found Academic	Error! Bookmark not defined.

1. Chapter 1: Introduction

The purpose of this study was for the researcher to investigate what digital brand strategies academic books used to position their brands in the online learning context to create brand resonance. The brand chosen for this study was Van Schaik. The study was against the Keller model of brand equity (1994). This chapter will be looking into the contextualization, rationale, problem statement, purpose statement, research question and research objectives. This chapter will be structured as follows: the researcher will present the background and orientation, followed by the rationale of the study. The problem statement, purpose statement and research questions and objectives will follow. Lastly the chapter will present the key concepts of the study before ending off with a summary of the research methodology.

1.1. Background and orientation (contextualization)

Digital academic books functionality amongst various brands seems to be identical and with this similarity it makes it difficult for consumers to differentiate between these brands making it hard to create a competitive advantage and creating brand resonance (business knowledge,2020). This means that for an academic digital book brand to differentiate itself from the competition to position its brand, digital strategies become crucial in creating brand resonance (Hassim, 2021). Publishing houses such as Van Schaik have introduced "Africa Ready " electronic textbooks (Van Schaik, 2022). Creating academic materials that are evolving with local requirements and designed for the South African market (Van Schaik,2021).

1.2. Rationale

The intent of this study will be to explore digital academic book brands, such as Van Schaik, to investigate what digital brand strategies they use to create a competitive advantage in this expanding market (Market research, 2020). This study's contribution would be important as the relevance of local content allows for a more meaningful learning experience (UNESCO,2022).

1.3. Problem statement

Digital academic books have greatly expanded in the market (Market Research,2020). Most digital academic books functionalities are identical and thus brands with similar functionalities make it difficult for consumers to differentiate between them. Therefore, it makes it difficult for brands to create a competitive advantage (Business knowledge, 2020). Thus, the challenge for digital academic books is to differentiate themselves for the competitive advantage in creating brand resonance (Schmidt,2020). Failure to do so will result in a decline in customer loyalty and a lack of brand resonance or connection between the brand and its consumers (Latif, Ismail &Noor, 2014).

1.3.1. Why is the problem worth investigating?

The problem is worth investigating because it can help industry professionals and the researcher gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of digital books. Therefore, the study will address the following research questions below.

1.3.2. Research questions

1.3.2.1. What digital brand strategies do Van Schaik use to position itself in the online learning South African context?

1.3.2.2. How does Van Schaik build brand resonance in the online learning South African context amongst academics?

1.3.2.3. Is there a correlation between Van Schaik's digital brand strategies and its brand resonance against Keller's brand equity model?

1.3.3. Research objectives

1.3.3.1. To analyze digital brand strategies that Van Schaik uses to position itself in the online learning South African context.

1.3.3.2 To determine how Van Schaik builds brand resonance in the online learning South African context.

1.3.3.3 To evaluate the correlation between Van Schaik's digital brand strategies and its brand resonance against Keller's brand equity mode

1.4. Purpose statement

The purpose of this study is to investigate what digital brand strategies Van Schaik has used to position itself in the context of online learning to create brand resonance against Keller model of brand equity (1993).

1.5. Conceptualization of the study's key concepts

1.5.1. Brand Differentiation: For the purpose of this study brand differentiation can be described as it can directly influence brand competitiveness (Gupta, Gallear, Rudd &Foroudi,2020)

1.5.2. Brand Equity: For the purpose of this research brand equity can be described as the value of having a recognized brand and related to customers preference over competitive brands, customer loyalty and willingness to pay higher prices (Cunningham,2017). Using the Keller model (1993), it relates to how a consumer perceives a brand and their attitude towards it (Williams,2021)

1.5.3. Brand Positioning: In the context of this research, brand positioning can be described as the process of brand positioning is to position the brand in the mind of the consumers and used to set the business apart from the competitors (Patel,2021).

1.5.4. Online Learning Environment: For the purpose of this research, an online learning environment can be described as no physical location or interaction between student and teacher and learning takes place online (IGI Global,2020). This can include platforms which allows for sharing and accessing and purchasing of educational material via the web (IGI Global,2022).

In the next section, the research will present an overview of the study's research methodology.

1.6. Overview of Research Methodology

The research was anchored in the interpretivist paradigm and therefore the study had a qualitative research design. The researcher conducted field research in the form of semi-structured individual interviews and thematic analysis was used to analyze the data. A detailed discussion on the research methodology is presented in Chapter 3.

1.7. Structure of the paper

This study was structured as follows:

Chapter 1: the Introduction, introducing the topic and concepts and the real-world problem.

Chapter 2: leading into the literature review, which will show understanding of existing knowledge of the chosen phenomenon.

Chapter 3: which will lead the study into the research methodology, which is to encompass the way the researcher intends to carry out this study and provide reasoning.

Chapter 4: which will lead into the findings of the study which will show what the researcher had found during the in-depth interviews conducted between academics and the Van Schaik brand manager team.

Chapter 5: which will conclude the study and answer the research questions previously mentioned.

The next chapter to follow will be Chapter 2, the literature review.

2. Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1. Introduction:

The purpose of this literature review was to understand the existing knowledge around the chosen phenomenon. The researcher has identified academic scholarly articles which address the purpose of this study. The purpose of this study was to investigate what digital brand strategies academic books used to position their brand in the online learning context of South Africa to create brand resonance. This chapter will firstly, present the chosen theoretical framework for the study, and secondly, it will present the literature review. The purpose of this literature review is to evaluate previous literature around the key concepts of the study. These concepts were derived from the study's topic, and they are: online learning environment, brand equity, brand position and brand differentiation.

2.2. Theoretical Foundation:

The researcher has considered the following theories: Bezuidenhout's (2017) common sense theory, Siemens' (2004) connectivism theory, Keller's (1993) Equity theory, and Kotler's (2003) brand positioning theory. These theories will be discussed shortly below.

A commonsense theory by Bezuidenhout, (2017) this theory is created through an individual's personal experiences or what they have learnt through the phenomenon. Connectivism theory by Siemens (2004) which aims to describe the process of learning in the digital age and emphasizes that the network itself serves as the foundation of the learning process.

Equity by Keller (1993) as according to Cunningham (2021) "Keller (1993) the differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to the marketing of the brand".

Brand positioning by Kotler (2003) as according to Saqib (2020) "Positioning as an act of designing a company's offering and image so that they occupy a meaningful and distinct competitive position in the target market's minds" and "Accepting the view that competitive advantage represents the cornerstone of the positioning concept".

For the purpose of this study, the researcher has specifically chosen the Keller Model of Brand Equity (1994) as the framework for this study because it relates to how a consumer perceives a brand and their attitude towards it (Williams,2021). Keller brand equity model (1993) builds strong brand equity by the brand standing out in the minds of their consumers and communicates what the brand stands for and how consumers respond to the brand based on their emotions and perceptions and by also strengthening connections and resonance between the brand and their consumers (Williams, 2021).

In the next section, the researcher will present the literature review.

2.3. Literature review and conceptualization:

The literature review will consist of a definition for each concept that is adopted for the purpose of this study, the concepts are brand differentiation, brand Equity and brand positioning and online learning environment. Each concept will also be further explained with the review of previous literature.

2.3.1. Brand Differentiation:

Brand differentiation can also be described as the process to ensure that the brand stands out from the competition and singling out unique qualities and promoting them in the best way (DJs Research, 2022). The concept of brand differentiation is an essential part of the brand marketing strategy, this way the brand understands their competitive advantage and stands out from their competition (SendPulse,2022). For the purpose of this study brand differentiation can be described as it can directly influence brand competitiveness (Gupta, Gallear, Rudd &Foroudi,2020) because brand differentiation creates customer loyalty through their pre-purchase decisions and purchase decisions, and it can be determined by brand value and determine the brands marketing and strategic direction (Gupta et al. 2020). Therefore, the researcher can further argue that it becomes important for digital academic book brands to incorporate brand differentiation because the brands are building a distinct product in their competitive market and can present the benefits of their brand and products to their consumers (Mailchimp, 2022). The strategy to brand differentiation consists of three types of brand differentiation techniques that brands would use, and

they are namely vertical, horizontal, and mixed differentiation (Kopp, 2021). Horizontal differentiation occurs through the customers personal preference, vertical differentiation is having two similar products, but the similar products are priced differently, and mixed differentiation involve with the combination of both the horizontal and vertical which is described as where the consumer has their own preference, but the products price point has an influence (Kopp, 2021). The researcher puts forward that relating back to the problem statement of the study, that if a brand is not being differentiated from their competitors could make it difficult for consumers to identify the brand leading to a lack of brand connection with its consumers (Latif, Ismail &Noor, 2014). The researcher acknowledges that the literature shows that digital academic books can differentiate themselves as being an identical copy of the original hardcopy and can be differentiated as being much better than the original because it has a longer shelf life and have an increased quality to the book and the price is far less expensive than the hardcopy (Nirbhaya,2021). It is therefore important to consider the concept of brand equity.

2.3.2. Brand Equity:

For the purpose of this research brand equity can be described as the value of having a recognized brand and related to customers preference over competitive brands, customer loyalty and willingness to pay higher prices (Cunningham,2017). Using the Keller model (1993), it relates to how a consumer perceives a brand and their attitude towards it (Williams,2021). Keller brand equity model (1993) builds strong brand equity by the brand standing out in the minds of their consumers and communicates what the brand stands for and how consumers respond to the brand based on their emotions and perceptions and by also strengthening connections and resonance between the brand and their consumers (Williams, 2021). Brand equity is the process of fulfilling the brands competitive advantage and has perceived interpretations (Williams, 2021). Therefore, the researcher acknowledges that it becomes important for digital academic book brands to incorporate brand equity because it gives the digital academic book brands the opportunity to effectively engage with their consumers that can help them build and drive brand loyalty and allows the brand to grow (Cullather,2012). The brand equity model can be further described starting from the bottom of the pyramid to the top with brand identity, brand meaning, brand

response and brand resonance (Smit, 2017). Therefore, brands can use this model to understand their consumers' perceptions and behavior towards their digital academic books (Smit,2017). The brand can use the following four steps of brand identity, brand meaning, brand performance and brand response, below to assist increasing their competitive advantage and how they can resonate with their consumers.

Step 1: Brand identity: this is building brand awareness and salience ensuring that your consumers recognize the brand and ensure their consumers make the correct perceptions about the brand (Smit,2017). This is linking a brand product to brand elements (Keller, Apeira & Georgson,2012). digital academic book brands will use this to show their consumers who they are and stand out from their competitors and by doing this the digital academic book brands would need to have an understanding of what their consumers think of them (Modicum,2017).

Step 2: Brand meaning: the brand needs to be communicating what the brand stands for and who the brand is and how the brand can meet the needs and wants of their consumers (Smit, 2017). Brand meaning can be broken down into two parts, brand performance and brand imagery.

Step 3: Brand performance can be described as the product itself which is the influence of what consumers experience with the brand and how it can attempt to meet the needs and wants of its consumers (Keller, Apeira & Georgson,2012). Brand imagery is the way people think about the brand and the type of person or organization who will use the brand (Keller, Apeira & Georgson,2012). Digital academic book brands will use both these factors of imagery and performance to play a role in developing the brand's personality (Modicum,2017). Brand response: is the way consumers feel and think of the brand through perceived quality, credibility, and consideration of brand relevance to their needs (Smit,2017).

Step 4: Brand response can be broken down into judgment and feelings. Brand judgment focuses on the consumers personal opinions (Keller, Apeira & Georgson,2012). Brand feelings are the consumer's responses and reactions to the brand (Keller, Apeira & Georgson,2012). Digital academic book brands would use response to use their communications and support it with their core values which can leave an impact on their consumers and how they feel about themselves and the brand (Modicum,2017). Brand resonance: this is established once the brand has built a relationship with the consumer and has created a connection between the brand

and the consumer (Smit, 2017). Brand resonance is also known as salience. The bond a consumer has with the brand, and it can be described with their loyalty to the brand, their attitude towards the brand, the sense of community they feel with the brand and the engagement they have with the brand (Keller, Apeira & Georgson,2012).

Digital academic book brands would have established a connection between their consumers which can result in their consumers re-purchasing their digital academic books and purchasing more of their digital academic books and resulting recommendation to other consumers (Modicum,2017). Thus, successfully using all these elements together digital academic book brands can become less vulnerable to the competitive market and the prices changes, but the researcher can also argue that if the brand equity begins to drop it can become out of control and the brand can experience devastating effects and it can be instant and social media can amplify these negative effects which can take the brands to recover from (Modicum,2017). In the next section the literature review will examine the concept of brand positioning.

2.3.3. Brand Positioning:

In the context of this research, brand positioning can be described as the process of brand positioning is to position the brand in the mind of the consumers and used to set the business apart from the competitors (Patel,2021). Effective brand positioning emphasizes superiority elements along distinguishing dimensions which are valued by consumers (Bhasin,2020). It is how the brands vision, product and identity are positioned in the market (Holmes, 2021). It is how the brand wants consumers to think of the brand when they hear or see it (Holmes,2021). according to Saqib (2020:1) "Positioning as an act of designing a company's offering and image so that they occupy a meaningful and distinct competitive position in the target market's minds" and "Accepting the view that competitive advantage represents the cornerstone of the positioning concept" (Saqib 2020:1). Therefore, the researcher concurs that as brand positioning, digital academic books brands such as Van Schaik, are building preference among their consumers that when consumers are looking or thinking of digital academic books they automatically think of Van Schaik. The brands are associating themselves and their products and offerings to an idea

(Frederiksen,2022). Brand positioning is important for digital academic books because it links to the concept of brand differentiation, it creates clarity around who is digital academic books right audience is and it helps to explain to the audience why Van Schaik is the best brand for them, it also makes Van Schaik reliable, credible and sets their price strategy (Thimothy,2022). For brand positioning to be successful there are strategies that the digital academic brands need to consider and it can consist of the digital academic brands to compile a SWOT analysis so they can narrow down their competition and find a point of difference in understanding the way their consumers think of them in the way of their appearances, performance and quality of the academic books functionalities and also to find what points of similarity in points of the product class (Juneja,2022). Brand positioning is also linked to brand equity, it helps to establish brand equity (Juneja,2022). Thus, it is important to consider the concept of an online learning environment.

2.3.4. Online Learning Environment:

For the purpose of this research, an online learning environment can be described as no physical location or interaction between student and teacher and learning takes place online (IGI Global,2020). This can include platforms which allows for sharing and accessing and purchasing of educational material via the web (IGI Global,2022). Online learning gives students the chance to have control over their learning process in terms of time and place (Park,2016). Online learning provides students with electronic educational materials and allows for knowledge to be available to them from anywhere and at any time (The Economic Times,2022). Online learning for lecturers offers them a variety of ways of interacting with their students and gives lecturers instant feedback, and it has become the most important way to make resources available for teaching and to share and acquire information (Arkorful,2014). This aims to describe the process of learning in the digital age and emphasizes that the network itself serves as the foundation of the learning process. The researcher proposes that digital academic books have become an important educational source because the world has recently made a shift into the digital space due to the pandemic, schools have made to shift and use digital solutions as courses and classes moved to online and for resources to be more accessible out of school and off-campus digital academic books was the solution (NewPath Learning, 2022).

The literature is highlighting some advantages of digital academic books (NewPath Learning,2020). Firstly, digital academic books have become a solution for the traditional print, and it allows students and lecturers to access the content at any time and at any place (NewPath Learning, 2022). Secondly, digital academic books also have their benefits, it is easily accessible, storage is convenient, and it is easy to synchronize to audio books, ease of searching, it is economical and environmentally friendly, and it has a representation of visuals (NewPath Learning, 2022). Thirdly, digital academic books can also further benefit the students as learning has improved among learners and it benefits those learners with difficulties such as visual impairments and dyslexia and digital academic books allow for font size change and can access e-reader (NewPath Learning, 2022). Furthermore, the researcher proposes some advantages and disadvantages from a lecture's perspective within the online learning environment. Advantages, firstly, digital academic books for lecturers are customizable and lecturers can easily see how their students perform and allow for easily customizable lessons (Bixler,2021). Secondly, digital academic books can be collaborative for lecturers which gives them the opportunity to share notes, ideas, and questions directly to students (Bixler,2021). Thirdly, digital academic books are self-directed, lecturers can personalize the learning experience for their students (Bixler,2021). The researcher will look at the disadvantages of the online learning environment for both students and lecturers. Firstly, most lecturers and students do not have adequate access to devices and data (Mail & Guardian, 2020). Secondly, digital academic books have added demands into the lecturers lives of the increased content in books and the skills needed to operate the new technology and require training and the increase of their workload (ViewSonic,2020). Thirdly, it becomes costly to purchase technology and digital academic books (ViewSonic, 2020).

This chapter has presented the literature review. The purpose of this literature review has been to evaluate previous literature around the key concepts of the study. These concepts were derived from the study's topic, and they are: online learning environment, Brand equity, Brand position and brand differentiation. The concepts were further described with theories that are the common-sense theory by Bezuidenhout (2017), Connectivism theory by Siemens (2004), the brand equity model by Keller (1993) and brand positioning by Kotler (2003).

The next chapter will be focusing on the research methodology. Chapter Three will consist of the research paradigm, research design and approach, the population, the sampling, the data collection method, the data analysis method, validity, reliability, trustworthiness and the contributions, ethical considerations, and limitations.

3. Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.1. Introduction:

The purpose of this chapter is to encompass the way the researcher intends to carry out this study and provide reasoning for the researcher's approach to the study (Paperpile,2022). According to Smit (2017:27) “A research method, an instrument or tactic, is the tool used to conduct the research study.”

This chapter will present the research paradigm, research design and approach, population, sampling, data-collection method, data analysis method and the limitations and delimitation of this study.

3.2. Research paradigm

A paradigm can be described as by Du Plooy-Cilliers (2017) a cluster of beliefs and dictates a particular discipline's influence on how the research will be done and how results would be interpreted. Du Plooy-Cilliers (2017) explains further that it can also be referred to as research traditions or worldviews that researchers adopt while studying a phenomenon relevant to their field. The chosen paradigm for this study is interpretivism. Interpretivism is described as a reality being fluid and created by human interaction that is subjective and can change at any time (Du Plooy-Cilliers,2017). Everyone's experiences and realities are different and attach different thoughts and feelings to their reality making their perceptions fluid (Smit, 2017). Interpretivism is then influenced by traditions such as hermeneutics which the interpretation of human action through theory and method, phenomenology which is individuals making sense of the world around them (reality), and symbolic interactions which is the ability to read into each other's actions and give it meaning (Du Plooy-Cilliers, 2017). The researcher proposes the use of phenomenology as the researcher is wanting to understand how consumers are experiencing the brand through their own perspective and how the brand is differentiated in the mind of the consumers. Phenomenology according to Dudovskiy (2022:1) “is the philosophical tradition that seeks to understand the world through directly experiencing the phenomena.” Phenomenology is also the way an individual makes sense of the world around them (Du Plooy-Cilliers, 2017). This paradigm was chosen for the purpose of

this study because the researcher wants to understand human behavior and to study and describe meaningful social action (Du Plooy-Cilliers, 2017). Smith (2017) puts forward that it can also assist the researcher in gaining in-depth understanding of knowledge through shared meaning as to how Van Schaik's digital brand strategies for their academic eBooks to position their brand in the online learning context in South Africa can be asset to build brand resonance against the Keller brand equity model (1993). Furthermore, a research paradigm can be systematically examined by unpacking its epistemological, ontological, metatheoretical, methodological and axiological positions (Du Plooy-Cilliers, 2017).

Interpretivism will therefore be explored according to these five positions, along with its influence on this study. Firstly, interpretivism's epistemological position constitutes valid knowledge as dependent on people's interpretation of the world. It means that this study will yield knowledge from interpretation from Van Schaik's digital brand strategies. In addition, due to the subjective nature of knowledge in the interpretivist paradigm, the results of such a study cannot be generalized beyond the context in which it was conducted (Du Plooy-Cilliers, 2017). Consequently, the results of this study cannot be generalized beyond the context of its target sample, which will be defined in Section 3.4. population. Ontologically, interpretivism consists of the belief that reality is fluid and that a single phenomenon may have multiple interpretations (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2017). This study reflected this ontological position as van Schaik's customers can potentially have multiple different interpretations of Van Schaik's academic eBooks. Smith (2017) puts forward that it can also assist the researcher in gaining in-depth understanding of knowledge through shared meaning as to how Van Schaik's digital brand strategies for their academic eBooks to position their brand in the online learning context in South Africa. Metatheoretically, interpretivism consists of theoretical frameworks which aim to gather detailed information and reveal a deeper meaning of the phenomena being studied (Du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014). This study's key theoretical frameworks were analyzed in Section 2 as 2.2 theoretical foundation, during which Keller brand equity model (1993) was selected as the most suitable framework for this study. Methodologically, interpretivism generally utilizes a qualitative research methodology, as it helps researchers to gain an in-depth understanding of the investigated phenomena (Du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014). This study will therefore utilize a qualitative methodology, which will be discussed further in the

section below. Axiological, interpretivism discusses participants' interpretations as well as their own (Du Plooy-Cilliers,2017). According to Smit (2017, PG:17) “interpretivists do not rely solely on what they understand from the immediate environment but may ensure to gain a deeper understanding through considering different values of both participant and researcher”. Therefore, this study will focus on gaining understanding of the phenomenon collecting primary data through in-depth interviews which will be discussed in the sections below.

3.3. Research approach

For the purpose of this research the research design will be a cross-sectional qualitative study. The researcher has chosen qualitative because using qualitative techniques will give the researcher a unique in depth understanding of the phenomenon through the participants' opinions, thoughts, and feelings (in sight,2017). A qualitative study aims to explore and understand participants' different thoughts, feelings, and perceptions (Smit,2017). T

The research approach is further incorporated within the research design of this study, which is further described in the next point to follow.

3.4. Research design

Therefore, to gain an in-depth understanding of participants' opinions, thoughts, and perspectives the researcher then followed an interpretivism approach, as i Furthermore, the research design will adopt an approach of deductive theorizing. Deductive theorizing has been chosen because it involves reasoning from general assumption to specific assumptions (Bezuidenhout, 2017). The deductive approach explores a known theory and tests it against the finding and data collected (Dudovskiy,2022). The researcher sets assumptions and uses the concepts to drive data collection, analysis and interpretation of data and then attempts to describe a relationship and develops a hypothesis to determine whether that relationship exists (Payne,2017). Therefore, this study will be exploratory. This study is exploratory because the researcher will be exploring an unknown area (Davis,2017). The aim of an exploratory research is to gather new information about the phenomenon (Davis,2017).

3.5. Population and sampling

Population can be described as a collection of individuals known to have similar characteristics (Explorable,2019). Furthermore, according to Pascoe (2017:132) population can be defined as “a total group of people or entities from whom information is required”. For the purpose of this study the researcher is aiming to gain an in-depth understanding of the participants' feelings, thoughts, opinions, experiences, and perspectives of academics who have interacted with Van Schaik's digital academic books and the academic book publishers focusing on higher education and the Van Schaik branding team. Population has two parameters namely known as the target population and the accessible population (Pascoe,2017). The researcher will set a population parameter, which refers to unique characteristics of a population (Pascoe, 2017), thus extending from the population, this study's population parameters are academic staff teaching in the social science field in Johannesburg based Higher Education institutions. The researcher had extended further to the brand manager of Van Schaik of someone who has been in the industry for more than 3 years and knows the background of the brand and the background of the publishing industry. This can be seen as the target population for the study. Pascoe (2017) defines target population as “everyone or everything that falls within the population parameters”. Once the target population has been defined, the researcher will use a sampling frame to select the studies and accessible population which can be defined as according to Pascoe (2017) “refers to only the section of the population that we can actually include in our study”. Sampling frame refers to a list of characteristics that the researcher will be exploring (Pascoe,2017), which will be the representative of the target population (Smit,2017). For the purpose of this research the participants need to have more than 5 years teaching experience and they need to be familiar with van Schaiks eBooks.

This sampling method that will be used to collect the accessible population will be a qualitative non-probability sampling method. The researcher has chosen to use the purposive sampling method as the researcher has specifically chosen the elements that will participate within the study such as the higher education sector and the academics within the higher education sector being within the field and industry of humanities and social sciences and .These specific elements are chosen to

participate within the study to assist with the research as each element of within the population parameters (Du Plooy-Cilliers,2017).

For the purpose of this research the participants needed to have more than 3- 5 years teaching experience in the social science field, and they needed to be familiar with van Schaiks eBooks and used these eBooks as part of their prescribed material. The researcher interviewed three academics and Van Schaik's brand manager.

3.6. Data collection:

Qualitative data collection methods are used to gather data and obtain an in-depth understanding into the phenomenon. field research and unobtrusive research methods can be used to collect data in a qualitative study. However, for the purpose of this study, field research was deemed as a suitable research method to collect data because it allows the researcher to make observations of the phenomenon in the participants' natural environments and while observing the behavior of the participants in expressing of their deeper feelings and beliefs and assume the participants structure their experience and describe their own world (Strydom & Bezuidenhout,2017). Field research can be conducted through focus groups and in-depth interviews, but for the purpose of this study the researcher will use in-depth interviews performed through a questionnaire and interview schedule. In-depth interviews are a data collection method that allows the researcher to present questions to the participants with the aim of investigating and learning about the participants views, opinions, and perspectives about the phenomenon (Strydom & Bezuidenhout,2017).

The researcher acknowledges that In-depth interviews have a few disadvantages and advantages. The advantages of in-depth interviews are that they are valuable sources of information and they allow us to interpret and understand the meaning of the participants answers, it allows the researcher to ask the participant to clarify a point the participant is trying to make and can also provide a detailed explanation and give the researcher the ability to read the participants non-verbal gestures , it also allows for more flexibility in the researcher asking the participant more questions in specific areas the researcher is interested in (Strydom & Bezuidenhout,2017). The disadvantages of in-depth interviews are that they can be very time consuming and resource intensive, the participant and researcher will need to travel to an agreed

location and the researcher needs to ensure that they have the necessary equipment for recording, this can also be a very long process, especially as answers need to detail (Strydom & Bezuidenhout,2017). However, the researcher has overcome the disadvantages of the method by conducting in-depth interviews in the academic's workplace and via a team meeting with Van Schaik's brand manager due to convenience. The researcher limited the equipment needed to use a cellphone to record the in-depth interviews. The researcher had also set a limited amount of time per interview and set interview questions straight to the point to receive accurate answers.

3.7. Data analysis

The researcher used qualitative content analysis to analyze the data. Content analysis according to Strydom and Bezuidenhout (2017:191) "a research method for the subjective interpretation of the context of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes and patterns." Content analysis requires systematic analysis of social artifacts for the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding (Strydom & Bezuidenhout,2017). Therefore, the goal of the researcher is to provide a thick description of the social reality (Strydom & Bezuidenhout,2017). The researcher could identify frequency with which an idea is shared or spoken about and could identify patterns of deeper underlying interpretations through phrases and words in communication text and content (Warren,2020). Therefore, the researcher will analyze a very specific question and goal and group large amounts of text into codes and summaries these into categories (Warren,2020).

For the purpose of this research the researcher will conduct content analysis by recording the one-on-one interviews between the academics and the brand manager of Van Schaik and once these interviews have been completed the researcher will then transcribe these interviews. Thematic analysis looks at patterns of meaning in a data set and therefore takes bodies of data and groups themes accordingly into their similar characteristics, namely known as themes, which will be used to help the researcher make sense of the content and interpret meaning from it (Warren,2017). Thematic analysis is useful in assisting the researcher to identify and find out about

the participants' experiences, views, and opinions and therefore the aim involves understanding participants' experiences (Warren,2020).

For this research, the researcher will look into Huberman and Miles thematic analysis model (1994). The Huberman and Miles (1994) model for thematic analysis consists of four concurrent flows known as data collection, data reduction, data display and conclusion verification (Mahumud,2021).

Firstly, the data collection gathered is based on field research. Field being conducted as a set of in-depth interviews with academics and the Van Schaik brand manager. The data collection is data investigation and generating a theory combined with the analytical element which is appropriate when the researcher aims to examine data to find patterns, themes, and thoughts from the participants (Ibrahim,2012).

Secondly, the data reduction is selecting and simplifying and transforming the data and is performed in such a way that the researcher can draw conclusions (Ibrahim,2012).Data reduction can be described in three phases, the first phase is the researcher tabulates the data collected to prepare and organize the content and this is meant that the data will be ready to be analyzed word-for-word to show any significant patterns between themes (Ibrahim,2012).This also allows the researcher to make connections between the participants thoughts, opinions, ideas and perspectives and allows the researcher to identify and evaluate the data preventing from jumping to conclusions (Ibrahim,2012).The second phase of data reduction is that this phase involved the researcher highlighting and making note of each participants answers that could be used to answer the study's research questions and identify answers that relate to the research objectives (Ibrahim,2012).

data reduction consists of the researcher breaking the data up into smaller themes (Ibrahim,2012). The researcher is required to compare, contrast and search for missing information that might not have appeared in the previous phases (Ibrahim,2012). For the researcher to ensure the themes reliability and validity, the researcher should involve an outsider to view, evaluate and provide feedback to the researcher if the theme chosen is compatible with the study and whole text (Ibrahim,2012). This will provide the researcher with the themes being credible and

the researcher validation will make the data presented less prone to errors and mistakes (Ibrahim,2012).

Thirdly, the data display is the third main step in the model which involves organizing and compressing the data information, it aims to make sense of the data collected (Ibrahim,2012). This helps to arrange concepts and thoughts and gives the researcher the ability to view and enhance data more clearly and to avoid data overload and allows to make sense of the data collected and by displaying it to related concepts (Ibrahim,2012).data display is used to gain conceptual coherence by relating items to ach research question and can include figures, graphs and tables to display the data is a variety of ways to help the researcher to gain an in depth understanding of the data (Ibrahim,2012).

The last step into the model is data conclusions. This is the use of some points to assist the researcher in drawing up a conclusion (Ibrahim,2012). The notion of patterns and themes, grouping categories, identifying relationships between factors, and building consistency which should at the end explore validity of the findings and data collected to fit the theoretical framework (Ibrahim,2012). The content analysis and thematic analysis will be analyzed according to the categories by Keller's brand equity model (1994), namely known as brand identity, brand meaning, brand response and brand resonance to compare results from the in-depth interviews conducted with the thematic and content analysis.

3.8. Limitations and delimitations

Limitations according to Enslin (2017:291) "are any potential problems you foresee for conducting your study. Anything that can possibly threaten the validity of your study can be considered a limitation." Limitations also consist of its delimitations (Enslin,2017). In this section the researcher will be discussing the scope of the study and its limitations and delimitations The scope of this study is the focus of digital academic book brands and specifically digital academic book brands from South Africa. The aim of this study is to identify and investigate the digital strategies of these digital academic book brands to position itself in the online learning context in South Africa to create brand resonance. Limitations can be described as the limit of the

amount of information the researcher must collect within the given time frame of three months (Enslin,2017). The next limitation is accessibility of the number of participants the researcher would know who would like to participate in the study and the availability of the participants to be able to participate in the in-depth interviews the researcher would like to conduct (Enslin,2017). There might also be a shift in conditions during the study and the conduct of the in-depth interviews (Enslin,2017).

Delimitations can be described as a result of specific and definite choices the researchers made when the researchers decided on the scope of the study (Enslin,2017). All the decisions the researcher makes will determine the delimitations of the study (Enslin,2017). Delimitations can also refer to the parameters the researcher has set such as the parameters of concepts, theories, literature, and methods (Enslin,2017). Delimitations have delimitations of theoretical framework, research design and population. The researcher would need to consider the below:

- .1. Delimitations: from the theoretical framework: which the researcher according to smit (2017:35) “purposefully set a delimitation of not generalizing results.” This will be to ensure that the researcher has considered the participants feelings, thoughts, and perceptions (Smit,2017).
- .2. Delimitation from the research design: which for the purpose of this study the researcher has a qualitative design and the interpretivism paradigm to allow participants to express their own feelings, thoughts, and perceptions of the Van Schaik brands digital academic books and how it resonates with them (Smit,2017).
- .3. Delimitations from the population: the researcher will conduct an in-depth interview with participants that are academic with the higher education sector in South Africa, Johannesburg who actively engage and use Van Schaik digital academic books. Therefore, the researcher is wanting to gain an in-depth understanding of how the brand has been positioned in their mind and how the brand has created brand resonance with these academics (Smit,2017).

The next chapter to follow will be Chapter 4, the findings and discussion of data collected.

4. Chapter 4: Findings and Discussion

4.1. Introduction:

The purpose of this chapter is for the researcher to analyze the data collected and findings, this is a crucial part of the study as this involves the researcher to analyze and interpret the data collected through the use of thematic analysis to determine trends, patterns, and relationships (University of Pretoria, 2022). The research questions to be answered in this chapter are:

1. What digital brand strategies do Van Schaik use to position itself in the online learning South African context?
2. How does Van Schaik build brand resonance in the online learning South African context amongst academics?
3. Is there a correlation between Van Schaik's digital brand strategies and its brand resonance against Keller's brand equity model?

This will consist of interpretation of the data and present the data as findings, which will be discussed in relation to previous literature.

4.2. Findings:

Findings have consisted of the researcher discussing and interpreting the results and describing what the researcher had found when analyzing the data (JMU, 2022). The researcher had related the findings and interpretations to previous literature. The research for the purpose of this study had grouped the findings into two groups to represent the findings from each population. Group one named as the Brand Manager and group two named as Academic

4.2.1. Group 1: Van Schaik Brand Manager

In the section below, the data will be presented according to the study's Keller of Brand Equity Model (1994). In this group was for the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of the brands digital academic books digital strategies used to position themselves in the online learning environment in the South African context to create brand resonance. The data will be presented according to Keller's Brand

Equity model (1994). These categories are Salience, Brand Image, Brand response and Brand resonance.

Category 1: Salience:

Salience was used by the researcher to look into the brand awareness and brand identity of the online brand Van Schaik. The questions asked around the category of salience was for the researcher to understand how the brand sees itself. The themes identified in this category were digital content, positioning, and strategy. The table demonstrated below illustrates the themes identified, the frequency and quotes.

Theme	Frequency	Quotes
Digital content	17	'All of the big academic publishing houses have been publishing both print and digital content for many years'
Position	5	'We position ourselves not as providers of books. We position ourselves as providers of academic content'
Strategy	3	'In terms of a digital specific strategy for our brand, we don't have one, because we don't see digital as a separate component of the business, so What we sell, what we develop and what we sell and what we distribute'

The theme of digital content emerged from the data as not being a fairly new concept in academic book publishing. The participant pointed out that it has been around for a long time but only recently due to the pandemic has the concept of digital content grown in demand, as everything had to make a shift into the digital and online space. The Brand Manager of van Schaik also explains due to the pandemic and everything moving into the digital space, as a publishing company and having digital content available already, they had the scale to make their digital content easily accessible to everyone. As mentioned in the literature review as according to NewPath Learning (2022) digital academic books have become an important educational source because the world has recently made a shift into the digital space due to the pandemic, schools have made to shift and use digital

solutions as courses and classes moved to online and for resources to be more accessible out of school and off-campus digital academic books was the solution.

The theme of positioning of the brand emerged from the data, as positioning themselves as academic content providers and not as book providers. It's not providing just any content but meaningful, South African academic content. as mentioned in the literature review as according to Saqib (2020:1) "Positioning as an act of designing a company's offering and image so that they occupy a meaningful and distinct competitive position in the target market's minds" and "Accepting the view that competitive advantage represents the cornerstone of the positioning concept". Therefore, the researcher concurs that as brand positioning, digital academic books brands such as Van Schaik, are building preference among their consumers that when consumers are looking or thinking of digital academic books they automatically think of Van Schaik.

The theme of strategy emerged from the data as the brand discusses their business strategy and marketing strategy of not strategizing separately for both their print books and digital academic books. They do not see digital as a separate component of the business as they repurpose content from their print books into their digital academic books. As part of their strategies, they partner up with local entities such as OPTIMI, VitalSource and Snappilfy. They have also partnered up with Media24 and must liaise with lecturers to prescribe their material to their students, bookstores, and institutions. Therefore, strategy could fall into brand differentiation on what makes them different and stand out from their competition. According to the literature review as according to Gupta, Gallear, Rudd and Foroudi (2020) brand differentiation creates customer loyalty through their pre-purchase decisions and purchase decisions, and it can be determined by brand value and determine the brands marketing and strategic direction.

Category 2: Brand image

Brand image was used by the researcher to look into brand performance and brand imagery. The questions asked around brand image was to gain an understanding of how the brand sees themselves and the meaning of the brand. The themes identified in this category were accessible, affordable, and African. The table below illustrates the category's theme, frequency, and quotes

Theme	Frequency	Quotes
Accessible	3	'Students to be able to find our books. Our physical books very easily. So, we partner with Just about every single bookstore in the country and we have long lasting relationships with them, and I stock the majority of our books. The second one is accessibility digital sense that we want people to be able to find our content very easily'
Affordable	2	'We have a bigger say around how we price things and how our internal finances work and how our profit margins look so we can play around a lot with the prices of our books, and we aim to be to always come in on the lower side for comparative books'
African	17	'Between Van Schaik and Juta we represent the lion share of a local presence, so in terms of our brand, the most important element of the van Schaik brand is that the vast majority of our authors are South African. About 99% of our authors. Or South African. They mix and all of our content is written from the South African perspective.'

The themes Accessible, Affordable and African have emerged from the data as the three words the brand uses as part of the brand focus to push into the market as part of their brand image. African being discussed as the brand providing content that is African and written and produced by Africans, ensuring content is relevant. Affordability being targeted around the brand pricing and always trying to be in the lowest price range as possible making it easier for South African lecturers and students to be able to afford their content. Accessibility having students and

lecturers find their content very easily and being able to track them down in a matter of minutes. According to the literature review the brand needs to be communicating what the brand stands for and who the brand is and how the brand can meet the needs and wants of their consumers (Smit, 2017). brand meaning can be broken down into two parts, brand performance and brand imagery. Brand performance can be described as the product itself which is the influence of what consumers experience with the brand and how it can attempt to meet the needs and wants of its consumers (Keller, Apeira & Georgson, 2012). Brand imagery is the way people think about the brand and the type of person or organization who will use the brand (Keller, Apeira & Georgson, 2012).

Category 3: Brand Response

Brand response was used by the researcher to look into judgment and feelings. The questions asked around brand image was to gain an understanding of how the brand responds to their consumers feelings and judgements. The themes identified in this category were trust, values, and purpose. The table below illustrates the category's theme, frequency, and quotes

Theme	Frequency	Quotes
Trust	2	'We want them to feel so. But that I can trust the content and that it is a high-quality content that we will support them that we will deliver on time and that they will be represented.'
Values	1	'Accessibility, affordability and being African as a very much our values and our driving points'
Purpose	1	'The magnet or product does not serve its purpose anymore. The academics will drop it, right? So, if the book is outdated or the conflict is not good, they just will not prescribe it anymore'

The theme trust has emerged from the data as the brand feelings under brand response to how the brand wants academics to feel and think about the brand.

They want the academics to feel like they can trust the content provided and to trust that the content is high-quality and to trust the brand in supporting the academics to trust them that their content and books will be delivered on time. According to the literature review this can be a way of how the consumers feel and think of the brand through perceived quality, credibility, and consideration of brand relevance to their needs (Smit,2017).

The theme value has emerged from the data as the core values of the brand and their driving points and what the brand wants to represent to its academics, as being accessible, affordable, and African. Using these driving points as communication and support to their academics and as to how they want the academics to think and feel of them. According to the literature review. Digital academic book brands would use response to use their communications and support it with their core values which can leave an impact on their consumers and how they feel about themselves and the brand (Modicum,2017).

The theme purpose has emerged from the data as described as a brand feeling, as they want to stay purposeful in the academic career. publishing houses are fighting to keep the attention of the academics and have them prescribing their material and not to just be dropped due to being irrelevant or outdated material and it does not serve its purpose anymore. Therefore, the impact they want to make on their lectures is to serve the purpose of trying to make the lecturer teaching easier with their content. Therefore, according to the literature review Brand feelings are the consumers' responses and reactions to the brand (Keller, Apeira & Georgson,2012).

Category 4: Brand Resonance

_Brand response was used by the researcher to look into brand relationships. The questions asked around brand resonance were to gain an understanding of how the brand creates relationships. The themes identified in this category were trust, values, and purpose. The table below illustrates the category's theme, frequency, and quotes

Theme	Frequency	Quotes
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Support	7	‘We will find solutions to your problems narrative, uhm? You know, if electricity is now, I need an eBook. Only we are not going to print, we want them to know that. We will interrogate that, and we will do what we can to support. We were a very malleable organization. We look at each specific lecturer's needs, and we do our best to accommodate that.’
Relationships	10	‘That is the campus calling where we go to individual lectures, so we have specific people and sales representatives that build up relationships with specific lectures to make sure that those lectures needs are met and you know, if the lecturer says the content in this book. We have the kind of relationship with them where They will give us an opportunity to first add that book or bring out a new because anything like that before they just drop us. So, it is very much a human engagement.’
Correlation	4	‘Most lecturers Are only interested in things that will immediately make class easier, so our lecture support material definitely plays a role for some subjects.’ ‘New academics who have just finished a master's degree and they are very keen on getting all the help they can get. So, for younger lecturers, younger academics, there is a higher correlation, between Digital solution and sort of brand loyalty if you will or brand buy in. a platform is more established academics than the digital offerings do not play a big role, really.’

The theme support emerged from the data as providing support material to the academics that will immediately make their teaching easier and easier to support their students. It is also providing support in helping the academics with finding solutions to their problems and doing all that they can to support and look at each academic's needs and wants and doing their best to accommodate them through their digital offerings. Therefore, the researcher believes support can be an element of creating a relationship between the brand and academics creating a sense of community and belonging as according to the previous literature brand resonance

or relationships can be the sense of community they feel with the brand and the engagement they have with the brand (Keller, Apeira & Georgson,2012).

The theme relationships emerged from the data as to how they begin creating a relationship between the brand and academics. How the brand creates these relationships as quoted by The Brand Manager of Van Schaik (2022) “that is the campus calling where we go to individual lectures, so we have specific people and sales representatives that build up relationships with specific lectures to make sure that those lectures needs are met, if lecturer says the content in this book is outdated we have the kind of relationships with them where they will give us an opportunity to first add that book or bring out a new book or something like that like that because they just drop us. So, it is very much a human engagement.” As according to previous literature brand resonance is establishing and creating a relationship between the brand and its consumers (Smit,2017).

The theme correlation emerged from the data as there is a correlation between Van Schaik’s digital strategies in creating brand resonance and brand relationships with the lectures. He describes the correlation as slight as most lecturers are only looking into what can make their teaching easier and this is where their support material comes into play. With younger academics there is a higher correlation because they are looking for all the help that they can get and therefore they have a higher brand buy-in or brand loyalty from younger academics. therefore, the researcher believes there is some form of correlation with established academics or younger academics starting out and there is a form of brand loyalty whether it's just using Van Schaik to make the teaching easier the academics are still using their support material or whether it's using all the material there is still some form of connection and bond created between the academic and brand. Therefore, as according to previous literature. The bond a consumer has with the brand, and it can be described with their loyalty to the brand, their attitude towards the brand, the sense of community they feel with the brand and the engagement they have with the brand (Keller, Apeira & Georgson,2012).digital academic book brands would have established a connection between their consumers which can result in their consumers re-purchasing their digital academic books and purchasing more of their

digital academic books and resulting recommendation to other consumers (Modicum,2017).

Conclusion of finding Group 1: van Schaik Brand Manager.

The anticipated contribution was to contribute to digital strategies for brand positioning and brand resonance using brand equity. The researcher had conducted an in-depth interview with the Brand Manager of van Schaik.

In the next section the finding of the group 2: Academics will be presented.

4.2.2. Group 2: Academic

In this group the questions were framed according to the study's theoretical framework: Keller's Brand Equity model (1994) to allow the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of the digital strategies Van Schaik uses to position their digital academic books in the online learning environment in the South African context to create brand resonance. The data will be presented according to Keller's Brand Equity model (1994). These categories are Salience, Brand Image, Brand response and Brand resonance.

Category 1: Salience

Salience was used by the researcher to look into the brand awareness and brand identity of the online brand Van Schaik. The questions asked around the category of salience was for the researcher to understand how the academic sees the brand. The three themes identified in this category were user-friendliness, competitive and reading brands. The table demonstrated below illustrates the themes identified, the frequency and quotes.

Theme	Frequency	Quotes
User-Friendly	4	'I think also from their website it's just a user-friendly experience being able to find what you are looking for and having a good selection of resources available in the online space.'

Competitive	14	'Competitive in things like pricing, it is just about efficiency and how quickly I can get the resource if I order online. How soon can I have the prescribed material or the material that I am looking for.'
Leading Brands	1	'I see van Shaik as being one of the leading brands in South Africa both online and offline.'

The data revealed the themes of user-friendly, competitive, and leading brands in terms of how she thinks and what comes to mind of Van Schaik.

User-friendly quoted by the academic "I think also from their website it's just a user-friendly experience" and "user friendliness of their online platforms" and then further discussed as the type of experience she has had with the brand in the past or when the academic uses their content on their platforms and also having a wide range of digital academic books available and how quickly the material can be given to the academic. Therefore, the researcher believes this could be considered as the brand identity according to the academic and how the brand has been positioned in the mind of the academic. Therefore, the researcher further believes there is a link established between the brand identity of user-friendly with the brand positioning of how the brand is positioned in the mind of the academic. According to the previous literature this is building brand awareness and salience, ensuring that your consumers recognize the brand and ensuring their consumers make the correct perceptions about the brand (Smit,2017). According to further previous literature brand positioning can be described as the process of brand positioning is to position the brand in the mind of the consumers and used to set the business apart from the competitors (Patel,2021).

Competitiveness is discussed through their competitive pricing and quoted by the academic "then as I said being competitive in things like pricing" having the material the academic needs to service their needs. According to previous literature brand equity can be described as the value of having a recognized brand and related to customers preference over competitive brands, customer loyalty and willingness to pay higher prices (Cunningham,2017). This is linking a brand product to brand

elements (Keller, Apeira & Georgson,2012). Digital academic book brands will use this to show their consumers who they are and stand out from their competitors and by doing this the digital academic book brands would need to understand what their consumers think of them (Modicum,2017).

Leading brands are discussed as the brand being the top brand in both online and print material and having their online space allowing them to grow and expand their target to a much bigger audience and having a good tap into the market. The researcher believes these three elements can be used as a way for the brand to show their consumers who they are and how they stand out from the competitors. According to previous literature digital academic book brands will use this to show their consumers who they are and stand out from their competitors and by doing this the digital academic book brands would need to have an understanding of what their consumers think of them (Modicum,2017).this is building brand awareness and salience ensuring that your consumers recognize the brand and ensure their consumers make the correct perceptions about the brand (Smit,2017).), it relates to how a consumer perceives a brand and their attitude towards it (Williams,2021).

Category 2: Brand Image

Brand image was used by the researcher to look into the brand performance and brand imagery of the online brand Van Schaik. The questions asked around the category of brand image was for the researcher to understand what the brand means to the academic. The themes identified in this category were variety, inclusivity, and adaptability. The table demonstrated below illustrates the themes identified, the frequency and quotes.

Theme	Frequency	Quotes
Variety	8	'I think just in terms of the variety that they have, the selection of resources available.'
Inclusivity	4	'Supply diversity and inclusivity and a different array of viewpoints to cater for everyone and is very well rounded.'

Adaptable	1	'The sense that they are moving with the times, they are flexible, they are adaptable.'
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The researcher has identified the theme adaptable and quoted from the academic "they are moving with the times, they are flexible, they are adaptable" and further used to describe who the brand is, being able to adapt , being flexible and diverse with new changes taking place in the academic world , and still meeting the needs and wants of both students and academics. According to previous literature, digital academic book brands will use both these factors of imagery and performance to play a role in developing the brand's personality (Modicum,2017).

The second theme that appeared in the data was inclusivity. the academic quoted inclusivity of what they think of when they hear the brand Van Schaik "I think of inclusivity" The data showed the academic associates with the brand and a term to describe Van Schaik catering to everyone's needs and wants and catering for all disciplines and providing in-depth content, making teaching, and learning easier and providing an inclusive approach to different viewpoints and angles of the content. Therefore, the researcher believes this term can be described to use as how the academic thinks about the brand and describes the type of people to use the brand and products would be the academics and students. According to previous literature Brand imagery is the way people think about the brand and the type of person or organization who will use the brand (Keller, Apeira & Georgson,2012).

The Researcher identifies the theme variety of the brand to describe its products and experience the academic has with the brand and how the term variety can be used to describe the ways in which the brand meets the needs and wants of the academics. The academic describes a variety of Van Schaik having a wide range of different content available for different disciplines and resources available.it can also be described of the brand providing a wide range of different views, perspectives, and angles on one topic from different authors. According to previous literature Brand performance can be described as the product itself which is the influence of what consumers experience with the brand and how it can attempt to meet the needs and wants of its consumers (Keller, Apeira & Georgson,2012).

Category 3: Response

Brand response was used by the researcher to look into judgment and feelings. The questions asked around brand image were to gain an understanding of the academics' feelings and judgment about the brand. The themes identified in this category were one stop shop, quality product and reassurance. The table below illustrates the category's theme, frequency, and quotes

Theme	Frequency	Quotes
Quality	4	'I feel like I get a quality product, I feel like I go there I can find what I am looking for'
One stop shop	1	'It gives me a sense as a one stop shop for my academic needs'
Reassurance	4	'It gives me a little bit of reassurance that they are a platform that can provide and cater to the needs that I have and in terms of the diversity it's just quite inclusive and can cater to all for everything and for everyone'

The researcher identified three themes into how the academic quotes about the brand and her judgment on her personal point of view about the brand. These three themes are namely a quality product, a one stop shop and reassurance. She discusses quality products as the brand provides quality products "I feel like I get a quality product" and that she is able to find and access any of their products easily and she can find anything that she is looking for. She then discusses it being a one stop shop and quotes "so it gives me a sense as a one stop shop for my academic needs, it gives me a little bit of reassurance that they are a platform that can provide and cater to the needs that I have" therefore discusses it as a one stop shop for her academic needs, the brand being able to provide with her multiple services and products and being convenient for her and efficient. She then discusses reassurance as she is reassured and is aware that Van Schaik is the platform that caters to her academic needs and meets her academic needs through diversity and inclusivity. According to previous literature brand response is the way consumers feel and think of the brand through perceived quality, credibility, and consideration of brand

relevance to their needs (Smit,2017). brand response can be broken down into judgment and feelings. Brand judgment focuses on the consumers personal opinions (Keller, Apeira & Georgson,2012). Brand feelings are the consumers' responses and reactions to the brand (Keller, Apeira & Georgson,2012).

Category 4: brand resonance

Brand response was used by the researcher to look into brand relationships. The questions asked around brand resonance were to gain an understanding of the relationship, bond, and connections the academic have with the brand. The themes identified in this category were relatability, secureness, and loyalty. The table below illustrates the category's theme, frequency, and quotes.

Theme	Frequency	Quotes
Relatability	1	'The relatability comes in the variety, and it comes in the useability of their online platforms.'
Secure	1	'I do think that there is a relationship in that or a connection in what I am looking for and what they supply so yes that does make me feel quite secure in their brand and product offering and making sure that that service provider is meeting my needs.'
Loyalty	2	'I do not have loyalty to a particular brand when I come to online resources but in saying that I do generally have certain platforms that I navigate to because I know that I am more likely to find it in that space more than others.'

The Researcher has identified three different themes that emerged from the data, namely relatability, secure and loyalty. The Academic discusses relatability has her connection and bond she has with the brand as to how she can relate to the brand through the variety of product offering and platforms they offer to the academics in what she is looking for and needs. The academic discusses secure as feeling secure with the brand and products because she does feel a relationship has been created between her and the brand and that relationship created is ensuring that her needs are met. The academic discusses loyalty as she does not feel loyal to a particular

brand but loyalty in the sense that she does have her certain and preferred platforms that she navigates to in knowing what she wants and where she can find it and Van Schaik provides that for her. Therefore, according to previous literature this is established once the brand has built a relationship with the consumer and has created a connection between the brand and the consumer (Smit, 2017). The bond a consumer has with the brand, and it can be described with their loyalty to the brand, their attitude towards the brand, the sense of community they feel with the brand and the engagement they have with the brand (Keller, Apeira & Georgson, 2012). digital academic book brands would have established a connection between their consumers which can result in their consumers re-purchasing their digital academic books and purchasing more of their digital academic books and resulting recommendation to other consumers (Modicum, 2017).

Conclusion

The anticipated contribution was to contribute to digital strategies for brand positioning and brand resonance using brand equity. The researcher has conducted semi-structured, in-depth interviews with academics, one mock interview with an academic and has also conducted two other official interviews with academics.

4.3. Validity and reliability / trustworthiness

This study is based on a qualitative study and therefore for the purpose of this study the researcher will briefly explain how the researcher will enhance the trustworthiness and rigor of this study. The aim of a qualitative study is to promote the understanding of the phenomenon with a specific context and not to generalize. Therefore, trustworthiness is appropriate for this study. Trustworthiness (Koonin, 2017). Trustworthiness or rigor of a study refers to the degree of confidence in data, interpretation, understanding, and methods used (Connelly, 2016). Trustworthiness is divided into four terms known as credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Koonin, 2017). Credibility refers to according to Koonin (2017:258) "the accuracy with which the researcher interpreted the data that was provided by the participants." When the researcher spends more time with the participants to gain a better understanding and when participants' perspectives are believable, credibility

is increased (Koonin,2017). Transferability according to Koonin (2017:258) “is the ability of the findings to be applied to a similar situation and deliver the same results.” Which results and analysis can be applied beyond the specific research (Koonin,2017). Dependability according to Koonin (2017:259) “refers to the quality of the process of integration that takes place between the data collection method, data analysis and the theory generated from the data.” Confirmability according to Koonin (2017:259) “refer to how well the data collected supported the findings and interpretation of the researcher.” Others who look at the research study must come to the same or similar conclusions the researcher has (Koonin,2017). Therefore, for the purpose of this study for the researcher to ensure trustworthiness, the researcher will ensure credibility by spending time, during the in-depth interview process, with the brand manager and academics and ask questions to gain a better understanding of their thoughts, feelings and opinions and ensure detailed answers. For transferability, the researcher will look for similar answers between the academics and find common thoughts they might have shared the same thoughts and feelings about the Van Schaik’s brand and to match it with the brand manager’s answers to find some similar results of hat the brand might have achieved what they wanted to achieve among academics. For dependability, the researcher will look back into the data collection methods and analysis and find some similar background of data. For confirmability, the researcher will ask an outsider if they do find similar results to what the researcher has found if they come to the same or similar conclusion as the researcher has, by allowing them to read the study and asking them to provide their feedback.

The next chapter will be chapter 5, which will conclude the following study. Chapter 5 will look into how the research questions were answered and conclude the findings.

5. Chapter 5: Conclusion

This chapter will present population and sampling, data collection, data analysis methods and findings and the research questions addressed and how these were implemented.

5.1. Concluding answers to the research questions

The anticipated contribution was to contribute to digital strategies for brand positioning and brand resonance using brand equity. The researcher will conclude how the researcher has answered the research questions through the data collected by group one of the brand manager of Van Schaik.

These research questions were answered as follows:

1. Van Schaik does not have specific digital strategies as its own component, it is one business strategy to use the same strategy across their digital academic books and their print academic books. Van Schaik uses this one strategy to position itself using a triple A method of Accessible, Affordable and African. Positioning themselves as easily accessible for academics and students and affordable with the aim of having the lowest pricing within academic books and African ensuring content is written by an African author with African content.
2. Van Schaik builds its brand resonance amongst its academics by contacting lecturers from different institutions and setting up appointments and taking time to go to the lecturers' offices and having human engagement and using this time to build on relationships with the academics and getting the academic to recommend their material to bookstores and institutions. They also create brand resonance through providing academics with support materials to help make their teaching easier and making it easier for the academic to support their students and that they will do all the can to help the academics meet their needs and wants in digital academic books and to help them find solutions to their problems. They also create a relationship where a lecturer can tell van Schaik if content is outdated and give them the opportunity to fix that and update their content.
3. Yes, there is a correlation between Van Schaiks digital strategies and its brand resonance against the Keller model of brand equity (1994). The correlation is along with academics needing material that can make their teaching easier and that

is where the support material from Van Schaik comes into play with brand resonance. There is a relationship created of the academic having a need and want and Van Schaik meeting that need and want, creating a connection and relationship that could lead the academic to re-purchase of the brands product offerings.

The anticipated contribution was to contribute to digital strategies for brand positioning and brand resonance using brand equity. The researcher will conclude how the researcher has answered the research questions through the data collected by group one of the brand manager of Van Schaik.

These research questions were answered as follows:

1. Van Schaik in the mind of the academic has positioned themselves in the South African market as the leading brand in both online and offline and positioned as being competitive in their pricing and providing services to meet the academic needs. They have also been positioned as being user-friendly experiences and having a good wide range selection of resources and being inclusive, diverse, and efficient.
2. Van Schaik has built brand resonance amongst its academics by making their teaching easier and providing relatable, diverse, inclusive and variety of material. And the academic feeling secured and reassured with the brand products and making the brand the first platform to look into when they need material and resources.

Yes, there is a correlation between Van Schaik's digital strategies and its brand resonance. The correlation academics in need of the material that can make their teaching easier and provide different perspectives and viewpoints and angles to their students to understand content better and Van Schaik assures that through their material provided. There is a relationship created of the academic having a need and want and Van Schaik meeting that need and want, creating a connection and relationship that could lead the academic to re-purchase of the brand's product offerings.

5.2. Implications of findings for future practices

The most important contribution of this study will be providing an in-depth understanding of a specific phenomenon and this phenomenon is to investigate to understand what digital brand strategies academic books use to position their brands in the online learning context to create brand resonance against the Keller model of brand equity (1994).

5.3. Conclusions

In conclusion to the study an interpretivist approach was followed as it can be described as reality is fluid and created by human interaction and is subjective and it can change at any time (Du Plooy-Cilliers, 2017). Interpretivism is then influenced by phenomenology which is individuals making sense of the world around them a symbolic interaction which is the ability to read into each other's actions and provide meaning to it (Du Plooy-Cilliers, 2017). Through the researcher using interpretivism phenomenology, the researcher is wanting to understand how consumers are experiencing the brand through their own perspectives and how the brand is being differentiated in the mind of the consumers (Dudovskiy, 2021). the researcher had used the Keller brand equity model (1994) which helps builds strong brand equity by the brand standing out in the minds of their consumers and communicates what the brand stands for and how consumers respond to the brand based on their emotions and perceptions and by also strengthening connections and resonance between the brand and their consumers (Williams, 2021). The researcher had then used the paradigm of qualitative research techniques to give the researcher a unique in depth understanding of the phenomenon through the participants' opinions, thoughts, and feelings (in sight,2017). A qualitative study aims to explore and understand participants' different thoughts, feelings, and perceptions (Smit,2017). The researcher had conducted a cross-sectional exploratory study because the researcher will be exploring an unknown area (Davis,2017). The aim of an exploratory research is to gather new information about the phenomenon (Davis,2017). Based on the research findings identified by the researcher, Van Schaik does not use different strategies to position their online academic books, strategies used for their hardcover books will be the same strategy used for their

digital academic book. They create brand resonance not through their strategies but through creating relationships with academics through personal visits, cold calling, and emails. they do not market to students or institutions but only to academics who then would recommend their material to their institutions and students.

5.4. Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations are ethical principles that researchers adhere to when conducting their research (Enslin,2017). Ethical considerations are guidelines of what the researcher can consider acceptable and unacceptable behavior and refers to the methods, procedures and perspective that tells the researcher how to act and analyses (Enslin,2017). Therefore, for the purpose of this study the researcher will follow the below to ensure ethical consideration:

5.4.1. Anonymity by ensuring any information collected from the participants that the study and research project does not collect any identifying information or personal information such as their name, address, email address, cell phone numbers and place of work and occupation (Endicott College,2022).

5.4. 2.. Confidentiality by ensuring any information collected from the participants that only the researcher can be the individual to identify responses of individual participant's preventing outsider readers to connect the individual participants with their responses (Endicott College,2022). This will be done by any recording of the in-depth interviews will only be recorded and heard by the researcher, the interviews will only be transcribed from the researcher and in respect to confidentiality the researcher will be keeping any recordings in secure place such as a folder on the researcher's laptop that is password protected to ensure their confidentiality.

5.4.3. Ethical clearance which is done by application from the researcher before engaging in any research and data collection which uses and gathers sensitive data to be approved (Van Wyk,2022). This will be done through the annexure A provided to be filled out by the researcher and submitted to the research committee for approval for the researcher to be able to start collecting data to show no high-risk study will be conducted and it does not involve vulnerable groups such as children.

5.4.4. Consent forms will be provided to each participant which can be seen as annexure B as the exact consent form that will be provided. The participants will be required to fill out the consent form before the researcher begins asking questions

and conduct the in-depth interviews as proof, they had given the researcher permission to conduct these interviews.

5.4.5. The researchers' details will also be provided to the participants if they wish to contact the research with any concerns

5.4.6. An institutional letter will also be provided to the participants to ensure the participants responses are for the use of academic research purposes.

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