



THE FACTORS INFLUENCING BRAND EQUITY OF SPORTSWEAR BRAND AMONG YOUNG ADULT IN MALAYSIA

Nurain Farahaina Binti Ilias^{1*}, Tony Khoo Wei Liang², Michelle Claudia Lo³,
Umami Sakinah binti Nor Afendi⁴, Sim Shin Yee⁵, Nur Izzati binti Badruddin⁶

*¹⁻⁶Faculty of Technology Management and Technopreneurship, Universiti Teknikal
Malaysia, Melaka*

*Corresponding Author email: nurainfarah63@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This research purpose is to study the factors that influencing brand equity of sportswear brand among young adult in Malaysia. Since there are a lot of new brand come into the industry, brand equity become more crucial day by day. Moreover, there are varieties of factors to achieve high brand equity. There were 3 objectives in this research study: (1) To investigate the factors that influencing brand equity of sportswear brand among young adult in Malacca, (2) To verify the relationship between brand loyalty, brand awareness, brand image and brand associations with brand equity of sportswear brand among young adult in Malacca, (3) To determine the factors that gives biggest impact on brand equity of sportswear brand among young adult in Malacca. SPSS and SEM PLS techniques were used to analyse the data. These studies were focus for the population of young adult in Malacca and the researcher distributed questionnaires to 200 respondents. This research study can facilitate the marketer of manufacturer to understand the foremost factors that may influence consumer which is young adult to purchase a sportswear brand and will advantage marketers in promoting and raising the sportswear production of original product. The result from this research showed that brand awareness gives the most influenced on brand equity.

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INTRODUCTION

Today's sportswear industry is booming in Malaysia and sportswear is well-defined mainly as attire and footwear made for sports involvement. Therefore, nowadays casual clothes worn by people for his or her daily activities. Since the 1990s, casual and luxury clothes have triumphed as a fashion trend, with sports or leisure activity being appreciated as part of a well-being trend (Ko et al. 2011). Then, sportswear items became a standard and classy class of consumer goods as it provides adolescents an additional relaxed lifestyle and higher comfort. Customers apparel athletic attire not solely in sports activities, however additional at school, at home, at work, or at leisure time.

Sportswear stuffs became a mutual and dominant category of customer goods as it gives young people a more cool way of life and greater cosiness. Huei, Tat,

Sharifuddin and Rasli (2010) mentioned that casualwear diversities such as Nike has become extra and famous between Malaysian populations, mostly youth in Malaysia.

According to Kinuthia et al. (2012), awareness of the buyer has been most popular by the competition throughout the economic process, saturation of markets, and knowledge technological development. This has influenced the caused to large-scale competition in the clothing industry particularly in sportswear brand.

The sportswear brands in specific have been strong competitor to induce a chance to the value of their new technology and products over sports sponsorship (Hwang & Choi, 2013). According to Tong and Hawley (2009), the international sportswear market is very competitive and is one of the best heavily brand-named segments within the whole apparel market. It is being contained by a few main international players, such as Adidas, Nike and Reebok.

Nowadays when it comes to fashion, clothes or apparel the major issue is counterfeit. According to Kay (1990), counterfeiting is the illegal reproduction of original products to come out with identical products by imitating the packaging, trademark and label. Counterfeiting is posing influences on numerous sectors and continuously rising as an illegal industry. China, Brazil, India, and Indonesia is the some countries that have been well-known for counterfeiting business. This is among of the wildest increasing economic crimes globally and it intimidates the economies of recognised and rising countries alike, damages new investment, and increasingly endangers public health and safety.

Malaysia is recognised as one of the origins of piracy and counterfeit besides Thailand, China, and India (Haque, Khatibi, & Rahman, 2009). Typically the products that are being counterfeited is clothing, handbag, CD and VCD, shoes and even drugs. Sportswear included mostly fashion clothing and other accessories, such as sport watch, sport shoes, and sport bottle likewise and it becomes the aim for the counterfeiters since the fake of sportswear requires less technical ability (Transcrime, 2010).

Report on the economic influence of counterfeit shows that the disadvantage from the sportswear business turning into a fashion industry has concerned counterfeiters referred to Organization for Economic Cooperation & Development (OECD). This is because the counterfeit sportswear is simple to supply because it was an immediate production by using grey market channel and it is easy to copy because it is always joined to big events such as the World Cup or another major event wherever counterfeit traders can focus on producing an enormous quantity of fake sportswear.

The aim of this learning is to lead a research about the factors that influencing brand equity of sportswear brand among young adult. The outcome could point out those factor which are brand loyalty, brand awareness, brand image and brand association. The studies were in Malacca, the questionnaires were distributed to the target

population which is young adult according to the simple random sampling method and this will examine on chapter 3. This analysis study can facilitate them to notice the most factors that will influence consumer which is young adult to purchase a sportswear brand. This research will helps and profit marketers in promoting and increasing the sportswear production of original product and it can also give valuable foresight to manufactures who want to focus on youth consumers.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Firstly, within 1980s, the most common marketing concept is brand equity. Today, marketers are aware the vital of brand asset management, significantly as organizations move toward associate to talk ever advanced and intangible messages as part of brand management strategy. Brand equity is outlined in terms of the marketing effects exclusively attributable to the brand (Keller 1993). For example, once certain outcomes from the marketing of a product or service because of its brand name that may not seem if the similar product or service didn't have that name.

Brand equity is regarded as a necessary concept in business practice as well as in academic research because marketers will gain competitive edge through winning brands (Lassar, Mittal, & Sharma, 2005). Brand equity is related to purchaser place better self-confidence in a real variety than competing products which they are willing to pay high prices for the product and growing customer loyalty. Very powerful brand equity will build a brand nearly resistant to competition.

Brand equity is attention to superiors because of brand extension and brand loyalty. Brand extensions are zones that are excessive by the unique brand's equity. A present of brand extension as difference to a new brand name has slight in term of advertising prices and advanced transactions because of customer knowledge and conscious of the pure brand. Nike and Adidas Companies is one example of the sportswear brand that who has proficient in brand extension. The results found that customers comply with take brand extensions more when the quality dissimilarities across the product line are slight instead large (Dacin & Smith, 1994). This proposes that buyer's don't belief brands whose offer quality contrasts.

Forming brand equity, accurate as the something value of that particular brand in the opinions of buyers, hints the consumer to admit as true that the item for consumption is the best amongst others on the market (Keller, 1999). This is essential because customers must value the brand first, next want to buy it and become faithful to it. Moreover, brand equity also will be reassurances especially for the buyer's whether buy a specific product among other products. Consuming brand equity value that the young adult consumer will belief that precise brand is better than other brands exist in the market, and it is the starting trail to develop brand loyalty.

The famous industries all around the world is sportswear which the main contributor to the history of fashion style. Sportswear was defined as a category of fashion-

oriented, comfy wear based on clothing developed for sports (Lim & Aprianingsih, 2016). As we can see nowadays the brand such as Adidas and Nike the popular brand in Sportswear industry.

Since the 1990s, casual and comfort clothes have prevailed as a fashion style, with sports or leisure activity being appreciated as part of a well-being trend (Ko et al., 2011). Sportswear generally is worn for physical and sport activities that contains the sports shorts, shirt and athletic footwear. So, the sportswear not just to make well performance for sports, but creating clothes to be used in everyday basis and that's why we can see that the sportswear is very popular that they are trying to innovate and spreading for their brands.

Brand loyalty is important which is nowadays the sportswear company trying to increase brand loyalty from their customers. Brand loyalty is a positive angle of the customers towards a brand that may be a results of consistent purchase of the brands over time. In other words brand loyalty is nothing however an understanding by the customer that a selected brand provides him with most satisfaction. It is the extent of trust and belief on a selected brand that's drawn by the repeat purchases of the brand by the purchasers despite the information and availability of the other brands existing within the market.

In general, brand loyalty can be defined as the power of preference for a brand compared to the other similar on the market choices. Amine (1998) analyse the important approaches to outline the loyalty construct that is firstly the behavioural one suggests that the repeat buying of a brand over time by a consumer expresses their loyalty. Hence, brand loyalty is action of each behaviour and attitudes. It is a consumer's option to get a specific brand in a product category. It happens as a result consumers understand that the brand offers the proper product look, level of quality at the right price and image.

Consumers also be within habit of shopping for a certain brand without while not very thinking a lot about why that's brand loyalty is typically accepted from the conceptualization of brand equity (Klaliq Ahmad & Ahmed, 2013). Brand loyalty incorporates an important relationship with brand equity in their analysis results. Brand loyalty as a position that discloses in what method recurrently a customer are going to be shift to various brand, specifically once that product creates associates degree alteration, whether or not in rate or in item for ingesting sorts.

Consumers, through precise brand resonance, have a high step of loyalty, aggressively pursue means to interconnect with the product and share their involvements with others. These explanations of brand loyalty idea to a through relationship between brand loyalty and brand equity where brand loyalty is frequently known to be a core dimension of brand equity. Brand loyalty has a positive relationship with brand equity (Lassar et al., 2005).

As well, a consumer's preferred to stay, keep purchase result, and validation to the product is influenced by loyalty (Shafi & Madhavaiah, 2013). Customer loyalty thus not only rises a company's market share and revenue but recovers its competitive advantage as well (Kumar, Purani, & Sahadev, 2013).

Brand loyalty is describe the customers' obtaining the similar product classification, either an acutely aware or unaware choice procedure measurement of however sometimes a consumer is possible to urge an item for ingesting from identical brand. (Benson & Hedren, 2013) stated that a strong brand is made by a high loyalty level that in turn certificates price points which let the brand trade acceptance and low price elasticity to urge the very best out of the company profits.

Youth customers are pleasant a very essential segment in today's marketplace as of their huge size, their existing important amount of expenses power and their potential for enormous amounts of future spending power (Joyce, 2001). Decide on to pay no attention to this section could be unsafe for companies considering that they are the future take over part of the market.

There are seven components that influenced consumer's brand loyalty towards certain sports attire brands in his research (Lau et al. 2006). The components that influenced brand loyalty are facility quality, brand name, price, product value, elegance, store setting, promotion and facility quality.

Brand awareness is a main and important element is brand equity. Aaker (1996) defines brand awareness as the durability of a brand that embedded in the customer mind. Hence, brand awareness are going to be created by in progress visibility, enhancing familiarity and powerful associations with connected offerings and purchasing experiences.

To attract new customers by influencing their behaviour with different strategies that would make them loyal to one brand, brand image is a powerful tool. Consumers incline to specialize on repetitive purchase instead of one-time purchase on promotion period if having the positive brand image of the product. Keller (1993) specified that the brand image is the perception of a product that may be a similarity of customer's memory within the product. Brand image is then separate as the views and initial selection of the customers to a definite brand reflected in the associations created in their memorial. Strong, favourable and unique associations to a definite brand are important as foundations of brand equity accomplished of guiding the customer's behaviour (Keller, 2005). Moreover, this brand image component is additional unwarranted the more noticeable the product is utilized by other individual.

Due to its position in building brand equity, brand image has been studied widely since the 20th century (Zhang, 2015). The brand turns out to be an expansion lead of the customer and a specific affirmation that this customer can make approximately himself (Nowak & Washburn, 2002). This is can allow marketing program can be

adored and be able to produce unique associations to the brand that always occur in customer retention if have a positive brand image. The factors creating the image of the brand in terms of brand association is that the presence of brand associations that clarify the attributes of customer trust and edges provided by a brand can fulfil the requirements and wishes of shoppers therefore on build a positive perspective towards the brand.

Brand association is connected to information on what is in the customer's attention about the brand, connected to the node of the brain memory either positive or negative (Hossien Emari, 2012). Brand association shows as an info collecting tool to implement brand extension and brand differentiation (Osselaer and Chris Janiszewski, 2001). Principally, any information come across in brand association is related to the brand name in consumer recall, and reveal the brand's image. It will be more memorised by the consumer and be loyal towards the brand if the greater the brand associations in the product.

Brand association also contain of other belongings such as the products norm, user way of life, challengers, and origin of the country (Shafi & Madhavaiah, 2013). Brand image is finished up when a bundle of association is outlined in a important strategy. Two fundamental categories mentioned which are association of the goods and association structural which are the typology of brand association.

Pouromid and Iranzadeh (2012) reveals that there are relationship among brand association and brand equity. Keller (1993) was emphatically impact paper on consumer based brand equity theorizes brand knowledge as those associations almost a brand reviewed from memorial. Likewise, Christodoulides and de Chernatony (2010) in their consumer based brand equity literature review accomplish that the general of conceptual studies classify brand associations as a primary portion of customer based brand equity.

Brand associations talk about the unified of the brand and opinions of the customers such as emotional state, approaches, imaginings, knowledges, philosophies, and insights. It is the main asset for the creating heavy-duty brand equity likened to three other assets of Aaker's which is brand awareness, brand loyalty, and perceived quality to (Chen, 2001).

The top three sportswear company's today (i.e. Nike, Adidas/Reebok and Under Armor) account for over 65 per cent of the entire US sportswear advertise (Mintel, 2011). These brands utilize significant extents of resources to advance strong consumer-brand association (Dawes, 2009). Mostly association in other terms is connected. Subsequently, based on the past inquire about on books (International Cases In The Business Of Sport) respondent which are the Korean recognized as the most grounded awareness of an companionship with the Adidas brand (ahead of totally others sportswear brand). Sample from the respondent revealed that strong awareness of the Adidas brand and arranged strong association with it.

A theoretical framework is a concept, definition, and reference rendering to the literature review. It is theoretical framework structure that guides this research study. According to Fig. 1, the researcher come out with independent variable and the dependent variables. There is one dependent variable which is brand equity and there are three independent variable which are brand loyalty, brand awareness, brand image and brand associations in this research study.

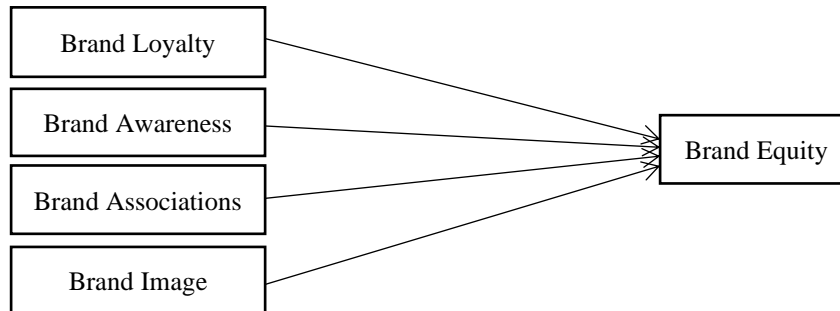


Fig. 1. The Proposed Research Framework

Brand loyalty as “an extraordinarily command commitment to repurchase a favoured product or service perpetually within the future, marketing efforts having potential to cause exchanging behaviour and despite situational influences” (Oliver 1997). Oliver’s definition highlights the activity dimension of brand loyalty, while Rossiter and Percy (1987) argued that brand loyalty is continual purchases of constant brand over time and often characterised by a decent perspective towards brand. Brand loyalty is also conceptualized supported an attitudinal perspective. Chieng and Lee (2011) declared that brand loyalty is the significant dimension of brand equity. In addition, brand loyalty develops once the complete fits the temperament or self-image of the buyer or once the complete offers pleasing and distinctive edges that the buyer seeks (Qyester and Lim, 2003). Hence, the following hypothesis of the relationship between brand loyalty and brand equity is proposed:

H1: There is a significant relationship between brand loyalty and brand equity.

Aaker (1991) stated that brand awareness may be a vital component of brand equity. It refers to the strength of a brand’s presence in consumers’ minds. Rossiter and Percy (1987) defined brand awareness as the consumers’ ability to identify or recognize the brand. According to Burmann et al. (2009), brand awareness falls into the category of knowledge-oriented measures and in and of itself forms the measure basis of external brand strength. This idea reflects the flexibility of the client to spot and properly classify a brand to a product class. Nevertheless, brand awareness itself is not sufficient to create internal or external brand strength. Rather brand awareness represents a necessary condition for brand strength since the positive or negative quality of brand strength is determined by the other dimensions. Based on the above definition and the suggested relationship of brand awareness and brand equity in the literature, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H2: There is a significant relationship between brand awareness and brand equity.

Today, corporation invest substantial resources to develop names with a favourable image. Among different advantages, a positive image facilitates business growth through brand extensions. Thus, product introductions with the constant brand name are able to leverage the brand image, brand awareness and, on the whole brand equity obtained within the established markets (Salinas and Perez, 2009). According the work of Boo et al. (2009), brand image has been thought of because the reasoned or emotional perceptions customers attach to specific brands. Brand image has additionally been known as a crucial supply of brand equity (Boo et al., 2009). Thus, the following hypothesis was formulated:

H3: There is a significant relationship between brand image and brand equity.

Referred to Kotler and Keller (2006) brand associations refers all brand-related views of the customers like attitudes, perceptions, experiences, feelings, and images. It is the main asset for the building sturdy brand equity compared to three different assets of Aaker's –brand loyalty, perceived quality and brand awareness to (Chen, 2001). Chen argued that brand awareness may be essential asset however not sufficient for building strong brand equity and different brand equity dimensions enhance brand loyalty.

Brand associations also produce value for the firm and its customers by serving to process information, create positive attitudes, differentiate the brand and supply a basis for extensions (Aaker, 1991). As a result, consumer-based brand equity happens once customers have a high level of awareness and hold some strong and distinctive brand associations in their memories (Tong and Hawley, 2009). Supported this, then, the subsequent hypothesis is posited:

H4: There is a significant relationship between brand associations and brand equity.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Primary data was the data gathered by the researcher themselves. For example, interview, observation, action research, case studies, life histories, questionnaires and ethnographic research. The questionnaire was our major and the only method that we use in obtaining the primary data. The questionnaire was distributed to 200 respondents towards consumers and each of the questionnaires stated the objective of the study and also the respondent's coventness. The questionnaire that distributed to respondents was be supervised by the researcher and collected on the applicable time of survey.

According to Krejcie and Morgan (1970), the sample size for the current study is 384 respondents. However, the researcher will allocate questionnaire only to 200 respondents due to time constraint and limited cost. According to Hair et al. (2010), he advocate that at least 100 respondents are required to conduct a quantitative research. A non-random sampling method used in this research study which is

stratified sample selection. The researcher study also wants to emphasis on Malacca area only.

Likert scale may be a generally applied evaluation scale that needs the respondents to show the degree of agreement or disagreement with every of a series of statement with every of a series of statements concerning the motivation object (Sekaran 2003). The likert scale starting from strongly agree to strongly agree in this study. Respondents were asked to specify in every statement a degree of they agree or pain the precise statement starting from strongly disagree (one) to strongly agree (five).

The questionnaires that already collected back are going to be analysed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). SPSS known as a software for **analysing all sorts of data** and running statistical tests. Several statistical tests was used by the researcher to analyse the data and information. Then, the researcher also used a descriptive statistic. The descriptive statistics containing means, median, mod, null, and standard deviation to describe the data distribution.

Multiple linear regressions (MLR) is a statistical technique that uses numerous instructive variables to predict the end of result of a response variable. So, this multiple linear regression method was used to clarify the relationship between one dependent variable and two or more independent variable. The significant relationship between variable will determine in the analysis. Then, the result will be used to discover and predict ability of a set of independent variables on dependent variable.

In this case, using the Pearson Correlation Coefficient was the appropriate technique to interpret the data for Likert Scale questionnaire. To signify the relationship between 2 variables, this correlation coefficient will be used. This analysis acknowledge the correlation among the variables, and measured the power of the relationships between two variables. In this study, the data analyses that the researchers get were used to answer the research question.

During this research, the researcher used the Cronbach's Alpha which is to specify the constancy and reliability. The reliability test is to seem at the questionnaire style and reliability put together designed to live inters item consistency of a study and facilitate to measures the higher measures. The research would be seen as being reliable if a researcher ready to replicate an earlier research design and come through an equivalent findings (Saunders et al., 2016). The reliability level is higher when the reliability coefficient nearer to 1.0, while if the items make low reliability alpha is smaller than 0.5. So, for this test will helped the researcher to determine which question is weak.

DATA ANALYSIS & RESEARCH FINDINGS

In this research used SPSS and SEM (PLS) for data analysis and main findings of this research study. Hence, statistics were analyse to identify the factors that influencing

brand equity among young adult. The questionnaire survey question described in the descriptive analysis result in this paper. Therefore, to test the reliability of the question in the questionnaire, the Cronbach's Alpha is being used with the help of smart PLS. Data from the questionnaire that have been distributed to 200 respondents will be analysed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 2.0. This research focusing on the factors that influencing brand equity in terms of brand loyalty, brand awareness, brand image and brand associations. The questionnaire was distributed to 200 respondents among young adult in Malaysia.

This research used the descriptive statistics to describe the basic feature of data that collected from the questionnaire. It will provide the summary of the respondents from the data analysis. Descriptive statistical analysis was used to analyse the demographic part in the questionnaire that collected from 200 respondents.

Table I. Respondent's Gender

Gender	Respondents	
	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	96	48
Female	104	52
Total	200	100

Based on table I, out of 200 respondents, 48% (96 respondents) are male and 52% (104 respondents) are female. The majority that answered the questionnaire is female.

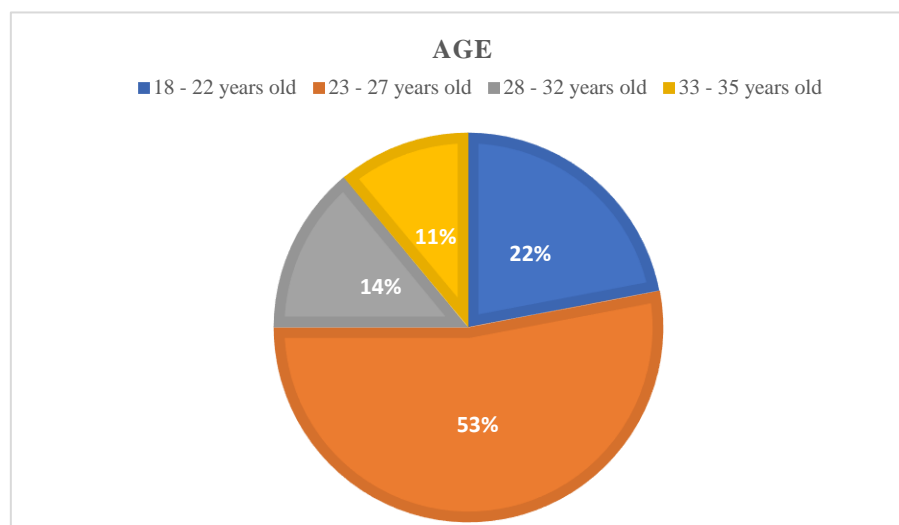


Fig. 2. Age of Respondent

Based on the fig. 2, it showed the age of the respondents. Majority of the respondents are between 23-27 years old which is 53% (106 respondents) out of total 200 respondents gained. The following much more respondent was between 18-22 years old (44 respondents) out of total. Respondent in age 28-32 years old only 14% (28 respondent) and the lowest range of respondents is 33-35 years old which is 11 respondents.

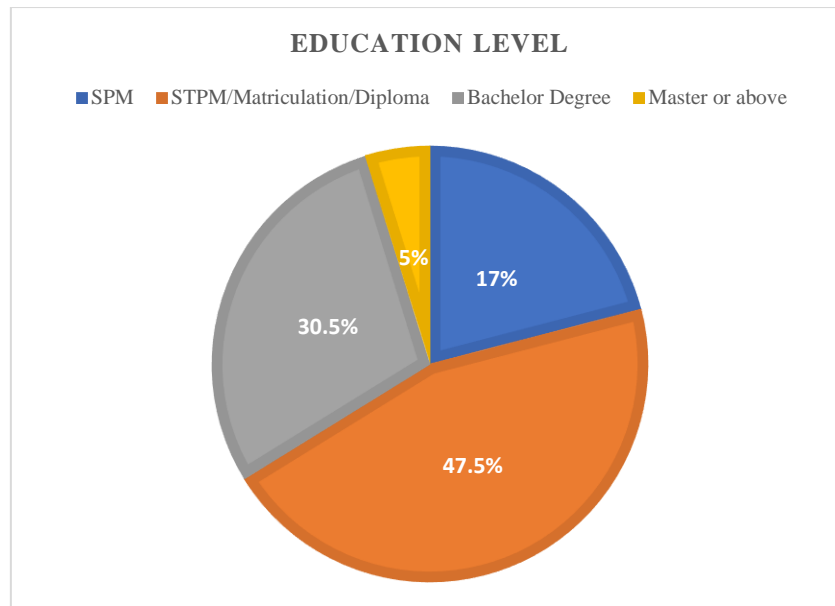


Fig. 3. Education Level of Respondent

Based on fig. 3, it presented the education level of respondents. Majority of them is from STPM, Matriculation and Diploma with data 47.5% (95 respondents). Other than that, respondents from Bachelor Degree with 30.5% (61 respondents) other than 200 respondents and 17% from background SPM with 34 respondents. Then, the lowest number respondents is from Master or above which only 5% (10 respondents).

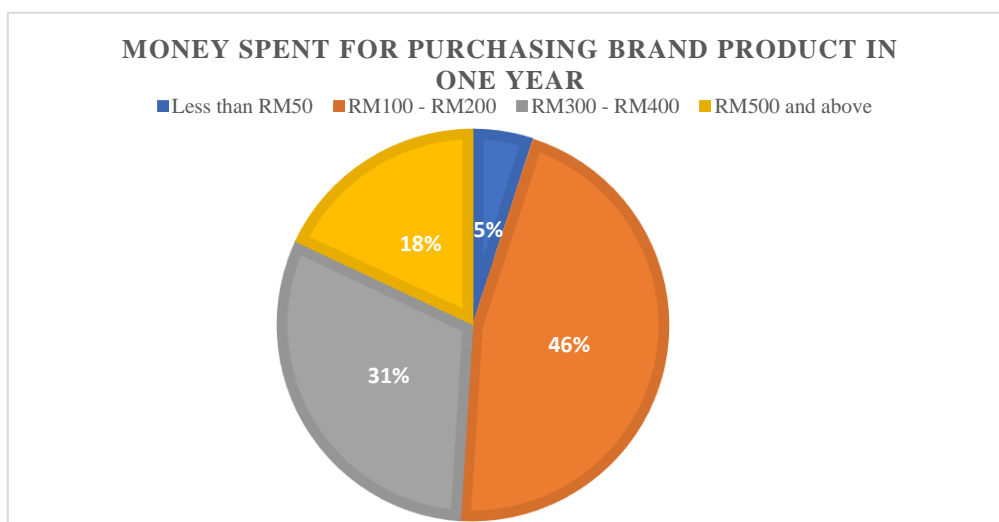


Fig. 4. Money spent for purchasing brand product in one year of Respondent

Based on fig. 4, it showed the money spent for purchasing brand product in one year by respondents. Majority respondent's money spend RM100 – RM200 for buying brand product in one year which is 46% (92 respondents). Then, 31% of respondents spend RM300 – RM400 in one year and 18% respondents spend RM500 and above. Lastly, the least is 5% (10 respondents) whereby spend less than RM50.

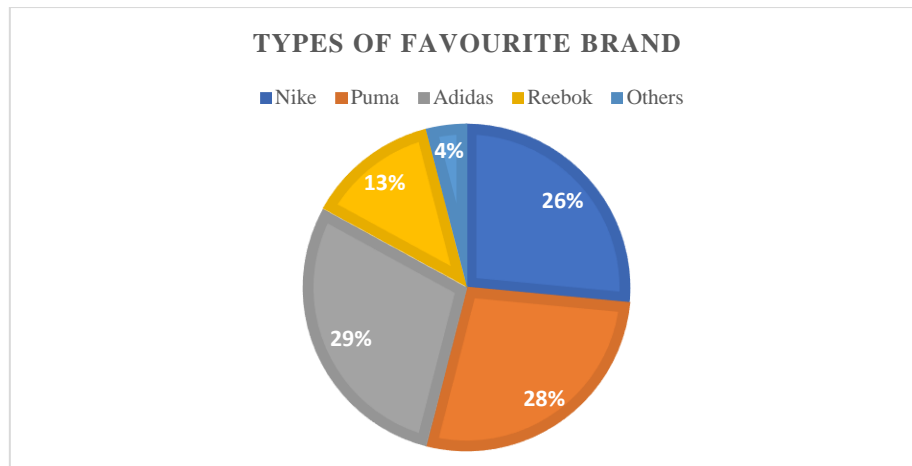


Fig. 5. Types of favourite brand of Respondent

Based on fig. 5, it showed the respondent's types of favourite brand. The highest favourite brand is Adidas with 29% (58 respondents). Then, Puma brand is the second highest that respondents used with 27% (55 respondents) and 13% for Reebok brand. Rather than four brand that has been stated, there are several brand that been used by respondents with 4% (8 respondents). So, young adult in Malacca mostly prefer Adidas brand rather than other brand because the price is reasonable with their quality offered. Other than that, the design also is up to date and follow the requirements of the Youngers.

The internal consistency among items was used to determine reliability of a scale used in a research instrument. For this purpose, Cronbach's alpha is the most commonly used measure to determine internal consistency which determines the reliability of a scale (Hair *et al.*, 2014).

Table II. Internal Consistency Measures

	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
Brand Association	0.817	0.874
Brand Awareness	0.859	0.899
Brand Equity	0.870	0.906
Brand Image	0.729	0.829
Brand Loyalty	0.858	0.904

The values of 0.8 or 0.9 in advance stages of a research indicate the internal consistency reliability of a measurement model, while values below 0.6 indicate low reliability. The higher composite reliability (CR) value indicates higher consistency of items. For the present study, both composite reliability (CR) and Cronbach alpha (CA) values are greater than 0.8 and 0.9 as shown in table II. These values showed a good level of construct reliability and thus revealed that the items used in the present research instrument to represent constructs have high internal consistency.

According to Hair *et al.* (2014), convergent validity determines the extent to which a measure correlates with an alternative measure of same construct. Thus, convergent validity ensures that an item measures its projected construct.

Table III. The values of AVE

	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Brand Association	0.635
Brand Awareness	0.640
Brand Equity	0.660
Brand Image	0.628
Brand Loyalty	0.702

The convergent validity was measured by the value of average value extracted (AVE) as suggested by Waddock and Graves (1997b). An AVE value of 0.50 and above showed the acceptable convergent validity. Table III contains the values of AVE for the convergent validity of the constructs used in the present study. Since, all the values satisfied the minimum threshold value (0.50) of AVE, thus it showed the acceptable convergent validity for measurement model of the present study.

The result given in Table IV showed the values estimated through Fornell-Larcker criterion for measuring discriminant validity. Table V the values of Fornell-Larcker criterion for measuring discriminant validity.

Table IV. showed Fornell-Larcker criterion

	Brand Association	Brand Awareness	Brand Equity	Brand Image	Brand Loyalty
Brand Association	0.797*				
Brand Awareness	0.323	0.800*			
Brand Equity	0.128	0.460	0.813*		
Brand Image	0.511	0.500	0.298	0.792*	
Brand Loyalty	-0.150	0.301	0.383	0.150	0.838*

According to Urbach and Ahlemann (2010), discriminant validity is used to describe how constructs are different from each other. In this method (Fornell and Larcker, 1981), the value is obtained when the square root of AVE of a construct is greater than its correlation with other constructs. The values of discriminant validity were obtained through running algorithm function in Smart PLS software.

The next sections will describe the results which were used to validate the structural model of this study. The validity of the structural model, was determined by assessment of multicollinearity, coefficient of determination (R), effect size (f), and path coefficients. In addition to this, mediating relationship, as proposed in the present study was also assessed through these measures.

Table V. Coefficient of determination (R^2)

	R Square
Brand Equity	0.284

Coefficient of determination (R) is used to determine the goodness of structural model (Hair *et al.*, 2012). It is further explained that the value of R determines the amount of variance in dependent variable caused by independent variable(s). Thus, the higher

value of R is desirable. The value of R in the range of 0.02 – 0.12 are considered lower, 0.13 – 0.25 are moderate, and 0.26 or greater are substantial (Cohen, 1988). However, the Hair *et al.* (2012) stated that the appropriate value of R depends upon the framework of the research study. In the present research the coefficient of determination is considered as substantial (Good) as it is greater than 0.26.

The fitness of proposed research model of the present study was evaluated through the value of f which explains the effect size. According to Cohen (1988), the value of f is measured by increase in R relative to proportion of variance of the endogenous variable which remains unexplained. He further explained that values of f between the ranges of 0.02-0.14 are considered weak effect, 0.15-0.34 are moderate, and 0.35 and above show strong effect. For the present research, model fitness through f was measured and the values obtained for each path are presented in Table VI.

Table VI. model fitness through f^2

	Brand Equity	Effect
Brand Assositation	0.000	Weak
Brand Awareness	0.103	Weak
Brand Image	0.006	Weak
Brand Loyalty	0.087	Weak

These findings of f revealed the fitness of structural model and proved that all four variables has a weak effect on Brand equity.

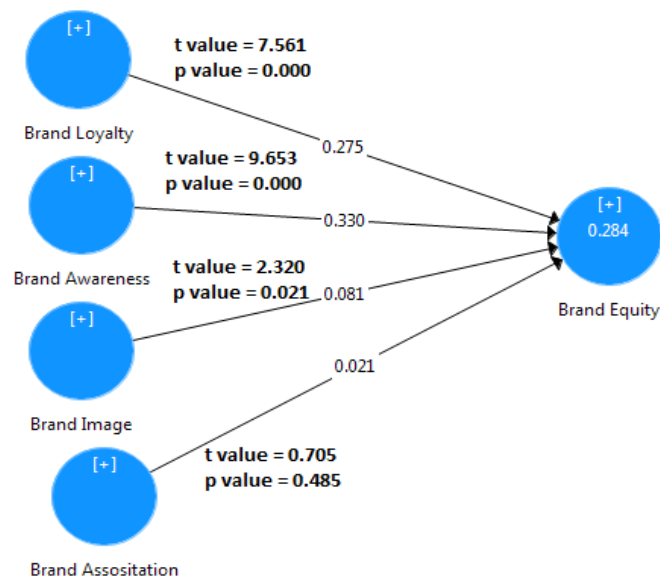
The structural model of research study is also evaluated through path coefficients. The values of path coefficients are useful to indicate the strength and significance of the relationship between two latest variables. In SmartPLS, there is technique called “bootstrapping” is used to obtain values for evaluation of relationships (paths) between independent and dependent variables. Moreover, t-statistics and p-values are assessed to verify the significance of all the paths exist between these variables. According to Hair *et al.* (2014), when the empirically measured statistical t-value is greater than the critical value, the coefficient is considered significant at a specific confidence level. For the present study, t-value of 0.95 is used at a significance level of 0.05.

Hair *et al.* (2014) further explained that nonparametric statistical test called bootstrapping is carried by PLS-SEM in order to measure the significance of estimated path coefficients. Moreover, they stated that the values of coefficients are ranged between -1 and +1. Thus the values of path coefficients close to +1 indicated strong relationship, while values of coefficient close to -1 show weak relationships. The empirically measured t-values, p-values and path coefficients values between variables in the present study are given in Table VII. The acceptance or rejection of hypothesis was based on path assessments. Thus, based on the results given for the present study, all hypotheses were supported at a significance level of 0.05.

Table VII. Path Coefficients

	Original Sample (O)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values	2.5%	97.5%
Brand Association -> Brand Equity	0.021	0.030	0.705	0.482	-0.032	0.080
Brand Awareness -> Brand Equity	0.330	0.034	9.653	0.000	0.257	0.393
Brand Image -> Brand Equity	0.081	0.035	2.320	0.021	0.013	0.152
Brand Loyalty -> Brand Equity	0.275	0.036	7.561	0.000	0.198	0.345

Based on the results obtained through PLS-SEM, structural model was used to test the hypothesis of present research study. The values of path coefficients, t-values, and p-values at significance level of 0.05 were evaluated to test the hypothesis. On the basis of these values, the entire hypothesis of the present study was accepted. This research proposed four hypotheses to evaluate the direct relationships among proposed variables. Below is the fig. 6 representing the path coefficient and their t-statics and p-values of each relationship.

**Fig. 6.** Path coefficient and their t-values and p-values

H1: THERE IS A SIGNIFICANT RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BRAND LOYALTY AND BRAND EQUITY.

The result revealed that path coefficient between brand loyalty and brand equity was 0.275. For the measuring significance of this relationship, the t-value was 7.561 which is greater than critical value of 1.96. Similarly, the p-value of 0.000 was also found significant and less than the threshold value of 0.05 (Hair *et al.*, 2006). These statistics presented sufficient empirical evidence that the hypothesis H1 is accepted and the present study determined a significant relationship between brand loyalty and brand equity.

H2: THERE IS A SIGNIFICANT RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BRAND AWARENESS AND BRAND EQUITY.

The findings showed that path coefficient between brand awareness and brand equity is 0.330. The t-value of 9.653 was found significant as it is greater than critical value of 1.96 and the p-value of 0.000 was also significant and less than the threshold value of 0.05. Thus there was empirical evidence sufficient to accept hypothesis H2 and the present study established a significant positive relationship between brand awareness and brand equity.

H3: THERE IS A SIGNIFICANT RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BRAND IMAGE AND BRAND EQUITY.

According to the results, the path coefficient value between brand image and brand equity was measured as 0.081. The t-value of 2.320 measured the significance of this path as it is larger than the critical value of 1.96 and the p-value of 0.021 also proved the significance of path coefficient. Based on the empirical evidence, hypothesis H3 was accepted and the present study established a significant positive relationship between brand image and brand equity.

H4: THERE IS A SIGNIFICANT RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BRAND ASSOCIATION AND BRAND EQUITY.

The value of path coefficient between brand association and brand equity was measured as 0.021. The t-value is 0.705 which is smaller than critical value of 1.96 and the p-value of 0.485 which is also greater than the threshold value of 0.05, proved the insignificance of this path. These statistics provided sufficient evidence to reject hypothesis H4 and also determined that there is insignificant relationship between brand awareness and brand equity.

In this research study, there are many limitations which are firstly the small sample size. To get the significant data, the small sample size will affect the data. The bigger sample size can make more accurate results in this research. This can be from certain the chosen distribution of the population and representative of the teams of respondents to whom outcomes will be conducted. For this research, only have 200 respondents for survey and this is a small sample size to find accurate evaluation of the young adult in Malacca. Thus, a bigger sample size is required and restricted time constraint. It takes a lot of time and is hard to conduct the result because the researcher used quantitative research. There was time limitation in finishing this analysis. Once the distribution of questionnaire, the researcher noticed that absolutely was tough to urge the feedback and cooperation from respondents in an exceedingly short amount of time. However, due to time constraint in collecting data, the survey only has 200 of respondents.

DISCUSSION & RECOMMENDATION

The researcher collected data from 200 respondents to demonstrate the data analysis of demographic variables or respondent's profile which includes gender, age,

education level, money spent for purchasing brand product in one year, frequency of buying product in one year and types of favourite brand. From the descriptive statistics, female were the majority answered the questionnaire which is 104 respondents and male only 96 respondents. There were 53% or 106 respondents in the age 23 to 27 years old, 22% or 44 respondents were between 18 to 22 years old, 14% or 28 respondents were from age within 28 to 32 years old and 11% or 22 respondents in age 33 to 35 years old.

Next, the majority of the respondents is from STPM, Matriculation and Diploma which is 95 respondents out of 200 respondents. Besides, young adult in Malacca are rarely in purchasing sportswear brand and they only spend their money in range RM100 to RM200. They are also spend their time only 2 to 3 times in purchasing sportswear product in one year might be due to time constraint. Besides that, once they get a top quality sportswear product, typically it'll long lasting and sturdy. Thus it'll scale back the acquisition intention to buy for consequent product. Then, for the types of favourite brand, young adult in Malacca frequently choose Adidas as their first choice. Many factors can be explained why young adult in Malacca choose Adidas from the other brand. For example, their design is up to date and trendy which is follow the needs of young adult and the price also is affordable to purchase. In this research study, researcher used two analysis technique which is SPSS and smartPLS analysis to achieve the objectives. Other than that, the previous researcher will be supported the answer.

For the objective one, the researcher investigate the factors influencing brand equity of sportswear brand among young adult in Malacca. This objective achieve by using descriptive analysis. The independent variables in this research is brand loyalty, brand awareness, brand image and brand associations. It can be concluded that the respondents have been given high level response regarding all the independents variable. So, it's clearly show the high perception regarding all the factors that influencing brand equity of sportswear brand among young adult in Malacca and all the variables is accepted for this study. In conclusion, the objective is achieved as a result young adult in Malacca extremely support this four variables. This study support with Frank (2016) whereby it planned that young consumers perceived brand equity would be considerably related to their attitudes toward universal brand.

There are several recommendations for the future researcher. The researcher concentrating with young adult in Malacca for the factors influencing brand equity in this research study. For this research, researcher only used four factors as independent variable which are brand loyalty, brand awareness, brand image and brand associations. Definitely, brand equity may be affected by several different factors such as Khaliq Ahmad, Islam, & Ahmed (2008) stated the other factor which is perceived quality, halal branding, brand awareness, brand associations and brand loyalty in terms of consumer based brand equity. For some improvement for the future

researchers, to get the higher result, more variable factors may be added to develop on factors that influencing brand equity.

Next, the researcher should expand the area of location. For this research, the researcher only focused on Malacca, thus, the future researcher should expanding to the other location in order to get more accurate data. In addition, to get feedback from the respondents the researcher used online questionnaire which is this way is difficult to get the feedback. However, by using online questionnaire will help to researcher to collect more data in a constrained of time. Other than that, the researcher used the quantitative research in this research study and qualitative research can be used by the future researcher to get more accurate data from the interview sessions.

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