A CONSUMER-BASED, CONSUMER-PERCEIVED BRAND EQUITY MODEL FOR RECURRING, PARTICIPATIVE SPORT EVENTS:
A FEMALE TRIATHLETE PERSPECTIVE

by

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submitted in accordance with the requirements

for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN MANAGEMENT STUDIES

at the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

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February 2019

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Degree: PhD Management Studies

A CONSUMER-BASED, CONSUMER-PERCEIVED BRAND EQUITY (CBCPBE) MODEL FOR RECURRING, PARTICIPATIVE SPORT EVENTS: A FEMALE TRIATHLETE PERSPECTIVE

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABSTRACT

Sport event organisations are under pressure to professionalise and commercialise their activities. The ongoing challenge of managing a sporting business, whilst staying true to the historical roots of sport, necessitates the development of marketing strategies to address the unique service-orientated nature of sport events. Marketing has become an important focus area for sport management and is still evolving. However, research in sport marketing has developed disproportionately, focusing mainly on fan experiences, which has led to a research gap regarding the experiences of participative sport consumers. Additionally, academic research in sport events has concentrated on mega-events such as the Olympics, with little focus on smaller, recurring events.

The aim of this study is to investigate the brand equity of recurring sport events from a participative athlete perspective. By investigating consumer-based, consumer-perceived brand equity, recurring sport events can better understand those items which add value for the participative sport consumers. The development of a consumer-based, consumer-perceived brand equity model for recurring, participative sport events, required that the established brand equity scale, developed by Baalbaki in 2012, be modified and tested using a census population. Quantitative data collected through an online questionnaire investigated the racing experiences of female triathletes belonging to the Women For Tri Facebook group. Confirmatory Factor Analysis tested and refined the model until an acceptable model could be established.

The data collected for this study indicates that the consumer-based, consumer-perceived brand equity of recurring, participative sport events consists of the following dimensions: **quality** (including items such as route layout and race swag), **preference** (due to the exclusivity of branded events), **sustainability** (protection of the racing environment), **leadership** (including contributions made to the local infrastructure and community) and **social influence** (creating better social impressions and social approval for participating athletes). In addition, the data was used to compile a demographic profile of female triathletes which indicates that, despite being more recent to the sport, similar characteristics as male triathletes were exhibited regarding average age, average number of training hours per week and performance category (which was self-rated). This study provides an acceptable model for the consumer-

based, consumer-perceived brand equity of recurring, participative sport events as the starting point for further research on value creation for participative sport consumers.

OPSOMMING

Organisasies wat sportbyeenkomste reël, word genoop om hul werksaamhede professioneel en kommersieel te bedryf. Die eise wat die bestuur van 'n sportbyeenkomsorganisasie deurlopend stel, noodsaak bemarkingstrategieë wat op die unieke diensgerigtheid van sportbyeenkomste gemik is sonder om die wese van sport te misken. Bemarking is 'n belangrike aspek van sportbestuur en ontwikkel steeds. Weinig navorsing oor die belewenis van deelnemende sportverbruikers is egter gedoen omrede navorsing oor sportbemarking op die belewenis van sportliefhebbers toegespits is. Afgesien hiervan verontagsaam navorsing oor sportbyeenkomste klein herhalingsbyeenkomste en konsentreer eerder op megabyeenkomste soos die Olimpiese Spele.

Die doel van hierdie studie is om die handelsnaamekwiteit van herhalingsbyeenkomste uit die oogpunt van deelnemende atlete te ondersoek. Danksy 'n verbruikersgebaseerde en verbruikersbeleefde verkenning van handelsnaamekwiteit kan organiseerders van herhalingsbyeenkomste vasstel wat volgens sportverbruikers waarde aan hulle deelname toevoeg. Die ontwikkeling van 'n verbruikersgebaseerde en verbruikersbeleefde handelsnaamekwiteitsmodel vir herhalingsbyeenkomste het vereis dat die gevestigde skaal vir handelsnaamekwiteit wat in 2012 deur Baalbaki ontwikkel is, met 'n sensusbevolking getoets en aangepas word. Die kwantitatiewe data wat deur 'n aanlyn vraelys verkry is, het die belewenisse van vroulike driekampatlete, wat lede is van die Women For Tri-Facebookgoep, ondersoek. Hierdie model is met 'n bevestigende faktoranalise getoets en verfyn om met 'n aanvaarbare model te kom.

Die data wat vir hierdie studie ingesamel is, dui daarop dat die verbruikersgebaseerde, verbruikersbeleefde handelsnaamekwiteit van deelnemende sportbyeenkomste uit die volgende dimensies bestaan: **kwaliteit** (waaronder die roete en reklamepasellas val), **voorkeur** (vanweë die eksklusiwiteit van handelsnaambyeenkomste), **volhoubaarheid** (die beskerming van die byeenkoms), **leierskap** (met inbegrip van bydraes tot die plaaslike infrastruktuur en gemeenskap) en **sosiale invloed** (die indruk wat deelnemende atlete wek en die goedkeuring van die gemeenskap). Hierbenewens is 'n demografiese profiel van vroulike driekampatlete aan die hand van die data opgestel. Hieruit blyk dat, hoewel vroue betreklik onlangs eers aan driekampe begin

deelneem het, hulle dieselfde kenmerke as hulle manlike eweknieë vertoon ten opsigte van hulle gemiddelde ouderdom, hoeveel ure hulle gemiddeld per week oefen, en hulle prestasiekategorie (wat hulle self bepaal het). Hierdie studie bied 'n aanvaarbare model vir die verbruikersgebaseerde, verbruikersbeleefde handelsnaamekwiteit van herhalende, deelnemende sportbyeenkomste wat as 'n vertrekpunt vir verdere navorsing oor waardeskepping vir deelnemende sportverbruikers dien.

SETSOPOLWA

Mekgatlo ya dipapadi e ka fase ga kgatelelo ya go dira gore dipapadi tša yona di be tša sephrofešenale le tša kgwebo. Tlhohlo ye e tšwelago pele ya go laola kgwebo ya diapapdi, mola ka go le lengwe e swanetše go lebana le go obamela metheo ya kgale ya dipapadi, e dira gore go hlokagale go tšweletša maano a papatšo ka nepo ya go rarolla sebopego sa go swana se nnoši sa tirelo ya ditiragalo tša dipapadi. Papatšo e fetogile karolo ye bohlokwa ya taolo ya dipapadi ebile e sa tšwelela. Le ge go le bjale, dinyakišišo ka ga papatšo ya dipapadi e hlabollogile kudu, e lebeletše kudu go maitemogelo a balatedi, gomme se se feleleditše ka tlhokego ya dinyakišišo mabapi le maitemogelo a babogedi ba dipapadi tšeo go kgathwago tema ka go tšona. Godimo ga fao, dinyakišišo tša dirutegi go ditiragalo tša dipapadi di hlokometše kudu dipapadi tše kgolo tša go swana le Diolimphiki, gomme šedi ye nnyane e filwe ditiragalo tša dipapadi tše nnyane, dipapadi tše di swarwago kgafetšakgafetša.

Maikemišetšo a dinyakišišo tše ke go nyakišiša tekatekano ya mehuta ya dipapadi tše di swarwago kgafetšakgafetša mabapi le go kgatha tema ga baraloki. Ka go nyakišiša tekatekano ya mehuta ya dipapadi tšeo di theilwego go babogedi le tšeo babogedi ba fago maikutlo ka ga tšona, dipapadi tšeo di swarwago kgafetšakgafetša di ka kwešiša bokaone dilo tšeo di nago le boleng go babogedi ba dipapadi tšeo baraloki ba kgathago tema go tšona. Go hlangwa ga mokgwa wa tekatekano ya mehuta ya dipapadi tšeo di theilwego go babogedi, tšeo babogedi ba fago maikutlo ka ga tšona, tša dipapadi tšeo di swarwago kgafetšakgafetša, tšeo baraloki ba kgathago tema go tšona, go nyaka gore sekala sa tekatekanyo ya mehuta ya dipapadi, seo se hlamilwego ke Baalbaki ka 2012, se fetošwe le go lekwa ka go šomiša dipalopalo tša setšhaba. Tshedimošo ya bontši yeo e kgobokeditšwego ka go diriša dipotšišo tša dinyakišišo tša inthaneteng e nyakišišitše ka ga maitemogelo a tša mabelo a baraloki ba dipapadi ba basadi bao e lego ba mokgatlo wa *Facebook* wa *Women For Tri*. Tshekatsheko ya tiišetšo e lekile le go lekodišiša mokgwa wo go fihla ge mokgwa wo o amogelegilego o hwetšwa.

Tshedimošo ye e kgobokeditšwego ka mo dinyakišišong tše e laetša gore tekatekano ya mehuta ya dipapadi tšeo di theilwego go babogedi, tšeo babogedi ba fago maikutlo ka ga tšona, tša dipapadi tšeo di swarwago kgafetšakgafetša e na le mahlakore ao a latelago: **tekatekano** (go akaretšwa dilo tša go swana le peakanyo ya ditsela le go

kgopama ga ditsela), **go kgetha** ka lebaka la dipapadi tšeo di thekgwago ke maina a itšego, **go tšwetša pele go ya go ile** (tšhireletšo ya lefelo leo mabelo a swarelwago go lona.), **boetapele** (go akaretšwa thekgo ye e dirwago go mananeokgoparara a kgauswi le go setšhaba) le **khuetšo ya setšhaba** (go hlama diabe tše kaone setšhabeng le tumelelo ya setšhaba go baraloki ba dipapadi bao ba kgathago tema). Godimo ga fao, tshedimošo e šomišitšwe go ngwala phrofaele ya dipalopalo ka ga setšhaba mabapi le baraloki ba dipapadi ba basadi tšeo di laetšago gore, ka ntle le gore ba kgatha tema kudu ka dipapading, dipharologantšhi tša go swana le tša baraloki ba dipapadi ba banna di ile tša bontšhwa mabapi le mengwaga ya magareng, palogare ya diiri tšeo ba di tšeago ge ba itšhidulla ka beke le legoro leo ba kgathago tema ka dipapadi (tšeo di iketšego ka botšona). Dinyakišišo tše di fana ka mokgwa wo o amogelegilego wa tekatekano ya mehuta ya dipapadi tšeo di theilwego go babogedi, tšeo babogedi ba fago maikutlo ka ga tšona, tšeo baraloki ba kgathago tema ka go tšona bjalo ka mathomo a dinyakišišo go tšwela pele mabapi le go tliša boleng go babogedi ba dipapadi tšeo baraloki ba kgathago tema ka go tšona.

ABBREVIATIONS & ACRONYMS

ANOC	Association of National Olympic Committees
CBBE	Consumer-based brand equity
CBCPBE	Consumer-based, consumer-perceived brand equity
CFA	Confirmatory Factor Analysis
FIFA	Fédération Internationale de Football Association
IOC	International Olympic Committee
ITU	International Triathlon Committee
PSC	Participative sport consumer
RCPA	Recurring, participative (sport events)
USAT	USA Triathlon
WADA	World Anti-Doping Agency

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CHAPTER 1:
RESEARCH ORIENTATION

1.1   INTRODUCTION

Sport organisations are under increasing pressure to become more professional, especially since the commercialisation of sport has become the norm in recent years (Clausen, Bayle, Giaque, Ruoranen, Lang, Schlesinger, Klenk & Nagel, 2018:374; Parrish, 2018:205; Sharpe, Beaton & Scott, 2018:215). A research study by Hoye, Smith, Nicholson and Stewart (2018:4) found that since the 1980s, the management of sport organisations has been characterised by a rapid period of professionalisation. Contributing factors, which have all played a role in forcing sport organisations and their managers to become more professional, include the general expansion of the global sport industry; the commercialisation of sport events and competitions; the introduction of paid staff into previously voluntary governance structures; and the growing number of people who earn a living, either managing sport organisations or playing sport in a professional capacity (Hoye *et al.*, 2018:7).

This unprecedented growth in the professionalisation and commercialisation of sport has driven changes in not only how sport is consumed, whether passively, by spectating, or actively, by participating in events or purchasing sports-related products, but also in how it is produced by either service providers or sports product manufacturers (Smart, 2018:245; Yeravdekar & Behl, 2018:277). This has resulted in many changes in the management of sport organisations at all levels (Hoye *et al.*, 2018:4). It is evident that the need for focused marketing and branding within the sport sector has become crucial, as sport clubs and organisations are faced with new challenges brought on by the commercialisation and professionalisation of the industry (Wagner, Storm & Nielsen, 2016:48; Clausen *et al.*, 2017:37; Skinner & Engelberg, 2018:183).

In efforts to remain competitive and sustainable, sport organisations are pursuing a more professional service delivery model. This is underpinned by the fact that globally, the sport industry has an estimated value of US$145 billion (which constitutes a little over 3% of the world's economic activity) and it appears to have cemented its value

and potential globally by effectively marketing and differentiating itself from the wider service and entertainment industries (Manoli, 2018).

Marketing management has therefore become an important focus area for sport management, as it allows for the development of more effective and efficient sport organisations. Indeed, one of the first topics to attract sport academics' attention was marketing, due to its close relationship with income-generating activities (Manoli, 2018:1).

During the early days of sport marketing, the concept of sport marketing was viewed as a tool to increase sales and assist in the commercial activities of sport organisations and individuals (Manoli, 2018:2). Since then, sport marketing has evolved from a mere promotional tool to involve a wider umbrella of promotional elements covering a wide array of activities, ranging from commercial sponsorships and advertising to publicity (Manoli, 2018:2). Further developments have included separating the concept of sport marketing into three distinct features, namely, marketing to promote **fan interest**, marketing to promote **sport participation**, and marketing to **promote consumption of products through sport** (Mullin in Manoli, 2018:2). Research studies during this time period, such as those conducted by Mullin, led to a deeper understanding of predominantly sport fan experiences. Thus, the focus of sport marketing and research has shifted to a focus on understanding sport consumption from the fans' perspective (Manoli, 2018:2).

It is apparent that the other two focus areas of sports marketing, namely consumer experiences and participative sport activities, have not yet been researched as thoroughly as the 'fan experience'. This has resulted in significant knowledge gaps in almost all areas of sport marketing and research. Therefore, in terms of this study, the gap in the field of sport marketing was viewed in conjunction with a parallel gap in marketing research regarding brand equity.

Aaker (1991) and Keller (1993) were pioneers in the research area of brand equity; establishing the concept of brand equity and the respective models related thereto. However, given the passage of time since their ground-breaking research was done, and the increasing role of the consumer in the creation of brand value, it is evident that brand equity should, ideally, be researched from the perspective where it is ultimately created, namely, the consumer.

In an effort to address one of these knowledge gaps in the literature on sport marketing, this study proposes that the concept of brand equity, when dealing with recurring, participative (RCPA) sport events, should be researched from the consumer's point of view. This study thus proposes the development of a consumer-based, consumer-perceived brand equity model which will ensure that RCPA events continue to create value for their own unique set of consumer experiences.

1.2   BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

The research problem addressed by this study consists of two core components, namely, brand equity and sport events. Each of these will be briefly discussed in the sections below.

1.2.1   Brand equity within the sport industry

In the early 1990s, Aaker (1991) and Keller (1993) started the academic discussion on brands, equity and the elements of brand equity. Shortly afterwards, research into sport brands joined the exploration of the topic, and whilst previously only serving as examples in academia, the concept of brand equity within the sport brand context was applied as early as 1995 (Manoli, 2018:3). Since then, research has identified the benefits of sport brands; for example, the emotional attachment derived from fans, and stronger sponsorship interests, as well as more extrinsic issues, such as sponsorship alignment (Parent, Eskerud & Hanstad, 2012:145; Parganas, Anagnostopoulos & Chadwick, 2017:152).

However, despite the availability of literature focusing on sport brands, research in this area does seem to be lacking (Bauer, Sauer & Schmitt, 2005:498), especially when investigating non-fan-related sport experiences and narrowly defined brands, such as those dealing with recurring sport events[1]. Indeed, more than two decades after

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[1]Recurring sport events are those events that occur on a regular basis. Although they may rotate between host cities/countries, events are staged on a regular basis (usually annually) in the same host cities, as they may be part of a circuit. The impact of this type of event might be smaller but more sustainable in the long run when compared to hallmark events, also known as major events, despite the fact that they often exhibit similar characteristics (Swayne & Dodds, 2011).

researchers started exploring sport brands, a plethora of studies focused on creating knowledge about sport brands, their creation and co-creation processes and management activities. In addition, there are ample discussions related to sport individuals', organisations' and events' brands. Notwithstanding, the research on sport marketing is still ongoing (Manoli, 2018:4).

It has been suggested that the management of their brand is one of the most important issues currently facing management, as it can be seen as the organisation's biggest asset (Parent *et al.*, 2012:146; Wetzel, Hattula, Hammerschmidt & Heerde, 2018:592). Branding is a crucial survival tactic, as, it not only allows the organisation to differentiate itself from competitors by creating a sustainable competitive advantage, but it also provides added value for consumers, encouraging repeat purchases. When creating a brand for the sport organisation, it is important that the process be initiated by looking at the establishment and objectification of the organisation's mission and core values. This ensures that organisational objectives are achieved by aligning branding strategies with the overarching mission of the organisation (Hutchinson & Bennett, 2012:435).

Brand equity and brand value form the basis for measuring the value of this asset, the brand. It is, however, evident that it is necessary to differentiate between these two concepts (Tiwari, 2010:421). Brand value, in the simplest terms, encompasses what the brand is worth to management and shareholders, and addresses the financial value of the brand (Tiwari, 2010:422). Brand equity, although not attached to a numerical value, still has a significant impact on the economic success of a sport organisation (Villarejo-Ramos & Martin-Velicia, 2007:123; Schmidt, Mason, Steenkamp & Mugobo, 2017:210; Yousaf, Gupta & Mishra, 2017:1431).

Brand equity consists of various elements that vary from model to model, but generally includes awareness, associations, perceived quality and loyalty (Gerber-Nel, 2009:129; Parent *et al.*, 2012:146). Brand equity represents a set of perceptions, knowledge and behaviour of consumers that creates the demand for a product or service that usually results in a price premium advantage (Tiwari, 2010:422; Marquard, Kahle, O'Connell & Godek, 2017). In the simplest terms, brand equity represents what the brand is worth to the consumer.

Research into brand value by Tiwari (2010:422) has shown that it is risky to measure brand value on its own, as the process of measuring by itself will not increase the value of a brand.

It is critical to quantify and manage brand equity, as this method allows for the transfer of value to shareholders (Tiwari, 2010:422). Therefore, this study proposes to investigate only brand equity, so as to determine the value of the brand as perceived by consumers.

The context within which this research problem will be investigated, namely, sport events, will be discussed next.

1.2.2   Sport management and events

The progression towards more professional management processes in the sport industry occurred concurrently with an increase in the demand for sport events. Countries and communities alike are becoming more interested in hosting sport events to obtain recognition on an international scale, this despite the challenges such events pose (Parent *et al.*, 2012:145).

The city of London and the various Olympic Games hosted by the city provide interesting examples of this. Prior to the successful bid of 2012, the city of London hosted two other Olympic Games (one of the few mega-events in the world), making it the first city in the world to host the modern Olympics three times (Crowther, 2012):

- In 1908, London hosted the Summer Olympics in Rome's stead, as after Mt Vesuvius erupted in 1906, Italy had to use funds set aside for the Olympics to deal with the aftermath.

- In 1944, London was set to host the Summer Olympics, but the Games were cancelled due to the impact of World War II. The city was thus awarded the first post-war Olympic Games in 1948. It was the first Games to be held in 12 years since the 1936 Berlin Games in Nazi-governed Germany. The 1948 Games were known as the 'Austerity Games', as funds were severely limited after the war and no new venues were built to host the event, with the exception of the addition of a track to Wembley Stadium. In addition, there was no athlete's village (Crowther, 2012).

- The 2012 Olympic Games bid cost the city $25 million, with the estimated presentation cost of the Games around $4 billion (Gamesbid, 2008). It was estimated that the Games would have a positive £16.5 billion impact on the United Kingdom's gross domestic product, of which 70% of the contribution was to occur before and during the event, and 30% during the so-called 'legacy' years after the event. In the end, construction costs alone accounted for £11.9 billion, dramatically reducing the direct revenue earned (Lloyd's Banking Group, 2012).

Given this example, many global communities have realised that smaller-scale sport events hold promising tourism potential (Kaplanidou & Gibson, 2010:163). Particular events, such as marathons, have started to build beneficial reputations, and are becoming preferred alternatives to mega-events (Kaplanidou & Gibson, 2010:164). Furthermore, over the past couple of years, the opportunities to travel to take part in amateur-level competitive events have become more pervasive, and it is evident from research conducted by the tourism industry that many of these so-called 'active sport tourists' return to participate in these types of recurring events (Kaplanidou & Gibson, 2010:164).

The study conducted by Kaplanidou and Gibson (2010:172) found that the direct and indirect predictors for athletes returning to the same event include factors such as satisfaction with the event (which may be related to brand equity), attitudes toward event participation, and destination image. In addition, the study found that athletes who devote a lot of time and effort to their sport are likely to have higher expectations regarding facilities, officiating and the general level of efficiency and competence exhibited by event managers (Kaplanidou & Gibson, 2010:174).

Sport events are unpredictable, making it difficult to build a strong brand. Additionally, quality is hard to manage, as a variety of stakeholders' needs have to be managed and satisfied. The branding process has become a vital task, as an event with a 'good' brand will be seen as desirable by not only sponsors, but also by spectators and communities, and it will allow event organisers to source resources at a premium rate (Parent *et al.*, 2012:146). However, recurring sport events face an additional management challenge that stems from having to maintain the perception that the brand (and event) is successful enough to be hosted again. Therefore, this requires

continual adjustments to the brand image, usually on an annual basis (Parent *et al.*, 2012:146).

A unique feature of sport event marketing is the degree of consumer connection that is generated. It has been noted that sport is, more so than any other product or service, about more than the needs and wants of consumers, but about connecting with emotions, building passion and leveraging images (Parent & Smith-Swan, 2013:97). By branding a sport event, additional benefits can be obtained, including the emotional attachment of fans, increased spectator masses and merchandise sales, and stronger sponsorship interest (Parent *et al.*, 2012:145). The ability of sport events to tap into the emotion and passion of consumers offer the sport marketer the unparalleled opportunity to connect with the consumers of their brand at a personal level. However, this same feature can pose a considerable risk, as it is much harder to influence decisions that are made at a purely emotional level.

It is therefore important for sport marketers to be aware of the behavioural loyalty, which specifically, athletes exhibit towards the events and activities in which they choose to participate (Sato, Jordan & Funk, 2016:3). Behavioural loyalty may include aspects such as frequency, duration, intensity, sequence, proportion and the probability of future participation. The concept of behavioural loyalty can be defined by looking at frequency (the amount of participation over a specified time-period) or intensity (the number of hours per week devoted to participation in the specific activity) (Sato *et al.*, 2016:3). It is interesting to note that research has found a correlation between mass participation in sport events and physical activity, where previously inactive participants were more active in the months after their initial participation in an event, provided that their experience at the event was predominantly positive (Sato *et al.*, 2016:3).

Little research has been conducted on events where the consumer (the athlete) participates in the event, instead of being a spectator. Given the available literature, it is expected that consumers who participate in events will have a different set of needs and expectations than those of consumers who spectate at events (Funk, 2017:152; Yoshida, 2017:431).

1.3   PROBLEM STATEMENT

The above discussion on brand equity and sport events shows that sport has undergone the process of commercialisation. In addition, it is shaped by technological and media developments, and has to comply with regulations put in place by government bodies such as the European Union. Moreover, it has to deal with the challenges posed by internationalisation and globalisation, as well as the dominance of the free market system (Chadwick, 2009:192). Sport management is therefore a relatively new discipline which greatly differs from mainstream management. Managers of sport organisations require a different kind of knowledge base, and they require a unique set of skills and management practices which differ from those of general business managers (Chadwick, 2009:192).

The commercialisation of sport has resulted in sport organisations realising that it is crucial for business to be conducted in a more professional manner to ensure the survival of both the sport and the organisation (Clausen, Bayle, Giaque, Ruoranen, Lang, Schlesinger, Klenk & Nagel, 2018:374; Parrish, 2018:205; Sharpe, Beaton & Scott, 2018:215).

Branding is one of the major elements that is experiencing immense growth in the professionalisation of sport, and it is often considered to be the most important asset of sport organisations (Manoli, 2018:1). Research has shown that a professional and customer-orientated brand and proper management of such a brand are imperative for the sustainability and success of the organisation (Marquard *et al.*, 2017). It can be said that perceived attractiveness of a brand boosts the salient features and the likelihood of consumption. Keeping this in mind, many sport organisations are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of brand management in order to attract consumers and to provide a superior customer service experience (Doyle, Filo, McDonald & Funk, 2012).

The issue of brand equity has emerged as one of the most crucial topics for consumer-based perspectives in management, and more specifically, marketing management (Horng, Liu, Chou & Tsai, 2012:816). Brand equity plays a crucial role in creating competitive market advantages, and is often used as a focal point in differentiation strategies (Horng *et al.*, 2012:816). Competitiveness has been found to be the key to business success and can make the difference between the success and failure of an

organisation (Gerber-Nel, 2009:129). It has already been established that brands, and by extension, brand equity can be regarded as one of an organisation's most valuable assets, largely as it provides consumers with a way of not only recognising a specific product or service (Gerber-Nel, 2009:117), but also as the basis of establishing and building their perceptions of the product or service (Tiwari, 2010:424).

Despite the importance of brand equity, which has already been established by many scholars, the management and measurement of brand equity remains uncertain and disorganised when it comes to different industries and applications. This is especially evident with regards to sport where the context differs significantly between different organisations: for example, research has shown that sport teams are more enduring than sport events and, as such, brand equity antecedents will differ (Parent *et al.*, 2012:146).

The question then arises as to how the perception of brand equity is influenced when it comes to recurring sport events, where the focus is not on the spectators' perception of the brand, but rather on the participants in the actual event. The branding of such events, and subsequent brand equity, will need to be managed carefully to ensure that participant numbers remain viable, year after year, taking new developments into account. Against this backdrop, this study proposes to develop and test a brand equity model which may be used to measure the brand equity of RCPA sport events. The events' main source of income will be derived from participation in the event, and not from spectators or fans. This proves to be an important differentiation, as it is expected that consumers who actively participate in sport events have different needs than those who passively participate as spectators, and as such, the value-creation process derived from brand equity will differ.

To emphasise the unique nature of these sport consumers, previously neglected by the research in sport marketing, a new consumer-based, consumer-perceived brand equity (CBBE) model was identified in order to create deeper understanding of this 'emerging' form of sport consumption. The model that was selected to provide the baseline for this study was taken from Baalbaki (2012) who developed a unique consumer-based, consumer-perceived brand equity (CBBE) model. The original research attempted to develop a consumer-based brand equity (CBBE) model for cellular phone brands by investigating the perceptions of university students who are the direct consumers of the product.

The study aimed to replicate and extend on Baalbaki's (2012) original methodology during the development of this new model, while employing this unique approach to brand equity. To further demonstrate originality in the use of Baalbaki's model, as well as to apply the model to the specific field of interest, the population selected for this study consisted of female triathletes who were part of an online community group, Women For Tri, on Facebook. By selecting this group of participants, the research could then serve a dual purpose: research could be conducted on a group of sport consumers that is relatively unexplored, namely female, participative athletes, and in addition, the model for brand equity could be suitably grounded in a unique and distinct consumer-perception group.

This study also intended to determine which dimensions of the Baalbaki (2012) model would contribute to the CBCPBE of RCPA sport events as perceived by female triathletes. The dimensions which were investigated included quality, preference, sustainability, leadership and social influences.

To achieve the objective set out above, the study followed a quantitative approach to measure the perceptions of the selected female triathletes with regard to their recent race experiences at both branded and non-branded events.

The research process which was followed to achieve the objectives set for this study is depicted in Figure 1.1 below.
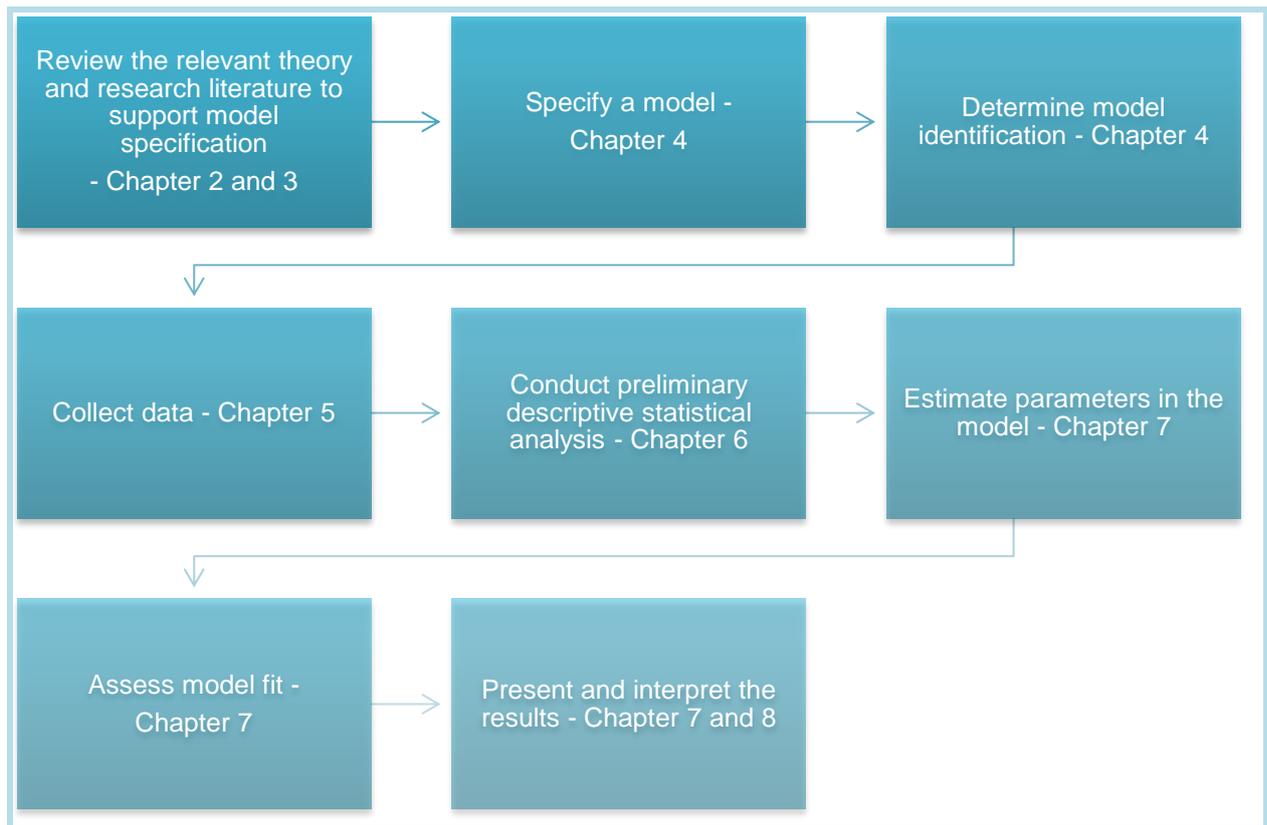
Figure 1.1: The research process used to develop a CBCPBE model for RCPA sport events
Source: Adapted from Suhr (2006:1)

The remainder of this chapter is devoted to a brief overview of the research context and subject. A summary is provided of the research aims and objectives, along with a concise introduction to the methodology. This introductory chapter will be concluded with the chapter outline followed in this thesis.

1.4   THE RESEARCH CONTEXT: TRIATHLON EVENTS

The sport of triathlon is, compared to other types of sport, still relatively new. It is widely recognised that the sport of triathlon originated in the 1970s. What is not widely known is that several records indicate that in 1920 a race with the name of *Les Trois Sport,* consisting of swimming, cycling and running was held in the greater Paris area (Lenherr, Knechtle, Rüst, Rosemann & Lepers, 2012:55). However, the International Triathlon Union (ITU) maintains that the first 'modern' triathlon event was held in 1974 in San Diego. Comprising of a 10 km run, 8 km cycle and 500 m swim, the event was designed to be a hard training session for the San Diego Track Club members (ITU, 2018).

During the next decade, the sport grew incrementally, and in early April 1989, the International Triathlon Union (ITU) was founded. The Olympic distance event (1.5 km swim, 40 km cycle and 10 km run) was awarded Olympic medal status in 1994. Triathlon made its Olympic debut at the 2000 Sydney Games and has been on the Olympic roster every time since (ITU, 2018).

Triathlons today are defined as a three-part sport discipline comprising of swimming, cycling and running. These disciplines are done in sequence on a continuous basis without any rest. It is generally considered an individual event, although some events can be undertaken on a team basis. Triathlon events are categorised according to distance as follows:

- Sprint distance: 750 m swim, 20 km cycle, 5 km run;

- Olympic distance: 1 500 m swim, 40 km cycle, 10 km run;

- Half Ironman: 1 900 m swim, 90 km cycle, 21.1 km run; and

- Ironman: 3 400 m swim, 180 km cycle, 42.2 km run

In addition to these distances, several longer triathlons also exist. In these events, athletes will aim to do double (or triple) Ironman distances over the course of several days. They may even participate in a Deca Iron ultra-triathlon which involves 38 km swimming, 1 800 km cycling and 422 km running (Rüst, Knechtle, Knechtle, Rosemann & Lepers, 2012:145). It is evident that the sport of triathlon is still very dynamic, and is adapting and growing to the needs of the athletes who have made the sport a part of their lives.

What makes triathlon history somewhat unique is that the different distances of the events did not evolve simultaneously. Instead, each event distance gained its own popularity separate from the other distances. For example, during the time period that the Olympic distance event became an official Olympic event, the Ironman distance event gained traction in a separate part of the world. It is interesting to note that up to the present, more Australian athletes hold Olympic medals in triathlon, however, American and European athletes dominate the long distance events.

An Ironman triathlon is considered to be one of the toughest endurance events in the world. The first Ironman competition was held in Hawaii on 18 February 1978. Only 15 competitors took part in this gruelling race which was the brainchild of John Collins, a

naval officer, and his wife, Judy. The first finisher was to be awarded the title 'Ironman', and 12 of the 15 competitors managed to cross the finish line. The initial concept was to combine the island's three toughest disciplines into one event: the Waikiki Rough Water Swim, the Around-Oahu Bike Ride and the Honolulu Marathon (Ironman, 2013).

In 1979, a *Sports Illustrated* article raised awareness about the event, and subsequently the field increased to hundreds in 1980. The television station, ABC's 'Wide World of Sport' was awarded filming rights of the event in 1980, and it established its worldwide following almost immediately (Ironman, 2013). However, 1982 was the last year that competitors were allowed to compete without having to qualify for the Kona event[2], and international interest in the event, and triathlons as an official sport, spiked when images of a young Julie Moss surfaced crawling on her hands and feet over the finish line to secure her second-place finish. That year also saw the publication of the sport's first national magazine in the United States (US), namely, *Triathlon Magazine*, and also the advent of the first national racing series.

The event described above became the branded triathlon, Ironman, which has since expanded to offer over 154 races in various distances. Similar distanced events are also offered, but may not call themselves Ironman races, as Ironman has trademarked the name. The Ironman distance event is then also the most popular long-distance triathlon (Knechtle, Knechtle & Lepers, 2011:82).

Within the context of branded and non-branded triathlon events, this study aimed to investigate female triathletes' (the research subject for this study) perceptions of their race experiences in order to develop a CBCPBE model for RCPA sport events.

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[2] The Kona event is known as the Ironman World Championships where only the top athletes are invited to compete. Participation in this event can only be secured through invitation which is determined with the use of a point system (Ironman, 2013).

1.5 THE RESEARCH SUBJECT: A FEMALE TRIATHLETE PERSPECTIVE

Given the increase in triathlon participation, in all of its distances (Rüst *et al.*, 2012:145), special mention must be made of an important subject: the participation of female athletes and the issue of gender equality. Although females are certainly still very much underrepresented in the sport (Rüst *et al.*, 2012:145), it would appear that triathlon has made a concerted effort to include females and increase participation (Greene, 2016), contrary to many other sport disciplines. Ironically, cycling, which is one of the disciplines of triathlon, has the worst track record when it comes to gender equality (TWC, 2015).

Triathlon, as a sport in general, has not only acknowledged that much still needs to be done in terms of gender equality, but has shown that the original intent of the sport was to be inherently equal. From the outset, equal opportunities were provided for male and female athletes participating in triathlon events, and both genders competed in the same distances for equal amounts of prize money (Greene, 2016).

This is still evident today if the female participation numbers in triathlon are compared to those of other types of sport. For example, in 2013, British Triathlon reported that approximately one third of its members were female. In 2015, females represented 28% of the competitors at the London Triathlon. In contrast, British Cycling noted that only 15% of the members were female in 2013, and this number only increased slightly to 19% in 2015 due to several initiatives (TWC, 2015). Similar numbers have been reported in the US, for example, USAT (USA Triathlon) indicated that their female membership increased from 27% in 2000 to 36,5% at the end of 2013 (Dowling, 2015). In 2016, the ITU announced an increase in female participation from 33% to 35% (Greene, 2016). In addition, it published a list of more than 50 National Federations that boasted higher-than-average female race entries for the year.

Various factors were listed as contributing to this growth: society's acceptance of 'active' women, women feeling more comfortable living an active lifestyle, the increase in women-only events, and races which focused on charity involvement and fundraising (Dowling, 2015).

It is interesting to note that the Women's Commission, which is still functioning today, was founded in 1990, only a year after the ITU was created. From the beginning, one

of the main goals of the ITU was to strive for equal participation in the sport. Moreover, the triathlon sport management structures also welcome female candidates into important management positions within its federations (Greene, 2016). The current ITU president, Marisol Casado, elected until 2020, is female, as are five of the nine table officers and board members. The ITU Athletes Committee has equal representations between the genders, and an increase in female participation in technical or coaching courses has been noted (Green, 2016). On several occasions since Casado's election, the ITU has indicated that one of the main goals for triathlon is, and always has been, to have the same number of men and women participating in events.

However, despite, the ITU's insistence on equal participation and their progressive stance on the issue of gender equality in sport, it is still questionable how much traction has been gained across the board. Although ITU racing (exclusively focused on Olympic distances) has shown its commitment to female athletes, other distances have not shown quite as much enthusiasm.

The so-called Ironman distance events (referring here to both the actual branded Ironman race, and the Ironman-distance events), have taken a rather strange stance on female participation, especially when it comes to professional athletes. Indeed, it is the equal participation in these events during the recent past that has caused the biggest concern when it comes to gender equality in triathlon. This discrepancy is displayed by the disparity in the Ironman World Championships held in Kona, which offers 50 slots to professional male athletes, while there are only 35 slots available for female athletes. Although this discrepancy has been highlighted in the past couple of years, Ironman has stubbornly refused to address this in a sensible manner.

As it is a coveted event with prize money of $650 000, the biggest purse for a triathlon, professional athletes have to qualify for the event on a points system. Points are earned by placing in events, and those athletes with the most points qualify to participate in the event. In 2015, the gender gap was highlighted by the experience of a professional triathlete couple, Beth Gerdes and Luke McKenzie (Shapiro, 2015). McKenzie had accumulated 4 450 points by June which assured him one of the 50 spots for male athletes in Kona, while his wife, Gerdes, who had earned a total of 4 515 points, had not yet been able to qualify for the event, despite earning more

points and placing higher in the events; all while doing the exact same distances as McKenzie.

To qualify for Kona, Gerdes had to not only compete in another Ironman event, but had to place in the top three to qualify. At this point in time, Gerdes had already done three full Ironman races (since giving birth the previous year). General consensus in the industry is that two full Ironman races per season are rough enough on the body, especially at the level the professionals compete at. To qualify, Gerdes would have to do four Ironman races and then still race the full Ironman distance at the World Championships, bringing her tally to five full Ironman races for the year. By competing in Ironman Switzerland, and winning, Gerdes 'stamped' her ticket to Kona. By the end of July of 2015, the points cut-off for male qualifiers was 3 700. For females, it was 4 625. Given the cost, financially, emotionally and physically, associated with racing in these Ultra distance events, there is an apparent difference between the equality and opportunity afforded to male and female athletes.

This is not to say that Ironman has not acknowledged this issue. Although it has taken some time, concerted efforts have been made by the brand to not only increase grassroot-level participation amongst females, but also to accommodate professional females. One of the biggest endeavours to encourage female participation in the sport was launched in 2015 by the Ironman Foundation. Called the Women For Tri programme, the aim of the programme was, and still is, to increase female participation at all levels of triathlon.

Seeking to identify and diminish the primary barriers to entry, the programme strives to mobilise triathlon advocates to encourage and engage female athletes across all race distances and across all athletic abilities. Since starting the programme, grant funding of $183 000 has been awarded to triathlon clubs to support female participation initiatives (Women For Tri, 2018).

A key part of this programme is the Facebook group, called Women For Tri. As a closed group community on Facebook, this platform serves as a private space where female triathletes can support and discuss all things related to being a female triathlete. It is also this group that was selected as the population for this study. In 2017, when the data was collected for this study, the group had roughly 21 000 members. In 2018, this number has grown to over 51 000 members, an encouraging

trend, given the participation numbers of females. An example of the marketing material used by the group to encourage female triathlon participation is depicted in Figure 1.2.

Figure 1.2:   Women For Tri branding and marketing material
Source: Women For Tri website, 2018

To encourage female participation in the sport at a more advanced level, Women For Tri launched an additional slot initiative during 2018 by offering an additional 400 slots to female age-groupers at the 2018 Ironman 70.3 World Championships. The revenue gained from these slots was given back to Women For Tri to use for further initiatives.

To accommodate the additional female athletes, the race weekend was also split: female athletes raced on the Saturday and male athletes on the Sunday, allowing for a more equally-distributed race. Ironman went a step further to announce that, as of 2019, they would no longer be making use of the points system for professional athletes to qualify for Kona, but will revert to a slot system similar to that used for the age-group athletes. By following this approach, it is expected that the slot allocations could be increased to a 100 slots becoming available, especially if they convert to a

split-race schedule as was done in 2018 for the 70.3 World Championships (Triathlon Magazine, 2017).

It is thus evident that triathlon as a sport is acknowledging the value of female triathletes and is actively pursuing an equal playing field for both genders.

1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study empirically investigated the perceptions of female triathletes regarding branded and non-branded triathlon events. The aim was to investigate and explore the different consumer-based, consumer-perceived brand equity dimensions, as initially proposed by Baalbaki (2012), however, in relation to RCPA sport events.

The primary research of this study followed a quantitative approach in order to collect data with the use of an online, self-administered questionnaire. The data was analysed using descriptive statistics and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to arrive at an acceptable model.

The secondary research in this study comprised of an in-depth literature review of the concepts directly related to the primary research. The extensive literature discussion in Chapters 2, 3 and 4 of this thesis, presents a review of previous research on sport events, branding and branding equity. The research was conducted by reviewing relevant existing academic literature contained in scientific journals, magazines, electronic databases and other published academic material. However, it is pertinent to note that virtually all of the seminal work conducted on brand equity was done during the 1990s, although still being completely relevant at the present time. In order to maintain the authenticity of this work, the researcher has deliberately chosen to reference the original works of these seminal authors. As such, some sources cited in this thesis exceed the prescribed minimum of ten years for academic relevancy.

Chapter 2 explores the available literature on sport events and relevant theories, such as the nature of sport events, the sport event management world, and marketing considerations for sport events. Chapter 3 outlines the literature concerned with brand equity management. Important aspects and theoretical foundations are explored within this context. Chapter 4 focuses on sport brand and brand equity within the sport industry, and concludes with the presentation of the proposed model which will be tested for this study.

The primary research was conducted with the use of an electronic quantitative survey. The survey was made available on the Facebook group, Women For Tri, which facilitated the collection of data given the geographically dispersed nature of the respondents. The population of interest was thus the Women For Tri Facebook group members at that particular point in time, estimated at around 21 000 members. A census was utilised as it was difficult to determine a representative sample size due to the nature of the group, and the limited information available on female triathletes.

The questionnaire was developed in consultation with a statistician and pre-tested. The questionnaire aimed to replicate the original methodology used by Baalbaki (2012) in combination with previous research and established scales that were used to test brand equity constructs by Aaker (1991), Keller (1993) and Erdem and Swait (1998). In addition, given the premise of the research (brand equity is dependent on the consumer as well as the particular brand category), the researcher included several sport-specific items which could, based on the literature discussed in Section 2.7 of Chapter 2, contribute to the CBCPBE of RCPA sport events.

The completed questionnaire was captured electronically and the data was analysed using a statistical package, namely Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The descriptive statistics included frequency counts and variance tables which were used to determine the respondents' perceptions regarding given branded events, as well as to compile a consumer profile of the respondents. Confirmatory Factor Analysis was used to determine the model fit of the baseline model proposed in Chapter 4. Given the data, some modifications were made and an acceptable model fit was achieved for the data collected.

The outcome of this study provides an acceptable indication of the different dimensions of brand equity when RCPA sport events are regarded from a consumer perspective. Given the highly personal nature of sport participation and the dynamic environment in which brands operate (and create value), this study attempted to provide a starting point for the discussion and to allow for further research to find an acceptable CBCPBE model which may be used for RCPA sport events.

1.7   RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Investigating the brand equity of recurring sport events is a critical topic for research, as not only has the demand for sport events increased, but also the need for a more professional approach when it comes to the management of sport events, and brands alike. In addition, literature indicates that the typical approach to brand equity requires additional refinement by adopting a more consumer-centric approach. To date, the consumer-based, consumer-perceived brand equity of RCPA sport events has not been researched exclusively, and literature on this specific topic is highly fragmented and incomplete. The study will firstly synthesise the available literature on the brand equity of sport events, and thereafter empirically explore the current theoretical framework provided for this particular concept.

The primary objective of this study is to develop a consumer-based, consumer-perceived brand equity (CBCPBE) model for RCPA sport events. The purpose is to gain a better understanding of the various dimensions that contribute to the brand equity of such sport events. To achieve this, several secondary research objectives were also set. These objectives are listed in Table 1.1 below.

Table 1.1: The primary and secondary research objectives

Primary research objective
To develop a model which may be used to measure the CBCPBE of RCPA sport events.
Secondary research objectives
• To investigate the items which contribute to the dimension of 'quality' for RCPA sports events.   • To determine which items contribute to the brand equity component 'preference' for these events.   • To investigate the effect of sustainability on the brand equity of RCPA sport events.   • To establish the items which contribute to the 'social influence' dimension of brand equity.

- To determine if 'leadership' contributes to the brand equity of RCPA sport events.

- To compile a general consumer profile for female triathletes.

The research process and achievement of the above objectives were facilitated in a logical manner comprising eight chapters, as set out in the following section.

1.8 CHAPTER OUTLINE

This study is structured into eight chapters.

Chapter 1 established the research orientation by providing the background to the research problem, the research subject, the problem statement, and presented the research methodology used, as well as outlining the primary and secondary objectives.

Chapter 2 focuses on providing an extensive literature review of sport events and brands.

Chapter 3 focuses on the concept of branding and brand equity.

Chapter 4 presents a discussion of sport brands and the current literature available on brand equity within the sport industry. The chapter concludes with the proposed or baseline model developed from the literature discussed in the preceding chapters.

Chapter 5 outlines the methodology to be used.

Chapter 6 presents the research results consisting of descriptive analyses.

Chapter 7 provides the findings of the model fit analysis.

Chapter 8 presents the conclusions and recommendations which can be made, based on the results of the study.

1.9 CONCLUSION

Sport events have become a desired and sought-after commodity for countries, communities and organisations alike, as international recognition for these types of events increase (Parent *et al.*, 2012:145). Concurrently, the sport industry has undergone a rapid period of commercialisation where more professional management practices have been pursued, which are still undergoing refinement to allow for more

effective and efficient sport organisations. This is especially evident for branding and marketing management within the sport industry. In addition, the concept of brand equity itself is still evolving, with various indications that it no longer makes provision for the modern-day consumer's needs, and requires further refinement from the original discussions started by Keller in 1990.

Research on unique consumer perspectives, such as those of female athletes, still lags behind and large research gaps remain. To ensure that sport events are sustainable and able to source valuable resources, it is crucial that the brand equity of these brands is managed efficiently and effectively to ensure that brand erosion does not occur.

The research study will provide more insight into the dimensions of consumer-based, consumer-perceived brand equity for RCPA sport brands. This will be achieved by looking at the perceptions of female triathletes regarding their racing experiences at both branded and non-branded events.

CHAPTER 2:
SPORT EVENT MANAGEMENT

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The mass participation in sport events, such as distance-running or cycling events, has globally attracted increased media and marketing attention during the past decade (Theodorakis, Kaplanidou & Karabaxoglou, 2015:87; Sato *et al.*, 2016:1), and this has led to lucrative opportunities for organised sport activities. In response to these opportunities, the number of participatory sport events hosted by communities has grown significantly over the past 15 years (Buning & Gibson, 2016:175). In particular, events orientated towards individual endurance, such as cycling, running and triathlons, have become extremely popular as consumers seek to engage in physical activity, whilst socialising with like-minded people (Buning & Gibson, 2016:175).

It is estimated that in 2014 there were 28 000 distance-running events in the US, and that almost 19 million people completed in these distance-running events (Sato *et al.*, 2016:1). By 2016, the number of running events grew to 30 400 (Statista, 2018), and in 2017 it was reported that nearly 42 million people took part in running events (Janssen, Scheerder, Thibaut, Brombacher & Vos, 2017:17). This trend in mass participation is not only evident in the US, but can be seen on a global scale. A number of Australian sport events draw thousands of international participants each year, this includes the Gold Coast Airport Marathon (24 214 runners) and the Melbourne Marathon Festival (24 410 runners). In Europe, it has been reported that 10% of the total population (50 million people) participate in running events (Janssen *et al.*, 2017:17).

Similarly, South Africa also hosts large annual sport events. The largest timed sporting event in the world is held annually in the Cape Peninsula, namely, the Cape Argus Cycle Tour which attracts more than 35 000 cyclists every year. The world's oldest and largest ultramarathon, the Comrades Marathon, is also held in South Africa. This iconic race alternates between Durban and Pietermaritzburg and attracts approximately 23 000 runners annually. The popularity of the Comrades Marathon is evident from the fact that the 25 000 entries made available to runners for the 2019 event were sold out in just six days (Levitt, 2018).

It is thus evident that during the past few decades sport events and sport event management have become important fields for management focus, given the increase in both the number of participants and the interest in hosting such events. Communities in general are showing increasing interest in hosting events to obtain geographical and brand recognition, despite the considerable challenges these events pose for sport managers.

Sport events are intangible, unpredictable, short-lived, and subjective in nature, and while they produce, they consume at the same time (Parent *et al.*, 2012:145). It is therefore difficult to build a strong brand and quality event to satisfy all of the involved stakeholders' needs. Stakeholders are all those individuals or groups that can influence the event, and include the local community, sponsors, the media, various levels of government, staff and volunteers, delegations and sport organisations. It is generally considered that high-quality events are only possible if there are positive relationships with these different stakeholders (Parent *et al.*, 2012:146).

Although research on branding and stakeholders within the context of sport events has been predominantly conducted on mega-events such as the Olympics, where spectators are the most important consideration, some research does focus on participative events (Kennelly, 2017:883), the topic of this thesis. The available current academic literature related to sport events is reviewed in this chapter in order to develop the academic grounding of the thesis.

This chapter commences with an introduction to the predominantly service-orientated nature of sport events and it attempts to provide a concise overview of the classification system used by many scholars for sport events. To provide additional context, an overview is provided of the sport event management world, as well as the life cycle of a sport event. Given that the topic of this study is brand equity (which is discussed at length in Chapter 3), a large portion of this chapter focuses on the marketing considerations for sport events. Here attention will be paid to the broad approaches to sport marketing, the consumer behaviour of participants in sport events, as well as female athletes, and the creation of sport event brands. A discussion of special considerations relevant to RCPA sport events concludes this chapter on sport events. These considerations include the event environment, local community issues, as well as the impact of the human element on sport events.

2.2 THE NATURE OF SPORT EVENTS

Sport events can simplistically be defined as "an activity involving physical exertion and skill that is governed by a set of rules or customs and is often undertaken competitively" (Free Dictionary, 2018). However, within the management field of sport events and academia, there is no simple way to define sport events. The following section will address the service-orientated nature of sport events and will attempt to provide a brief, but concise, overview of the classification of sport events which may be used to understand the context of this study better.

2.2.1 Sport events as a service

Products and services have different characteristics which vary to such a degree that they affect the management (and marketing) of these items (Erasmus, Strydom & Rudansky-Kloppers, 2016:294). While a product is something tangible which is offered for sale, services can be defined as a special form of product which consists of activities, benefits or satisfactions that are offered for sale. This type of 'product' is intangible and does not result in the ownership of a physical item (Claessens, 2015).

The offering of services has grown dramatically in recent years and contributed more than 65% of the gross world product in 2015 (Claessens, 2015). The service industry varies greatly and runs on a continuum, as not only do companies offer services, but also governments and non-profit organisations (Claessens, 2015). However, despite this, services do have certain characteristics in common (Erasmus *et al*, 2016:294 and Claessens, 2015):

- Services are generally characterised by being intangible and perishable. This means that services cannot be seen, tasted, felt, heard or smelled before they are purchased. It is thus not possible to try out a service before buying it.

- The outputs for services are not kept in stock. This also relates to the perishability of services. Services cannot be inventoried, nor stored for later use or sale. The value of a service exists only at a particular point in time, and this has a significant impact on the financial management of the service provider.

- There is plenty of client contact present with a service. Users of the service (the consumer) participate in every service production. A service can thus not be separated from both the provider and the user.

- As such, the provision and consumption of the service will occur simultaneously. Services are first sold, then produced and consumed at the same time. It can be said that for service marketing, the service provider is the product.

- There is usually a short response time from the moment the service is sold until it has to be produced. This is, however, not always the case, for example, athletes usually enter sport events months in advance, and thus some time will pass from the point of purchase to the point of consumption.

- A lack of ownership. Service cannot be owned in the same way a product can be owned by the purchaser. To assist with the lack of ownership, some services will provide tangible elements to their service offering. This can include a medal or a finisher t-shirt which may be taken home by the athletes to remind them of their race and their experience of it.

- The quality of services is not only difficult to measure, but can also vary greatly. For example, the quality will depend on not only on who produced the service, but also when, where and how it was produced. As services are highly labour-intensive, a great deal of variation can occur in the quality provided by different, or even the same, service provider.

When looking at the above characteristics of services, it is evident that sport events can be seen as predominantly a service offering. As such, the value-proposition of a sport event provider is often to offer a platform that enables consumers to interact with each other (Woratschek, Durchholz, Maier & Strobel, 2017:3); it is thus a wholly intangible interface. The participation in a sport event cannot be 'tried-out' prior to the event. Furthermore, the event is presented at a specific point of time, the consumer participates in the event and as such, the provision and consumption of the event occur simultaneously. The quality of the event will vary greatly and will depend on a variety of factors: from the volunteers to the venue to even the weather, all of which cannot be predicted beforehand.

In theory, it is easy to distinguish between pure product manufacturers and pure service providers, but in practice most businesses will be involved, to a greater or lesser extent, in both the manufacturing of products and the provision of services (Erasmus *et al.*, 2016:294). This also applies to sport events, as many sport events are starting to sell event memorabilia, including branded event merchandise and photo

packages which are all products that can be taken home after the event. These tangible items contribute to the overall brand value of the sport event, and they play an important role in the participant's evaluation and satisfaction related to the event.

Despite the incorporation of some tangible elements into the offering, sport events are still higher on the service continuum, as the predominant offering purchased by the consumer is a service; whether participating or spectating in an event. In order to retain consumers and enforce consumer loyalty, irrespective of the uncertainty of sport competitions, performances and outcomes, the delivery of a high-quality service should be the focal point for both participant and spectator sport (Yoshida, 2017:427).

It is important to establish that although both the core sport product and ancillary services are intangible and perishable by nature (both characteristics of services), for sport events, there should be a differentiation between the core product and ancillary services. The core product for sport events is inherently unpredictable and beyond managerial control, and this holds true for both spectator and participant events (Yoshida, 2017:431). The ancillary services which supplement the core product, however, can be managed by organisations and are under the control of sport managers.

Sport events may also be classified using different systems and criteria. This will be discussed in more detail below.

2.2.2   The classification of sport events

The classification of sport events is a well-researched topic, and terminology such as mega-event, hallmark event, major sporting event, large-scale sporting event and special event is well-recognised and often used interchangeably (Parent & Smith-Swan, 2013:3).

Events are frequently divided into categories such as mega, major or local events, based on subjective interpretation (Parent *et al.*, 2012:145), thereby implying the various sizes of the events. A definitive definition and classification of events have not yet been developed, as definitions vary across different theoretical understandings and disciplines (Horne, 2017:329).

Below follows a discussion of the academic interpretation of the classification of sport events. The most common typology of sport event classification is depicted in Figure 2.1 below.
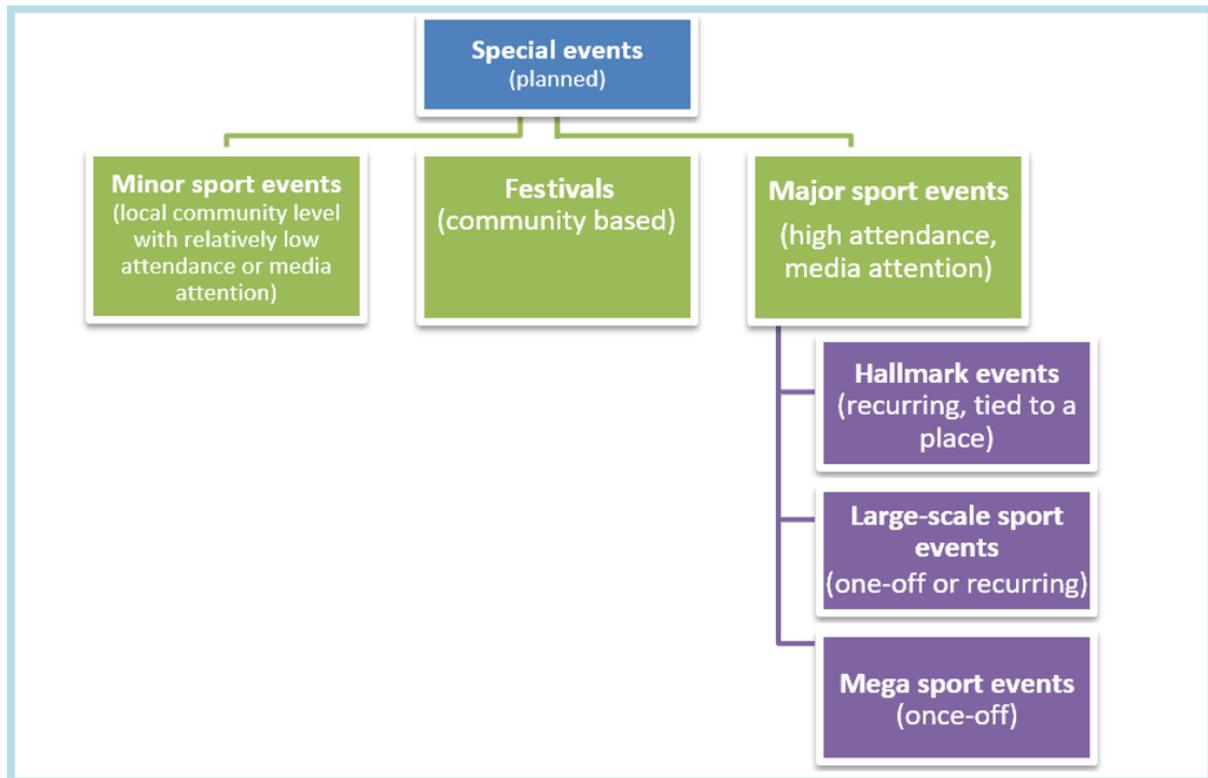
Figure 2.1:   A typology of major sport events
Source: Parent & Smith-Swan (2013:4)

As indicated in the figure above, special events, which are planned, can be divided into three categories: **minor sport events** which take place at community level with relatively low attendance levels or media attention, **festivals** and **major sport events** with high attendance and media attention. Given the nature of this study, only major sport events will be discussed. Major events can then be further classified into hallmark events, large-scale sport events and mega-sport events.

A popular definition used by authors in the field of sport events is that of **hallmark events** which was first defined in 1984 by Ritchie (in Parent & Smith-Swan, 2013:3) as "a recurring or one-time event of a temporary nature whose significance provides awareness, appeal or any other potential benefit to the host region". Hallmark events typically fall outside the normal pattern of everyday life and present the overarching concept for all other types of events.

More recent definitions include that of Roche (Maiello & Pasquinelli, 2015:116) who defines **mega-events** as "short-term occurrences with long-term consequences for the cities that stage them", since the hosting of such events requires long-term investments, such as the building of infrastructure and facilities. A recent example of this is the Summer Olympics held in Rio de Janeiro during 2016. In 2009, when Rio won its bid to host the Olympics, it was estimated that the Games would cost them around $3 billion, but by the time the Olympic torch was lit during the opening ceremony, Brazil had already spent more than $4.6 billion on venues, administration, transportation and other event-related costs (Dillow, 2016). In exchange for this hefty investment in the Olympics, Rio will gain several new infrastructure developments, including the Athletes' Park which has already been used for several major music concerts, the Porto Maravilha which is the main sea port for Rio de Janeiro (the existing port was renovated after being left to decay for many decades) and the Light Rail Vehicle (LVR) to assist with Rio's traffic congestion (Anon, 2016).

Major events were defined by Emery (in Parent *et al.*, 2012:145) as "a sport event that receives national or international media coverage as a result of the calibre of competition, and one in which a minimum of 1 000 spectators are present at the event".

Since the original formulation of the term 'hallmark event', the definition has been modified to include or exclude special events, mega-events and community events (Parent & Smith-Swan, 2013:3). In addition, events are distinguished between being one-time events and recurring (usually annually) events. The changes to the definition include different combinations of size, geographic span, economic return, length of event and association with the destination. It should be pointed out that most research on this topic is of a logical nature or focused on comparisons between previous definitions, often with particular reference to festivals, rather than sport events (Parent & Smith-Swan, 2013:3). An overview of the definitions provided by Hall in the 1990s shows an evolution from very defined and specific terms to the various terms becoming essentially synonyms for each other.

The biggest problem with these definitions is that many categories for events are overarching, and the majority of sporting events will fall in more than one category. A good example of this would be the world's oldest tennis tournament, the Championships, Wimbledon, or as it is more commonly known, Wimbledon. It has been held annually since 1877 at the All England Club in London, Wimbledon. Based

on the definitions above, it can be defined as a major event since it receives national and international media coverage: BBC reported a cumulative audience reach of 26 million viewers in 2018. The highest peak, at 6.54 million viewers, was reported for the third-round match between Djokovic and Edmund. The Ladies' Singles Final had over 4.6 million viewers, and the BBC website reported 13.5 million unique browsers with 345 million page views during the championship (Wimbledon, 2018).

Major events must also have a minimum of 1 000 spectators present at the event. Wimbledon's centre court has 14 979 seats and an average of 39 000 spectators were recorded at any one time during the 2018 Championships (Wimbledon, 2018). Wimbledon can also be regarded as a hallmark event as it has been embedded within the community and provides the destination with a competitive advantage, as the event is almost synonymous with the suburb of Wimbledon, London. This example then demonstrates that Wimbledon can be considered both a major event and a hallmark event when looking at the definitions set out above.

There is thus considerable ambiguity about the classification of events, and even more specifically, what constitutes a mega-event (Müller, 2015:627). As such, further mega-events and major events are discussed in more detail below.

2.2.2.1 *Mega-events*

Mega-events are defined as those events which due to their size or significance will provide significant media attention, financial/economic impact, an increase in tourism and prestige to the host region, venue or organisation (Parent & Smith-Swan, 2013:4), predominantly involves macro-scale interest (Clark, Kearns & Cleland, 2016:87) and which has a dramatic character, mass popular appeal and international significance (Horne, 2017:329). Mega-events can further be distinguished from major events, as they do not recur at the same place, annually, as major events do. The essence of mega-events is scale, and four integral dimensions across this scale should be considered: visitor attractiveness, mediated reach, cost and transformative impacts (Clark *et al.*, 2016:87). Hosting mega-events can be seen as one of the most political acts of the modern age, as securing and delivering a mega-event is very indicative of the host nation or city's power in the international realm (Clark *et al.*, 2016:87).

Mega-events are often used as 'bargaining chips' and can send a very strong message to competitors. Examples of political influence over mega-events include, most

notably, the two major boycotts of the Olympics which occurred during the Cold War. In 1980, 65 countries, led by the US, refused to participate in the Moscow Olympic Games, following the Soviet's invasion of Afghanistan. In 1984, the Soviets, along with 17 other nations, returned the favour by boycotting the Los Angeles Games (Rumsby, 2015). In 2015, the Russians exerted political influence when faced with a ban of all of their athletes to the 2016 Rio Games due to systematic doping. Although Russia eventually retracted their boycott, it was initially reported that Russia and its allies would repeat a similar boycott as that which was staged during the Cold War period (Reuters, 2016). The International Olympic Committee (IOC) lifted the overall ban on Russian athletes just weeks before the Games, allowing several athletes to still compete (Newberry, 2016).

Mega-events can be considered an integral component of urban development, with urban transformation and legacy benefits to justify the major expenditure incurred to host these types of events (Clark *et al.*, 2016:87). One of the most successful campaigns for urban transformation stems from the 1992 Olympic Games held in Barcelona.

The city council of Barcelona still maintains that the Games were the catalyst for the regeneration plans responsible for creating the modern, vibrant city Barcelona has since become. Construction undertaken for the Olympics included works that opened up the seafront to the city (in fact, Barcelona did not have a beach front until the Games led to the demolishment of more than 3 km of industrial buildings), the restoration of historical buildings and the building of ring roads around the metropolitan area. New projects which were undertaken included the Montjuic Telecommunications Tower, the reconstruction of the Montjuic Stadium and the renovation of the International Trade Centre located at the port. Many of the projects undertaken during this time were not directly for use during the Olympics and Barcelona ensured that the maximum amount of infrastructure could be utilised after the Games. Although the investment in these infrastructure projects was significant (in 2009 monetary terms it would have cost $11.4 billion, nearly three times as much as the anticipated cost of the Rio 2016 Games), it has been argued that the investment was worth it.

An economic impact study conducted after the Games revealed that unemployment levels reached an all-time low, as 20 000 permanent jobs were created, an increase of 15% was noted in the development of new roads (compared to roads which existed

in 1986), 17% of Barcelona's sewage systems were new, and a 78% increase was noted in new green areas and beaches. Much of Barcelona's current infrastructure is a 'legacy' of their 1992 Olympic Games. In addition, the Barcelona Olympics led to an increase in government and private spending on sport facilities all over Spain which saw some impressive results by the end of the decade. Overall, Spanish sport has been enabled by the successful hosting of the Barcelona Games to make money – Real Madrid may be the most profitable soccer club in the world (Taylor, 2012).

2.2.2.2 Major events

Major sporting events include large-scale sporting events which are of an international nature, attract many delegations and international media, and provide the host region with benefits or so-called 'legacies' (Parent & Smith-Swan, 2013:4). As indicated, legacies can include infrastructure, repeat visitors to the destination, permanent jobs for the local community, and social cohesion. It should be noted that legacies should be carefully managed as they often become a financial burden afterwards.

Mega-events are notorious for their significant infrastructure investments, which often leave behind crippling debt and stadiums which serve no purpose to the host community. There are many examples of this, including the stadiums built for the 2008 Beijing Games and the infrastructure created for the 2014 Sochi Games (Flanagan, 2016).

Major sporting events are therefore becoming very popular with host nations, as they provide many of the benefits mega-events do, but are smaller in scale which make them, especially logistically, easier to host. They do not require the same amount of capital and infrastructure as mega-events do, and often, host cities already possess the required infrastructure. Additionally, although these events may not attract the same number of spectators as traditional mega-events, large-scale events have the potential to draw more participants to the region (Van Niekerk, 2017:844).

To further illustrate the convoluted nature of sport event definitions, some definitions of major events include recurring hallmark events (for example, Wimbledon which is held annually in the same place) and one-time mega-events (for example, the Summer Olympic Games which is held every four years at a different location, the most recent Olympic Games were held in Rio de Janeiro during 2016). Hallmark events are typically embedded within a community and provide the destination with a competitive

advantage, as the event is hosted annually. Hallmark events are imbued with tradition and quality that has developed and expanded over a period of time (Parent & Smith-Swan, 2013:4).

Each type of event has its own benefits and risks. These will be briefly discussed in the following section.

2.2.2.3   *Benefits and risks of hosting sporting events*

Proponents of sport mega-events have argued that events of this nature result in direct benefits, such as the attraction of capital, inflow of tourists, the development of infrastructure (Barajas, Coates & Sanchez-Fernandez, 2015, Kim, Jun, Walker & Drane, 2015:21, Maiello & Pasquinelli, 2015:116; Sato *et al.*, 2016:11), the creation of jobs, collection of taxes and protracted spending in the region by both businesses and individuals (Peachey, Borland, Lobpries & Cohen, 2015:87), and an increase in sport participation of the local community after the event (Chalip, Green, Taks & Misener, 2017:258). In addition, such events garner substantial attention worldwide (Kim *et al.*, 2015:23).

Key stakeholders, such as media companies and corporate sponsors use large-scale sport events as money-making vehicles in the form of advertising revenue and opportunities for branding purposes and the sale of products. Tourism stakeholders often use these types of events for destination marketing purposes (Peachey *et al.*, 2015:86).

Sport events command large broadcast fees from competing media companies who may even be willing to sign long-term contracts (Peachey *et al.*, 2015:86). For example, a record sum of almost $1 billion was paid by Fox and Telemundo (owned by NBC) for the rights to broadcast the 2018 and 2022 FIFA World Cups in the US. Fox agreed to pay more than $400 million, while Telemundo is to pay about $600 million for the rights to broadcast the two events. This amounts to more than double what was paid to broadcast the 2010 World Cup and the 2014 World Cup. ESPN paid $100 million and Univision $325 million, resulting in a combined $425 million for the broadcast rights for those events (Longman, 2011). It was speculated that the record sum paid by Fox and Telemundo resulted from the fact that both ESPN and Univision were favoured to retain the rights for the upcoming World Cups (Longman, 2011).

According to Brown, Smith and Assaker (2016:161), the indirect benefits which may be attributed to the hosting of sport events include the creation of a legacy for the destination, territorial promotion and an increase in exports, civic pride, improvement in local identity, and empowerment. Research has indicated that one of the main benefits that cities gain from the hosting of sport events is the opportunity to promote tourism, where experiences at such events are placed in settings which have been consciously designed to influence cognitive and affective outcomes, creating, hopefully, repeat visitors (Brown *et al.*, 2016:161).

Sport events may also hold a special political-ideological symbolic power, as they convey universal and transcultural principles by mobilising a common interest (Kim *et al.*, 2015:21; Maiello & Pasquinelli, 2015:116). In addition, sport events have been found to transcend social boundaries and are able to evoke values, such as peace, justice and mutual respect. A good example of this was the hosting of the 2010 FIFA Soccer World Cup by South Africa. The event did much to repair racial relationships and encouraged local identity and cohesion amongst South Africans (Knott, Fayal & Jones, 2015:47). Other noneconomic benefits include the contribution made to participants in sport events, with specific reference to participants' behaviour and life satisfaction (Sato *et al.*, 2016:11).

The immediate success of a sport mega-event is often evident by looking at the perceptions it created with the local residents, where their initial perceptions frequently form the reference point for the performance evaluation of the event (Caiazza & Audretcsh, 2015:1). It has been found that sport events can improve efficacy, create social capital, and in instances where poverty is evident, promote social and economic justice and well-being (Peachey *et al.*, 2015:87). For example, one of the social agendas that gained traction during the build-up to the 2016 Rio Games was the 'Rio fit for the Olympics' programme which provided neighbourhoods, with low educational test scores, with free sport and recreational activities under the guidance of experienced trainers. In addition, the programme developed public sport facilities which provided low-income students, who had exceptional sport skills, with quality academic and sport training. Of the municipal schools, 71% were able to provide sport activities to students after the initiation of the programme. In addition, 12 Olympic villas, which were all located in low-income neighbourhoods, offered various sport

programmes to different age groups, as well as recreational activities for the physically and mentally disabled (D'Allant, 2013).

Sport events allow participants to develop contacts, friendships and networks, in addition to serving as boosters for social inclusion and identity (Peachey *et al.*, 2015:87). It is therefore considered that the staging of a large-scale event can be thought of as lucrative, and capable of raising the economic profile of a geographic region. In addition, sport events can make an impact on individual and collective social agendas (Peachey *et al.*, 2015:87).

It should be noted that sport events do hold a measure of risk. It would appear that the appeal of hosting a mega-event, such as the Olympics, is diminishing (Barajas *et al.*, 2015; Maiello & Pasquinelli, 2015:116) and many communities are starting to pursue smaller-scale sport events (Kaplanidaou & Gibson, 2010:163; Kennelly, 2017:884; Van Niekerk, 2017:844). For example, during the bidding process for the 2022 Winter Games, four bidding cities withdrew from the process (namely, Oslo, Stockholm, Lviv and Krakow), and both Germany and Switzerland rejected the proposal to take part in the bidding process (The Associated Press, 2014). Due to large opportunity costs, relating not only to the financial costs, but also to the social and environmental costs of hosting a mega-sport event, many host cities are becoming less eager to bid for the right to host such events (Kim *et al.*, 2015:21; Van Niekerk, 2017:844).

In addition, the positive impacts of these events are no longer taken for granted, as the considerable costs of hosting these events are on the increase. Policy makers and cities considering hosting sport events, are increasingly demanding economic impact studies of sporting events (Barajas *et al.*, 2015).

What is interesting to note is that, although there is a lack of research on small-scale sport events (Kennelly, 2017:883), it can be suggested that small-scale events present more sustainable, positive effects for their host communities (Barajas *et al.*, 2015). It is therefore important to conduct more academic research on smaller-scale events, as their importance in the event industry will become more distinct due to the cost of mega-events increasing.

2.2.3   RCPA sport events

As indicated above and in Chapter 1, sport marketing research has predominantly focused on the fan experience at mega-sport events such as the Olympics and the FIFA Soccer World Cup (Kennelly, 2017:833). However, little research has been done on recurring sport events, even from a spectator point of view (Kwiatkowski & Könecke, 2017:464). It is especially notable that even less academic research has been done on events where the consumer actively participates in the event. In other words, where the main source of income for the event does not come from passive spectating, but from encouraging consumers to pay an entry fee which grants them access to the event where they are expected to actively participate. This creates an interesting service dimension, as the consumer forms part of the 'product'-creation process and plays an integral part in how the event will be perceived.

As indicated in the discussion above, recurring sport events pose different challenges for event and marketing managers than events which occur only once. Given that the event will return, usually to the same community and location, it becomes important to ensure that the marketing message and branding efforts become inclusive of the local community, as well as the consumers of the event. If an event fails to do this, an unsuccessful event is imminent, as the support of the local community is invaluable to ensure the success of any sport event, and without participants, participative sport events cannot function.

For the purposes of this study, the focus will be on developing a consumer-based, consumer-perceived brand equity model for RCPA sport events. Within these parameters, RCPA events can be defined as those sport events which:

- Occur on a regular basis, usually annually;

- Are hosted in the same location as the previous events; and

- Represent a sport event in which people take part (participation is not limited to professional athletes, but also the general public).

Thus, the size of the event does not have a bearing on the classification of the sport events being investigated. These type of events are usually community-based open-entry events which promote participation and engagement, rather than focusing solely on the significance of the sporting outcome (namely, the winning athlete or team)

(Kennelly, 2017:883). Examples of such types of events include triathlons (the focus of this study due to its increasing popularity), on- and off-road running events, recreational cycling events, open-water or mass-start swimming events, and various permutations of adventure races such as 'mud runs' (Kennelly, 2017:883).

The common characteristics of these type of events are their open and participatory nature. Mass start events offer a 'challenge' to the participant based on terrain, time and distance, and although there is a winner, the event focuses on more than just the overall victor (Kennelly, 2017:884). In order to be classified as a mass participative event, at least 1 000 people should participate (Chiampas & Goyal, 2015:62). However, for the purpose of this study, the size of the event was not be considered and it did not form part of the investigation into the consumer-based, consumer-perceived brand equity for RCPA sport events.

As indicated in Chapter 1, the research subject for this study is female triathletes and as such, the specific RCPA events to be investigated will be triathlons. Given the nature of triathlons, and the logistical challenges it presents to event organisations, triathlons in general, do not make provision for more than 3 000 athletes. The triathlon to date with the largest number of athletes was the 2012 Chicago Triathlon which had 5 303 finishers (Valenti, n.d.). In contrast, the largest timed sporting event in the world, the Cape Town Cycle Tour, attracts nearly 35 000 cyclists every year (the 40th event was held in 2018).

It is worthwhile to mention, that even though these types of events cater for participants which will exclusively be the research focus for this study, these events do still attract large numbers of spectators. Although, spectators do not purchase tickets to watch the event, ancillary spending during these type of events still contribute towards the earning potential for the host city. RCPA sport events would (and do) do well in encouraging spectators to attend their events. For example, during the 2016 Ironman African Championships (held in Port Elizabeth) an active effort was made to break the world-record attempt for the most 'IronFans' at an Ironman race. It was estimated that more than 100 000 spectators lined the new run route to cheer participants on until the 17-hour cut-off at midnight (Jacobson, 2016). The feat earned the event the 2017 Athletes' Choice Awards for Overall Swim, Overall Bike, Best Run Course in the world, Will Attend Next Year, Will Recommend to a Friend, and 2nd Best Race Venue in the world.

These type of events are becoming increasingly popular and are starting to attract even international participants. The popularity of these events may be attributed to their challenging, but fun and achievable nature, the alignment with charity fundraising objectives, use of accessible locations, and the event's accessibility to all sectors of society (Kennelly, 2017:884).

Smaller-scale, participation-based sport events are becoming the back-bone of the tourism development plans of many destinations, as they are effective in overcoming tourism seasonality without placing unreasonable strain on the local community's resources, as mega-events notoriously do (Kennelly, 2017:884). In addition, many active sport tourists (athletes who travel to compete in sport events) do not travel alone, and bring along their families and supporters when travelling for events, resulting in lucrative economic opportunities for the host city (Kennely, 2017:884). Smaller-scale sporting events are also able to operate within existing infrastructure, require minimal investment of public funds, and are more manageable in terms of crowding and congestion when compared to hallmark events (Ziakas & Boukas, 2016:540).

It is evident from the above discussion that there are broad definitions and classifications for sport events, and the terms can be used, somewhat interchangeably. Despite this, all sport events occur in the same environment, the sport event management world, where similar principles and practices are employed to successfully host events, regardless of their size.

2.3   THE SPORT EVENT MANAGEMENT CONTEXT

The sport event industry is directed or managed by a combination of different rights holders and other stakeholders, as well as professional associations, due to the variety of sport events in the world (Parent & Smith-Swan, 2013:6). It is mainly the professional associations which provide the parameters for the events and direct the event managers. Examples of such associations include the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA).

The popularity of international major sport events has resulted in the creation of a host of other sport events, along with their respective international rights holding organisation. A good example of this is the Commonwealth Games Federation and

the Special Olympics. In addition to these international, regional and continental sport federations and Games organisations, a variety of international sport federations, organisations, assemblies and associations also function within the event management world. Examples here include World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) and the Association of National Olympic Committees (ANOC).

It is evident that the international sport event context includes a variety of single-sport and multi-sport organisations, federations, assemblies and associations (Parent & Smith-Swan, 2013:7). All of these organisations can be influenced by external stakeholders, most notably sponsors, the media and the general public.

Sport event managers play a crucial role in the management of sport events and to meet all their stakeholders' expectations. Similar to managing a big corporation, special management qualities and leadership are required to run these events successfully. It is important that event managers possess a wide body of knowledge to ensure that the event is managed successfully. The following list represents areas of knowledge which the sport event manager must possess, if an event is to be presented in a successful manner (Parent & Smith-Swan, 2013:9):

- The ability to manage the phases of the event lifecycle, that is initiation, planning, implementation, the event and the closure;

- Managing the event processes, including the assessment, selection, monitoring, documenting and communication processes;

- Having certain core values such as creativity, strategic (thinking), continuous improvement, ethics and integration of various activities of the event; and

- The ability to exert management principles in the various functional domains, such as administration, design, marketing, operations and risk management.

An increasing number of sport organisations are aligning themselves with universities in order to offer appropriate training programmes for sport managers. A good example of this approach is the IOC's recognition of the International Olympic Academy which offers a Masters' programme and a post-graduate seminar. It is hoped that once candidates qualify from these programmes they will possess the right body of knowledge to manage successful sport events. The majority of sport managers,

however, learn on the job, with many successful managers working as either referees or athletes before becoming event managers (Parent & Smith-Swan, 2013:9).

The sport event management world is a complex environment which consists of many different organisations from a variety of industries. Collaboration between these organisations is crucial, and each organisation plays an important role during the lifecycle of the sport event. The lifecycle of a sport event will now be discussed.

2.4   THE LIFECYCLE OF A SPORT EVENT

It is tempting to think of sport events as a definitive point in time, however, for the host community and the organising committee, it is more appropriate to view it as a process moving from the bid through to the aftermath or legacy of the event (Clark *et al.*, 2016:88). The organising committee and the host community of a sport event will generally go through three modes or phases during the hosting of an event. Each mode will consist of several phases, as depicted in Figure 2.2:
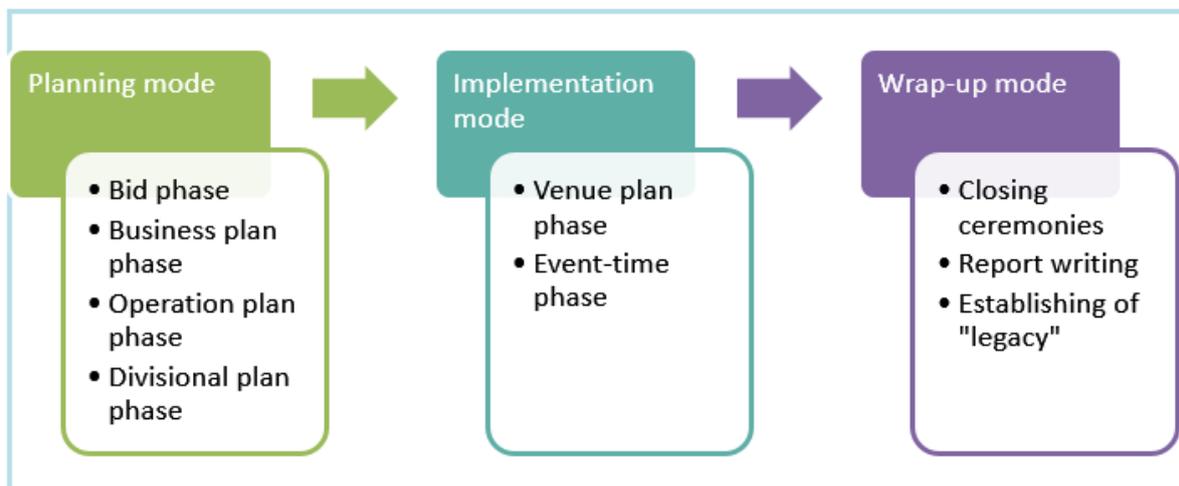
Figure 2.2:   The different phases of a sport event
Source: Author's own interpretation

Each of these modes and phases will be discussed in the next section.

2.4.1   Planning mode

The planning mode often commences with the bid phase, which can last anything from one to three years, depending on the type of event. For example, the planning process for the Olympic Games is arduous and can take several years. The bidding process for the 2024 Games commenced in 2015 with the invitation to bid. The host city winner

(Paris, France) was only announced in 2017. It therefore takes a full two years for the bidding process to be completed. It is interesting to note that the 2024 announcement was a historic moment for the IOC, for not only did they announce the bid winners for the 2024 Olympics, but also for the 2028 Olympics (Los Angeles), which had never been done before (IOC, 2017). Once the winner is announced, they (usually) have almost six years to prepare for the Games (Livingstone, 2016).

In contrast, recurring events have a much shorter timeframe to work with, although they generally do not have to bid for the event each year. Usually a contract is signed for a predetermined amount of years with the host city, allowing them to host the event year after year in the same location as stipulated in the contract. It is not uncommon for these type of events to start planning the next year's event, the day after the current year's event!

Once the bid has been successful, transition occurs where the bidding committee is transformed into the organising committee. A successful transition takes around six to eight months. During this time period, the team leader is elected and the overall strategic plan and organising committee chart are developed. At this point, the business plan phase commences.

The next phase involves the operational plan which highlights the responsibilities to be fulfilled. The operational plan represents an extension of the terms of reference from the business plan and provides more detail whilst keeping a strict eye on the budget (Parent & Smith-Swan, 2013:10).

The divisional plans phase, or work package phase, occurs when the organising committee breaks the operation plan up into workable chunks. The effect on the host community during this phase can be substantial in the sense that displacement and demolitions are often present, especially with the hosting of mega-events where new infrastructure is required. From the organiser's perspective, the community may represent a risk-factor during this stage of the event, as they and local businesses, often provide resistance against the development of new infrastructure (Clark *et al.*, 2016:88).

Research has shown time and time again that the benefits promised to the local community are not realised, especially for mega-events like the Olympics. For example, during the 2012 Olympics in London, 90% of the tourism-orientated

businesses in London reported losses (Boykoff, 2013). This is mainly due to the fact that tourists who would usually visit host cities, such as London, tend to stay away during the year that the Olympics is hosted to avoid the construction works and crowds, resulting in much lower visitor rates (Boykoff, 2013). During the 2012 Olympics, central Londoners experienced major disruptions. Research conducted by the London Chamber of Commerce (2012) found that stores had to change delivery times so that stock deliveries had to be made during the evenings, resulting in shift adjustment of employees, and hotels had to lay down rubber padding to minimise noise pollution for guests.

In contrast to this, recurring smaller-scaled sport events have a much more positive effect on the local community and their businesses. The Cape Town Cycle Tour event is held annually in the Cape Peninsula and only requires road closures for one day. In 2014, the tour's estimated economic impact for the city of Cape Town amounted to R450 million. The estimated economic contribution of the 2018 event was R500 million (Ndlendle, 2018), despite the negative effect of the severe drought on participant numbers (Bryer, 2018).

The Absa Cape Epic, a seven-day mountain bike event also held in the Western Cape, generated R218 million for the local economy in 2016. Smaller, signature events generated R1.3 billion for the province during the previous financial year and attracted 196 600 tourists (Jooste, 2014). In 2018, it was reported that the Cycle Tour, the Absa Cape Epic and the UCI Mountain Bike World Cup made a combined contribution to the Western Cape economy in excess of R1 billion (Bryer, 2018).

Furthermore, the community is generally more supportive of smaller-scale sport events, as the impact on their environment is minimal and the financial gains to be made are more lucrative due to their businesses receiving more direct economic benefits (Kennelly, 2017:884).

As smaller-scale events are more likely to be recurring, an active effort is made to accommodate the local communities. For example, the 2018 Cape Town Cycle Tour incorporated several initiatives to ensure that the drought-stricken region would not be unduly influenced from an influx of visitors taxing water supplies. The event aimed to have a 'zero' water footprint by using greywater, chemical toilets and by omitting the availability of shower facilities (IOL, 2018). Several email notifications were sent out to

participants providing valuable guidelines and advising on how to manage their water consumption during their stay in the host city.

2.4.2 Implementation mode

The second phase of the event is spent in implementation mode. This mode starts with the venuisation of divisional plans into venue plans.

The venue plan phase combines the various divisional plans into each of the venues, which is followed by the committee moving into the actual Games-time phase, which often includes the venuising of members (moving members from headquarters to the actual venue) (Parent & Smith-Swan, 2013:10).

During event time, securitisation becomes an important consideration and may constrain the local community, as often a carefully, sanitised image of the host city is presented to television audiences and event spectators (Clark *et al.*, 2016:88). In numerous cases, pre-event evictions and cleaning operations have been reported where minority groups, such as the homeless, are detained or removed during the event from their usual place of residence, in order to provide a more tourist-friendly version of the city (Clark *et al.*, 2016:88). Security becomes a major concern, for example, for the London Olympics in 2012, security was boosted with the presence of 18 200 military personnel, which was more personnel than those deployed to Afghanistan during that time (Clark *et al.*, 2016:88).

2.4.3 Wrap-up mode

Once the closing ceremonies have been completed, the organising committee enters its third and final mode, the wrap-up mode. During this time, committee members write the final report and manage the event's legacy (Parent & Smith-Swan, 2013:10).

The main economic benefit from the event may be felt in other parts of the city, and often the host community finds that the promised legacy is targeted at affluent incomers and non-residents (Clark *et al.*, 2016:88).

Jobs created by events are often of poor quality and temporary in nature, leading to further frustrations. Infrastructure becomes redundant or so expensive in upkeep that they are generally only allocated to the affluent who can afford to make use of it. This type of development may lead to an increase in property prices, pricing out the local

community and making no contribution towards a permanent legacy from these type of mega-events.

The above discussion represents the theoretical lifecycle of an event, and is just a general guide, as it will differ according to the type of event. It is evident as well that the host community and their perceptions of the event should be managed carefully during the process of hosting an event to avoid negative results and frustrations. These perceptions can be managed through the use of proper marketing techniques, as discussed in the following section.

2.5 MARKETING CONSIDERATIONS FOR SPORT EVENTS

Sport events are gaining notoriety for the increasing cost of hosting them, and as such, there is a need for organisers to ensure a high level of marketing competency in order to guarantee the financial success of the event (Parent & Smith-Swan, 2013:96). Marketing is essential, as it not only ensures that there is awareness and energy surrounding the event, but it also creates an additional, often vital, avenue of external funding through sponsorships. In addition, marketing plays an important role in informing the local community of the event and in generating a positive response towards the event and its activities. Marketing thus helps the event organisers in garnering the support of the local community and can assist in alleviating frustrations and negative perceptions of the event's impact on their way of life.

2.5.1 A broad approach to sport marketing

Sport marketing can occur in two ways: marketing through sport and the marketing of sport. Marketing through sport refers to using sport as a vehicle for the marketing of a non-sport-based product or company, for example, Standard Bank being the title sponsor for the Standard Bank Ironman African Championship. The marketing of sport refers to the practice of marketing as it occurs within a sport organisation. Since the focus of this thesis is sport events, the marketing of sport will be discussed in more detail.

The marketing of sport events is an area that covers a wide variety of practices, and incorporates the theories and concepts of several academic fields of study. The theory on which sport event marketing is based, is a function of the fields of marketing and specifically, sport marketing (Parent & Smith-Swan, 2013:97).

The following all represent key concepts in marketing strategy, which apply to sport event marketing as well (Parent & Smith-Swan, 2013:97):

- Environmental analysis, which includes analyses of both the internal and external environments;

- Situational analysis, which involves the analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats;

- Market segmentation, which refers to how the event should be positioned in relation to the competition;

- Segmentation, which refers to the grouping of consumers based on homogeneous needs and wants;

- Targeting, which involves taking the data gathered during the segmentation process and determining which of the identified segments will be targeted within the event's marketing strategy;

- Positioning can be seen as the last step during which the marketer will decide how they want the selected targets to perceive their product offering versus that offered by competitors; and

- Marketing mix, which involves the traditional four Ps – product, price, place and promotion.

The greatest application of theory in the field of sport event marketing derives from the area of spectator considerations.

2.5.2   Consumer behaviour: spectator and participant considerations

Sport events are predominantly presented in two formats:

- Spectator events where consumers purchase a ticket to attend an event to spectate (often this will be for an event where two teams or individual athletes compete and the consumer attends to watch the game); and

- Participant events where the consumer pays an entry fee to physically participate in the event.

The core product of spectator events pertains to mostly team characteristics (team standings, win/loss record, star players and team history), player performance (skills and strategies) and outcome valence (positive versus negative game outcomes)

(Yoshida, 2017:431). For participant sport events, sport-related attributes are manifested in the physical fitness components, such as sport programmes (the quality and range of such programmes) and physical changes (the improvement in physical skills and abilities) (Yoshida, 2017:431).

The sport encounter or experience consists of three distinct spheres: the sport user, the sport context and the sport organisations (Funk, 2017:152). This is depicted in Figure 2.3 below. The overlapping of these spheres then offers a different experience, as the relationship between the three elements of the sport experience differ.
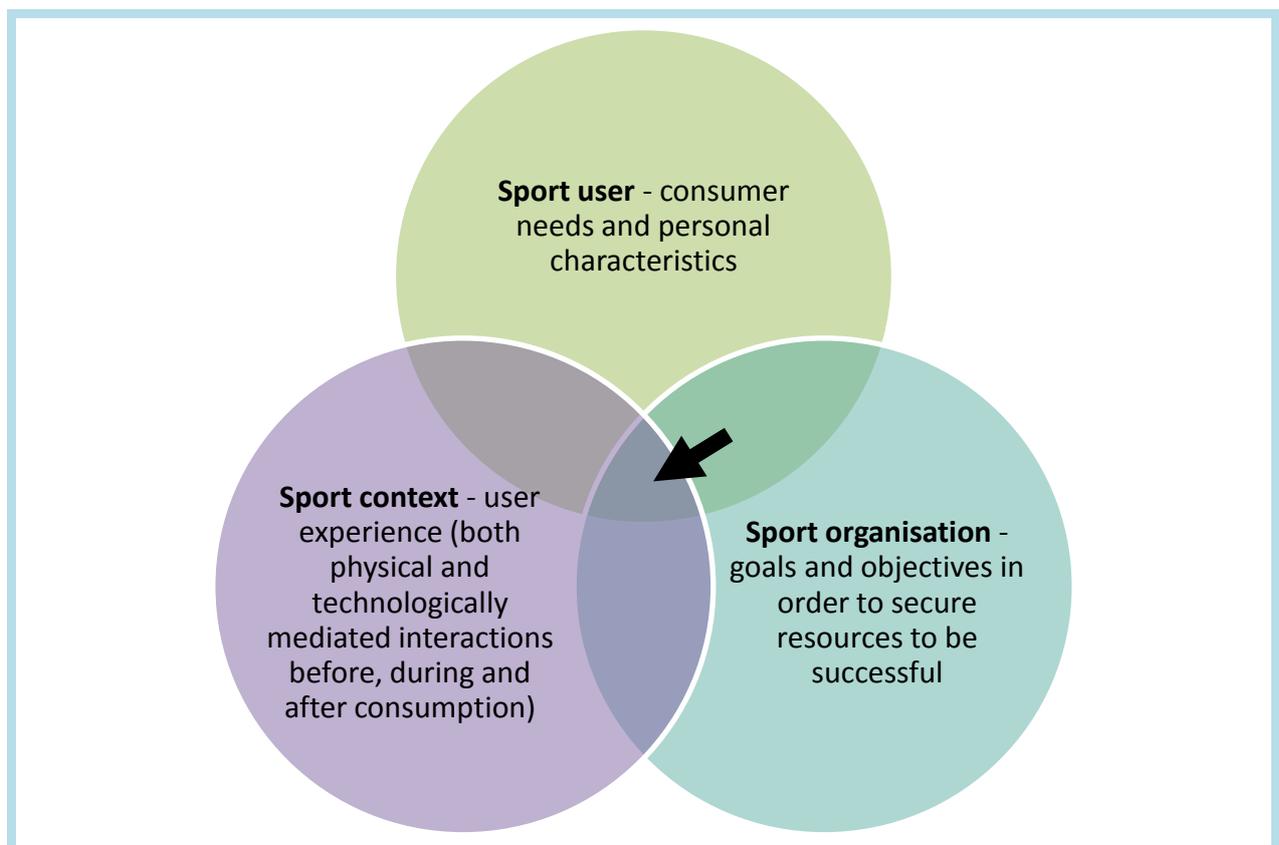
Figure 2.3: **The sport encounter or experience**
Source: Funk (2017:152)

The overlap indicated by the arrow in Figure 2.3 represents the scenario where a sport organisation will deliver a sport experience, such as an organised bike ride that meets the needs of the sport user, while simultaneously generating the resources required by the organisation to be successful (Funk, 2017:152).

The actual sport encounter (defined as the consumers' interaction with a sport competition or performance) then differs between spectator and participant sport events. Spectator sports are seen as vicarious experiences in which the performance

of individual athletes or teams are evaluated or scored in order to determine the winner in an unpredictable manner (Yoshida, 2017:431). Participants sport events are considered to be a direct experience with the sport competition or performance.

Consumer characteristics have been found to influence the assessment of the sport experience, as the sport interaction is evaluated and experienced differently by various sport consumers (Funk, 2017:153). Furthermore, this distinction between participant and spectator becomes important, as customer involvement in the service process has been found to influence the satisfaction-loyalty relationship (Ahrholdt, Gudergan & Ringle, 2017:439). In addition, the sport experience is a dynamic process that generates emotional and physical responses which are able to influence the satisfaction and future behaviour of consumers (Funk, 2017:153). Loyalty then becomes a pre-cursor to brand equity and also determines the repurchase intention. Direct experiences are more involved in the service setting of a sport event than the vicarious experiences of spectators, and as such, it is expected that the consumer will play a bigger role in the creation of value and, ultimately, brand equity.

It is also important to note that there is a vast difference in the motivation for sport consumption between the spectator and the participant. Spectators at sport events tend to purchase tickets to a source of entertainment, much like going to the cinema or a theatre. In addition, sport events also provide an 'escape' to spectators, and provide social interaction (Woratschek *et al*, 2017:4). It has been noted that some spectators exhibit immense loyalty towards their team, which greatly influences their decision to purchase tickets (Woratschek *et al*, 2017:4).

However, for the majority of active participants, personal achievement and the desire to compete in the event provides the motivation for purchasing an event entry (Kennelly, 2017:884). Given the centrality of the activity in the participants' lives, the happiness of the experiential purchase of the entry fee is a powerful motivator. In short, consumers experience more overall happiness with experiential purchases than material purchases, and are thus motivated to make a purchase as they know or expect that the purchase will lead to overall happiness (Theodorakis *et al.*, 2015:88). It is interesting to note that Theodorakis *et al.*'s (2015:88) research on mass participation in running events found that satisfaction with the event enhanced the participants' commitment to running.

In addition, sport participation provides a compelling reason for participative sport consumers to travel, as they can often experience unique terrains or move through terrains in a unique manner, which would not have been accessible to them without sport participation (Sheenan in Kennelly, 2017:884). Indeed, it has been found that some participants develop ongoing 'event travel careers' where they travel further afield seeking prestigious, more challenging, better organised, or more novel events in which to participate (Kennelly, 2017:885).

It is also evident that, for participants, personal performance is an important consideration. It has been found that there is a positive relationship between goal achievement and event satisfaction (Du, Jordan & Funk, 2015:689). It should also be noted that due to the nature of these participative events, the 'investment' required from the consumer goes much further than just the cost associated with attending the event and the time commitment required to participate. Participants are required to be physiologically competent to complete the event as well. Therefore, the role of personal performance in event satisfaction most likely depends on the interaction between internal and external factors (Du *et al.*, 2015:690). Internal factors include the beliefs and feelings participants hold in relation to personal traits, whereas external factors contain various tangible and intangible components related to the service components and extensions provided by event organisers (Du *et al.*, 2015:690).

Although service quality and satisfaction is a complex construct to measure, the evaluation of these components, given the spectator experience, is not nearly as complicated as it is for participants, where the event cannot control many of the variables involved in the participants' evaluation of satisfaction and service quality. As such, it may be recommended that event organisers create a structure and processes that support participants so that they are more likely to achieve predetermined performance expectations (Du *et al.*, 2015:699). A good example is the SwimSmart initiative introduced by Ironman in 2013. It is a well-established fact that the swim portion of the triathlon is the most daunting part of the race for most athletes. To reduce anxiety and improve athlete satisfaction, Ironman made several modifications to the swim portion of their races. Most notably, instead of mass starts, athletes are expected to self-seed themselves according to expected finishing times, and are then released in batches of ten athletes every ten seconds. This approach was piloted at the 2013 Ironman Coeur d'Alene where swimmers saw an average of 3% to 4% improvement

on their swim splits (which translated to roughly 2,5 minutes). Younger athletes reported improvements of up to 6%, taking off nearly five minutes off their overall swim times (Runtri, 2013).

In summary, sport consumption from a participative viewpoint largely depends on underlying motivations, such as behavioural variables (Janssen, Scheerder, Thibault, Brombacher & Vos, 2017:3). Sport-related variables such as training frequency, complexity of participation, performance level, expenditure, intensity of training, time of practice, event participation, years of practice and organisations context (individual or group-based participation) have all been used in previous research on triathlons, and have proved to be better predictors of sport consumption than demographic variables for male athletes (Janssen *et al.*, 2017:3). As such, some of these variables were chosen to compile the consumer profile of female triathletes for this study, which is discussed in detail in Chapter 6. Other motives that can determine sport participation and expenditure include socio-demographics and psychographic variables which cover aspects such as the athlete's state of mind, personality and beliefs (Janssen *et al.*, 2017:3). As these motivations are not easily explained within the field of business management, they were excluded from this study.

Another important consideration for event managers, in terms of the consumer behaviour of participative athletes, is the expectations of athletes (Kaplanidou & Gibson, 2010:174). Serious athletes who devote significant amounts of time and effort to their sport are more likely to have higher expectations regarding facilities, officiating, and the general level of efficiency and competence exhibited by event managers (Kaplanidou & Gibson, 2010:174).

Given the cost, time and effort required to travel to participate in an event, it is to be expected that the basic requirements of a good event, as stipulated above, are probably magnified for experienced athletes. Indeed, it has been found that organisational aspects of events were of particular importance to experienced athletes, and even more so, if they had to travel to the event (Kaplanidou & Gibson, 2010:175). Participants noted a distinct dislike for disorganisation and lack of signage, which not only affected negative attitudes towards the event, but also towards event participation. Thus, to create satisfaction for serious athletes, event managers should focus on providing sufficient signage, competent officiating, punctuality in starting

times, and an overall sense of efficiency as this is what the athletes are expecting (Kaplanidou & Gibson, 2010:175).

Much research has been done on spectator considerations and it forms an integral part of many consumer behaviour studies. It is important to note that similar research on sport participants is lacking and that more research should be done to determine what their considerations are.

It is evident from the above discussion that consumers who participate in events, instead of only spectating, have different needs and desire a different product offering from sport events. The gap in the research then forms a large portion of this thesis. The descriptive findings presented in Chapter 6 then focus specifically on the racing experiences of female participants in branded and non-branded triathlon events. Within the arena of consumer behaviour, it is also important to address the issue of the female athlete, the unit of measurement for this study.

2.5.3 Consumer behaviour: the female athlete

Traditionally, women have been underrepresented in sport. For example, the participation numbers of ultra-triathlons from 1985 to 2010 show that a total of 3 579 athletes participated in events, of which 92,1% were men and 7,9% were women (Lenherr *et al.*, 2012:60). It is interesting to note that there were more female than male participants from Africa. No female athletes came from Australia or South America, and it was evident that the majority of the participants were Europeans (76.7%). This can be ascribed to the fact that 55% of the races were held in Europe which would make these events more accessible for European athletes (Lenherr *et al.*, 2012:61).

However, despite the discrepancy between male and female participation, it is evident that the number of females competing in triathlon has increased progressively (Lepers, Knechtle & Stapley, 2013:852). These participation numbers show an interesting trend as they appear to decrease as the distance of triathlon races increase: females accounted for 26% of short distance events, 19% of half-Ironman events, 13% of full-Ironman events, and less than 10% of ultra-triathlons in 2010 (Lepers *et al.*, 2013:852). Female participation in Ironman triathlons is slightly lower than that which has been reported for more traditional endurance events, such as marathons, but is still higher than those of ultra-endurance events (Lepers *et al.*, 2013:852).

Although women's sport has not always received the same level of attention as men's sport, it is in the spotlight now, more than ever. Female athletes are making history with equal pay agreements, comeback victories, attracting record audiences to their games, and securing lucrative media deals (Nielsen, 2018). It is evident that the rate of change in women's sport is one of the most exciting trends in the sport industry, and right holders, brands and the media are responding to this change in the industry by developing new commercial propositions and engaging fans in a different way (Nielson, 2018:4).

Tennis and golf were groundbreakers in the professionalisation and commercialisation of women's sport, and soccer has followed by increasing the number of professional leagues around the world. Trek Cycling is the latest organisation to commit to a professional women's road team, while in Australia, the Women's Australian Rules Football League attracts large audiences, stand-alone sponsorships and broadcast revenue (Nielsen, 2018:4). Equal-pay agreements are gaining momentum, with Norway and New Zealand paying the female national football team the same as the male team. Rugby Australia has committed to follow suit for the Sevens teams (Nielsen, 2018:4).

It is thus evident that the commercial value of women's sport is an untapped market, and a fundamental part of maximising this new commercial opportunity is to understand the consumers who engage with events, teams and leagues (Nielsen, 2018:5). Research conducted by Nielsen in 2018 across eight global markets found that 84% of general sport fans (49% female and 51% male) have an interest in women's sport. Interest levels in women's versions of specific sport types were higher when men and women's event were staged together. For triathlon, specifically, 81% of the respondents indicated that they were interested in watching women's triathlon events.

The consumption of women's sport has increased significantly during the past few years. Indeed, the BBC has noted that a catalyst moment for the sport broadcasting division was the Rio 2016 Olympics when the ten o'clock news was delayed to broadcast the women's hockey gold medal match between Great Britain and the Netherlands. Before London 2012, it was unimaginable that the news on BBC would be delayed for sport, especially a women's event. Great Britain won the game, and with it Olympic gold (Nielsen, 2018:11).

The Nielsen (2018:21) study also found that a fifth of the population is more influenced by the sponsors of women's sport than men's, for example, three-quarters of the respondents interested in women's sport could name at least one brand involved in women's sport, and 63% of the people surveyed believed that brands should invest in both women's and men's sport. Women's sport is seen as more progressive, less money-driven, more family-orientated and cleaner than men's sport, as well as more inspiring, indicating that brands could possibly position themselves more favourably by sponsoring women's sport. In addition, 35% of respondents indicated that women's sport is skilled (40% for men), 32% that it is of high quality (42% for men), and 46% that it is competitive (63% for men).

Historically, women were allowed to participate in the Olympics for the first time in 1900 in Paris, and only 22 athletes participated, representing a meagre 1.8% of the participants. However, women's participation in the Summer Olympics has proportionally increased since 1948, and 45% of the competitors at the 2016 Rio Games were female, nearly double the proportion of women who competed in the 1984 Los Angeles Games (Nielsen, 2018:26). In 1991, the IOC passed the ruling that all new Olympic sport had to include both women's and men's events. Since then, the percentage of women participating in the Olympics has increased from around 26% in 1988 to 45% in 2016 (Nielsen, 2018:26). The steady growth in female participation in the Olympics is depicted in Figure 2.4 on the next page.

It is evident that as women's sport leagues and teams are being established, and strive to attract fans and generate commercial momentum at an elite level, the promotion and increased participation of women in sport at grassroots level is becoming necessary (Nielsen 2018:29). Brands can then be encouraged to engage with all aspects of sport and to play an integral part in sport development. However, wider societal issues around diversity and equality should be considered when investing in women's sport.
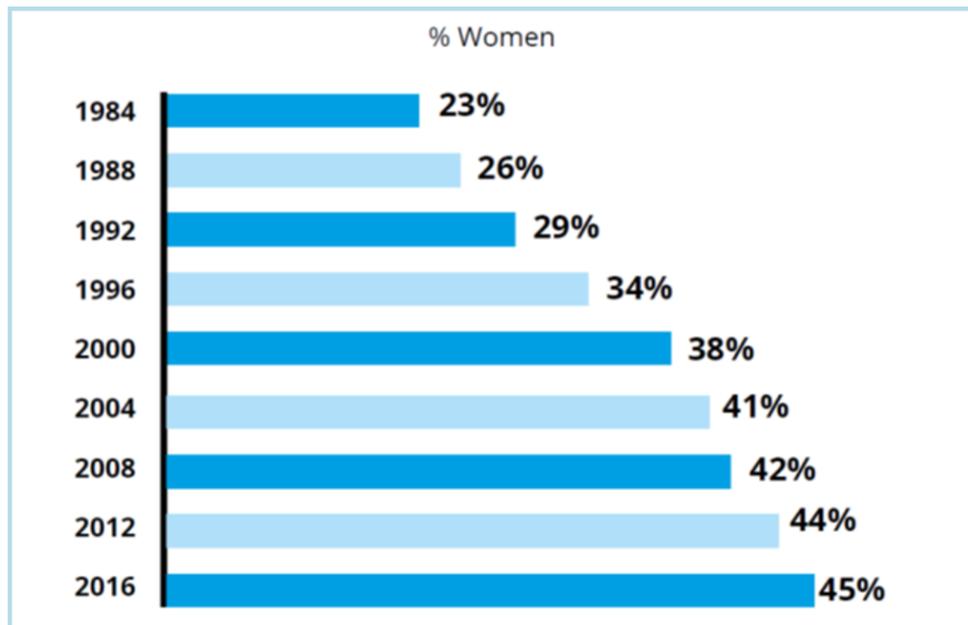
Figure 2.4:   Participants at Summer Olympics 1984 – 2016

Source: Nielsen (2018:27)

Although the rise in female elite sport participation is evident from the number of professional women's leagues that have emerged and the growth in the number of elite female athletes, the mass participation of women in sport is still slow (Main, Lowe, Schoenberg, Gastin & Walsh, 2018:81). In addition, women remain underrepresented as coaches, administrators and officials at all levels of competition (Main *et al.*, 2018:82). Women and girls face a range of participation barriers which can be addressed through policy and programming intervention. For example, the Sport England 'This girl can' campaign, British Cycling's 'Breeze Programme' and Recreation Victoria's 'Change our game' campaigns are all examples of movements encouraging mass female participation in sport (Main *et al.*, 2018:81).

It is interesting to note that the active wear industry has reported a significant growth with regard to women's sport apparel. In 2014, nearly half of the US active wear market's sales could be contributed to female consumers which totalled $15.1 billion. On a global scale, the market is expected to outgrow its male counterpart at 5.7% per annum from 2015 to 2020 (Zhou, Hanlon, Robertson, Spaaij, Westerbeek, Hossack & Funk, 2018:403). Not only are brands, which have traditionally focused on men's apparel, developing new lines of women's garments, but new brands have entered the market, signalling that women have emerged as an important and lucrative segment on a global scale (Zhou *et al.*, 2018:403).

The active wear industry has found that, to succeed in such a competitive market, brand managers must focus marketing strategies that specifically address female consumers' needs (Zhou *et al.*, 2018:403). Female consumers consider a wide range of factors when purchasing sport garments (Zhou *et al.*, 2018:412), and similarly, it can be expected that female consumers would consider a wide range of factors when deciding on an event to participate in.

It is thus expected that the branding of sport events will influence the purchasing decision of female athletes when choosing an event in which to participate. Although this topic will be addressed in considerable detail in Chapters 3 and 4, a brief discussion is warranted under the marketing of sport events.

2.6   CREATING A SPORT EVENT BRAND

Event organisers and marketers aiming to build an effective brand for sport events need to be familiar with the brand-creation process (Parent *et al.*, 2012:146). By creating a 'good' brand, organisers are able to present a desirable event in the eyes of stakeholders, thereby allowing the organisers to make use of the stakeholders' resources. In addition to this, brands add additional value, enable the event to distinguish itself from competitors, and establish a competitive advantage (Parent *et al.*, 2012:146).

However, brand building for events is challenging, as the spectators (or participants) are not left with a physical product after watching an event (or participating in one), but are rather left with perceptions and memories (Parent *et al.*, 2012:146). This means that from an organisational perspective, organisers should continuously focus on the interaction the brand has with the identity of the consumers and the organisation. The internal processes, including the organisation's mission, vision and values, then become increasingly important in the process of creating a 'good' brand.

The theoretical framework for the creation of sport event brands consists of the following four skills (Parent *et al.*, 2012:154);

- Political/network skills: this skill set includes building and managing relationships with different internal (paid staff and volunteers) and external stakeholders (government/political and others), negotiating with stakeholders and managing

their diverse needs. Proper networking is crucial, as is having a network within the host region.

- Business/management skills: includes typical strategic planning, human resource management, financial and communication skills.

- Sport/event skills: includes technical sport skills and event hosting technical skills.

- Value-based actions: includes leadership commitment[3] and passion, and the embeddedness of the organising committee's values in the event and their employees.

From the above, it is evident that stakeholders' impressions affect the identity of the event, and induced event experience is a referent for the brand-creation process (Parent *et al.*, 2012:154). This is crucial for recurring events, as unlike once-off events where the brand must be created before event execution, the brand can be fine-tuned after event execution and before the next event occurs.

Three aspects have been identified that can also affect the brand-creation process for recurring events: core values, induced event-experience elements, and institutional affiliations (to be discussed in more detail later in this section).

The new brand-creation model developed by Parent *et al.* (2012) can best be illustrated by Figure 2.5 (on the next page).

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[3] Leadership was also proposed by Baalbaki (2012) as a dimension of the new consumer-based, consumer-perceived brand equity model.
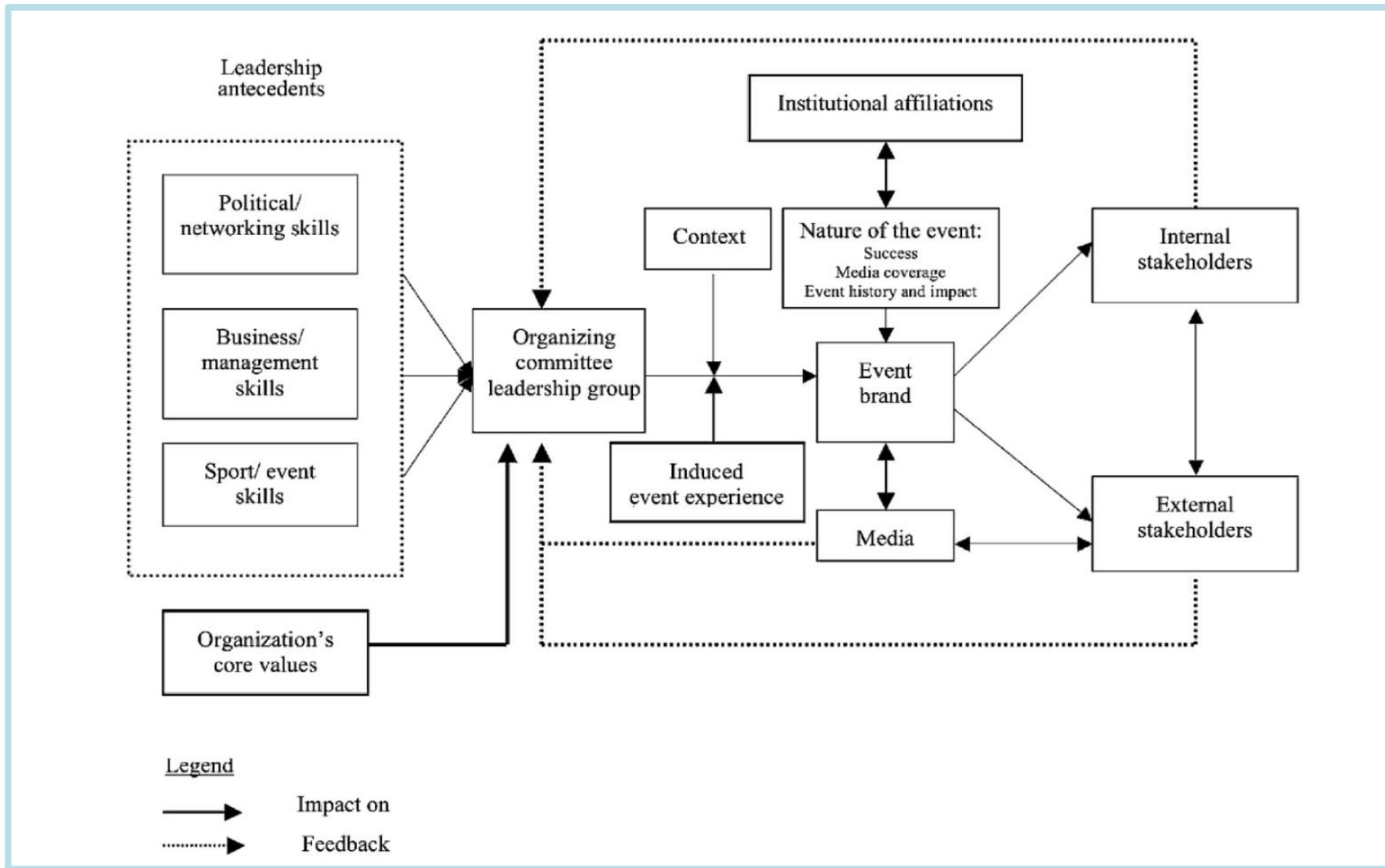
Figure 2.5: Brand-creation model for international recurring sport events

Source: Parent *et al.* (2012:155)

As is evident from the figure above, Parent *et al.'s* brand-creation model for international recurring sport events is complex and involves various elements. These elements will be briefly discussed below (Parent *et al.*, 2012:150), but also form part of the discussion in Section 2.7 of this chapter.

2.6.1   Leadership antecedents and value-based actions

The organisation's core values represent an important element, which together with the three skill sets presented as leadership antecedents as per the established model (political/networking skills, business/management skills and sport/event skills), affect both the organising committee and the event brand.

Other researchers have indicated that there is a connection between organisational values/culture and identity, stakeholders' perceptions, core values, and brand-building and management (Parent *et al.*, 2012:154). Leadership is thus an important aspect of the brand-creation of an event and as such, will also be explored as an antecedent of brand equity in this research.

2.6.2   Induced event experiences and context

The findings of Parent *et al.* (2012) highlighted the fact that individuals' experiences during an event determine their impressions of the overall event. The elements of the induced event experiences, together with the context, have a moderating effect on the organiser's transmitted images, and ultimately, on the final event identity and brand (Parent *et al.*, 2012:155). This study specifically focused on the racing experiences of female triathletes at branded and non-branded triathlon events. The descriptive findings presented in Chapter 6 provide valuable insight into the induced event experiences of these participants. In addition, many of the items contributing to their experiences where found to be antecedents to brand equity for RCPA sport events, as set out in Chapter 7 of this thesis.

In addition, research conducted by Kaplanidou and Gibson (2010:172) determined that satisfaction with the event was one of three direct or indirect predictors of intention to participate in the event again. Simply having participated in the event did not accurately predict the future intention of participants to return. Only for those respondents who had had a positive experience at the event, could such an accurate prediction be made. Event satisfaction was thus found to be a significant predictor of

future intention to take part in the following year's event. This result is more pronounced when events return to the same destination. A similar study conducted by Kaplanidou and Vogt (2007), found that for a non-recurring bicycle event, satisfaction did not play such an important role.

2.6.3 Institutional affiliations, nature of the event and the media

The organising committee's connection with the overarching organisation is critical in the branding process, and both team and event brands are shaped on the basis of their institutional environment, which includes the legal framework within which they must operate (Parent *et al.*, 2012:154). In addition, national sport organisations are central to the brand-creation process because of the authority they possess, as well as their mode of operation.

The success of athletes is vital for the creation of the event brand. This is true for both spectator- and participative sport (Parent *et al.*, 2012:154). In addition, if success is achieved, an increase in national television exposure can be expected, which in turn assists in creating the event brand. Participative sports are often more successful in attracting consumers to their events, even if they occur at a distance from the participant's home, than spectator sport. Here geographical location will rather refer to the scenic aspects of the course, which can be helpful in creating a brand (Kennelly, 2017:884). For example, both the Two Oceans Marathon and the Cape Argus Cycle Tour include the spectacular Chapman's Peak in their routes and have successfully created an international brand based on their geographical location. As with all successful brands, time plays a crucial role. The longer an event has been hosted, the stronger the event brand will become, as it becomes part of the city's environment and yearly happenings, building up a large spectator/participant base that is familiar with the event and knows what to expect (Parent *et al.*, 2012:155).

Given the above discussions on sport event marketing and the particulars of consumer behaviour within this industry, as well as the unique brand-creation process, it is evident that sport events are inherently different from other sport product offerings. These unique characteristics seem to be emphasised even more when events become recurring and participative. The next section will conclude this chapter with a discussion of the unique considerations which must be taken into account when dealing with RCPA sport events.

2.7 UNIQUE CONSIDERATIONS FOR RCPA SPORT EVENTS

This section will discuss the unique considerations for RCPA sport events, and will look at the event environment, collaboration with the local community and shared infrastructure, as well as the human element involved in these types of events.

2.7.1 The event environment

The physical environment within which RCPA events occur is certainly one of the biggest and most unique considerations for RCPA sport events, as the focus is rarely on professionally maintained sport fields and stadiums, but rather on communal roads and public spaces. Mass participation events, such as triathlons, rarely have a space they can call their 'own'. The process of having to operate and put on events in facilities not directly owned by the event organisers presents not only unique challenges, but interesting opportunities for value creation.

The section below will discuss some of the aspects pertinent to the RCPA event environment.

2.7.1.1 Safety considerations

With the increase in popularity and participation in mass endurance events that has occurred in recent years, it has become evident that the safety of participants should be at the forefront of the race director's operational strategies (Chiampas & Goyal, 2015:61). Athletes, trainers and health care providers have noted that both participant outcomes and safety are of the utmost importance when competing in sport events (Chiampas & Goyal, 2015:61). Research by Buning and Gibson (2016:187) found that events with the reputation of being safe were preferred by participants when travelling more than four hours to participate. Further results also indicated that when athletes were travelling with non-participating supporters, the evaluation of a destination as safe (including the risk of crime, food, health, terrorism and natural disasters) becomes important to travel decision-making (Buning & Gibson, 2016:187).

The perception of risk has received considerable consideration from event organisers of mega-sport events, and this is filtering down to participative sport events, especially after the bombing of the 2013 Boston Marathon (Buning & Gibson, 2016:187).

Safety, within the context of participative sport events, has a dual nature: the provision of medical care to participants, while maintaining public safety (Chiampas & Goyal, 2015:61).

The increasing number of participants is placing considerable strain on the streets, waterways and medical facilities of small and large cities (Chiampas & Goyal, 2015:62). Event organisers must be prepared for expected and unexpected incidents when drawing up the operational plans for their events. It is crucial for events to prepare, manage and respond to the unique medical and safety conditions associated with mass sporting events, as it is vital to participant outcomes and the mitigation of public safety incidents (Chiampas & Goyal, 2015:61).

When assessing the safety of a sporting event, certain circumstances should be considered. These include the type of endurance event (it is evident that a marathon will have different safety precautions than an open-water swimming event), participant make-up, time of year and time of day. Research has shown that 2% of participants might seek medical help under normal conditions, however, environmental impacts, such as heat or cold, will impact medical encounters upwards to 10% of participants (Chiampas & Goyal, 2015:62).

It should be noted that the local police, as well as fire personnel and medical staff, form a valuable part of the event's structure, and play not only a vital role in keeping participants and the public safe, but are also additional modes of streaming necessary information on race day (Chiampas & Goyal, 2015:67).

2.7.1.2 Route layout

Participative sport events, such as triathlons, are not usually held inside a building or stadium. The event location and route often form an integral part of the event offering (Kennelly, 2017:890). Participative events may use urban spaces, such as parks or city roads, National Parks, and public places, such as the ocean or lakes, privately managed estates or military training land (Kennelly, 2017:890).

These type of events rarely make use of stadiums as spectator events do. Stadiums are predominantly used as race venues for the collection of race packets or can be used for transition areas, rather than for hosting the actual competition. In some instances, stadiums are used as either the starting point for a race or the finishing point (for example, the Cape Argus Cycle Tour ends at the Cape Town Stadium).

As such, the route layout and the physical environment within which the event will occur is an important consideration for event organisers, as well as participants. Research conducted by Buning and Gibson (2016:186) found that, when participants were travelling solo or with other athletes, a challenging and/or scenic course was one of the event-related preferences which was rated as important. This is consistent with other studies on 'pure' sport tourists, where the sport is the main reason for taking the trip. Sport-related criteria become an important determinant for the satisfaction of the athlete and the intent to participate again (Buning & Gibson, 2016:186).

Research on mass running events indicates that the geographical backdrop of events, including unique starting lines and the inclusion of iconic landmarks in the route, contributed significantly to the "theatrical visual choreography" of such events (Kennelly, 2017:885). The research conducted by Buning and Gibson (2016) confirmed that the only destination preference item that was universally important to participants, regardless of travel party composition (whether travelling alone, with other athletes, or with non-athletes) when traveling to participate, was scenery. Of course, the creation of visually appealing race routes requires substantial planning and co-ordination between sport, event and tourism authorities in order to cater effectively to athletes and their supporters (Kennelly, 2017:885).

Challenging courses are likely to act as motivators for participation in and travel to a specific event (Buning & Gibson, 2016:187). In addition, research by Kennelly (2017:890) has shown that event organisers can successfully use location to attract participants to their events. This can be achieved by including attractive destination imagery and descriptions in event promotions, choosing race routes that showcase the event location positively and emphasising unique or desirable route attributes which would appeal to the particular participants of the relevant sport (Kennelly, 2017:890).

Event location thus often becomes central to the marketing message and is used in both text, as well as images and video clips to promote the event. Appeal for an event can be created by providing access to locations which are not usually accessible to the public; and this provides a compelling reason to purchase for many athletes seeking more unique experiences (Kennelly, 2017:885).

2.7.1.3   *Technology within the event industry*

Technology has changed the way the sport industry functions and exists. When prompted about the future direction of sport, a panel consisting of 28 industry experts identified seven ways in which sport consumers could be influenced by changes in the sport industry over the next ten years (Funk, 2017:149). The most frequently mentioned item was technology. Panel members mentioned the following:

- The market will continue to be diversified, due to the media outlets, content and sources.

- A noted increase in e-sport is expected. This growth in e-sport will redefine the sport industry as it changes the very notion of sport as it is traditionally perceived.

- Significant growth in the mediated consumption of sport is expected.

- Technology will continue to be used to improve participants' and fans' experiences.

- Sport consumption will occur through other mediums, such as television and the internet, which is already challenging the value proposition of attending live events.

- Sport will be challenged tremendously by a generation of new consumers whose primary interest will not be to follow sport through mainstream television subscriptions.

As can be seen from the above examples, technology is expected to play an increasing role in the provision of sport products. Currently, it is being used extensively to manage sport events. Technology is often used to improve the sport experience. For example, during endurance events with mass participants and spectators spread across a wide area, it can be extremely difficult to obtain accurate, real-time data (Chiampas & Goyal, 2015:66). Events can implement innovative technology tools to assist with the flow of clear and timely information, which not only assists in the management of the event, but which can contribute to the participants' and spectators' experiences.

One of the biggest tools in this regard is having a participant tracking system. The system allows all stakeholders (including athlete supporters) to monitor the health of athletes by providing information on the number of athletes that are on-course, have been checked into medical facilities, or who have withdrawn from the event.

Technology is deployed on race day to assist in the communication efforts with, not only members of the event team and athletes, but also with spectators and the wider

community (Chiampas & Goyal, 2015:67). Information communication technologies have the potential to facilitate more efficient communication systems to a large audience in real time and is often integrated with mobile technology. Events are making use of voice communication, short messaging systems (SMSs) and social networking to communicate with stakeholders, including spectators, such as family and friends of the participating athletes. For example, Ironman South Africa offers a tracking service whereby athletes can be tracked during race day; funds collected through this service are donated to the Ironman For the Kidz organisation.

By collecting the necessary contact information in advance, the capability to message as needed via ICT can be easily facilitated (Chiampas & Goyal, 2015:67). For example, when the 2017 Cape Cycle Tour was cancelled due to strong winds, participants received SMS notification as soon as event organisers made the decision. In addition, social media was used to notify nearly 35 000 participants within a short span of time of the event's cancellation. Email and social networking sites may also be used prior to the event for updates and education purposes (Chiampas & Goyal, 2015:67).

The discussion above provides a brief picture of how technology can be used to improve the experiences of both participants and spectators at sport events. As endurance events continue to draw athletes seeking newer and greater challenges, best practice will be utilising innovative technologies for the unique conditions associated with these types of events (Chiampas & Goyal, 2015:67).

2.7.1.4   *Environmental management of sport events*

The issue of climate change due to human activity is a pressing concern which needs to be addressed by sport organisations, so that the environmental harm caused by sport events can be mitigated (Dolf & Teehan, 2015:244). Sport events are notorious for their large carbon footprints and gross consumption of natural resources. They can become 'ecological nightmares' given the large amount of single-use plastics they consume; for example, the London Marathon uses approximately 750 000 bottles of water, equating seven tonnes of waste (Gabbatiss, 2018).

Sport events can potentially impact the local ecosystem and, in addition, make use of irreplaceable natural resources. In addition to the environmental impact of sport, the

effects of events in terms of social impacts, such as noise and air pollution on the existing population, have also become a main area of debate.

Sport can be a contributor to environmental degradation, as well as be directly impacted by the effects of environmental degradation, for example, winter sport is suffering from shorter snow seasons due to global warming, which then leads to a greater energy expenditure in order to create artificial snow (Dolf & Teehan, 2015:245). Air pollution levels were of great concern during the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games, as it threatened the health of the participating athletes as well as the spectators.

Several Ironman races had to be either shortened, cancelled or moved during 2018 as a result of environmental factors: Ironman Hamburg cancelled the swim due to high algae levels caused by a heatwave; Ironman Chattanooga cancelled the swim due to floods; Ironman Taupo 70.3 cancelled the swim due to high levels of algae; Ironman Santa Rosa 70.3 cancelled the swim due to fog; Ironman UK shortened the bike leg due to fires; Ironman North Carolina 70.3 was cancelled due to hurricane damage; and Ironman Florida was moved to a new location less than three weeks before race day due to hurricane damage.

During the Rio Olympics, athletes were warned against swallowing ocean water while participating in the watersport events. The first victim of Rio's dangerous waters was sailor, Evi van Ecker, a bronze winner from the 2012 Olympics. Although she was considered a strong podium contender, the serious gastrointestinal infection she reportedly picked up from training in Rio a month prior, resulted in poor performance. Although she managed to qualify for the medal race, she obtained only a sixth position, out of a field of 10 athletes (The Telegraph, 2016).

The globalisation of sport has led to an increase in participant travel to events which contribute to the environmental impacts of sport events. For example, during the 2010 Soccer World Cup held in South Africa, a study showed that 2,8 million tonnes of CO_2 was attributed to travel, representing 86% of the event's total reported carbon footprint. The majority of this travel component could be attributed to international air travel by spectators (Dolf & Teehan, 2015:246).

The 'greening' of the sport industry is, however, making big improvements, and zero-waste techniques are becoming popular at sport events, specifically. In this sense,

events strive for sustainability by adopting water conservation efforts, energy reduction initiatives, recycling programmes and curbing the waste of unused food items after events (Hermes, 2017). For example, the first plastic-free triathlon, the Croyde Ocean Triathlon in the UK, was held in 2018. They did this by avoiding single-use plastic at all costs: caterers were not allowed to use any plastic for food items, prizes and signage were plastic-free and plastic bags were banned from the transition area (Gabbatiss, 2018). In addition, athletes were not allowed to race with energy gel sachets and were instead provided with flapjacks and protein balls. The drink stations used compostable paper cups instead of plastic cups and sachets.

Ironman Boulder (in the US) was the first triathlon to be awarded the 'Evergreen' certification from the Council for Responsible Sport in 2016 (Mavis, 2017). In 2016, the race diverted 80% of its waste from landfills, donated 5 621 pounds (2 550 kilograms) of unused, perishable food to a community food share scheme, eliminated the use of on-course sponges, which prevented the run-off of 400 gallons (1 514 litres) of water, and coordinated with a local company to minimise race weekend vehicle use (Mavis, 2017).

Events are embracing the green culture, as it not only leads to lower operations costs, but has proven to be an extremely successful public relations opportunity (Hermes, 2017). It is evident that there is a wider trend within the sporting community to acknowledge the harm events can cause the environment (Gabbatiss, 2018). For example, in South Africa, the Ironman branded triathlon events have acknowledged the sensitive, ecological environments in which their races are conducted, and in response, have issued a disqualification penalty for any athlete found littering. Both mass participation sport events and spectator sport events are looking to reduce their impact on the environment (Gabbatiss, 2018).

Despite the apparent negative environmental impact that sport events can have, many researchers are postulating that events should be investigated as an opportunity to leverage wider environmental changes, as they are highly visible platforms that seem to have the ability to stimulate action (Dolf & Teehan, 2015:245). Furthermore, many sport managers are starting to accept the responsibility for climate change issues by aiming to improve the environmental sustainability of events, and are incorporating this message into stakeholder communications (Dolf & Teehan, 2015:245). Good examples of this are the low-carbon commitments made by the London 2012 Olympic

and Paralympic Games, and programmes such as the 'Stash your trash' initiative used at, amongst others, the Cape Town Cycle Tour.

The brand equity scale developed by Baalbaki (2012) indicates that in the measurement of brand equity from a consumer-perceived perspective, sustainability and environmental friendliness are starting to play a crucial role in brand equity, and should be considered when measuring brand equity. It, however, remains an open question if sustainability will have an effect on the brand equity of sport events when measured from the consumer's point of view. This study will aim to investigate the importance of sustainability when it comes to the brand equity of RCPA sport events.

The next section on the unique considerations for participative sport events will discuss the collaboration required with various local stakeholders and the communal infrastructure required by RCPA sport event.

2.7.2 Collaboration with the community and communal infrastructure

As highlighted in the discussion above, participative sport events rarely possess their own infrastructure. As such, relationships with the local community become crucial, as these type of events often cannot function without assistance from the local community and the use of communal infrastructure.

2.7.2.1 Collaboration with the community and other stakeholders

In order for a sport event to be successful and of a high quality, it is necessary to have collaborations amongst different event-related organisations (Werner, Dickson & Hyde, 2016:1). A variety of different organisations will be involved in the successful presentation of any event, and it will encompass a multitude of industries and sectors, including events, sport, tourism and the public sector.

Collaboration occurs when "a group of autonomous stakeholders of a problem domain engage in an interactive process using shared rules, norms and structures to act or decide on issues related to that domain" (Wood & Gray in Werner *et al.*, 2016:2). It is therefore an important element within the sport event management world to ensure proper collaboration between the different entities which are required to host a successful event. In fact, it is considered that the key success factor for the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games was the strong partnership and cooperation among the public

and private sector organisations involved in the hosting of the Games (Werner *et al.*, 2016:1).

It is imperative that event managers create collaborative capacity (namely, the conditions required for coalitions, partnerships or networks to work together towards common goals in order to create sustainable changes) during the planning, execution and wrap-up of a sport event, as it can be seen as a competitive advantage (Werner *et al.*, 2016:1). Such a collaborative network of relationships cannot be bought or copied and must be created from scratch, hence, making this network of relationships extremely hard to imitate and substitute by competitors. By building collaborative capacity, organisations should benefit from cost-savings by sharing knowledge of best-practice, through better decision-making by obtaining information from partners, and improved innovation through the exchange of ideas (Werner *et al.*, 2016:2).

The engagement in inter-organisational relationships with partners, local authorities, government agencies and the media is critical for modern sport events, given the high levels of media scrutiny, and the fast-changing environment in which organisations operate (Werner *et al.*, 2016:2). By participating in such relationships, event organisers are able to minimise uncertainty, create opportunities for new markets, share financial risk, and acquire skills or expertise that they might not currently possess. Collaboration between a diverse group of organisations is usually broad and complex, but can be managed by focusing on coordination, commitment, trust, communication quality, and joint participation in planning, decision-making and problem-solving. Event collaboration usually makes extensive use of stakeholder analyses, and prefers to build on existing relationships (Werner *et al.*, 2016:2).

Due to the variety of stakeholders, there are many interests which must be met, 'politicking' to handle, and negotiations to undertake (Parent *et al*, 2012:155). Political or networking skills become even more important when dealing with the local government or municipality, as required from many sport events. In addition, an exceptional set of management skills are required to motivate volunteers to do their best. Empowerment is often encouraged through job rotation, especially for higher order employees, as this enables a broader range of experience for the employees. Sport event leaders who are successful in the hosting of their events are committed to high standards, with specific reference to the course preparations and technical

requirements of the event. It is important to learn from previous events, so that lessons can be incorporated into future events, resulting in even higher quality.

It is also interesting to note that Kaplanidou and Gibson (2010:165) found that participants in recurring sport events were more likely to return to the destination and the event if they had positive images of the community. The community can then directly influence the success of the event by influencing the satisfaction of the participants.

2.7.2.2   Communal infrastructure

Communal infrastructure within the participative sport event context refers to infrastructure required by the event. These include, but are not limited to: transportation, housing, hotels, sport venues and facilities, parks and recreation, media centres, tourist attractions and airports (Karadakis, 2012:30). Such infrastructure might be initially developed for the event, but can ultimately lead to an improvement in the quality of life of the community which hosts the event (Karadakis, 2012:39).

Physical activity and, by extension, the health and wellness, of a community can be enabled by the availability and use of community sport infrastructure (KPMG, 2018). In addition, such infrastructure provides a space for people to connect socially, supports employment and the economy, and is a critical requirement for liveable cities and neighbourhoods. In a study conducted by Karadakis and Kaplanidou (2012) after the Vancouver Olympics, respondents indicated that the most important legacy of the Olympic Games for them was infrastructure, as it pertained to quality of life (Karadakis, 2012:41).

A 2018 KPMG report indicated that community sport infrastructure generated an annual value of more than $16.2 billion for Australia. Of this amount, $6.3 billion was allocated to the economy directly by activities associated with the construction, maintenance and operation of the infrastructure, as well as indirectly by increasing the productivity of the people that used the infrastructure to be physically active. A contribution of $4.9 billion was made to health benefits, as users were less likely to contract a range of health conditions associated with physical inactivity, and the resultant benefits to the health system from a healthier population.

Increased human capital resulting from social interactions facilitated by the infrastructure, and the broader community benefits of having access to 'green spaces' amounted to an additional $5.1 billion of social benefits. Other qualitative benefits, such as social inclusion and community pride, were also noted, but could not be quantified. It is evident from the KPMG report that community sport infrastructure is a critical factor that amplifies the outcomes across the participation spectrum, from volunteers and officials, to team members and social supporters.

In response to the KPMG report, the Australian government has committed to spending $230 million on sport and physical activity initiatives over five years, where the main focus will be on improvements to existing sport infrastructure to support grassroots sport. Although funds will be allocated based on grant applications, the official communication in this regard highlighted the importance of female participation in sport, and the need for proper facilities geared towards female needs. Special mention was made of the success achieved by the Australian Football League Women's, also known as the Matildas, the Diamonds Netball team, Australian Women's Cricket, and the Rugby Sevens teams which have led to an increase in women's participation in sport on the continent. As such, this initiative hopes to provide an opportunity for community clubs to enable them to meet this increasing demand by ensuring that they have the appropriate facilities (The Department of Health, 2018).

Research concluded that small-scale, participative sport events are able to provide an economic boost for the local economy through the use of community infrastructure (Ziakas & Boukas, 2016:540). It has also been found that, if the event the community is hosting, is compatible with the community's infrastructure, the community may experience economic, social and environmental impacts that can contribute to the community's sustainable tourism (Karadakis, 2012:22).

An interesting argument for hosting small events is that, although public expenditure on infrastructure falls into the same category as local spending, it might represent incremental spending for events hosted in smaller areas. As such, these communities can attract spending from regional and national government for the upgrading or construction of infrastructure, which would not have been accrued to them if the event had not been hosted in the region (Saayman & Saayman, 2014:158). The 2018 Ironman 70.3 World Championships hosted in Port Elizabeth, South Africa is a good example of this. As part of the hosting agreement with Ironman, the Port Elizabeth

metro agreed to upgrade the road along the planned route for the bike leg of the event, as it was not on par with international standards set for the event. The initial budget for these upgrades amounted to R200 million which had to be procured from other wards' road resurfacing funds (Parfit, 2017). Amidst local tensions and disruptions, the budget was revised and a final agreement was reached; and the metro would spend R45 million to host the event. This amount included the hosting fees paid to Ironman, as well as the provision of services. Included in this amount was R28 million for road infrastructure, which would not have been allocated to that particular ward if not for the event. In addition, the event had a direct impact on the metro's economy to the amount of R400 million (Matavire, 2018).

Events can thus make valuable contributions to the infrastructure required to host them. The infrastructure required by participative sport events is more often than not used by the local community after the event (unlike the stadiums developed for spectator events) which contributes to the quality of life of the communities which host these events.

It is clear from the above discussion, that sport events are not only hosted within communities, but that athletes are required to participate in such events in order for them to be successful. As such, the 'human element' forms an important consideration when it comes to participative, recurring sport events.

2.7.3   The human element

For most service-orientated offerings, the use of human resources is practically unavoidable. For the RCPA sport event the human element becomes not only an important consideration, but also a valuable point of differentiation. Elements that come into play when consumers participate in sport events are the social interaction participants will have with other athletes, the use of a staff complement that predominantly consists of volunteers, and the use of race officials to run the event according to the rules set in place by the governing bodies.

2.7.3.1   *Social aspects of participating in sport events*

The social value of mass participation sport events is widely recognised, and it is believed that such events can bring great social benefits to a community (Zhou & Kaplanidou, 2018:491). Social benefits include civil pride, social cohesion and

community attachment, as well as the creation of social capital, which can be built and enhanced through the social interaction among various stakeholders at participative sport events (Zhou & Kaplanidou, 2018:491). Participating in these types of event can enhance the athlete's sense of belonging, solidarity and camaraderie. In addition, the type of social capital that is built through participating in sport events bridges the gap across class, religion and ethnic boundaries (Zhou & Kaplanidou, 2018:491.

It is evident from the above literature discussions that, for sport events, the sport consumer experience becomes an important consideration, as it is this experience which is essentially being sold to the consumer. The traditional approach to sport marketing is to focus on quality dimensions which are transaction bound and occur immediately after the core sport product and ancillary services are provided to the consumer (Yoshida, 2017:428). However, the experiences of the sport consumer are not limited to transaction-specific sport and service encounters, but can also be present in the interaction between consumers and multiple communication channels such as online (emails, websites, social medial, user reviews and smartphones) and offline (face-to-face communication channels) channels. In addition, it was found that social relationships among consumers were able to influence the consumer experience of sport consumers (Yoshida, 2017:428). The reciprocal characteristics of interaction among consumers were found to be common values, shared culture and social contact with other consumers (Yoshida, 2017:428).

Even for non-sport related services, it has been found that the quality of social conditions in the service encounter (the number of people evident in the service environment) will influence the consumer's experience and judgement of the service quality (Yoshida, 2017:432). The sport consumer shares a deep social relationship with other consumers during their communal sport consumption. Communing and socialising has been found to be prevalent among spectators, and it has been suggested that this dimension should be included as a distinct element of quality for sport services (Yoshida, 217:432).

Although this research focused on the vicarious sport encounters of spectators, it is expected that 'social network quality' would also be important related to direct sport encounters, such as those experienced by participants. Within this network it is evident that the following dimensions become important: structural dimensions (presence of social interaction ties among consumers), cognitive dimension (shared culture

amongst sport consumers) and relational dimensions (willingness of consumers to act together) (Yoshida, 2017:433).

Researchers, such as Buning and Gibson (2016) have noted a disproportioned increase in the popularity of endurance events such as running, cycling and triathlon. It is evident that consumers are seeking opportunities to engage in physical activity while socialising amongst a group of like-minded individuals (Buning & Gibson, 2016:175). Further research conducted by Buning and Gibson (2016:186) found that, for athletes travelling to an event, positive word-of-mouth from a trusted source was one of the key preferences when deciding on an event to participate in. This finding echoed Kaplanidou and Gibson's (2010) research which indicated that the power of the athlete's social environment should be considered, as it is used to evaluate the value, or worth, of an event through word-of-mouth.

2.7.3.2   *Human resource capital: volunteers and referees*

Sport organisations are generally faced with three human resource challenges when organising sport events. The first challenge relates to the participants, as it is important that the event does not constrict existing participation (Chalip *et al.*, 2017:268). The other two challenges are to secure sufficient human resources to serve new participants, and to obtain sufficient personnel with appropriate skills to plan and implement leveraging (leveraging refers to the benefits gained after the event) (Chalip *et al.*, 2017:268).

The human resource base required by sport events and organisations can be built by recruiting former athletes, as well as family members of athletes, coaches, officials or volunteers (Chalip *et al.*, 2017:269). In some instances, current personnel and athletes could also be trained to take on more responsible roles to enhance human resources. In either scenario it is evident that volunteers play a major role in the delivery of sport events (Gellweiler, Fletcher & Wise, 2017:1; Horne, 2017:336).

Volunteers are those individuals who work out of free will, or are at least, relatively uncoerced, and who do not receive remuneration or only a small reimbursement (Wicker, 2017:326). Volunteers are crucial for the functioning of sport organisations, and this is reflected in the large number of volunteers at sport events (Wicker, 2017:326). For example, 70 000 'Game Makers' were trained for the 2012 London Olympics (Horne, 2017:336) and 60 000 volunteers were required for the Ironman

North American race series in 2017 (Lidbury, 2018). The 2016 Rio Games had more than 240 000 applications for volunteers (Wicker, 2017:327).

Participative sport events require volunteers to fulfil various duties and roles during the event, as the event budget is often limited and such events tend to be complex (Ziakas & Boukas, 2016:545). Volunteers are used in various roles from planning and logistics to staffing the registration desk and feed stations, and often represent the visible face of the event on race day. Various studies have linked volunteering to legacies and social impacts of the event (Gellweiler *et al.*, 2017:2). Sport event volunteering is often used to facilitate and enhance the event's impacts which can affect participants and communities socially and culturally (Gellweiler *et al.*, 2017:2).

Many sport events, including triathlons, have an additional component when it comes to the human resources required to make the event a success: referees or officials. In triathlons, officials have a range of roles and responsibilities which are based on their level of certification. All officials or referees (as they are called in South Africa) are required to undergo training and receive certification from the sanctioned national body of that particular country. Officials are responsible for ensuring that the event is not only safe for participants, but also fair. Their main job on race day is to ensure that the fundamental rules of the sport are upheld (Triathlon Nova Scotia, 2016). They also facilitate equipment checks prior to the race to ensure that all participants are able to complete the race without outside assistance, as triathlon is an individual sport. Generally speaking, a Level 1 official can officiate at any race and can be placed anywhere on the course. A Level 2 official is usually also the technical director at the race or can be a head referee. It is required that all race directors are Level 2 certified (Triathlon Nova Scotia, 2016).

What makes triathlon particularly complex when it comes to officiating events, is the fact that the rules for the sport are not standardised. Different distances and different brands of triathlons have different rules set out for athletes to follow. In fact, up until 2015 athletes had different rules and regulations, depending on which Ironman branded event they were participating in. The Ironman Corporation only adopted a standardised rule book for all of their events across the globe on 1 March 2015. The rulebook was developed by working closely with ITU, who has a different set of rules for their short-distance triathlons. Although the rules and regulations of Ironman and ITU are not yet synchronised, the two organisations have shown that they are working

towards a uniform set of rules for athletes to follow (Ironman, 2015). Given these differences in the rules, referees and officials become doubly important to the race experiences of triathletes. If a referee or official misinterpreted or applied the incorrect rule or regulation for a particular event and awarded a time-penalty or even disqualified a participant, it would have a negative effect on the athlete and their experience at the event.

As the discussions above have illustrated, the induced event experience plays an important role in the satisfaction of the athlete, which will affect intent to return, as well as the brand-creation process. It is thus important to ensure that the considerations discussed above are taken into account when managing RCPA sport events.

2.8   CONCLUSION

In recent decades the mass participation in endurance sport events has seen a marked increase in participation levels. This global trend and the increasing interest of communities to host sport events have led to a thriving event management industry. Despite much research on the topic of sport events, a distinct classification systems seems to be lacking, with many definitions of events being used interchangeably and classification systems overarching in their categories.

Nonetheless, the event industry is well-established and operates within a highly complex management environment. This environment is characterised by collaboration between a variety of stakeholders from various industries, including tourism, sport and events. It is evident then that each of these stakeholders plays important roles during the three distinct modes of the sport event lifecycle: the planning mode, the implementation mode and the wrap-up mode.

The marketing of sport events forms a large portion of the event manager's duties, and the brand-creation process become crucial in this regard, especially for recurring sport events. In addition, event managers and organisers should be cognisant of the consumer behaviour unique to their consumers. It is important that the different sport experiences sought by participants and spectators should be acknowledged. The chapter concluded with a discussion of the unique considerations for RCPA sport events which should be taken into account. These included, but are not limited to the event environment, collaboration with the community and other stakeholders, the use

of communal infrastructure and human elements, such as the social aspects of participative sport and the use of volunteers and referees.

The next chapter will provide an extensive overview on the current literature available on the subject of brand equity.

CHAPTER 3:
BRANDING AND BRAND EQUITY

3.1   INTRODUCTION

It has been stated that branding will become the cornerstone of services marketing in the 21st century (Underwood, Bond & Baer, 2015:1). Given that the importance of branding of goods is a well-established concept, within academia and industry alike, its relevance to services has been less obvious (Underwood *et al.*, 2015:1). Researchers are, however, proposing that due to the nature of services, predominantly their lack of tangible characteristics which makes them difficult to differentiate, brand development is crucial. Combined with the intense competition which exists in many service markets, it is evident that services can no longer deny the value of the brand. Strong service brands are built by making an emotional connection with their audience, something the sport industry has been quite successful at achieving (Underwood *et al.*, 2015:1). Successful brands are able to create a connection with consumers which reflects the consumers' core values and an experience which goes beyond the fulfilment of their functional needs (Underwood *et al.*, 2015:1).

In modern organisations, the branding strategy, despite its intangible nature, will often form part of the strategic plans for the organisation (Villarejo-Ramos & Martin-Velicia, 2007:66). The study of brand equity within the sport industry seems inevitable, especially since consumers often make emotional, instead of economic purchasing decisions (thereby acting irrationally, if judging the consumer from a traditional product point of view) (Villarejo-Ramos & Martin-Velicia, 2007:66; Vahdati, Esfahani, Hosseini & Ehsani, 2013:681).

In a general sense, brand equity is defined as the marketing effects uniquely attributable to the brand (Keller, 1993:1)[4]. Even more simply, brand equity is seen as "the certain outcome result from the marketing of a product or service because of its

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[4] Although this source is more than the 10 years prescribed maximum age for academic sources, the following authors are considered to be seminal authors when it comes to marketing and brand equity: Aaker, Keller, Erdem & Swait and Lassar *et al*. Research conducted is still considered relevant, and as such, the decision was made to use the original sources.

brand name that would not occur if the same product or service did not have that name" (Keller, 1993:1). Initially brand equity was related to the name of the product or service, as brands were defined as "a name, term, sign, symbol or design or a combination of them which is intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors" (Keller, 1993:2; Wu, Hu, Qi, Marinova & Shi, 2018:1932). However, since the conceptualisation of brand equity, it has evolved to become much more than just a name. Brand equity now comprises of various elements and dimensions, varying in degrees of complexity, depending on the model and perspective from which it is being investigated.

This chapter aims to explore branding and brand equity in depth. It commences with an overview of the concept of branding, after which a comprehensive literature review on brand equity is provided. The literature review continues with an introduction to consumer-based brand equity and the different models which may be used to measure brand equity. The discussion concludes with a discussion of the models used to measure consumer-based brand equity.

3.2   THE CONCEPT OF BRANDING

Brands have been around for centuries – it is believed that the ancient Egyptians used to brand their bricks as a form of identification, and traders would 'trademark' products to ensure consumers of a certain level of quality (Baalbaki, 2012:1; Wu *et al.*, 2018:1933). The first time brands, however, appeared in literature was during the 16th century when whiskey distillers started to brand shipped barrels. During the 18th century brands evolved when producers' names were replaced with names and pictures of places of origin, animals, and even famous people of the times (Baalbaki, 2012:1). The use of names and pictures helped to strengthen the association of the brand name with the product, and by the 19th century, brand names enhanced a product's perceived value by using associations. During the 20th and 21st century, brands have evolved to such an extent that consumers are willing to pay a premium price for a branded product (Wu *et al.*, 2018:1933).

Brands, historically, thus served to differentiate an item from competitors' goods, and represented consistency of quality, whilst providing legal protection from copying (Tuominen, 1999:65; Gerke, Chavanat & Benson-Rae, 2014:175; Wu *et al.*, 2018:1933). Today, as in the past, the brand often has a powerful symbolic

significance and can imply status, enhance image and project or augment lifestyle to such an extent that ownership of the brand becomes value in its own right (Tuominen, 1999:66; Baalbaki, 2012:1). Branding has become a key marketing priority for most organisations in the modern marketplace (Keller, 2009:139). In fact, brands have become so ubiquitous in the everyday life of most consumers that brands and branding is widely recognised as a company's biggest asset (Fayrene & Lee, 2011:34; Vel, Suhail, Satyaharayan & Easo, 2011:2; Gerke *et al.*, 2014:175).

A brand is generally a name and a symbol that aids in the creation of a positive image from the consumer's perception, differentiates the product or service from that of competitors (Tuominen, 1999:66; Vel *et al.*, 2011:2; Ercis, Unal, Candan & Yildirim, 2012:1395; Gerke *et al.*, 2014:174), and represents an enormously valuable piece of legal property (Keller, 2006:546). In essence, a brand identifies the seller or manufacturer of a product or service (Tuominen, 1999:66).

Brands are a valuable input in the creation of loyal customers and the retaining of market share, and can simplify the decision-making process by reducing the perceived risk (Tuominen, 1999:66; Keller, 2006:546; Schmuck, Matthes, Naderer & Beaufort, 2018:416). Loyal customers are loyal consumers of the brand and they engage in repeat purchasing patterns and positive word-of-mouth where the brand is recommended to other customers (Ercis *et al.*, 2012:1395).

Brands provide added security to the owners by sustaining future revenues (Keller, 2006:546). It can improve perceptions of product performance and may even be able to secure greater trade or intermediary cooperation and support (Keller, 2009:140; Faurene & Lee, 2011:34; Schmuck *et al.*, 2018:416). It is thus evident that branding is more than just a name, with the challenge being to develop a deep set of meanings for the brand (Tuominen, 1999:66).

3.2.1   Brand identity

In order to develop meaning for the brand, a company will combine a collection of brand elements in a certain manner so as to create the right image of itself for the consumer. This is known as the brand identity (De Bara, 2017). Brand identity is best explained by using a pyramid, such as the one in Figure 3.1, which consists of three tiers (Tuominen, 1999:69):

- The base layer of the brand pyramid consists of brand themes that indicate how the brand communicates through marketing. This includes the physique of the brand (logo, packaging and colour), its reflection (for example the type of spokesperson used to advertise the brand), and the relationship expressed (for example, glamour or prestige). Brand themes form the base level of the pyramid, as they are more flexible than brand style and brand core, and are able to change with fashion, style and technology (Tuominen, 1999:69).

- The middle tier is known as brand style that articulates the culture the brand conveys, its personality and its self-image.

- The fundamental part of the brand, represented by the upper part of the pyramid, is the brand core which remains the same over time.
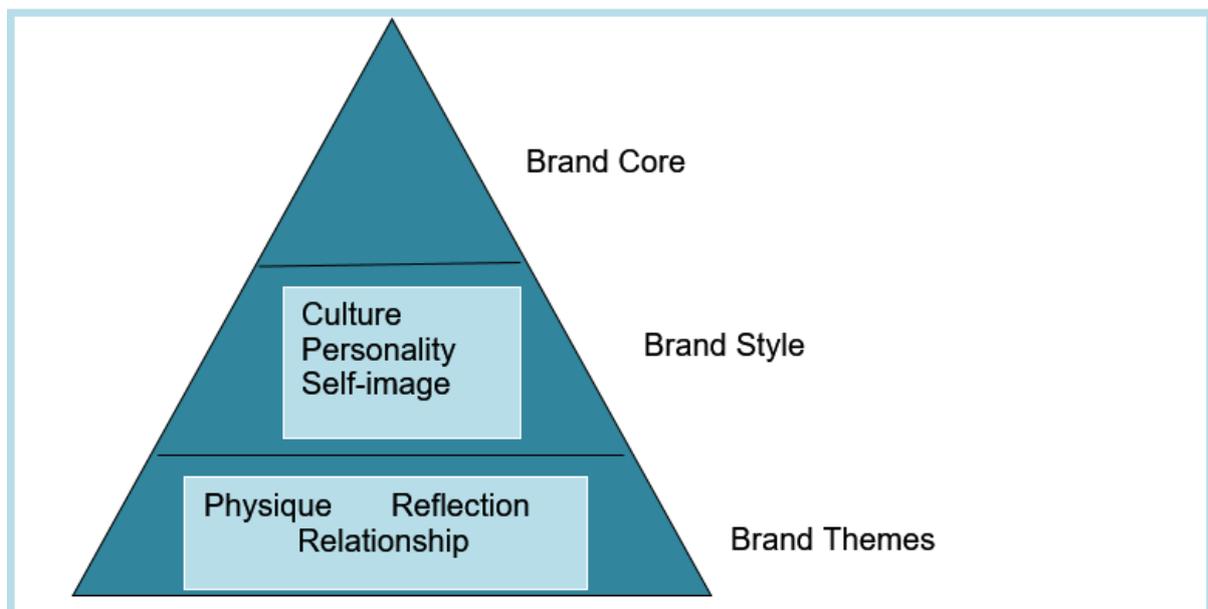
Figure 3.1:   The brand pyramid

Source: Tuominen (1999)

A successful brand is an identifiable product, service, person or place which is augmented in such a manner that the buyer or user perceives unique and relevant added value which closely matches their needs (Tuominen, 1999:66; Yousaf, Amin & Gupta, 2017:125).

3.2.2   Branding success

Brands often take time to become successful and will acquire the added values of familiarity and proven reliability if a good service is provided over many years of regular

use (Tuominen, 1999:66). Other added values can be contributed by usage experience, other consumers, belief that the brand is effective, brand appearance and the reputation of the brand owner (Tuominen, 1999:67; Kuvykaite & Piligrimiene, 2014:479). In addition, brands are able to appeal to consumers' rational reasoning in such a manner that trust and commitment are enhanced (Högström, Gustafsson & Tronvoll, 2015:391).

Brand success is a complex and multidimensional construct which should be viewed from a long-term perspective by looking at both the brand's stakeholders and its competitors (Tuominen, 1999:68). Brand success is often classified as either business-based or consumer-based, despite the fact that they are interrelated and mutually dependant on each other. This is because profit and market share (therefore, business-based) often follow from consumers' perceptions and responses to a brand (therefore, consumer-based) (Tuominen, 1999:69).

Traditionally, the approach to branding emphasised mass media techniques. This approach, however, has become outdated, as the technological, interactive marketplace of the 21st century consists of consumers that have access to massive amounts of information about brands (Keller, 2009:139). Marketing communications are crucial when trying to build strong brands which are needed to reap the benefits and advantages of having a brand in the first place (Keller, 2009:140). In order to build a strong brand, the right knowledge structures must exist within the consumers' minds, so that they are able to respond to marketing activities in a positive manner. Therefore, marketing communication plays a crucial role in shaping such knowledge structures (Keller, 2009:140). This has resulted in marketers currently using more varied marketing communication options than ever before.

With the advent of new technology and more savvy consumers, brands have been refined in terms of what they offer consumers, and can now be found in a myriad of industries and markets. Despite the evolution of brands from a mere stamp on a barrel to the complex structures they have become, the purpose remains the same: to create value for the consumer. This value can then be determined by looking at brand equity.

3.3 BRAND EQUITY

The concept of brand equity is fairly new and emerged as recently as the early 1990s (Tuominen, 1999:71; Baalbaki, 2012:3; Yousaf *et al.*, 2017:119). In a general sense, brand equity is defined in terms of the marketing effect that is uniquely attributed to the individual brand. The fact that the product or service is branded will result in a different outcome than if the product or service was not branded (Iglesias, Ind & Alfaro, 2013:671). It is a construct that reflects the real value a brand name holds for the products or services it accompanies (Marketing Research Association (MRA), 2010; Vahdati et al., 2013:682; Gerke *et al.*, 2014:175).

Brand equity can be seen as the promise that is made to consumers to meet their expectations and deliver value on a continuous basis (Chekalina, Fuchs & Lexhagen, 2018:96). Brand equity then leads to a situation where the consumers have high brand-name awareness, maintain a favourable brand image, perceive the brand as of high quality, and are loyal to the brand (Bodet & Chanavat, 2010:57; Horng *et al.*, 2012:819; Vahdati *et al.*, 2013:682; Yousaf *et al.*, 2017:120). Brand equity thus increases the likelihood of a positive contribution to consumers' buying behaviour, and helps with the effective management of brands (Buil, de Chernatony & Martinez, 2013:115).

Brand equity is deemed to emanate from three different perspectives (Baalbaki, 2012:3):

- Business management, which views brand equity as a set of assets or liabilities which either add value or deduct value from the product offering. This perspective was defined in a model by Aaker in 1991.

- Cognitive psychology, which defines brand equity as the differential consumers' responses to a brand's marketing mix that results from consumer associations for a brand. This perspective was refined by Keller in his model created in 1993.

- Information economics, which views brand equity as the increased utility that a brand name gives to a product. This perspective was refined into a model by Erdem and Swait in 1998.

- Another perspective on brand equity stems from the financial markets which make use of financial-based brand equity as the financial measure of a firm's market value minus the tangible asset value (Fayrene & Lee, 2011:35).

As can be seen from above, there are a number of different views on what brand equity entails although they all contend the same basic notion that brand equity represents the 'added value' awarded to a product or service as a result of past investments in the marketing of the brand. Research has shown that this type of value can be created for a brand in a myriad of ways.

3.3.1 Definitions of brand equity

Brand equity can be seen as the common denominator in the interpretation of marketing strategies and the assessments of the value of a brand. As such, brand equity can be defined in a number of ways, as it has value for both the business and the consumer of the brand (Tuominen, 1999:72; Horng *et al.*, 2012:816). The common ground between most definitions of brand equity is that they focus on the incremental effect of the brand compared with what consumers' responses would have been if there was no brand. Some of the popular definitions for brand equity are listed below (Tuominen, 1999:73):

- A set of brand assets and liabilities linked to a brand, its name and symbol that add to or subtract from the value provided by a product or service to a business and/or to that business's customer.

- A differentiated, clear image that goes beyond simple product preference.

- The added value that a brand endows a product with.

- The differential effect that brand knowledge has on consumer response to the marketing of that brand.

- The value attached to a brand due to the powerful relationship that has over time been developed between the brand and customers and other stakeholders.

- The incremental price that a consumer will pay for a brand versus the price for a comparable product or service without a brand name attached to it.

- A long-term relationship with those people who loyally buy the brand over and over again.

- A product of the total net brand support of customers and other stakeholders that is determined by all the communication interactions of the company.

- Off-balance sheet intangible brand properties embedded in a company's brand.

The above definitions indicate that brand equity can be regarded as a managerial concept, an intangible financial asset, a relationship concept, or as a customer-based concept from the perspective of the individual consumer (Tuominen, 1999:73; Ioannou & Rusu, 2012:345). The common denominator between the above definitions is the reliance, either implicitly or explicitly, on brand knowledge structures in the minds of consumers as the source or foundation of brand equity (Keller, 2006:546).

3.3.2   The role of brand equity in marketing research

For marketing research purposes, brand equity is not seen as a tangible financial asset, but rather viewed conceptually as a framework for understanding the power brands yield in terms of the intellectual and emotional associations consumers will have with the particular product or service (MRA, 2010). Brand equity is thus measured with the purpose of being used for strategic positioning and planning, rather than to attach a financial value to the brand in order to establish a direct financial perspective (MRA, 2010). There is thus a strong strategy-based motivation for actively studying brand equity so as to improve marketing productivity (Keller, 1993:1).

Brand equity is an effective method for increasing the efficiency of marketing expenses, given the higher costs, greater competition and flattening of demand in many markets (Keller, 1993:1). Brand equity, and especially consumer-based brand equity (CBBE), provides marketers with a more thorough understanding of consumer behaviour which allows for better strategic decision-making regarding marketing expenditure (Keller, 1993:2).

3.3.3   The value of brand equity

The value of brand equity is thus ultimately derived from the words and actions of consumers (Keller, 2006:547). Consumers show with their purchasing decisions which brands have more equity than others, based on those factors that are most important for consumers (Keller, 2006:547).

3.3.3.1 Brand equity value to the consumer

Brand equity provides value to the consumer in at least three different ways (Tuominen, 1999:88; Chekalina, 2018:94) as listed below:

- Brand equity aids in the interpretation, processing, storing and retrieving of information about products and services (Schmuck *et al.*, 2018:416).

- Brand equity influences the consumers' confidence in the purchase decision, as consumers are known to be more comfortable with well-known and familiar brands, as they are considered to be of high quality (Tuominen, 1999:87; Ioannou & Rusu, 2012:344).

- Brand equity is able, through perceived quality and brand associations, to increase the consumer's satisfaction when the individual uses the product or service (Wu *et al.*, 2018:1933).

3.3.3.2 Brand equity value to the organisation

Brand equity provides value to organisations in at least six ways (Tuominen, 1999:87):

- Brand equity can enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of marketing campaigns.

- Brand awareness, perceived quality, and brand associations can strengthen brand loyalty by increasing customer satisfaction and providing motivation for purchasing the brand. Even if these assets are not visibly pivotal to brand choice, they can still reassure the consumer which will reduce the incentive to try a new brand.

- Brand equity will provide higher margins for products by permitting premium pricing and reducing the reliance on sales promotions. Often, the elements of brand equity are used to support premium pricing or to resist price erosion. In addition, should a brand lack brand equity, more investment in promotional activity will be required to maintain its position in the distribution channel.

- Brand equity facilitates brand extensions which provide a platform for growth.

- Brand equity is able to provide leverage in the distribution, as channel members have less uncertainty dealing with a proven brand name that has already achieved recognition and has established strong associations. By having a strong brand, organisations have the potential to benefit from efficiencies and synergies by using the brand's visual impact on shelves and in promotions.

- The most significant advantage brand equity provides is in the form of a barrier that dissuades consumers from switching to a competing brand.

It can thus be concluded that brand equity is important, as strong brands influence critical business outcomes, such as sales and market share (MRA, 2010). Research has found that branded products invariably command a higher price than generic or store brands. This was found to be true for even commodities like sugar (MRA, 2010). Commodity products may then charge higher prices due to the power of the brand they are offering consumers.

3.3.4 Obtaining brand equity

This section discusses how an organisation can obtain brand equity, namely, by building brand equity, borrowing brand equity or buying brand equity.

3.3.4.1 Building brand equity

The process of building brand equity starts with (1) creating positive brand evaluations with a quality product, and then by (2) fostering accessible brand attitudes to have the most impact on consumer purchase behaviour (Tuominen, 1999:89). The last step is (3) to develop a consistent brand image so as to form a relationship with the consumer.

Quality is the cornerstone of a strong brand and a company must have quality products that provide superior performance if they expect a positive evaluation of the brand in the consumer's mind (Tuominen, 1999:89). Three types of evaluations can be stored in a consumer's memory, and efforts to create positive brand evaluations are usually aimed at one of these:

- Affective responses that involve emotions or feelings towards the brand.
- Cognitive evaluations are inferences made from beliefs the consumers have of the brand.
- Behavioural intentions are developed from habits or heuristic interest toward the brand.

The second element in building a strong brand is attitude accessibility which refers to how quickly an individual can retrieve something stored in their memory. There are two ways in which stored evaluations can be retrieved: automatic activation occurs spontaneously from memory upon observations of the object, and controlled activation

which requires the active attention of the individual to retrieve a previously stored evaluation (Tuominen, 1999:90).

The third element of building a strong brand element is the creation of a consistent brand image which is part of managing the relationship between the consumer and the brand (Tuominen, 1999:90). With each purchase, a relationship will be developed between the personality of the brand and the personality of the consumer. During the process of creating a familiar brand that has favourable, strong and unique brand associations, the initial choice of the brand identities (including the brand name, logo or symbol) play an important role. Brand identities, especially those that are well-thought-out, can contribute significantly to brand equity and support the marketing activities for the brand (Tuominen, 1999:90).

Building brand equity is, however, the least preferred method for acquiring brand equity, as the investment needed to build, or even just maintain, brand equity is difficult to justify when looking at the short-term financial impact (Tuominen, 1999:90).

Management must therefore have a clear vision and belief that investing in brand equity will be valuable in the future. This type of vision can be created by understanding the ways in which the brand is able to create a competitive advantage for the organisation. However, to remain loyal to this type of vision is difficult as the appeal to correct short-term problems with the investment required for long-term brand equity is often too enticing. This is particularly evident when organisations' structures and reward systems do not protect brand equity (Tuominen, 1999:90). An easier way to obtain brand equity is to borrow it.

3.3.4.2   *Borrowing brand equity*

Common practice amongst many companies is to borrow brand equity in their brand names by extending existing brand names to other products (Tuominen, 1999:90). Here two options are available: line extensions or category (also known as brand) extensions. Line extensions occur when a current brand name is used to enter a new market segment within the existing product class (Bogomolova, Anesbury, Lockshin, Kapulski & Bogolomolov, 2019:121). Additional items are then introduced in the same product category under the same brand name and often feature different sizes, colours, flavours, ingredients or a different application for the brand (Tuominen, 1999:91; Bogomolova *et al.,* 2019:121). It is therefore considered that products in line

extensions are technically congruent and belong to the same product category. The majority of new product activities will fall into this category so as to command more shelf space, utilise excess manufacturing capacity, meet consumers' needs for variety, capitalise on latent consumer wants, or to match a competitor's successful line extension (Tuominen, 1999:91).

It should be mentioned that, although line extensions are the preferred way to borrow equity, it does not come without risks. The possibility exists that the brand name will lose its specific meaning resulting in the so-called line-extension trap. In addition, product cannibalisation might occur where sales come at the expense of other items in the product line. The idea of a line extension is to take away sales from competing brands and not to sacrifice own products (Sharma, Nathani & Parshar, 2019:297).

Category extensions use the current brand name to enter a different product class. This type of extension capitalises on the brand image of the core product or service to efficiently inform consumers and retailers about a new product or service (Tuominen, 1999:91; Maldonado-Guzman, Marin-Aguilar & Gutiérrez-Quijano, 2019:36). The advantages of using category extensions are primarily immediate name recognition and the transfer of benefits associated with a familiar brand. In addition, the new product can gain instant recognition and earlier acceptance, allowing the organisation to enter into new-product categories more easily (Tuominen, 1999:91). This then eliminates the high costs of establishing a new brand and can even reduce the costs of gaining distribution.

The risks involved with this type of extension include consumer disappointment which could lead to damaging the organisation's other brands. The brand name might lose its special positioning in the consumer's mind through over-extension which can lead to brand dilution. Brand dilution occurs when consumers no longer associate the brand with a specific product. It is therefore important for organisations wishing to pursue this type of extension, to determine how well the brand's associations would fit the new product. The ideal situation occurs when both the new product and existing product contribute to sales (Tuominen, 1999:91; Maldonado-Guzman, 2019:33).

The relationship between the core product and the extended product may be based on technical attributes, benefits, values or lifestyle elements (Tuominen, 1999:92; Maldonado-Guzman, 2019:33). Technical attributes are generally based on the

physical attributes of the products, and often this type of relationship proves to be the most successful when engaging in extensions (Tuominen, 1999:92). The association network of the core product will be the determinant of how far an organisation can stretch a particular brand when it comes to extensions (Tuominen, 1999:93). If the network of the core product is low in the hierarchy (the relationship is only characterised by technical and functional product attributes) it is highly recommended that extensions should not go beyond line extension.

Brands need time to develop and most (not all) brands' histories indicate that it starts narrowly with a complete overlap of the product. Once line extensions have been incorporated, the brand will become broader and gain connotations of quality, design and other psychosocial attributes and benefits (Tuominen, 1999:92). Once this has been achieved, the brand will go beyond associations with its physical attributes and begin to create associations with the value it holds for consumers. Some brands may, however, not follow this type of development at all, as the above scenario illustrates the ideal development process (Tuominen, 1999:93).

It is evident that great care must be taken when transferring an existing brand name to a new product category.

The last method to enhance brand equity is to buy it through acquisition or licensing.

3.3.4.3   Buying brand equity

There is a trend toward acquiring well-established brands, given the potential difficulties of building brand equity (Tuominen, 1999:93). The most obvious way to buy brand equity, is to acquire an organisation, complete with its brands and products. A more common approach is to license brands, despite the fact that it can become counter-productive if the extended products have little or no association with the original product category (Tuominen, 1999:94). Perceptual fit, competitive leverage and benefit transfer will, once again, be important factors to consider when licensing a brand.

3.4   CONSUMER-BASED BRAND EQUITY (CBBE)

Consumer-based brand equity essentially defines the value that a brand creates from the consumer's point of view (Ioannou & Rusu, 2012:345). It has been shown that

value is only available to the investor, manufacturer and retailer if value has been created for the consumer (Ioannou & Rusu, 2012:346).

3.4.1 Brand equity from a consumer's perspective

Consumers tend to view or evaluate brand equity from two components, namely, brand strength and brand value (Wiedmann, Labenz, Haase & Hennig, 2018:105). Brand strength relates to the associations consumers have with the brand, while brand values are seen as the gains that may be accrued when brand strength is leveraged in such a manner that superior current and future profits are secured (Wiedmann *et al.*, 2018:105). In the simplest sense, one can conclude that CBBE stems from the greater confidence that consumers place in a brand than in the brand's competitor, which translates into consumer loyalty and willingness to pay premium prices (Datta, Ailawadi, & Van Heerde, 2017:1).

The basic premise of CBBE is that the power of a brand lies within the minds of consumers and the experiences and learning opportunities they have had over time with the brand (Tuominen, 1999:75; Fayrene & Lee, 2011:35; Yousaf *et al.*, 2017:122). As the source of brand equity is essentially customer perceptions, it is important to measure and track brand equity on a consumer level (Fayrene & Lee, 2011:35; Yousaf *et al.*, 2017:122; Chekalina *et al.*, 2018:95).

In addition, CBBE is the driving force for incremental financial gains for the organisation (Datta *et al.*, 2017:17), and by conceptualising brand equity from the consumer's perspective, managers gain the advantage of being able to evaluate the impact their marketing programmes have on the value of their brands. CBBE can thus be defined as the differential effect that brand knowledge has on the consumer response to the marketing of the brand (Keller, 1993:2; Tuominen, 1999:75; Bauer *et al.*, 2005:498; Horng *et al.*, 2012:816). This entails three key elements:

- **The differential effect,** which is determined by comparing consumer response to the marketing of the brand with the response to the same marketing of a product or service that is not branded.

- **Brand knowledge,** which is defined in terms of brand awareness and brand image and is conceptualised according to the characteristics and relationships of brand associations.

- **Consumer response to marketing** is seen as the consumer perceptions, preferences and behaviour that arose from the marketing mix activities (such as brand choice and sales promotion) of the brand.

Lassar, Mittal and Sharma (1995:12) add another five considerations when defining CBBE (the model containing these considerations is discussed in Section 3.6.1). First, CBBE does not refer to an objective evaluation of the brand, but rather to perceptions as an indication of value. Second, CBBE refers to the global value of the brand, not just a single product line. Third, this global value that is associated with the brand is derived not only from physical aspects of the brand, but also from intangible aspects, such as the brand name. Fourth, CBBE is not absolute but is relative to the competition. And finally, CBBE should positively influence financial performance.

Taking these five factors into consideration, Lassar *et al.* (1995:13) are of the opinion that CBBE can be seen as "the enhancement in the perceived utility and desirability a brand name confers on a product and is the consumers' perception of the overall superiority of a product carrying that brand name when compared to other brands."

Therefore, it can be said that CBBE involves the consumer's reaction to an element of the marketing mix for the brand in comparison to their reaction to the same marketing mix element if it was attributed to a fictitious or unnamed version of the product or service (Keller, 1993:2). Brand equity can only be established if there is a difference in responses from consumers. If there is no difference, the brand can essentially be classified as a generic version of the product (Tuominen, 1999:75). CBBE is thus created when the consumer is familiar with the brand, and holds the perception that the brand is unique, thereby creating a strong and favourable image in the consumer's mind (Keller, 1993:2). Favourable consumer responses and positive CBBE can lead to enhanced revenue, lower costs and greater profits (Keller, 1993:8; Horng *et al.*, 2012:816).

The different responses are the result of brand knowledge, and it is reflected in the perceptions, preferences and behaviour consumers have relating to all aspects of the marketing of the brand. The favourability, strength and uniqueness of brand associations (discussed below) all play a critical role in determining the differential responses by consumers (Keller, 1993:8). CBBE can be enhanced by creating a favourable response towards the marketing mix for the brand, including pricing,

distribution, advertising and promotion for the brand (Keller, 1993:9). Furthermore, if consumers are familiar with the brand, further licensing opportunities may arise where the brand can be used by another organisation and brand extensions become possible. These advantages have become popular growth strategies in recent years (Keller, 1993:9).

By viewing brand equity from a consumer's perspective, specific guidelines for marketing strategies and tactics can be identified, and areas where research can be useful in managerial decision-making become evident (Keller, 1993:2; Tuominen, 1999:75). Marketers should take a broad view of the marketing activities for a brand and take cognisance of how these activities influence brand knowledge (Keller, 1993:2). The long-term success of future marketing campaigns is greatly affected by the knowledge of the brand that has been established in the consumer's memory by short-term marketing efforts. In essence, this means that the content and structure of the memory of the brand will influence the success of future brand strategies. It is therefore critical that organisations have insight into how current marketing programmes affect consumer learning and recall for brand-related information (Keller, 1993:2; Tuominen, 1999:75).

When a brand has positive CBBE and is identifiable, it means that consumers will react more favourably to a product or service and the way it is marketed than when the brand has negative or no CBBE. The premise is that if a brand has positive CBBE, consumers will be more accepting of new brand extensions, less sensitive to price increases and the withdrawal of advertising support, and they will be more willing to seek the brand in a new distribution channel (Tuominen, 1999:75). The key issue in creating CBBE then lies in brand knowledge, as this creates the main source for CBBE (Gerke *et al.*, 2014:175).

3.4.2   The management of CBBE

It is evident from the above discussion that CBBE should be seen as a multidimensional concept that depends on what knowledge structures are present within the consumer's mind, and what actions a firm can take to capitalise on the potential that these structures hold for the organisation and its brands (Keller, 1993:14).

Different firms should be able to maximise the potential value of a brand, depending on the type and the nature of the marketing activities that they engage in (Keller, 1993:14). In addition to this, it is important that marketers should adopt a broad view of marketing decisions as this will enable them to utilise the most extensive form of marketing activity which will create value for the brand.

CBBE can be extended by adopting a broad view when it comes to marketing activities. Such activities will improve consumers' ability to recall the brand and it may also be able to create, maintain or change the favourability, strength and uniqueness of various types of brand associations (Keller, 1993:14). Marketing activities are able to affect sales by influencing brand knowledge in one or more ways (Keller, 1993:14).

Marketers should define the knowledge structures that they would like to create in the consumer's mind by specifying what levels of awareness, favourability, strength and uniqueness they would require (Keller, 1993:14). Product- and non-product-related attributes, as well as functional, experiential and symbolic benefits should be clearly defined so that the core needs and wants of the consumer that are satisfied by the brand can become clear. It is also important to identify the extent to which it is necessary to leverage secondary associations for the brand (Keller, 1993:15).

To manage CBBE it is crucial that managers evaluate the increasingly large number of tactical options available to create knowledge structures, especially in terms of marketing communication alternatives (Keller, 1993:15). The growth in new media developments, such as social media, sponsorships and product placements in movies, are highly appropriate when CBBE comes into play. New media developments are especially helpful in creating a cost-effective means of affecting brand knowledge, and as a consequence thereof, sales (Keller, 1993:15).

It is, however, important to note that whichever marketing communication medium the organisation should chose, all programmes should be chosen in such a manner that congruent and strong brand associations can be created (Keller, 1993:15). The consistency and cohesiveness of the brand image should be judged, while keeping the business definition in mind, as well as being cognisant of how well the specific attributes and benefits offered by the brand actually satisfy the needs and wants of the consumer (Keller, 1993:15).

Once the sources of brand equity have been defined and determined, an appropriate form of measurement must be selected.

3.5 MEASURING BRAND EQUITY

Brand equity is a unique construct, in the sense that it has been defined and measured both by academia to build and expand the body of knowledge on the subject area, and for-profit companies to assist in realising better profits (MRA, 2010). What makes brand equity even more dynamic is that many research agencies have developed their own brand equity models (MRA, 2010), resulting in a somewhat fragmented and subjective view on what exactly brand equity is and how it should be measured. Keller (in MRA, 2010) states that although the details of the different approaches to measuring brand equity differ, the majority of approaches implicitly or explicitly rely on the brand knowledge structures which are found in the minds of consumers (or in organisations) as the foundation or the source of brand equity.

The predominant brand equity models were developed within an academic framework in the 1990s by Aaker (1991), Keller (1993), and Erdem and Swait (1996). The different models for approaching the measurement of brand equity are discussed in the next section. (A summary is also provided in Chapter 4 before introducing the new models which focus specifically on consumer-based brand equity.)

3.5.1 Aaker's framework – brand equity from a management point of view

The first framework is that of Aaker (1991) which views brand equity from a **management point of view** (Menictas *et al.*, 2012:3). Aaker viewed brand equity as a set of brand assets and liabilities which are linked to a specific brand, its name and symbol. These assets or liabilities will then either add or subtract from the value provided by a product or service to a business and/or the business's consumers (Zarantonello & Schmitt, 2013:258).

The intangible assets of a brand create the basis of brand equity, and brand equity often consists of five different asset dimensions: brand loyalty, brand awareness, perceived quality, brand associations, and other proprietary assets. If managed well, these assets add value to the product or service, which in turn creates additional consumer satisfaction. The assets are depicted in Figure 3.2.
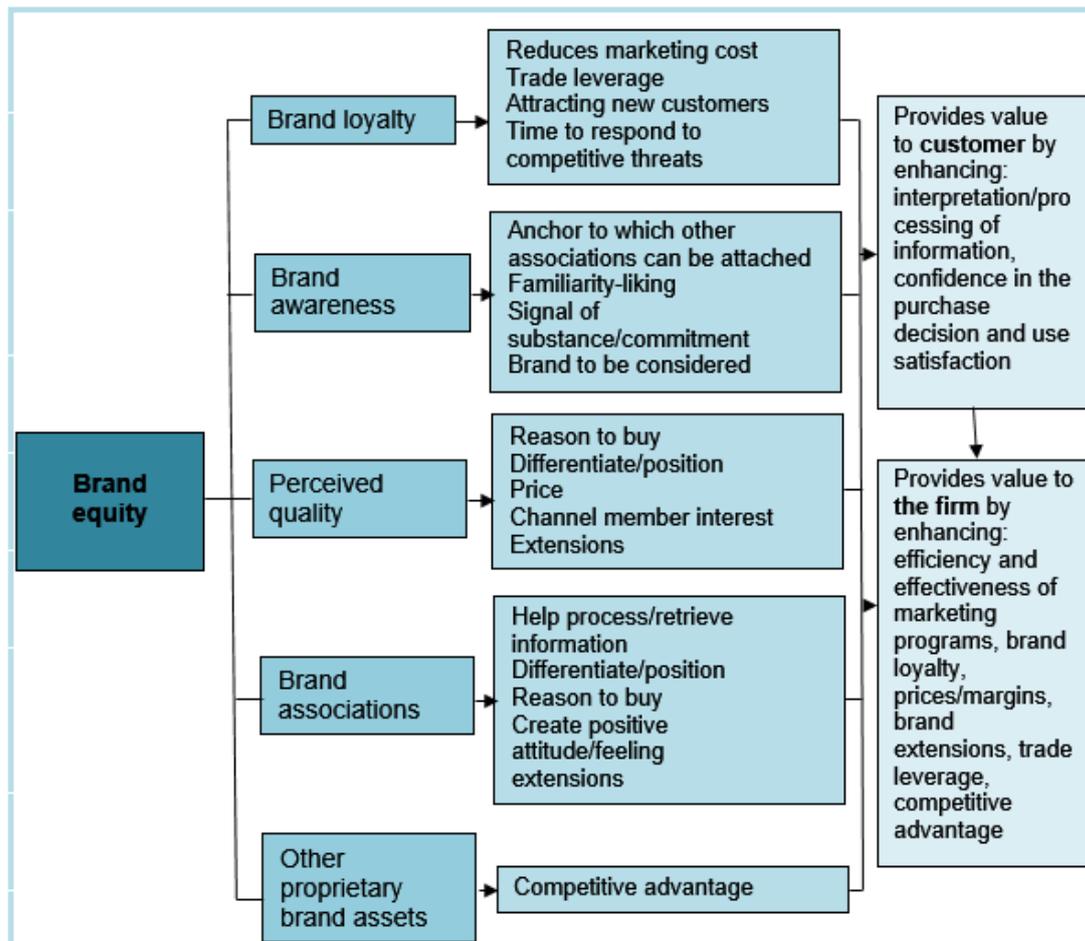
Figure 3.2:   Aaker's five asset model of brand equity

Source: Tuominen (1999:88)

Each of the assets listed in the figure are discussed in more detail in the section below.

3.5.1.1   *Brand loyalty*

Brand loyalty can be seen as a core component of brand equity (Fayrene & Lee, 2011:39; Keller in Horng *et al.,* 2012:817), and represents a favourable attitude towards a brand which results in consistent purchasing of the brand over a period of time (Tuominen, 1999:79; Fayrene & Lee, 2011:39; Ioannou & Rusu, 2012:347; Ahrholdt *et al.*, 2017:438). In addition, loyal consumers are willing to recommend the brand and spread positive word-of-mouth (Ahrholdt *et al.*, 2017:438). Should consumers feel indifferent to the brand and base their purchase decisions on price, features and convenience with little consideration of the brand name, there would be little evidence that brand equity is present (Ioannou & Rusu, 2012:347).

Initially, consumers will purchase the brand for a trial period and if they are sufficiently satisfied with the brand, they will continue to purchase the brand (Ioannou & Rusu,

2012:347. Brand loyalty therefore refers to the brand attitude of consumers in their intention to repurchase the brand, as well as their willingness to pay a premium price for the preferred product or service (Fayrene & Lee, 2011: 39; Horng, 2012:817). Fundamentally, brand loyalty is influenced, and to an extent, increased if high levels of brand awareness are experienced, accompanied by a positive brand image (Keller, 1993:8). The premise behind this is the learning which emphasises that only a particular brand can satisfy the specific needs that consumers undergo (Tuominen, 1999:80).

There are two approaches to brand loyalty within the current marketing literature:

- The **behavioural approach,** which views consistent purchasing of one brand over a period of time as an indication of brand loyalty.

- The **cognitive approach,** which underlines that behaviour alone does not reflect brand loyalty, and that commitment to a brand may not be reflected by just measuring continuous behaviour.

By taking the above into account, brand loyalty can reflect a range from the habitual buyer (behavioural approach) to those consumers that are truly committed to the brand (cognitive approach) (Tuominen, 1999:80). The value that lies in brand loyalty is generated mainly by reducing the brand's marketing costs, as retaining existing consumers is generally considered to be less costly that sourcing new ones (Lassar *et al.*, 1995:11; Tuominen, 1999:80). In addition, satisfied consumers are less likely to be persuaded by competitors' messages, because they have little motivation to learn about new brands that might satisfy their needs in a similar manner. Research has also shown that loyal consumers may entice new consumers to purchase the brand by using or advocating the brand (Aaker, 1992:30).

Brand loyalty is an extremely complex occurrence, as at least seven different types of brand loyalty are found:

- **Emotional loyalty** allows for the creation of a strong emotional bond with the brand through unique, memorable and reinforcing experiences. When positive emotional loyalty occurs, consumers generally engage in positive word-of-mouth (Tuominen, 1999:80).

- When the brand is used as an expression of the consumer's self-image, **identity loyalty** is evident. Often the brand will be used to bolster self-esteem and to manage impressions of the consumer.

- **Differentiated loyalty** bases brand loyalty on the perceived superior features and attributes of the brand.

- Consumers may also choose to be loyal to a brand to ensure preferential treatment, this is known as **contract loyalty.**

- **Switching cost loyalty** boils down to the premise that the cost of switching to an alternative brand is too high for the consumer, hence, loyalty is only secured because it requires less effort to stay with the specific brand. Often, with this type of loyalty, consumers may even be dissatisfied with their chosen brand, but will remain loyal in spite of their dissatisfaction. Competitors can easily undermine this sort of loyalty by making it easier to switch to their own brands (Tuominen, 1999:80).

- The type of brand loyalty that results in top-of-mind awareness is **familiarity loyalty,** which needs to be defended constantly by providing advertisements that build this type of awareness.

- **Convenience loyalty** is based on buying convenience which can easily be attacked by competitors.

From the above, it can be concluded that some types of brand loyalty are easily influenced, as they are superficially maintained by buying convenience or ease of recall (Tuominen, 1999:81).

The brand loyalty of the consumer base often forms the core of brand equity and reflects how likely a consumer will switch to another brand, given that the other brand makes a change in either price or product features (Tuominen, 1999:81). The likelihood of the consumer base switching to an alternative brand decreases as brand loyalty increases (Aaker, 1991:39-41). This is however subject to the level of loyalty the consumer base exhibits.

It is thus clear that the brand loyalty of existing consumers is an important strategic asset that contributes not only to brand equity, but also to the overall marketing strategy. Brand loyalty reduces the cost of marketing and provides leverage over

competitors in the distribution channel. Loyal consumers in turn can create brand awareness and reassurance to new consumers (Tuominen, 1999:81). Brand awareness then also plays an important role in brand equity.

3.5.1.2   *Brand awareness*

Brand awareness is the ability of a potential buyer to recognise or recall that a brand is part of a specific product category (Tuominen, 1999:82; Huang & Sarigöllü, 2012:92), and forms the first dimension when distinguishing brand knowledge (Keller, 1993:3), which precedes building brand equity (Huang & Sarigöllü, 2012:92). It therefore relates to the strength of the brand trace in the memory of the consumer, as reflected in the ability to identify the brand under a different set of conditions (Keller, 1993:3; Bodet & Chanavat, 2010:57).

In addition, brand awareness makes the link between product class and the brand. Brand awareness is able to provide a learning advantage for the brand, and affects consumer decision-making, especially for low-involvement packaged goods (Huang & Sarigöllü, 2012:92). Consumers are more likely to include a brand in their decision set if they know of the brand. Therefore, the conclusion can be reached that brand awareness can increase the brand's market performance (Huang & Sarigöllü, 2012:92).

Brand awareness is built by repeatedly exposing consumers to the brand and linking the brand to product categories, purchases, and usage and consumption situations. In order to create a positive brand image, a strong, favourable and unique association is required for the brand (Tuominen, 1999:76). Brand awareness is noted on a continuum that ranges from an uncertain feeling in recognising the brand to the firm belief that it is the only brand in the product category (Tuominen, 1999:82). Brand awareness is then, in essence, the likelihood that a brand name will come to mind and the ease with which it does so (Keller, 1993:2; Bodet & Chavanat, 2010:57).

Brand awareness is valuable to the marketer for several reasons. For example, it provides the anchor to which other associations of the brand can be linked, as recognition of the brand breeds familiarity, and familiarity leads to trust (Tuominen, 1999:82).

Studies have found that brand awareness, which is based on previous consumer experiences, is more important than other experiences for consumers when

determining overall satisfaction with the product or service (Horng, 2012:817). As such, it is an important antecedent of customer value, which translates into a positive relationship between perceived value and future behavioural intentions (Boo in Horng, 2012:817).

Brand awareness is usually characterised by looking at the depth and the breadth of a consumer's awareness of the brand. The depth of brand awareness refers to the likelihood that the brand can be recognised or recalled by consumers (Keller, 2006:548). The breadth of brand awareness relates to the variety of purchases and consumption situations during which the brand comes to mind (Tuominen, 1999:76; Keller, 2006:548). Brand awareness can be assessed by making use of various aided and unaided memory measures. These can be applied to test brand recognition and recall (Keller, 2006:549).

- **Recognition**

Brand recognition relates to consumers' ability to confirm prior exposure to the brand when the brand is given as a cue, and is the lowest level of brand awareness (Keller, 1993:2). This level of brand awareness is generally considered more important if the purchasing decision occurs at the point-of-sale.

Recognition processes require that consumers are able to distinguish some kind of stimuli (a word, object or image) as something they have previously seen. It relates to consumers' ability to identify the brand under a variety of circumstances and can also involve the identification of brand elements. In its simplest sense, recognition procedure will give consumers a set of single items, either visually or orally, for identification from previous exposure. To make the test more sensitive, it is often advisable to include some decoys which the consumer could not have possibly seen.

By applying this type of measure of brand recognition, marketers can determine which brand elements exist in memory, and to a certain extent, the strength of the association. It should be noted though that recognition only provides an approximation as to the potential recallability. The organisation will have to make use of brand recall measures to determine whether the brand elements will actually be recalled under various circumstances.

- **Recall**

Brand recall relates to consumers' ability to identify the brand under a variety of circumstances. Consumers must retrieve the actual brand element from memory when given some related probe or cue. It is therefore a more demanding memory task than brand recognition, as consumers are just given the brand element and asked to identify it as something they have previously seen.

Different measures of brand recall are available, depending on the type of cues provided to the consumer. Unaided recall on the basis of all brands provided as a cue is likely to identify only the strongest brand in the market. Aided recall uses various types of cues to help the consumer recall. One way in which to gain insight into the organisation of consumers' brand knowledge structures is to use progressively narrowly defined cues, for example, product class, product category and product type labels. Other recall cues include the basis of product attributes or usage goals. Brand recall can further be distinguished, apart from correctly being recalled, according to order, latency or speed of recall. In many cases, most consumers will be able to identify the brand when given enough cues. The bigger issue is the salience of the brand which relates to consumers thinking of the brand under the right circumstances.

Therefore, it is evident that brand awareness is related to the strength of the brand in the consumer's memory. This is reflected by consumers' ability to identify various brand elements, such as the logo or symbol, under different conditions. The likelihood that the brand will come to mind and the ease with which it does when given different types of cues is measured. This can be done by using several measures. The appropriate measure will depend on the relative importance of brand awareness for consumer behaviour in the specific category, and the role it plays in ensuring a successful marketing programme for the brand. For brands where decision-making occurs away from the point-of-sale, as is often the case with sport events, it will be important to measure brand recall.

3.5.1.3 *Perceived quality*

Perceived quality can be defined as the consumer's perception of the overall quality or superiority of the brand compared to competitors (Tuominen, 1999:83; Fayrene & Lee, 2011:38). It is the consumer's judgement that results from comparisons made between the consumer's expectations and the perception of the service that was

rendered (Fayrene & Lee, 2011:38; Horng *et al.*, 2012:817) and provides the consumer with a fundamental reason to purchase the brand (Ioannou & Rusu, 2012:347. It should be evident that perceived quality is difficult to determine objectively due to its unique nature.

Despite this, it remains valuable as it provides a pivotal reason to purchase the brand and justifies the charging of a premium price (Tuominen, 1999:83; Ioannou & Rusu, 2012:347). Price premiums are especially valuable for a company, as they can increase profits and provide an additional stream of revenue which can be used for investment purposes.

Perceived quality is also meaningful to intermediaries as it aids in gaining distribution privileges. In addition, perceived quality can be exploited by introducing brand extensions through the use of the brand name (and the associated quality) to enter new product categories. If the brand is considered to be strong regarding perceived quality, it will be able to extend further and achieve a higher success rate than its weaker counterparts (Tuominen, 1999:83).

3.5.1.4   *Brand associations*

A brand association is any mental linkage with a brand, and may include product attributes, customer benefits, uses, lifestyles, product classes, competitors and countries of origin. It represents the links that exist within a consumer's mind concerning the brand (Fayrene & Lee, 2011:36; Doyle *et al.*, 2013:285) and will consist of anything that is linked in the consumer's memory to the brand, influencing brand evaluations (Bianchi *et al.*, 2014:217). . Brand associations are often regarded as a key predictor to brand loyalty (Doyle *et al.*, 2013:285). This is because brand associations help consumers to determine the perceived attractiveness of the brand, consequently boosting the brand's salience and likelihood of consumption (Doyle *et al.*, 2013:288).

Research has shown that the more associations a consumer holds of a brand, the more likely the brand will be selected for purchase, and the more loyal the consumer will become (Doyle *et al.*, 2013:288). Brand associations are important as they affect the processing and recall of information, provide a point of differentiation, provide purchasing motivation, create positive feelings and attitudes and serve as the basis of extensions (Tuominen, 1999:83). Moreover, well-established brands provide

associations that can influence purchase behaviour and affect user satisfaction. Where the associations themselves are not that important, they still serve to assure consumers, thereby reducing the incentive to try other brands.

Brand associations come in many different forms, and as such, many different dimensions exist. It is therefore useful to distinguish between lower-level considerations related to consumer perceptions of specific attributes and benefits, and higher-level considerations related to consumer responses and their judgements and feelings toward the brand.

Lower-level considerations refer to the descriptive thoughts a person may have of the brand and includes the beliefs they have of the brand. Higher-level considerations generally relate to what the brand means to the consumer. The meaning attached to the brand, which forms part of brand association, can be established either through direct contact with the brand, or indirectly via advertising or other consumers.

The level abstraction is often used to distinguish among brand associations and entails the amount of information that is contained in the association. This level can be further divided into three major types of increasing scope as depicted in Figure 3.3.
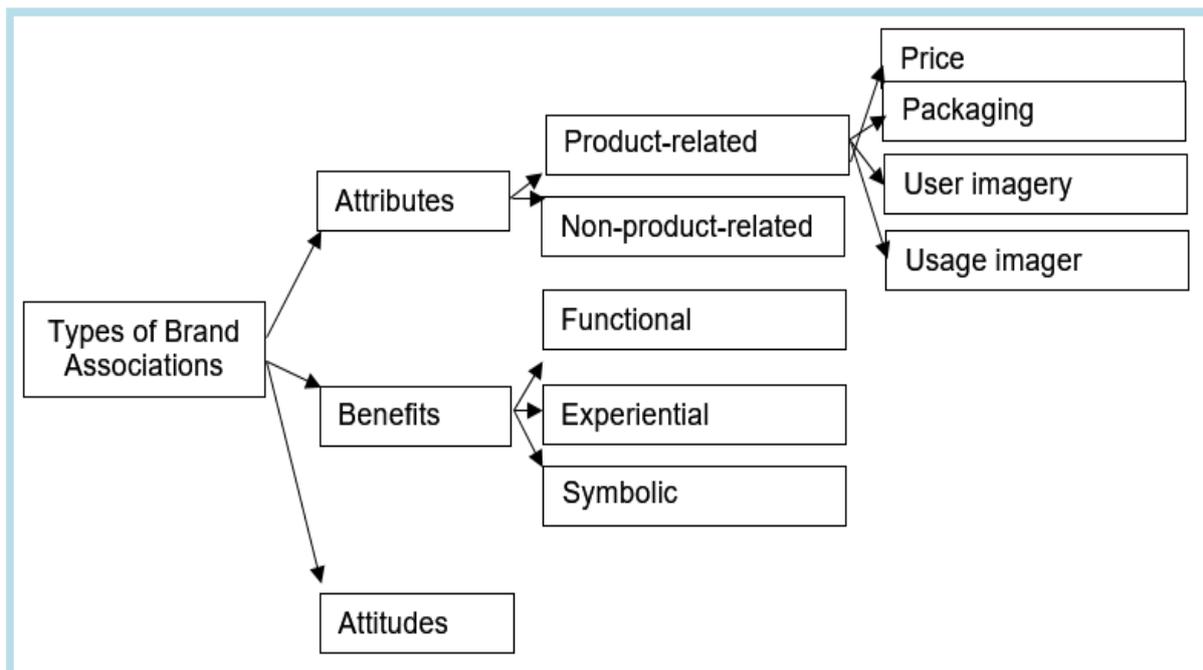
Figure 3.3: **The types of brand associations**
Source: Keller (1993:7); Tuominen (1999:84)

These types of brand association are discussed next.

- *Brand attributes*

Attributes are considered to be those descriptive features that characterise a product or a service (Keller, 1993:4). In the simplest sense, brand attributes are what a consumer thinks the product or service actually is and what it entails when the product or service is purchased or consumed (Keller, 1993:4).

Attributes are mainly categorised according to how they relate to the product or service performance. Product-related attributes are defined as the elements that are required to perform the primary product or service function sought by consumers and they relate to the physical composition or requirements for the brand (Keller, 1993:4; Tuominen, 1999:84). The nature and level of product performance are determined by these attributes as they relate to the physical composition of the product or requirements for the service. This will depend on the product or service category being evaluated (Keller, 1993:4).

Non-product attributes relate to the external aspects that may affect the purchase or consumption process but do not directly affect the product performance (Tuominen, 1999:84). The four main types of non-product related attributes are price information, packaging or product appearance information, user imagery and usage imagery. The price of a product or service is considered to be a non-product attribute because it represents a necessary step in the purchase process but is not intrinsically related to the product performance. The same applies to packaging, as in most cases, it does not directly relate to the necessary 'ingredients' for product performance. User and usage imagery are formed directly from a consumer's own experiences and contact with the brand.

- *Brand benefits*

Brand benefits are the personal values and meaning that consumers attach to the product or service, and are basically what consumers think the brand can do for them (Keller, 1993:4). It can be divided into three categories based on the underlying motivations to which they relate: functional, experiential or symbolic benefits (Keller, 1993:4; Tuominen, 1999:84).

- Functional benefits are the intrinsic advantages of using the brand and usually correspond with the product-related attributes, driven by fairly basic motivations

such as physiological or safety needs (Tuominen, 1999:85), and involve the desire for problem removal or problem avoidance (Keller, 1993:4).

- Experiential benefits refer to what is experienced during consumption and correspond with both product and non-product-related attributes, satisfying experiential needs such as sensory pleasure and variety (Tuominen, 1999:85) and cognitive stimulation (Keller, 1993:4).

- Symbolic benefits refer to the extrinsic advantages of using the brand and relate to non-product related attributes, satisfying more complex needs such as social approval or self-expression (Tuominen, 1999:85). Symbolic benefits are especially relevant for socially visible products where consumers value the prestige, exclusivity or fashionability of the brand as it relates to their self-concept (Tuominen, 1999:85). This type of benefit is especially relevant to those types of brands that are considered to be socially visible, 'badge' products (Keller, 1993:4).

- ***Brand attitudes***

Brand attitudes are defined in terms of the consumer's overall evaluation of the brand, and are important as they often form the basis for actions and behaviour that consumers expect from the brand (Tuominen, 1999:85). Brand attributes are dependent on specific considerations regarding the attributes and benefits offered by the brand. The most widely accepted approach to determining brand attitudes is based on a multi-attribute formulation where brand attitudes is a function of the salient beliefs a consumer has about the product or service and the evaluative judgement of those beliefs (Keller, 1993:5). As such, brand attitudes can relate to both product-related attributes and non-related product attributes.

The different types of brand associations vary according to their favourability, strength and uniqueness and the success of a marketing programme is reflected in the creation of favourable brand associations (Tuominen, 1999:86). The strength of brand associations depends on how the information is absorbed as part of the consumer's memory and how it is maintained as part of the brand. The strength of the association therefore not only depends on the quantity of information that is processed, but also on the quality of the information that is processed (Keller, 1993:5).

Although the brand may or may not share brand associations with other competing brands, the essence of brand positioning remains that the brand must have a sustainable competitive advantage that provides a compelling reason to purchase that particular brand (Keller, 1993:6). It is crucial to brand success that strong, favourable associations are unique to the brand and imply superiority over other brands (Tuominen, 1999:86). It is therefore important for marketing managers to know which attributes are important to consumers so as to avoid creating positive associations for unimportant attributes.

The favourability and strength of a brand association can be affected by other brand associations held in the consumer's memory (Tuominen, 1999:86). Congruence is defined as the extent to which brand associations share content and meaning with each other (Tuominen, 1999:86). The congruence among brand associations determines the cohesiveness of the brand image, which in turn may determine consumers' more holistic reactions towards the brand (Keller). Secondary brand associations then occur when the brand association itself is linked to other memorised information that is not directly related to the product or service and, as the brand becomes identified with this other entity, consumers may infer that the brand shares associations with that entity, resulting in indirect links for the brand (Tuominen, 1999:86).

Secondary associations may occur from associations related to the company, the country of origin, the distribution channel, a celebrity spokesperson or even an event. Brand associations may then involve factual sources (companies, countries of origin or distribution channels) or user and usage situation attributes (spokespersons or events).

Secondary brand associations become important if existing brand associations are deficient in some way, and can be leveraged to create favourable, strong and unique associations that might not have been possible in any other way (Tuominen, 1999:87).

3.5.1.5   Other proprietary brand assets

The last contributing factor to brand equity involves the proprietary brand assets of the organisation. These include patents, trademarks and channel inter-relations which ultimately provide protection for the organisation (Ioannou & Rusu, 2012:347). While this type of asset is useful in preventing competitors from attacking the organisation,

it may also assist in maintaining customer loyalty and adds to the competitive advantage of the organisation.

3.5.2   Keller's framework – brand equity from a psychological perspective

Brand equity may be viewed from a **psychological foundation,** as indicated by the framework developed by **Keller** in 1993 (Menictas *et al.*, 2012:3). Keller defined brand equity as the differential effect that **brand knowledge** has on the consumer response to the marketing of that brand (Zarantonello & Schmitt, 2013:258).

Brand knowledge then affects how consumers respond to products, prices, communications, channels and other marketing activities (Keller, 2006:547; Wiedmann *et al.*, 2018:106). This process then either increases or decreases the brand value. It is important to note that brand knowledge does not relate to the facts about a brand, but encompasses subjective thoughts, feelings, perceptions, images and experiences that become linked to the brand in the consumer's mind (Keller, 2006:547).

Brand knowledge consists of several elements, as depicted in Figure 3.4.
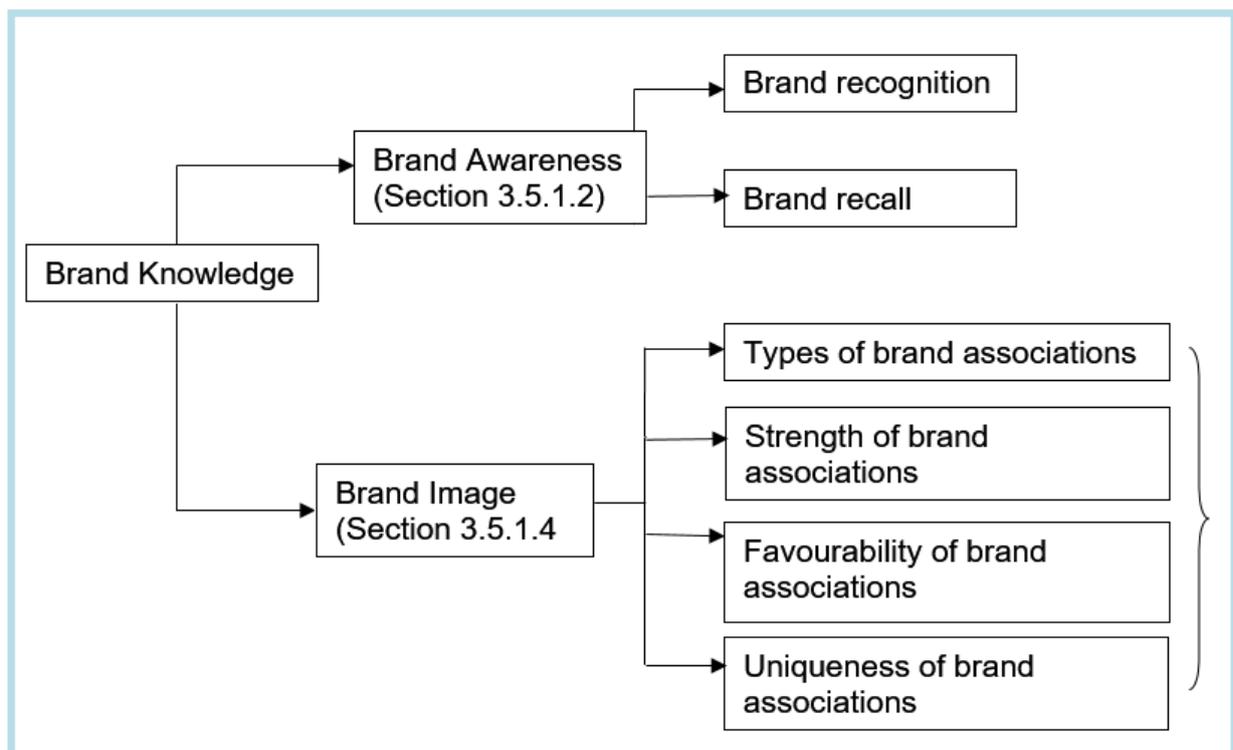
Figure 3.4: The elements of brand knowledge

Source: Tuominen (1999:77)

Brand knowledge comprises of **brand awareness,** which relates to consumers' ability to recognise or recall the brand under different conditions (refer to Section 3.5.1.2) (Keller, 2006:548; Fayrene & Lee, 2011:36; Ioannou & Rusu, 2012:346), and **brand image** which consists of consumers' perceptions and associations of the brand (Tuominen, 1999:76), as well as their preferences for a brand (Keller, 2006:548).

Brand awareness primarily consists of **brand recognition** which reflects the ability of consumers to confirm previous exposure to the brand, and **brand recall** which reflects the ability of consumers to retrieve the brand when given specific cues, such as the product category or the needs that will be fulfilled by the product (Tuominen, 1999:76; Gerke *et al.*, 2014:175). Therefore, brand recall is seen as active brand awareness, and brand recognition as passive brand awareness (Bauer *et al.*, 2005:498). Refer to Section 3.5.1.2 where these concepts are described in more detail.

The second determinant of brand knowledge, **brand image**, is defined as the consumer's perceptions of a brand, as reflected by the associations the particular consumer has of the brand (Tuominen, 1999:76; Bauer *et al.*, 2005:498), which is in turn defined by the brand's attributes and benefits, and the consumer's attitude towards those elements (Gerke *et al.*, 2014:175). Brand image can be seen as the accrual of impressions that affect how a brand is perceived, including elements that identify or distinguish the brand from others, the personality of the brand, and the benefits it promises to consumers. It is then evident that brand image in itself is largely subjective, as it is based on perceptions which are formed through consumer interpretation, whether emotional or rational (Tuominen, 1999:77). Brand image can be assessed through a variety of qualitative and quantitative approaches.

Associations held for brand image range along a number of different dimensions and include strength, positivity, uniqueness and abstractness (Keller, 2006:548) (refer to Section 3.5.1.4).

A summary of Keller's approach to brand equity is provided in Table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1: Keller's approach to brand equity

Construct	Measure(s)	Purpose of Measure(s)
Brand Awareness		
Recall	Correct identification of brand, given product category or some other type of probe as cue	Capture 'top of mind' accessibility of brand in memory
Recognition	Correct discrimination of brand, as having been previously seen or heard	Capture potential retrieve ability or availability of brand in memory
Brand image *Characteristics of brand associations*		
Type	Free association tasks, projective techniques, depth interviews	Provide insight into nature of brand associations
Favourability	Ratings of evaluations of associations	Assess key dimensions of producing differential consumer response
Strength	Ratings of belief of associations	Assess key dimensions of producing differential consumer response
Relationships among brand associations		
Uniqueness	Compare characteristics of associations with those of competitors (indirect measure) Ask consumers what they consider to be the unique aspects of the brand (direct measure)	Provide insight into the extent to which brand associations are not shared with other brands, assess key dimensions producing differential consumer response
Congruence	Compare patterns of associations across consumers (indirect measure) Ask consumers conditional expectations about associations (direct measure)	Provide insight into the extent to which brand associations are shared, affecting their favourability, strength of uniqueness
Leverage	Compare characteristics of secondary associations with those for a primary brand association (indirect measure) Ask consumers directly what inferences they would make about the brand based on the primary brand association (direct measure)	Provide insight into the extent to which brand associations of a particular person, place, event, company, product class are linked to other associations, producing secondary associations for the brand.

Source: Keller (1993:14)

Brand equity may be viewed from another perspective that is based on the signalling theory used in information economics (Erdem & Swait, 1998:132).

3.5.3 Erdem and Swait's framework – brand equity from an information economics point of view

Erdem and Swait (1996) developed a brand equity framework which is based on **information economics and the signalling theory** (Menictas *et al.*, 2012:3). This theory is based on a formal theory about consumer decision processes which explains how various brand equity constructs are related in such a manner that brand utility and brand choice may be created (Menictas *et al.*, 2012:3). This framework consists of seven constructs: brand investments, consistency, clarity, credibility, perceived quality, perceived risk and information costs saved. According to this framework, the clarity and credibility of brands, as signals of product positions, increase perceived quality, reduce the consumer's perceived risk and information costs, which ultimately lead to an increase in consumer expected utility (Menictas *et al.*, 2012:4). Since the development of the theory in the 1990s, it has remained fairly unchanged with the main literature on the theory being contributed by the original authors.

The brand equity framework provides an information economics perspective on the value that is ascribed to brands by consumers (Erdem & Swait, 1998:131). The main difference between the signalling theory and other theories which are based primarily on cognitive psychology, is that it motivates the role of credibility as the primary determinant of CBBE (Erdem & Swait, 1998:131). The theory maintains that, when consumers are uncertain about product attributes, organisations may make use of brands to inform consumers, in a credible manner, about product positions. Market signals improve consumer perceptions about brand attribute levels and increase the consumer's confidence in the claims that are made by the brand (Erdem & Swait, 1998:131).

A large variety of market signals have been identified, and the most common signals that were investigated when it comes to the consumer, include advertising, warranties or retailer choice, as quality signals (Erdem & Swait, 1998:132). This approach to brand equity is said to be unique, and in some arguments, more accurate in that it takes the imperfect and symmetrical informational structure of the market into account when looking at brand equity. This approach stresses the role of credibility as the main

determinant of CBBE, and as such, is defined as the value of the brand signal to the consumers (Erdem & Swait, 1998:132). This perspective on brand equity then focuses on the brand's signal credibility and the impact it has on consumer utility. This impact is derived from the reduction of perceived risk and information acquisition costs, over and above that due to increased perceived quality (Erdem & Swait, 1998:133).

It is evident from this framework that CBBE is not necessarily associated with only 'high-quality' products, and that equity rather hinges on the credibility of quality claims.

As this framework is based on information economics principles, the reduction in perceived risk and information costs, which can be attributed to the brand, represents the antecedents to brand equity.

With psychological frameworks, such as the one presented by Keller, these aspects are seen as the consequences of brand equity (Erden & Swait, 1998:133). According to the psychological frameworks, brand equity must thus first exist before perceived risk and information costs are reduced, whereas the information economics framework states that these reductions drive brand equity.

The signalling framework then also proposes that brand loyalty is a consequence of brand equity, as the increased expected utility should motivate consumers to continually buy the same subset of brand. This is in contrast to the psychological framework where brand loyalty is seen as a component of brand equity (Erdem & Swait, 1998:133).

The brand equity model proposed by Erdem and Swait (1998:136) is depicted in Figure 3.5 below.
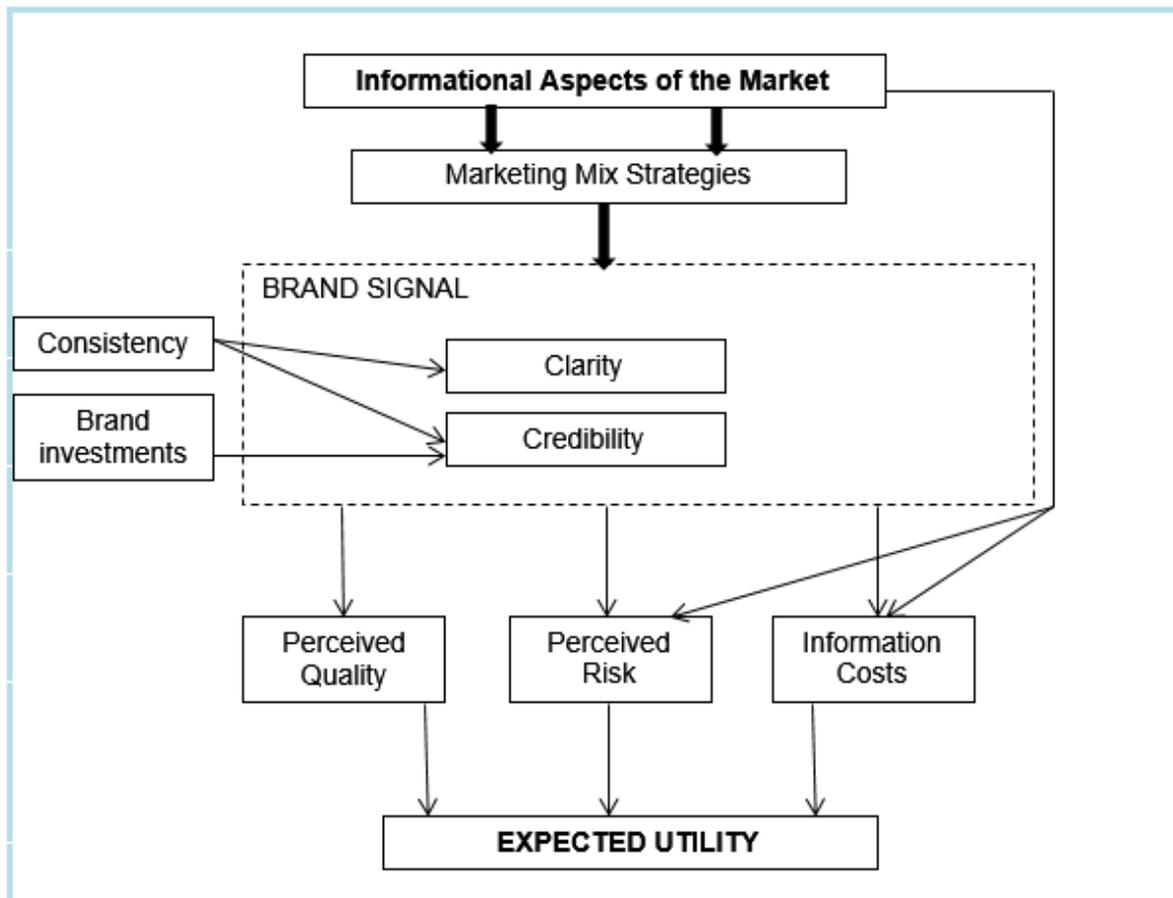
Figure 3.5: Conceptual framework for brand equity based on the signalling theory
Source: Erdem & Swait (1998:136)

To conclude, the signalling theory maintains, in contrast to the other main theories on brand equity, that credibility is the key element in brand equity formation, and not brand associations and image (Erdem & Swait, 1998:152). The signalling perspective thus focuses on the market process by which credibility is created and describes the factors that determine this process. Value is created by reducing information cost and perceived risk which underly CBBE. Brand loyalty then becomes a consequence of brand equity, rather than an antecedent, as usage experience which is consistent with product claims, increases the brand signal credibility.

The signalling theory maintains that organisations should communicate to consumers that they are committed to their brands, and this may be accomplished by emphasising the resources the organisation spends to establish and support its brand's credibility as an information source (Erdem & Swait, 1998:153). Organisations should strive to avoid intentional and unintentional discrepancies between promised and actual product offerings to avoid eroding the credibility of their brands. By providing

consistent product claims that are related to consumers' experiences with the brand, the credibility of the organisation's product claims is reinforced, which will enhance brand equity. Maintaining brand equity requires consistency within and across the marketing mix, and it is important for individual brand claims and brand attribute levels to remain consistent over time.

In efforts to measure CBBE, researchers have proposed a slightly different approach than what has been discussed in the section above.

3.6 MEASURING CONSUMER-BASED BRAND EQUITY

Two approaches to specifically measuring CBBE will be discussed below. The two approaches were developed by Lassar *et al.* (1995) and Keller (2009).

3.6.1 Lassar *et al.*'s five dimensions scale

Lassar *et al.* (1995:14) developed a preliminary scale to measure CBBE which included an adaptation of the original five dimensions proposed by Aaker (as previously discussed). They argued that 'performance' should be viewed in the totality of the physical 'job' a product does. In addition, the reference of the image dimension to the social dimensions was limited. The intention of this new approach was to measure the perceptual dimensions of CBBE, and as such, a distinction was made between commitment as a feeling versus commitment as an action (Lassar *et al.*, 1995:13).

The dimensions they included in their scale were as follows (Lassar *et al.*, 1995:14):

- Performance – the brand should ultimately perform the functions for which it was designed and purchased. If it does not perform as promised, consumers would not purchase the brand and low levels of CBBE would be evident.

- Social image – adds value by creating a social reputation associated with owning or using the brand. Social image contributes more to CBBE in product categories that are socially visible, such as designer clothes.

- Price/value – the consumer's choice of brand depends on a perceived balance between the price of a product and all its utilities. Some brands will have a higher brand equity because of their price value.

- Trustworthiness – consumers place high value in the brands that they trust. Similarly, should a brand be prone to distrust, low CBBE will be evident.

- Identification/attachment – consumers often identify with the brand and develop sentimental attachments to the brand.

The five dimensions measure a total of 17 scale items, including aspects such as levels of defectiveness, personality matching, price, levels of care, and positive personal feelings toward the brand. Lassar *et al.* (1995:16) also found that organisations will need to manage all of the elements if they are to build positive CBBE.

It was found that if consumers evaluated a brand as performing well, an expectation was created that the brand also had high levels of value or was extremely trustworthy. However, if the brand failed on only a single dimension, the ratings of the other dimensions decreased as well.

3.6.2   Keller's direct, indirect and comprehensive approach

According to Keller's research (1993), two basic approaches can be used to measure CBBE: the 'indirect' approach which measures brand knowledge (comprises of brand awareness and brand image) and the 'direct' approach which measures the impact of brand knowledge on consumer responses to the different elements of the marketing programme (Keller, 1993:12). Keller refined the model further so that a comprehensive new approach to CBBE was developed in 2001. More details are supplied on Keller's models below.

3.6.2.1   The indirect approach

The first approach an organisation can use to measure CBBE measures brand knowledge, which requires the measurement of brand awareness, as well as the characteristics and relationships among the different brand associations (Keller, 1993:12). Multiple measures must be used to ensure that the multidimensional nature of brand knowledge is captured, instead of just one particular aspect (Keller, 1993:12). (These measures were discussed in detail in Section 3.5.1 above.)

3.6.2.2   The direct approach

The direct approach to measuring CBBE is much more complex, as it strives to directly measure the effects of brand knowledge on consumer responses to the marketing for

the brand (Keller, 1993:13). To do so, experiments are created to distinguish between groups of consumers: one group will typically respond to an element of the marketing programme when it is attributed to the brand and another group of consumers will respond to the same element when it is attributed to either a fictional brand or an unbranded version of the product (Keller, 1993:13). The classic example of this approach is the 'blind' test where consumers evaluate a product on the basis of a description, examination or actual consumption, either with or without brand attribution. As this type of methodology falls outside the scope of this research project, it will not be discussed in detail here.

3.6.2.3 *The comprehensive approach*

Keller (2009:143) revised the brand equity model discussed in Section 3.5.2, so as to allow for the building of brands according to consumer knowledge structures. According to this CBBE model, brands are built by using an ascending series of steps (Keller, 2009:143; Yousaf *et al.*, 2017:124):

- Step 1: Ensuring identification of the brand with consumers and an association of the brand in consumers' minds with a specific product class.

- Step 2: Firmly establishing the totality of brand meaning in the minds of consumers by strategically linking a host of tangible and intangible brand associations.

- Step 3: Eliciting the proper consumer response in terms of brand-related judgements and feelings.

- Step 4: Converting brand response to creating an intense, active loyalty relationship between customers and the brand.

The aforementioned steps then result in a pyramid of six brand building blocks which emphasise the duality of brands. The model reflects both the rational route to brand building, as well as the emotional route (Keller, 2009:143). In order to create significant brand equity, the top of the pyramid must be reached, which can only occur if the right building blocks are put into place. The building blocks are explained below (Keller, 2009:143; Yousaf *et al.*, 2017:124):

- **Brand salience** refers to how easily and often consumers think of the brand when they are in specific purchase or consumption situations. By making use of

interactive marketing, both the breadth and the depth of brand awareness can be improved. The Internet especially offers the unique option to target potentially difficult-to-reach groups, facilitating brand awareness for online consumers. Another key advantage of using interactive media to promote salience is that consumers can be reached while they seek information, thereby heightening awareness at potential purchasing opportunities.

- **Brand performance** relates to how well the product or service meets the consumer's functional needs. Interactive marketing may be used to create a number of key performance parity and difference points when comparing the brand to competitors. Websites allow organisations to provide much details and supporting documentations for marketing claims and can convey rich accounts of history and experiences, something that ties in strongly with brand imagery. Although the specific performance attributes will differ depending on the product category, five important types of attribute which underlie brand performance can be measured as follows (Keller, 2006:556):

  o **Primary characteristics and supplementary features.** Consumers will often have their own set of beliefs about the levels at which the primary characteristics of the product operate.

  o **Product reliability, durability and serviceability.** Reliability refers to the consistency of performance over a period of time, with specific reference to repurchase situations. Durability relates to the expected economic life of the product. Serviceability refers to how easy it is to obtain after-sales service, such as repairs.

  o **Service effectiveness, efficiency and empathy.** Service effectiveness is measured by determining how completely the brand satisfies customers' service expectation. Service efficiency relates to the speed and responsiveness with which the service is delivered. Empathy is seen as the manner in which service providers are seen as trusting and caring.

  o **Style and design**. Consumers may have associations of the product that stretch beyond its functional aspects towards more aesthetic considerations, such as size, shape, materials and colour. Performance may, in addition, depend on sensory aspects as to how the product should look, feel, or sometimes even, smell.

- o **Price.** The pricing policy for the brand is able to create strong associations in consumers' minds.

- **Brand imagery** describes the extrinsic properties of the product or service and includes ways in which the brand attempts to meet psychological and social needs. Interactive marketing allows for the creation of a brand personality by not only its tone, but also the creative content it can provide. Brand imagery relates to brand meaning and deals mainly with the extrinsic properties of the product or service. It attempts to identify the manner in which the brand attempts to meet consumers' more psychological or social needs. Brand imagery can be best described as how consumers abstractly think about a brand, rather than what the brand actually does. Therefore, the intangible aspects of the brand come into play when looking at brand imagery. Five categories are measured when looking at brand imagery (Keller, 2006:556):

  - o **User profiles.** The type of person or organisation who uses the brand. This perceived user profile of a brand may result in a mental image by consumers of actual users or more aspirational users.

  - o **Purchase situations.** Describes under what conditions the brand is bought and consumed. Associations with the typical purchase situation may be based on the type of channel, the specific story, ease of purchase or the associated rewards of purchasing the brand.

  - o **Usage situations.** Associations of a typical usage situation may be based on a number of considerations such as the particular time (weekly, monthly, yearly), location to use the brand, or the type of activity where the brand is used.

  - o **Personality and values.** Brands are able to take on personality traits and values, and are often related to more descriptive usage imagery.

  - o **History, heritage and experiences.** Brands can extend associations to their past and events in the brand's history. This type of association relates to personal experiences or the past behaviour and experiences of reference groups.

- **Brand judgements** are concerned with the consumers' personal opinions and evaluations of the brand. Attitude formations and decision-making can be

encouraged with the use of interactive marketing communications, especially if they are used in conjunction with off-line channels.

- **Brand feelings** deal with the consumers' emotional responses and reactions with respect to the brand. Significant experiential and enduring feelings can be created through the use of sights, sounds and motion that can easily be provided by interactive marketing media.

- **Brand resonance** reflects the nature of the relationship consumers have with the brand and the extent to which they feel connected to the brand. Brand resonance is more easily created with interactive marketing communications, as it provides a platform for frequent encounters and opportunities for feedback. Attachment may be significantly strengthened when the consumer has this type of interaction with the brand. Brand communities are also easily encouraged through the use of blogs and bulletin boards. Active engagement is created, as consumers are able to interact with other consumers, enabling them to learn about the brand and observe the brand loyalty of other consumers.

The building blocks are depicted in Figure 3.6 below.
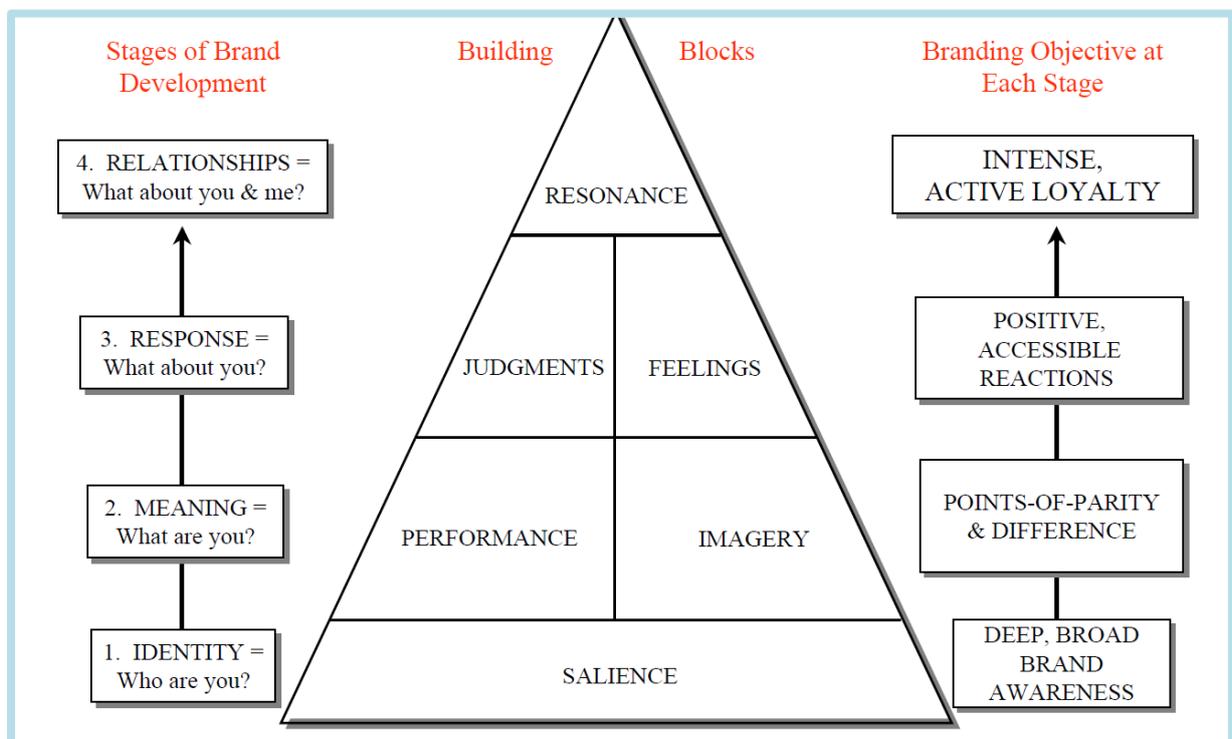
Figure 3.6: CBBE model pyramid

Source: Keller, (2009:144)

The pinnacle of this model is the creation of brand resonance which is the intensity or the depth of the psychological bond that consumers have with the brand (Keller, 2009:144). It reflects the level of activity engendered by this type of loyalty and consists of four dimensions (Keller, 2009:145):

- **Behavioural loyalty** which reflects consumers' repeat purchases and the amount of category volume that may be attributed to the brand.

- **Attitudinal attachment** where consumers view the brand as something special within a broader context.

- **Sense of community** occurs when consumers feel a sense of kinship or affiliation with other people that are associated with the brand.

- **Active engagement** that indicates consumers are willing to invest personal resources such as money, time and energy on the brand. This expenditure goes beyond those resources used during the purchase or consumption of the brand.

Once intense active loyalty has been cultivated, the brand has reached a level where brand equity has become evident.

3.7 CONCLUSION

Brands have been around for many years and have evolved from a simplistic way of differentiating wine barrels, to a complex structure which adds value for consumers and organisations alike. Various attempts and approaches have been identified over the years, most notable were the models proposed by Aaker (1991), Keller (1993) and Erdem and Swait (1998), which addressed the concept of brand equity from various viewpoints.

The idea of looking at the differential value a brand can add for the consumer, cumulated in the concept of consumer-based brand equity (CBBE) which was discussed in this chapter by looking at the model created by Lassar *et al.*, as well as Keller's revised CBBE pyramid model.

The next chapter will focus specifically on branding in the sport industry, as well as introducing the proposed CBCPBE model for RCPA sport events.

CHAPTER 4:
WORKING TOWARDS A CBCPBE MODEL FOR RCPA SPORT EVENTS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The globalisation of the sport industry has been a dominating trend since the 1980s and it is still continuing up to the present time (Vahdati *et al.*, 2013:681; Gerke, Chavanat & Benson-Rea, 2014:174). In addition, sport has also become increasingly commercialised and sport entities are undergoing the process of professionalisation (Vahdati *et al.*, 2013:681). This trend has had a significant impact on the management of sport, especially sport events, sport sponsorships, sport media, as well as sporting goods firms (Gerke *et al.*, 2014:174). As such, brand management has become an important point of focus for sport organisations, mainly due to the globalisation of sport increasing the competiveness of the market, and brands offer an enticing option to differentiate the competing sport products (Vahdati *et al.*, 2013:681; Gerke *et al.*, 2014:174).

It has been found that the provision of unique and memorable experiences to consumers, such as those sport consumers have during their sport encounters, requires the establishment of a positive relationship with the sport brand (Vahdati *et al.*, 2013:682; Wiedmann *et al.*, 2018:101). In addition, sport organisations must become progressive service sellers in order to successfully compete with other leisure offers (Bauer *et al.*, 2005:496). Relationship management activities must thus be established with not only fans, but other stakeholders as well, such as corporate sponsors. Brands and brand equity offer the sport brand an effective and efficient solution.

However, despite marketing and branding aspects becoming more important in the management of sport organisations, research into the branding of recurring,

participative sport events still lags behind (Bauer *et al.*, 2005:497), especially regarding specialist brands, such as those dealing with recurring sport events[5].

Researchers maintain that the brand of a sport organisation may indeed be considered their most important asset (Bauer *et al.*, 2005:497; Vadhati *et al.*, 2013:683; Farham & Hongyi, 2015:17). Branding is a crucial survival tactic, as not only does it allow the organisation to differentiate itself from competitors, creating a sustainable competitive advantage, but it also provides added value for consumers. Brand equity, as discussed in the preceding chapter, is therefore seen as the basis for measuring the value that is created for the organisation by making use of a branded product or service, instead of an unbranded version. It represents what the brand is worth to the consumer and consists of awareness, associations, perceived quality and loyalty (Gerber-Nel, 2009: 129; Parent *et al.*, 2012:146).

When it comes to sport, athletic success is only one dimension or determinant of the strength of the brand, and professional, customer-orientated brand management has been shown to be crucial in the long-term success of a brand (Bauer *et al.*, 2005:497). In fact, research has shown that both athletic success and brand equity had significant positive effects on revenue (Gladden & Milne in Bauer *et al.*, 2005:497).

This chapter focuses on brand equity within the context of sport management. A brief discussion follows on brand equity in sport. The discussion builds towards the conceptualisation of a consumer-based, consumer-perceived brand equity (CBCPBE) model for RCPA sport events. This is achieved by providing a summary of the traditional brand equity models discussed in Chapter 3, discussing the scales currently being used for sport brands, and by providing an introduction to the proposed new consumer-based, consumer-perceived model which will be used as the basis for this study. The chapter concludes with the presentation of the proposed model which will subsequently be tested and refined in the remaining chapters of this thesis.

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[5]Recurring sport events are those events that occur on a regular basis. Although they may rotate between host cities/countries, events are staged on a regular basis (usually annually) in the same host cities, as they may be part of a circuit. The impact of this type of event might be smaller but more efficient in the long run when compared to hallmark events, also known as major events, despite the fact that they often exhibit similar characteristics (Swayne & Dodds, 2011).

4.2 BRANDS IN THE SPORT INDUSTRY

Research has found that having a strong sport brand relates to resilient emotional attachments from fans, increased spectator masses, increased merchandise sales and stronger sponsorship interest (Parent *et al.*, 2012:145). As such, one can conclude that a sport brand is so much more than just a logo and a name (Conway, 2011a). A brand will encompass all aspects of the sport organisation.

Within the sport team setting this will include the sport team itself, both on and off the field, in season and out of season, while in the sport event setting, this will include the sport event in its entirety, from the lead up to the closing ceremony, encompassing all of the contact points with attendees.

4.2.1 Elements of a sport brand

Some common elements found within the sport brand include the following (Conway, 2011a):

- **Memories and stories** represent one of the unique elements that can be attributed to sport, and include the traditions, legends and heritage of the sport or team. A good example of this would be the tradition to hand over a yellow jersey to the leader of the Tour de France (the historical main sponsor, L'Auto, a local newspaper printed its newspaper on yellow paper, and when asked by the press to make it easier to identify the leader of the tour, this option easily came to mind). This tradition is still continued today. The same applies to the New Zealand All Blacks rugby team which is instantly recognised by their silver fern logo and the world-renowned warrior challenge, the haka, performed before each game.

- All of the **marketing activities** used by the sport organisation form part of their brand. This includes sales promotions, ticket prices and mass media, such as television advertisements. Although the use of social media is a recent development in this area, sport organisations are eagerly utilising it to help build their brand. For example, in 2012, the Louisville Sluggers used Facebook and Twitter to create awareness for the company's baseball bats by hosting a one-day scavenger hunt for 45 bats hidden in the St. Louis area. They posted clues on social networks to draw consumers to their online platforms (Scheiner, 2012). The

more traditional approach may involve handing out free brand merchandise, such as caps, a tactic that helped to make the New York Yankees brand so visible.

- **Relationships and interaction** with the general public allows consumers to have direct contact with the brand. Interactions typically include ticketing agents, merchandise sellers, announcers on game day, and of course some of the team players (if the brand represents a team). A good example here would be Paul Kaye, the official announcer for the two Ironman triathlon events held in South Africa. He has become so intertwined with the brand of Ironman, that most triathletes associate Mr Kaye with finishing an event (he is well known for welcoming each triathlete by name as they cross the finish line).

- **Communication** is an important part of the sport brand, as all communications should reflect the core brand values. Communication should be consistent and authentic, irrespective of the channel used. The 'voice' and 'tone' of all communication should represent the brand and reflect the brand values. In 2011, Manchester United appointed a PR agency, Jon Tibbs Association, to assist with their communication. Although the team was enjoying major on-field success, off-field the club was struggling, therefore steps were taken to improve its media image, modernise corporate communication and improve commercial performance (Conway, 2011b).

- The brand is represented by all individuals, or **people**, at the organisation. The actions of all the staff, on or off-field, play a major role in the development of the brand and will reflect the core values of the brand. The Sydney Swans Australian Football team famously had a "no contemptible persons (polite term)" recruitment policy during the coaching years of Paul Roos, which some believe contributed to his ultimate success. Winning a premiership in 2005 and a grand final appearance in 2006, was the result of a culture of honesty and accountability that was implemented by Roos. The club had a code underwritten by a set of rules which each one of the players signed. Sport brands often use brand spokespersons to represent the brand, one of the best examples of this is Nike and Tiger Woods, one of the world's best golf players. When news of his infidelity scandal broke in 2009, Nike made the decision not to withdraw their sponsorship from him. Their reasoning was that he cheated on his wife, not his sport, and as such, they would continue to support him as a sportsman, as their focus on him as a spokesperson

was as a golf star (Kalb, 2013). They did, however, create a campaign that assisted Woods in repairing his image.

- **Facilities** within a team sport setting, the stadium or grounds, as well as the whole game day experience is crucial for the brand. In America, the home ground of the teams is almost as important as the team itself. For sport events, such as the FIFA World Cup and the Olympics, facilities form a major part of the event itself, and thus influence the brand. Having the stadiums ready for the events is always a huge consideration and has created many problems, such as the two stadiums that were incomplete with less than a month to go before the Brazil 2014 FIFA Cup (BBC, 2014).

- **Logo and visuals:** Most strong brands possess a good logo with smart graphic designs and visuals. It is this part of the brand that makes it identifiable to the consumers. Some of the world's most recognisable sport brands (and brands in general) include the Nike Swoosh and the Olympic Rings. In fact, Nike was rated as the number one most iconic brand logo in 2013 (Bromell, 2013).

A strong brand allows the organisation's economic performance figures to exist somewhat independently of athletic success, indicating that even if the team is not so successful in their on-field performance, the existence of a strong brand may carry them through those rough patches in, not only the financial capacity, but also in terms of support from fans (Bauer *et al.*, 2005:497). It cannot, however, be denied that the strongest sport brands are still those that are the most successful on the field.

It has been noted that having a strong brand does not necessarily predict how successful the team will be (Bauer *et al.*, 2005:497). It is thus possible to detach brand equity from athletic success (Bauer *et al.*, 2005:497). Research by Bauer *et al.* (2005:509) found that brand equity, rather than athletic success had a high and significant effect on economic success when it came to a team sport setting. It can thus be concluded that, for professional sport teams at least, professional brand management is of central importance (Bauer *et al.*, 2005:510). Brand management has to focus on increasing brand awareness, as well as developing strong, favourable and unique associations of the brand within the minds of consumers.

Once a successful brand has been created, sport organisations now have the ability to make use of brand extensions to further their product offering, either by merchandising or offering additional event options.

4.3   BRAND EQUITY IN SPORT

As for all brand categories, including sport, brand equity is created and maintained in the mind of the consumer. Therefore, it is crucial to know and understand the perceptions of the market in relation to the brands that are competing for the same market share.

It has become evident that a professional and customer-orientated approach to brand management is required if the brand is to be successful in the long-term (Bauer *et al.*, 2005:497). "While (athletic) success may be fleeting, a focus on commitment to customers is not" (Gladden in Bauer *et al.*, 2005:497). Research has indicated that similar to all other product categories, brand equity is important for sport organisations, and it has become apparent that brand equity is a valuable management tool for the sport organisation (Villarejo-Ramos & Martin-Velicia, 2007:66).

Each element that contributes to brand equity should represent a value carrier for the product that serves to determine the valuation of the sport organisation's brand (Villarejo-Ramos & Martin-Velicia, 2007:67). Together these elements need to conquer, maintain and create marketing loyalty among the consumers that purchase the brand. To measure the brand's value, all of the elements that the brand is composed of, must be analysed. This includes perceived quality, loyalty towards the brand, recognition of the name and the images that are associated with the brand (Villarejo-Ramos & Martin-Velicia, 2007:67).

As discussed in Chapter 3, perceived quality can be defined as the consumer's subjective judgement of the excellence or superiority of a product, and it aids in creating an understanding of the importance of the consumer's experience with the brand (Villarejo-Ramos & Martin-Velicia, 2007:67). A consumer's perception of a high quality product will largely depend on the environmental factors that surround the purchasing situation, or in the case of many sport brands, the actual usage of the product or service. For many sport brands, perceived quality relates to the success of the team, regardless whether they win or lose a particular game or series.

The perceived quality of experience is another important dimension for the sport organisation and links a satisfactory experience with the purchased product's quality. If the sport brand exhibits successive victories, it will create a perception of high quality with consumers (Villarejo-Ramos & Martin-Velicia, 2007:67). The same holds true for teams with lower winnings where a lower perception of quality will be established. It is then evident that for sport teams, perceived quality is easily judged, and although the sport manager cannot directly control this quality judgement, the perception of it can be managed through the use of appropriate marketing strategies.

However, the same principle does not apply to participative sport events, because as there is no sport team, the quality of the event is more difficult to judge. As such, this study set out to determine which aspects of sport events would contribute to the CBCPBE of RCPA sport events.

Satisfied, stable customers that are loyal towards a brand will allow for a sustainable organisation with a high value product (Villarejo-Ramos & Martin-Velicia, 2007:68; Salem, 2018:1748). In markets where competition is high, marketers should strive to cultivate consumer loyalty if the brand wants to maintain a superior and enduring position in the market (Salem, 2018:1748). The success of the brand will largely be determined by its ability to not only attract consumers, but to keep them (Salem, 2018:1748).

With regards to sport organisations, purchasing behaviour is more affected by the intangible attributes of the product, rather than the objective characteristics and price levels. Therefore brands are able to maintain a high level of value by maintaining a high degree loyalty from their consumers (Villarejo-Ramos & Martin-Velicia, 2007:68; Vahdati *et al.*, 2013:682). For example, should season tickets of a rival team cost less than similar tickets of the consumer's preferred team, most sport consumers would still purchase the more expensive tickets as they are loyal to their 'own' team.

Some research on loyalty is centred on the idea that a 'link' joins consumers with the product, measuring the probability of the consumer being attracted by the commercial efforts of the brand's competitors (Villarejo-Ramos & Martin-Velicia, 2007:68). When it comes to sport brands, the 'link' between the consumer and the brand is often an extremely strong bond that elevates loyalty to unprecedented levels which allows the

sport organisation to increase the value of their brand, and to more accurately predict sales levels (Villarejo-Ramos & Martin-Velicia, 2007:68).

A brand's renown or prominence lies in consumers' ability to recognise and remember the name of the brand (Villarejo-Ramos & Martin-Velicia, 2007:68). In order to identify the brand under different conditions, the brand name must be present in the consumer's memory and the easier and more immediate access is, the higher the level of prominence the brand possesses (Villarejo-Ramos & Martin-Velicia, 2007:69). Well-known brands therefore possess a competitive advantage, as recall usually occurs with little or no consumer effort. In the sport industry, consumers generally feel more familiar with their preferred brand and it is worthwhile for brands to take advantage of this general knowledge by offering events to the mass media (Villarejo-Ramos & Martin-Velicia, 2007:69).

Brand associations are important for a variety of reasons, the most immportant being that it makes a valuable contribution to the consumer decision-making process, sets the basis for differentiation, helps with name extensions, and it facilitates a reason to buy the brand (Aaker in Villarejo-Ramos & Martin-Velicia, 2007:69). As indicated, associations tend to interact with each other, as they are connected to form a framework of sensations and facts in the consumer's mind.

This framework consolidates the brand's image and indirectly contributes to the prominence of the brand. Associations in terms of sport organisations are mainly sustained by symbolic attributes, such as team colours, or lived experiences, such as attending an important game or participating in a race (Villarejo-Ramos & Martin-Velicia, 2007:69).

4.4 WORKING TOWARDS A MODEL FOR MEASURING CBCPBE OF SPORT EVENTS

As discussed above, brand equity and CBBE can be defined in a myriad of ways, and measured using various models and approaches. In order to develop an appropriate model which may be used to measure the CBCPBE of a RCPA sport event required a systematic review of the literature. The process commenced by reviewing the main models that have prevailed over the past decades, as discussed in Chapter 3 (Section

3.4 and Section 3.5). A brief summary of these models is provided below to aid the discussion.

4.4.1   Summary of traditional brand equity models and scales

The literature review in Chapter 3 identified and discussed several different models that may be used to measure brand equity. The measurement of CBBE differs from the measurement of brand equity, as the measurement is taken from the viewpoint of the consumer, rather than the organisation. Despite various authors' contribution to the literature, Aaker (1991) and Keller (1993)'s conceptualisations of brand equity remain the most well-known and commonly adopted in both academia and industry (Balbaaki, 2012:2). Keller's (1993) model was also the first attempt at defining CBBE, and forms the basis of nearly all CBBE models since then.

Aaker defined brand equity as "a set of brand assets and liabilities linked to a brand, its name and symbol that add to or subtract from the value provided by a product or service to an organisation and/or to that organisation's customers" (Balbaaki, 2012:5). Aaker was also the first to focus on the customer during brand evaluations (Bauer *et al.*, 2005:498). Keller drew on Aaker's conceptual framework (Bauer *et al.*, 2005:498) and proposed the consumer-based brand equity model (CBBE) which is currently the most widely used model for measuring CBBE (Balbaaki, 2012:5). The model sees brand knowledge as the central driver of brand equity (Bauer *et al.*, 2005:498), and CBBE is defined as, based on an understanding of the model, the power of the brand that resides in what consumers have learned, felt, seen and heard about the brand over time and which has been 'stored' in the consumer's mind (Balbaaki, 2012:5). In essence, this refers to the differential effect that brand knowledge has on the consumer's response to the marketing of the brand (Bauer *et al.*, 2005:498).

The various authors' approaches thus form the basis of the discussion on brand equity and the measuring thereof, and are summarised in the tables on the next few pages. Tables 4.1 lists the various models to measure brand equity, and Table 4.2 lists the various approaches to measuring CBBE.

Table 4.1: Models for measuring brand equity

MEASURING BRAND EQUITY				
Model	**Point of view**	**Brand equity defined**	**Variables used to measure equity**	**Key features**
Aaker	Business Management	Brand equity is seen as a set of brand assets and liabilities which are linked to a specific brand, its name and symbol.	Five different asset dimensions are measured: - **Brand loyalty** – measured in terms of five stylised levels (non-loyal buyers, habitual buyers, switching-cost loyal consumers, friends of the brand, and committed consumer). - **Brand awareness** – measured by looking at two levels (brand recognition and brand recall). - **Perceived quality** – consumer's perception of overall quality or superiority of brand compared to competitors. Scale used will be largely dependent on industry. - **Brand associations** – both existence and strength is measured. Type of brand associations that are measured include: attributes (product and non-product-related), benefits (functional, experiential, symbolic) and attitudes. - **Other proprietary brand assets,** such as proprietary technologies, trademarks, patents and other intangibles, such as industry know-how.	- Brand loyalty forms the core component. - Brand knowledge, which precedes brand awareness, must be present to build brand equity.

MEASURING BRAND EQUITY				
Model	**Point of view**	**Brand equity defined**	**Variables used to measure equity**	**Key features**
Keller	Psychology	Brand equity is seen as the differential effect that brand knowledge has on consumer response to the marketing efforts of the brand.	Seven components are measured to determine brand equity: - **Brand knowledge** – measured by looking at brand awareness and brand image. - **Brand salience** – both the depth and breadth of the awareness of the brand is measured. - **Brand performance** – the manner in which the brand attempts to meet consumers' functional needs. - **Brand imagery** – extrinsic properties of the product or service. - **Consumer judgements** – consumers' personal opinions and evaluations. - **Consumer feelings** – consumers' emotional responses and reactions to the brand. - **Brand resonance** – the nature of the relationship between consumers and the brand.	- Brand knowledge, consisting of brand awareness and brand image, is the main component of brand equity.

MEASURING BRAND EQUITY				
Model	**Point of view**	**Brand equity defined**	**Variables used to measure equity**	**Key features**
Erdem and Swait	Information Economics	Brand equity is seen as the value of the brand signal to the consumer.	Seven constructs are measured: - **Brand investment** – commitment of resource to a brand's marketing efforts. - **Consistency** – degree to which each component of the marketing mix reflects the intended whole. - **Clarity** – absence of ambiguity in the information conveyed by the brand's present and past marketing strategies. - **Credibility** – the truthfulness and dependability of information provided to the consumer through marketing. Depends largely on consistency of marketing mix. - **Perceived quality** - **Perceived risk** – consumer uncertainty regarding the brand. Includes functional, financial, physical, psychological and social risk. - **Information cost** – costs incurred during gathering and processing of information. Include expenditure of time, money and physiological costs.	- Brand credibility is the main determinant of brand equity. - Brand signals improve consumer perception and increase confidence in claims made by the brand. - Antecedents to brand equity are a reduction in perceived risk and information costs. - Brand loyalty is seen as a consequence of brand equity and not a driver behind brand equity.

Table 4.2: Approaches to measuring CBBE

MEASURING CBBE		
Model	**Dimensions measured**	**Key features**
Five dimensions scale (Lassar *et al.*)	The following five dimensions are measured: - **Performance** – brand should ultimately perform the functions it was purchased for. - **Social image** – adds value by creating a social reputation associated with owning or using the brand. - **Price value** – consumer choice will depend of a brand will depend on the perceived balance between the price of a product and all its utilities. - **Trustworthiness** – consumers place high value on brands that can be trusted. - **Identification/attachment** – how well consumers identify with the brand and the level of sentiment attachment.	- The scale was developed as an adaptation of Aaker's original scale, so as to view 'performance' in its totality of the physical job, product or service. - Scale also takes into account the measurement of perceptual dimensions of CBBE, so that commitment as a feeling, and commitment as an action are distinguished.
Keller – the indirect approach	A multidimensional approach is taken to measure **brand knowledge.** This includes the measurement of **brand awareness** and the characteristics and relationships of **brand associations**. - **Brand awareness** may be measured using aided and unaided memory measures to test brand recall and recognition. - **Characteristics of brand associations** can be measured by comparing the characteristics of brand associations and will include type of characteristic, favourability and strength. - **Relationship among brand associations** are measured in terms of uniqueness, congruence and leverage.	- Brand knowledge forms the basic determinant of brand equity and is composed of brand awareness and brand image. - To ensure that the multidimensional nature of brand knowledge is captured, multiple measures must be used instead of just one particular aspect.
Keller – the direct approach	The measurement of CBBE using the direct approach is highly complex. Experiments are used to distinguish between consumers that have been exposed to the brand. This approach is not suitable for this study due to the methodological approach.	- The impact of brand knowledge on consumer responses to the different elements of the marketing programme is measured.

It should be noted that most researchers indicate that irrespective of the model used, slight adaptions will be required when it comes to the specific product category. To accommodate the specific product category chosen for this study, sport event brands, further refinements to the main models were deemed necessary.

4.4.2   Working towards a brand equity scale for sport event brands

It has been found that a brand's assets and liabilities, which contribute to brand equity, are often context-specific, depending on the type of product and the culture being investigated, and will usually differ from one context to another (Ioannou & Rusu, 2012:349). This is especially evident between goods and services, and high and low involvement products (Ioannou & Rusu, 2012:349. According to Kimpakorn and Tocquer (in Ioannou & Rusu, 2012:349), "the nature of services, specifically the inseparability between production and consumption, requires a different approach to build a powerful service brand". In addition, research conducted by Smith and Steward (in Hoye, Smith, Nicholson & Stewart, 2018:4) found that due to the nature of sport, it possesses several unique features that will impact the effective management thereof, and as a result, the measurement of brand equity.

When measuring brand equity, or CBBE, the following will have to be taken into consideration:

- Sport is a heterogeneous and ephemeral experience caught up in the irrational passions of the fans, commanding high levels of product and brand loyalty, optimism and vivid identification.

- Sport, in general, favours on-field winning over profit.

- Sport is subject to variable quality, which in turn has implications for the management of competitive balance and anti-competitive behaviour.

- Sport has to manage a fixed supply schedule.

It therefore stands to reason that sport organisations in general, and sport events specifically, will have to alter existing brand equity models, as sport in itself poses unique management considerations. Moreover, as established in Chapter 2, sport events ultimately provide a service to consumers, and as indicated in Chapter 3, the majority of brand equity models do not specifically focus on services, but rather on products where quality is easier to measure.

It is also important to note that sport consumers are generally highly involved, and even more so when it comes to participative sport events, as can be seen from the discussion on consumer behaviour in Chapter 2. Due to the fact that mass female participation in sport is still evolving, it is not unreasonable to expect that female athletes as consumers of the sport experience will have a different perception of sport event brands.

As it has already been established in the preceding chapters, as well as above, sport organisations present unique business considerations, and as such, the traditional set of models are not deemed wholly suitable for measuring the brand equity of sport organisations. In addition, new research shows that modern consumers present additional challenges which were not considered during the development of the traditional brand equity models. Therefore, research, although limited, has been done to propose a more suitable brand equity model for sport organisations.

Research by Bauer *et al.* (2005) and Villarejo-Rame and Martin-Velicia (2007) has attempted to propose a brand equity model for sport organisations which is discussed in Section 4.6 of this chapter. Some further attempts were made by Vahdati *et al.*, (2013) and Sajjidi, Tarighi and Abedlati (2017) to develop a CBBE model for sport organisation by focusing on Aaker's brand equity model (1993), as discussed in Chapter 3.

However, all the research specified above and discussed in the next section, focus on the creation of CBBE from the perspective of sport teams. This means that the proposed models equate a large portion of brand equity to team antecedents (indeed, according to some researchers, it is the main antecedent to brand equity). This is clearly problematic, as RCPA sport events are not rooted in the endeavours of a team, and will therefore not rely on team antecedents, such as trainers and star players, to contribute to their brand equity. Despite the obvious shortcomings of these models, they are included in this review, as they provide an indication as to how different antecedents relating directly to sport may be combined in an attempt to measure brand equity.

From the discussion above and the summary below, it is evident that CBCPBE will be more appropriate for determining the brand equity of recurring sport events that involve the participation of consumers in the event in order to pursuit profit. When it comes to

the competitive world of sport, it is evident that the consumer is vitally important for the survival of sport organisations, as the consumer plays an important role in the brand management strategies through loyalty and repeat purchases (Vahdati *et al.*, 2013:682). In addition, it is clear that sport events will need to 'tailor-make' their product offering to entice consumers to come back to the event year after year. It is therefore crucial to measure brand equity from the consumer's point of view, and to measure brand equity in a manner which is important to the consumer. Brands should thus attempt to create a resilient, sustainable correlation between the consumer, their attitudes and their mentality towards the brand (Vahdati *et al.*, 2013:682).

Although recent studies have been done on the importance of brand equity for sport organisations, the majority of these studies were conducted in North America which has its own unique sport management industry (Villarejo-Ramos & Martin-Velicia, 2007:66). Despite this, few studies have been able, or even attempted, to quantify the extent to which a sport organisation's brand can reach prominence and popularity (Villarejo-Ramos & Martin-Velicia, 2007:67). In addition, the majority of the models discussed below focused on football, or as it is also known soccer, within a specific country.

4.4.2.1 *Bauer et al.: CBBE in the team sport industry with specific focus on German soccer teams*

Bauer *et al.* (2005:499) relied heavily on Keller's modified customer-based brand equity model for their empirical study. The model was combined with a combination of Gladden and Funk's framework of brand associations in the team sport setting, which was developed in 2001. Bauer *et al.* (2015) focused on the German team sport industry, with specific focus on soccer, and although no attempt was made to develop a proposed brand equity model within the sport setting, the findings of their research remains valuable when it comes to CBBE for sport brands. The main findings of the research indicated that CBBE has to be used carefully in product categories where consumers exhibit high levels of consumer knowledge, and that brand awareness seems only to be a good indicator of brand equity when consumers differ in their knowledge about the brand (Bauer *et al.*, 2005:509).

In product categories where consumers are highly involved and knowledgeable about the available brands, brand recall is high, and brand awareness does not contribute to

brand equity (Bauer *et al.*, 2005:509). The results did confirm the use of brand image as a reliable predictor of brand equity.

Bauer *et al.* (2005:509) further investigated the impact of brand equity on the economic success of sport teams by calculating a brand equity value for each team and relating the result to attendance numbers. From this consumer view, it was found that brand equity had a positive effect on purchase intention, price premiums and brand loyalty, confirming previous research which indicated that brand equity, rather than athletic success, has a high and significant effect on economic success (Bauer *et al.*, 2005:509).

Brands can thus be confirmed to be of major significance within the team sport setting. Results indicated that brand management must focus on increasing brand awareness, and building strong, favourable and unique associations within the minds of consumers (Bauer *et al.*, 2005:510).

4.4.2.2 *Villarejo-Rame and Martin-Velicia – brand equity of sport organisation*

Villarejo-Rame and Martin-Velicia (2007:70) proposed a model for measuring brand equity in sport organisations. The proposed model recognised the multidimensional character of brand equity, and attempted to identify the different antecedents which affect the brand equity of sport organisations. It is important to note that this research was not based on CBBE, but rather focused on the organisations and the benefits the organisation derived from brand equity.

Based on the model proposed by Aaker (1991), the conceptual model identified three groups of antecedents that specifically contributed to the components of brand equity of sport organisations. Although not specified by the researchers, much of the discussion focused on Spanish soccer clubs, such as Real Madrid.

Given the proposed antecedents to brand equity, it is evident that this model might be suitable for soccer clubs, but this researcher has not been able to find any indication that the model below was tested statistically.

The proposed model is depicted in Figure 4.1 on the next page.
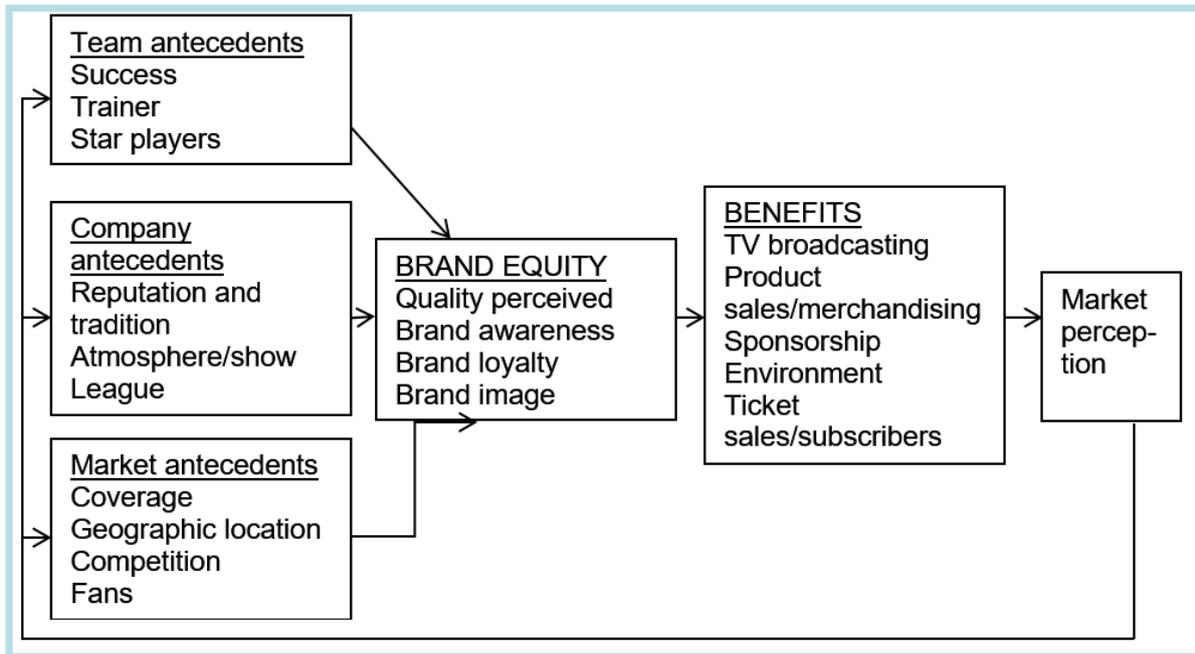
Figure 4.1: Villarejo-Rame & Martin-Velicia proposed model

Source: Villarejo-Rame & Martin-Velicia (2007:70)

As with most other brand equity models, the above specifies a system where the consequences of brand equity form a perception of the product or service as reflected within the mind of the consumer (Villarejo-Rame & Martin-Velicia, 2007:71). This perception is the cumulative result of the antecedents relating to the team, company and the market, as well as the four components of brand equity and the benefits that are derived from it. The proposed model has a cyclical character, as the benefits that are derived from the marketing efforts of the sport organisation, form a perception in the market that, in turn, increases or diminishes the organisation's brand equity. Each of the antecedents will be briefly discussed below.

Team antecedents

The main antecedent to brand equity, as based on this model, is the one that deals with the team. According to Villarejo-Rame and Martin-Velicia (2007:71) there is nothing like the success of a team that contributes quite as much to the brand equity of the sport organisation. This can be attributed to the fact that a winning team greatly elevates its perceived quality, which leads not only to higher prominence, but also to higher levels of loyalty and positive associations, all of which contribute to brand equity (Villarejo-Rame & Martin-Velicia, 2007:71).

Once high brand equity is achieved due to sporting success, the sport organisation should notice an increase in ticket sales, sponsorships, and a variety of other benefits. It is interesting to note that although success usually comes from present victories, it is not limited to current performance, and created expectations and history can contribute to current brand equity (Villarejo-Rame & Martin-Velicia, 2007:72).

The second element of the team antecedent deals with having a responsible trainer that is able to guide the sport aims of the organisation. If a trainer (or coach) is recognised, respected and guaranteed by previous success, the sport organisation should experience an increase in perceived brand equity.

The third element of the team antecedent related to measuring sport organisations' brand equity is related to the presence of star players. Star players can contribute to brand equity by bringing their strong network with them and guaranteeing, to some extent, a successful season (Villarejo-Rame & Martin-Velicia, 2007:73).

Company antecedents

The second group of antecedents proposed by this model deal with the sport organisation itself. Here the reputation and the tradition of the organisation come into play, and a solid management reputation regarding the administration, economic and sport-related performance of the organisation contribute significantly to brand equity. Sport organisations are able to create brand equity by maintaining a certain level of competitiveness and on-field success, which in turn, lead to higher fan loyalty. This allows the brand to further differentiate itself as well, which also contributes to brand equity (Villarejo-Rame & Martin-Velicia, 2007:74).

The second antecedent states that brand equity may be created through the entertainment plan or atmosphere which surrounds sport events presented by the organisation or in which the club participates (Villarejo-Rame & Martin-Velicia, 2007:74). Most sporting events will include additional activities, such as musical performances, entertainers, mascots and hand-outs, which contribute towards the atmosphere of the sport organisations. The impact that the atmosphere has on the spectator, as well as the programme of activities that contribute to the lived experience at the event, can be measured in terms of the contribution made to brand equity.

The third antecedent that contributes to brand equity through the sport organisation is membership to a specific league or the association to certain clubs. By belonging to

certain associations or leagues, sport organisations are able to attract sponsors, advertisers and television networks which support greater prominence, as the affiliated club's brand name gets greater coverage in the mass media (Villarejo-Rame & Martin-Velicia, 2007:74). It has been noted that, if a sport organisation is part of a league that is extremely competitive, fan loyalty and interest is higher, which results in more attractive advertising opportunities for sponsors. This then leads to a greater capacity to generate income (Villarejo-Rame & Martin-Velicia, 2007:75).

Market antecedents

The third group of proposed antecedents measures the effect of market aspects on the brand equity of sport organisations. Public coverage by means of agreements with mass media organisations can create interest in the sport organisation by influencing public opinion (Villarejo-Rame & Martin-Velicia, 2007:75). The possibility of reaching certain levels of recognition and prominence can only be achieved by the cover given to sport events that extends to the sport organisation's brand name (Villarejo-Rame & Martin-Velicia, 2007:76).

The second element, geographic location, has much to do with the identification of the brand (Kapferer in Villarejo-Rame & Martin-Velicia, 2007:76). This is especially evident in the sport industry where certain regions or areas are well-known for their specialities in a certain sport. Often tradition, climatology, culture or other considerations dictate the practice of some sport specialities within specific regions. Should a sport organisation be found within such a region, a contribution to the brand equity could be made, as they will be associated with the region's speciality in that particular sport (Villarejo-Rame & Martin-Velicia, 2007:76).

Competition amongst different sporting codes and different clubs can influence brand equity, as the success of one sport/team may lead to a decrease in brand equity of another (Villarejo-Rame & Martin-Velicia, 2007:76).

The last element that may influence the market antecedents of brand equity is the fans of the sport organisation. A fan may be classified as an unconditional follower who supports and defends the organisation and represents the brand name (Villarejo-Rame & Martin-Velicia, 2007:76). The support of fans is essential to maintain brand equity, as they provide income and help to consolidate and strengthen the team itself

(Villarejo-Rame & Martin-Velicia, 2007:76). Fans assist in making the brand appear appealing to other consumers and can also increase brand equity in this manner.

4.4.2.3   *Vahdati et al. and Sajjadi et al.: Brand equity for football clubs in Iran*

The most recent studies that could be found on brand equity within the sport industry, dealt with brand equity from a football (soccer) perspective in Iran.

Vahdati *et al.* (2013:688) used Aaker's model (1993) as a basis for the research, and concluded that the brand equity for football in Iran could be measured using this model. The goodness-of-fit indices confirmed that team brand loyalty, team-perceived quality, team brand awareness and team brand associations would all contribute to the brand equity model for football clubs. The model tested and confirmed by Vahdati *et al.* (2013:688) is depicted below.

Figure 4.2: Brand equity of Iranian football clubs
Source: Vahdati *et al.* (2013:688)

It would appear that the research conducted by Sajjadi *et al.* (2017) was not based on a traditional brand equity model. Instead, the researchers developed their own questionnaire in which the variables of brand equity were derived from previous research conducted on brand equity. Ten variables were tested with the use of 59

items, and validity of the model was obtained using an expert panel. Due to the nature of statistics derived from the study, the Cronbach Alpha was used to determine the reliability of the model. The analysis confirmed the following model as can be seen in Figure 4.3 below:
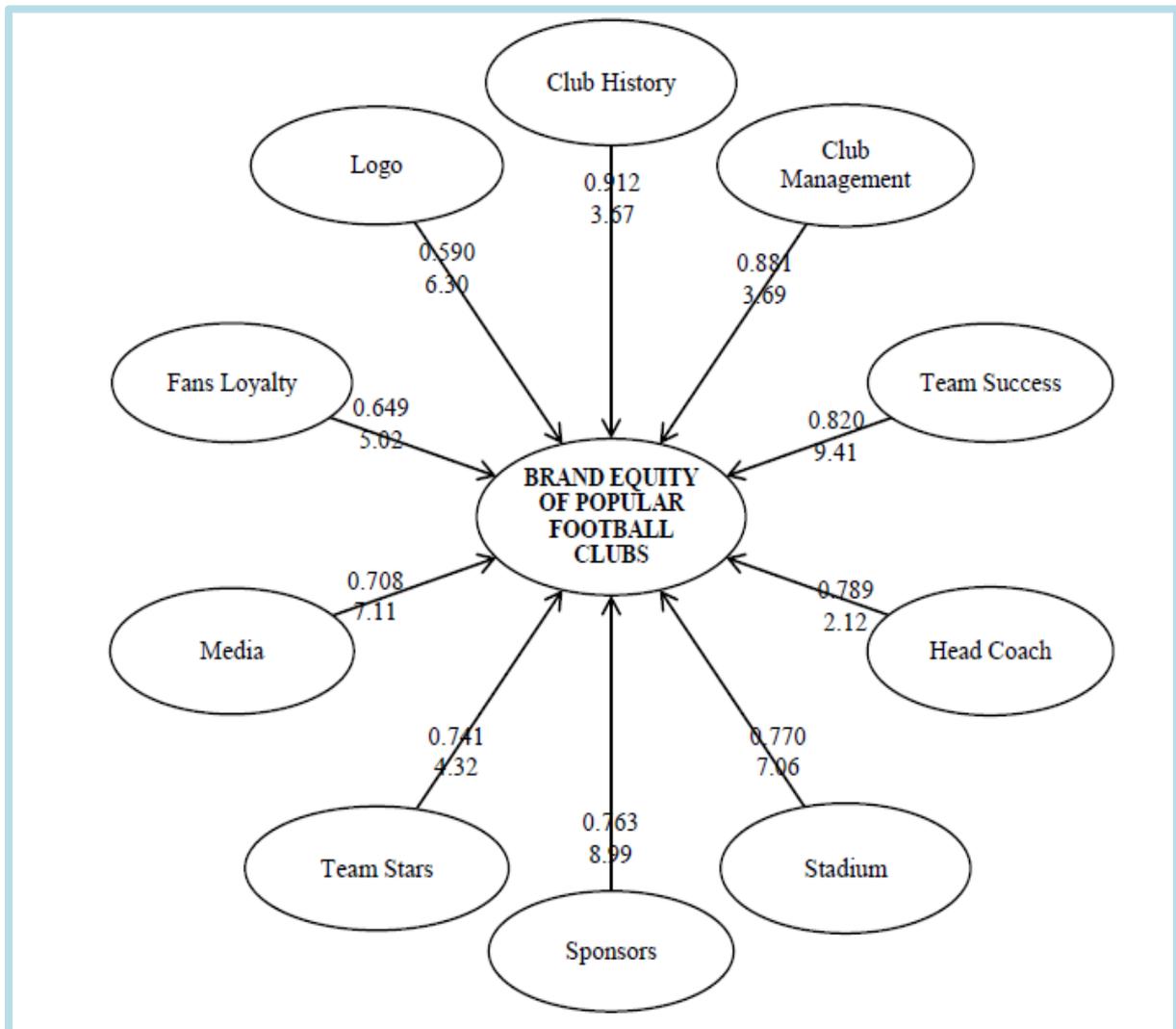
Figure 4.3: Brand equity of popular football clubs in Iran
Source: Sajjadi *et al.* (2017:90)

It is evident therefore that research done on the topic of brand equity within the sport industry is focused primarily on the team sport setting. As the topic of this study, namely sport events, which require the participation of consumers in the event, do not rely on sport teams to create their brands, the approaches discussed above are not appropriate, despite the valuable lessons that may be learned from the research available. As such, a new approach must be established for recurring participative

sport events. The consumer-based, consumer-perceived brand equity scale will be discussed next.

4.5 A NEW MODEL: CONSUMER-BASED, CONSUMER-PERCEIVED BRAND EQUITY SCALE (CBCPBE)

A number of researchers have tried to create a model which measures CBBE, but it is acknowledged that there is still a lack of consensus regarding a universally accepted measurement instrument (Ioannou & Rusu, 2012:348). The majority of research and proposed models are based on Aaker's work, despite calls for refinement to the dimensionality of CBBE (Ioannou & Rusu, 2012:348). It is argued that CBBE measurement approaches can only be useful if brand equity is broken into components which relate directly to measurable factors, such as favourable consumer perceptions (Ioannou & Rusu, 2012:348).

In addition, both Keller and Aaker's models are critiqued for not sufficiently quantifying the intangible nature of brand equity, and a scale of measurement was found to be lacking, by especially academics (Baalbaki, 2012:2). Further critique on Keller's model indicates that the brand equity component 'brand awareness' will only add to brand equity in product categories where consumers are diverse in terms of their product category expertise (Bauer *et al.*, 2005:497).

The model by Erdem and Swait adopted a view on the dimensions of brand equity that was so far removed from the traditional, that many scholars and marketing experts do not acknowledge the model as valid nor as making a valuable contribution to the field of brand equity. Although many scholars have proposed measurement scales, also discussed in this literature review, a key area has been ignored.

Most measurement scales that have been offered during the years are still largely based on either Keller or Aaker's work which fails to take into account the mental resources consumers employ to determine which characteristics are important to them (Baalbaki, 2012:2). It becomes apparent then that a CBCPBE scale is lacking. Furthermore, with the emergence of more knowledgeable consumers, the consumer is playing a more active role in the creation of brand equity, as brand equity in essence is created in the consumer's mind (Baalbaki, 2012:2).

Following this argument, Baalbaki (2012:6) proposed the development of a CBBE model that focused on the meaning of brand equity as it rests in the consumer's mind, by determining the dimensions of brand equity that are actually perceived by consumers. This new model, the consumer-based, consumer-perceived brand equity scale, first attempts to identify the dimensions that consumers perceive to be critical to the development of CBBE, and then to determine how these dimensions are interrelated to effectively measure brand equity.

It is notable that Baalbaki (2012) continued to use the designation of CBBE for the model developed in 2012, despite the model including consumer-perceived elements which had not been included in the traditional CBBE model that focused only on consumer-based brand equity. The researcher then proposes that, for the purposes of the current study, and in order to differentiate the model refined in this study, the acronym CBBE should be changed to CBCPBE. This designation should be used to reflect that the consumer's perception of the dimensions of brand equity is taken into account. As such, the model developed in this study will be known as CBCPBE as it investigates consumer-based, consumer-perceived brand equity, and not just consumer-based brand equity.

The preliminary qualitative study conducted by Baalbaki (2012:46) helped to identify the most important consumer-based dimensions which confirmed previous results. Four dimensions were identified as depicted in Table 4.3 below:

Table 4.3: Baalbaki's perceived dimensions

Perceived quality	Perceived value	Brand loyalty	Sustainability
- Quality - Reliable - Consistent - Works well - Durable - Long-lasting - Performance	- Price - Cost - Affordable - Value - Ease of use - Available	- Loyalty - Trust - Honesty - Likeable - Comfortable - Dependable	- Safety - Sustainable - Healthy - Reputation - Environmentally responsible

Source: Baalbaki (2012:46)

Perceived quality and brand loyalty are both dimensions that have featured extensively in the previous literature on brand equity, particularly Aaker and Keller's respective conceptualisations of brand equity. The dimension that deals with perceived value

differs somewhat, as it relates to those aspects of a brand that consumers find important in their evaluation of a brand (Baalbaki, 2012:46). Sustainability reflects the current perspective that consumers have towards brand choices, as consumers are more aware of the level of responsibility they expect from a brand than they previously were (Baalbaki, 2012:47).

The dimensions identified during the qualitative research component were further described in terms of attributes that had been previously developed by a variety of authors (Baalbaki, 2012:47). The proposed scale was further refined and tested among respondents. After ensuring validity and reliability, the 24-item scale was deemed to have acceptable fit, discriminant and convergent validity, internal consistence, reliability and parsimony (Baalbaki, 2012:60).

The final scale consisted of five dimensions: quality, preference, social influence, sustainability and leadership. The Baalbaki (2012) CBBE scale is depicted in Table 4.4 on the next page.

Table 4.4: The Baalbaki (2012) CBBE Scale

Dimension	Criteria
Quality	The reliability of (Brand X) is very high.
	(Brand X) is consistent in the quality it offers.
	The performance of (Brand X) is very high.
	The quality of (Brand X) is extremely high.
	The functionality of (Brand X) is very high.
	(Brand X) has consistent quality.
	(Brand X) performs consistently.
	(Brand X) has an acceptable standard of quality.
	(Brand X) is made well.
Preference	(Brand X) would be my first choice.
	I consider myself loyal to (Brand X).
	I will not buy other brands if (Brand X) is available at the store.
	I am committed to buying (Brand X).
Sustainability	(Brand X) is an environmentally safe brand.
	(Brand X) is an environmentally responsible brand.
	(Brand X) is a sustainable brand.
Social influence	(Brand X) improves the way I am perceived by others.
	(Brand X) would make a good impression on other people.
	(Brand X) would give its owner social approval.
	(Brand X) helps me feel accepted.
Leadership	(Brand X) would last a long time.
	(Brand X) has good workmanship.
	(Brand X) contributes something to society.

Source: Baalbaki (2012:61)

The new dimensions that measure CBBE are thus quality, preference, sustainability, social influence and leadership. Quality, in terms of the new scale, describes how consumers perceive the quality of the brand in terms of its consistency, acceptable

standards, performance, reliability, functionality, and being generally well made (Baalbaki, 2012:62).

Consumers perceive that a brand should perform highly on all of the aspects regarding quality. Although it can be said that quality has previously been included in brand equity scales, it must be noted that the quality dimensions in the new scale includes consumer-perceived items, and that quality is viewed as the consumer's judgement about a product's overall excellence (Baalbaki, 2012:63).

Brand preference, as an element of loyalty within this scale, describes how a brand is the consumer's first choice, how loyal they are to the specific brand, their willingness to purchase other brands and how committed they are to purchasing the brand. Brand loyalty previously formed part of both Aaker and Keller's measurement scales. Additional items were included in the new scale so as to measure not only loyalty, but also preference which is perceived to be the consumer's 'number one' brand which they prefer to purchase no matter what (Baalbaki, 2012:64).

The dimension that deals with social influence is a dimension that has not previously been included in a brand equity scale. The rationale to include this dimension when measuring brand equity is that consumers gain value from social approval, feeling accepted and making a good impression. Through being perceived by others in a specific way, a brand can create a specific identity for a consumer which is proving to be extremely valuable for the modern consumer (Baalbaki, 2012:65).

Sustainability is another new dimension which has not previously featured in a brand equity scale. Within the current business environment, sustainability has become increasingly important to both organisations and consumers. Research has shown that modern consumers are more aware than ever before of brands that are environmentally sound, safe and healthy, and consumers are more loyal to a brand, believing it is of higher quality if it is sustainable (Baalbaki, 2012:65). A growing number of consumers think about recycling, going green and worry about the environment to such an extent that it becomes an important consideration during the purchasing decision-making process. Value might thus be added by providing a sustainable brand to consumers (Baalbaki, 2012:66).

If looking from the consumer's perspective, leadership is seen as longevity, good workmanship and contributing to society (Baalbaki, 2012:66). When a brand is seen

as a 'leader brand', in other words, one which will last consumers for a while as it consists of good workmanship, value is added for the consumer.

The Baalbaki (2012) scale is simple to use and the confirmatory factor analysis supports the goodness-of-fit of the data and the hypothesised structure (Baalbaki, 2012:66). It can therefore be inferred that the five identified dimensions reflect the basis of the CBCPBE scale (Baalbaki, 2012:66).

The new scale is not without its limitations, however. The scale only attempted to test one particular consumer market (cellphone brands) and used a student sample taken from one university in the US to generate scale items. It is therefore evident that these limitations pose generalisability concerns, and it is recommended that the study be replicated using additional product categories and brands (Baalbaki, 2012:73).

With specific reference to sport brands that encompass sport events which draw participants rather than spectators, it is evident that some of the proposed dimensions are problematic in the sense that the scale was created for products rather than services. For example, it would be difficult to measure how long the brand would last, as services are, per definition, perishable. It is thus recommended that the proposed scale be adapted to suit the sport event category for this study.

4.6   PROPOSING A CBCPBE MODEL FOR RCPA SPORT EVENTS

Based on the above discussion, the following approach is proposed for developing an appropriate CBCPBE model for RCPA sport events. Furthermore, it has been established that consumers are playing an increasingly important role in the creation of brand equity, and that it is crucial to focus on the consumers' needs in terms of sport events where consumers participate in the sport event, rather than just attending the sport event. This is especially evident in recurring sport events, and events where the brand message must be improved year-on-year. As such, the new Consumer-Perceived Consumer-Based Brand Equity Model is deemed the most appropriate model for this scenario.

However, it has also been pointed out that the model, as conceptualised by Baalbaki (2012), does present limitations. Most notably that it focuses on a single product market, namely cellphone brands, and as such, would not present a good 'fit' to the sport event market. For this reason, it is proposed that the model presented by

Baalbaki be slightly adjusted to tie in with research done on the needs and behaviour of triathletes, so that a new CBCPBE conceptual model is created which focuses specifically on RCPA sport events and the needs of the athletes that participate in these events. This conceptual model will further be tested with the use of quantitative research methods to ensure that it is appropriate.

It should be stated that there is limited knowledge available on the participants in triathlon from a consumer perspective; that is, research that is grounded in management theories and not physiological studies. The lack of research on sport participants, namely, consumers who actively engage with the sport product, has been highlighted by various scholars (Phelps & Dickson in Wicker, Hallmann, Prinz & Weimar, 2012:3) who stated, "With such vast numbers of participants […] it remains somewhat surprising that existing research on events is dominated by studies of spectators at elite sport events." However, due to the growing popularity of triathlon world-wide, the sport has received increased media attention with more events being covered on televisions. Therefore the sport of triathlon and its participants have gained the attention of national sport organisations that are gathering information about the participants in triathlon (Wicker *et al.*, 2012:3).

It would appear that the demographic profile of triathletes suggests that triathlon is a sport for all age-groups, and that the characteristics of triathlon participants seem to be more important than the demographics of participants (Wicker *et al.*, 2012:3). Triathlon is perceived to be a tough endurance sport, and the challenge for sport marketers is to largely understand why sport consumers are attracted to such gruelling, but enjoyable, events. It has been found that the majority of athletes participate for the personal challenge these events pose or to simply get into shape (Wicker *et al.*, 2012:4). The same study, conducted by the Tribe Group in 2009, found that 37% of triathletes expected to increase their spending on triathlon and are willing to travel long distances to participate in events.

Triathletes have been primarily classified according to their personality characteristics and attitudes towards triathlon (Wicker *et al.*, 2012:6). Triathletes are mainly characterised by a high level of commitment to the sport, with fun, enjoyment and excitement being the most important values for participation (Wicker *et al.*, 2012:6). The most recent market study conducted in the US found that triathletes could be organised into seven clusters: enthusiastic, aspirationists, power trainers, dabblers,

dedicated triathletes, competitives and emotionals. The clusters differed in terms of the intention to participate in longer triathlons, training year-round, gender, age and income (Tribe Group in Wicker *et al.*, 2012:6).

Classifying the sport consumer by using only one variable will not provide an accurate picture, as the mindset of the sport participant is motivated by both rational and emotional, and intrinsic and extrinsic elements which determine their sport consumption and participation (Wicker *et al.*, 2012:6).

The study conducted by Wicker *et al.* in Germany (2012) found that the average triathlete is a well-educated and affluent male in the mid-30s age group. The average amount of years that the respondents had been participants in events were 7.4 years, and the average time spent training in a week amounted to 9 hours. It should be noted though that the number of training hours per week was strongly related to the level of the triathlete. In addition, the study found supporting information that triathletes are not price sensitive and expect to increase their spending on triathlon in the future. The study found several clusters of triathletes:

- The serious pursuiters who are characterised mainly by their lack of interest in activities outside of triathlon. The behavioural profile of these triathletes suggests that they are highly involved in the sport as they have spent many years participating in triathlon, train many hours a week and have a high level of expenditure on triathlon.

- The sport lovers are extremely interested in practising and consuming sport as both a participant and spectator. Their lifestyle is mainly characterised by an interest in all types of sport, however, with specific reference to triathlon they are still considered 'rookies' and do not spend a large portion of their income on triathlon specifically.

- The socialisers' lifestyles are mainly characterised by social activities, and leisure time is mostly spent with friends and family. They devote a lot of their time to eating out and undertaking cultural activities, along with participation in social media. The social aspect of triathlon is what draws them to the sport.

Drawing then on the research that has been conducted on the specific characteristics of triathletes, as well as the literature discussed in this chapter on consumer-based brand equity, as well as the model presented by Baalbaki (2012), this study proposes

the following model to be used to measure the CBCPBE of RCPA sport events. The dimensions proposed to measure CBCPBE are: quality, preference, sustainability, social influence and leadership. The proposed model is depicted in Table 4.5 below.

Table 4.5: Proposed model to measure the CBCPBE of RCPA sport events

CBCPBE Dimension	Scale item	Justification for inclusion
Quality	I know that when I attend an event presented by (Brand X) I can expect a consistent experience.	Original scale item adapted (Baalbaki, 2012) - T*he reliability of (Brand X) is very high*. Reliability refers to the consistency or repeatability of the outcome.
	(Brand X) is consistent in the quality of the event it provides.	Original scale item (Baalbaki, 2012).
	I know that when I participate in an event presented by (Brand X) the event will be presented as advertised.	Original scale item adapted (Baalbaki, 2012) – *(Brand X) performs consistently*. The brand is able to fulfil their obligation to the consumer in the manner in which they had agreed to.
	The quality of the event presented by (Brand X) is extremely high.	Original scale item (Baalbaki, 2012).
	The safety standard of the event presented by (Brand X) is very high.	Event Qualitymark (Triathlon England)[6]
	(Brand X) has an acceptable standard of quality for the event.	Original scale item (Baalbaki, 2012)
	(Brand X) provides an easy-to- use race registration process.	Tests ease of access to brand's event which relates to brand salience (Keller, 2009). See Section 3.2.2.
	The entry fee charged by (Brand X) offers value for money.	Forms part of the perceived quality dimension as defined by Aaker (Tuominen, 1999). See Section 4.1

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[6] The Event Qualitymark given by Triathlon England to events is a scheme developed to provide a quality assurance standard for events, as well as providing a useful resource for new and established events. It is included in the measurement of the quality dimension of the proposed CBBE model as the scale items represent quality considerations for sport events.

CBCPBE Dimension	Scale item	Justification for inclusion
	The event presented by (Brand X) provides a unique experience.	Provides a reason to buy/differentiates the product/service offering. Originally part of the perceived quality dimension as defined by Aaker (Tuominen, 1999). See Section 4.1
	The referees officiating (Brand X) event are of a high quality.	Event Qualitymark (Triathlon England)
	The volunteers working at (Brand X) events are of a high quality.	Event Qualitymark (Triathlon England)
	The route layout and design of the event presented by (Brand X) is of a high quality	Author generated, based on literature as discussed in Section 2.2.7.2.
Preference	(Brand X) would be my first choice of event.	Original scale item
	I consider myself loyal to (Brand X).	Original scale item
	I will not participate in another brand's events if I am able to participate in (Brand X) event.	Original scale item
	I am committed to participating in (Brand X) event.	Original scale item
	I participate in the (Brand X) event on a recurring basis.	Can be considered part of the brand loyalty component (Keller and Aaker)
	(Brand X) presents an event that is exclusive in the sense that it is hard to accomplish and therefore not something everyone else does.	Wicker *et al*., 2012. Based on triathletes' characteristic, this might be an important measure for CBCPBE.
Sustainability	(Brand X) is an environmentally safe brand which means that their practices do not negatively affect the environment.	Original scale item adapted for clarification (Baalbaki, 2012).
	(Brand X) is an environmentally responsible brand which means that events are organised in such a manner that the environment is protected.	Original scale item adapted for clarification (Baalbaki, 2012).
	(Brand X) is a sustainable brand as they provide me with social and environmental benefits.	Original scale item adapted for clarification (Baalbaki, 2012).

CBCPBE Dimension	Scale item	Justification for inclusion
	(Brand X) cares for the environment in which I race.	Ioakimidis, 2007. Argument is made that environmental considerations are becoming crucial for the management of sport events.
	It is important to me that (Brand X) protects the environment in which I race.	Author generated.
Social influence	(Brand X) improves the way I am perceived by others.	Original scale item (Baalbaki, 2012).
	(Brand X) would make a good impression on other people.	Original scale item (Baalbaki, 2012).
	By participating in the event presented by (Brand X) I gain social approval.	Original scale item (Baalbaki, 2012).
	(Brand X) helps me feel accepted.	Original scale item (Baalbaki, 2012).
	(Brand X) provides me with a personal challenge.	Wicker *et al.* 2012. Based on triathletes' characteristic, this might be an important measure for CBCPBE.
	I am proud to be associated with (Brand X).	Can be considered part of the brand resonance and reflects the nature of the relationship the consumer has with the brand (Keller, 2009). See Section 3.2.2.
	By participating in the event presented by (Brand X) I am able to interact with like-minded individuals.	Author generated.
	(Brand X) event satisfies my competitive nature.	Author generated.
	(Brand X) event allows me sufficient social interaction on the course.	Author generated.
Leadership	(Brand X) uses technology in such a manner that my race experience is improved.	Conway, 2011a
	(Brand X) is a leader in their field.	Can be considered part of brand awareness (Tuominen, 1999). See Section 4.1.

CBCPBE Dimension	Scale item	Justification for inclusion
	(Brand X) contributes something to society.	Original scale item (Baalbaki, 2012).
	(Brand X) has been successful in securing the support of the local community for the event.	Author generated.
	(Brand X) has made a valuable contribution to the infrastructure required for the event.	Author generated.

Source: Author's own compilation, adapted from Baalbaki (2012)

The quality dimension of CBCPBE are covered by the following dimensions which form part of the original model: the reliability of the brand, the consistency of the quality provided, the performance of the brand's event, the level of quality provided, presenting the event in a consistent manner and an acceptable quality standard. In addition, the following quality dimensions have been added to customise the model for RCPA sport events: the level of the safety standards at the event, ease of registration for the event, value for money the entry fee provides, event accessibility, the uniqueness of the event, the quality of the referees officiating the event, the quality of the volunteers, and the route layout and design of the event.

The dimension relating to preference (which corresponds with the original dimension, brand loyalty) are measured by predominantly using the scale items generated by Baalbaki (2012): brand is the consumer's first choice, level of loyalty towards the brand, purchase intention, and commitment towards the brand. A scale item which tests the respondents recurring participation was added to firstly determine if respondents will or do come back to participate in the event, and secondly, as a dimension of brand loyalty as a measure of repeat purchasing. In addition, the exclusivity of the event is also tested. This exclusivity specifically measures the perception of 'toughness' the event holds for the respondent.

The sustainability of brands is a key consideration in the current marketplace and sport events have been under public scrutiny regarding their impact on the environment. Scale items generated by Baalbaki were somewhat adapted for clarity and include: the brand is an environmentally safe brand, an environmentally responsible brand, and a sustainable brand. Ioakimidis (2007) maintains that sport organisations should

care for and protect the environment in which they operate, therefore this is also included as a scale item. As this model measures CBCPBE, it is valuable to determine if the consumer actually finds it important that the event protects the environment.

In the social influence dimension, the following scale items were included from Baalbaki (2012): the brand improves the way the consumer is perceived by others, the brand makes a good impression on other people, gaining social approval and gaining acceptance. In addition, the following scale items where included, based on the characteristics of triathletes: provides a personal challenge, proud to be associated with the brand, social interaction, satisfaction of competitiveness, and social interaction on the course.

With regards to the leadership dimension, the majority of the original scale items proposed by Baalbaki (2012) were not deemed appropriate for a service. The only original scale item included was that the brand contributes something to society. Scale items included to match the sport event category are: the use of technology, leadership in the field, success in securing support for the event, and contribution to the local infrastructure.

4.7 CONCLUSION

It is evident from the discussions in this chapter and those in Chapter 3, that brand equity is an important aspect of any organisation's marketing activities. It is also evident that research on brand equity has predominantly focused on products, where the quality is easily measured. Research conducted on brand equity within the sport industry has focused on the brand equity of sport teams, where the main antecedents for brand equity were based on team performance and the player's skills. Despite her best efforts, at the time of writing this thesis, the researcher of this study could not find any brand equity models pertaining to the service offering of sport events which focus not only participation, but which are recurring.

The chapter concluded with an attempt to propose a brand equity model for sport events which are both recurring and participative in nature. The main brand equity models were summarised and research done on brand equity within the sport events was reviewed. The new consumer-based, consumer-perceived brand equity approach

developed by Baalbaki (2012) was discussed as a possible model to measure the brand equity of sport events.

The next chapter will discuss the methodology used to test the model proposed in this chapter.

CHAPTER 5:
METHODOLOGY

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapters 2, 3 and 4 comprised of the theoretical and contextual literature on which the primary research was based, and in these chapters key concepts, such as the concept of branding, brands in the sport industry, brand equity, consumer brand equity and various concepts regarding sport events, were reviewed. The focus of the present chapter then turns to the primary research conducted on the development of a model which may be used to measure the consumer-based, consumer-perceived brand equity (CBCPBE) of RCPA sport events.

This chapter therefore discusses the research methodology that was used for this study. The research design, measurement process, sampling design, as well as the data analysis methods are presented. The aim is to explain the process of empirical research and to justify the analytical methods used. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the measures taken to ensure reliability and validity, as well as the ethical considerations taken into account during the research process.

5.2 THE RESEARCH OBJECTIVES REVISITED

The primary objective of this study is to develop a model which may be used to measure the CBCPBE of RCPA sport events. The purpose of this analysis is to identify the unique constructs which may contribute to the brand equity of RCPA sport events as found from the perspective of the consumer. This is important, as although the significance of brand equity has been well-established in both academia and the business world and attempts have been made to provide sport organisations with a framework for brand equity, it is also evident that brand equity, within the modern era of changing consumer demands, should be measured from a consumer perspective. As such, brand equity then becomes a highly subjective element of measure which is also dependent on the product category.

To achieve the primary objective of this study, several secondary objectives were set. The first secondary objective is to investigate the constructs which contribute to the dimension of 'quality', a core component of brand equity. Constructs which were

probed include: consistency and standard of quality, as well as various other constructs relating specifically to the product category at hand, sport events. The second secondary objective is to determine which constructs contribute to the brand equity component 'preference'. Here respondents were probed in terms of loyalty, commitment and repeat participation. The third secondary objective dealt with 'sustainability', a new addition to brand equity. It aimed to discover if respondents find sustainability an important element which contributes to brand equity, and if so, in which manner it contributes to brand equity. The fourth secondary objective was to establish the constructs which contribute to the 'social influence' dimension of brand equity and included items such as acceptance, pride of association and social interaction. The final secondary objective aimed to determine if 'leadership' contributes to the brand equity of RCPA sport events by investigating items, such as technology, contribution to society and contribution to infrastructure. The primary and secondary objectives for this study are listed in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1: Primary and secondary research objectives

Primary research objective
To develop a model which may be used to measure the CBCPBE of RCPA sport events.
Secondary research objectives
• To investigate the items which contribute to the dimension of 'quality' for RCPA sports events.
• To determine which items contribute to the brand equity component 'preference' for these events.
• To investigate the effect of sustainability on the brand equity of RCPA sport events.
• To establish the items which contribute to the 'social influence' dimension of brand equity.
• To determine if 'leadership' contributes to the brand equity of RCPA sport events.
• To compile a general consumer profile for female triathletes.

In order to answer both the primary and secondary research objectives, a methodical and systematic process was conducted, consisting of a series of steps known as the research process (Zikmund, Babin, Carr & Griffin, 2009:63). Figure 5.1 below offers a systematic layout of the methodical process used for this study and which forms the basis of the chapter.
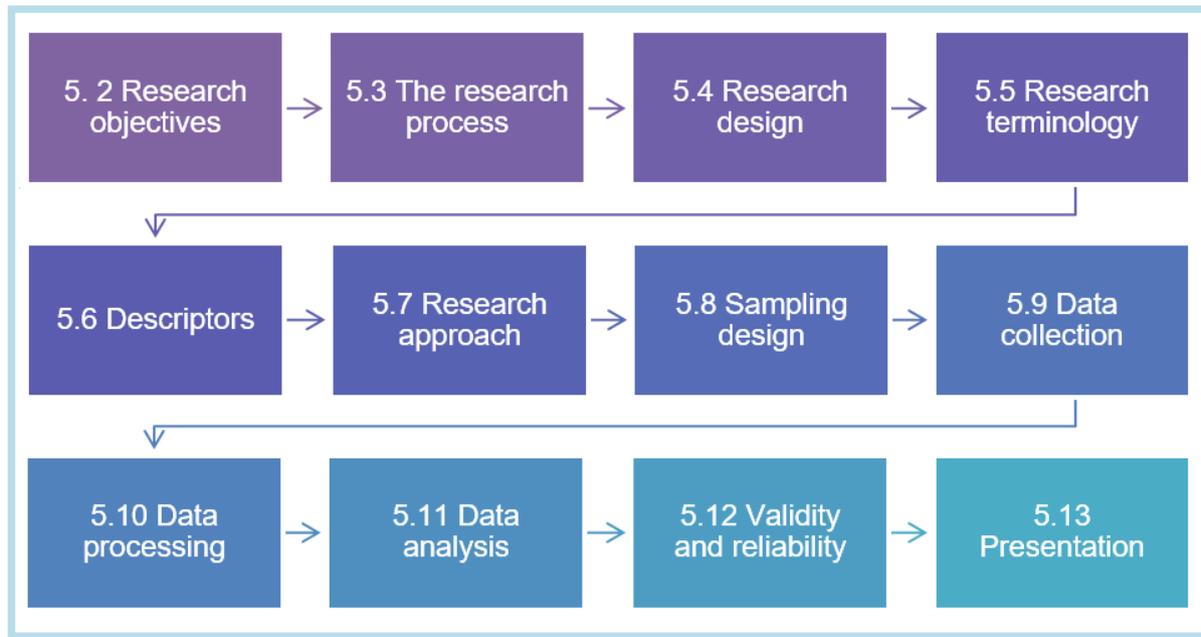
Figure 5.1: Layout of Chapter 5

Source: Author generated

The research process will now be discussed in detail.

5.3 THE RESEARCH PROCESS

During the research process, researchers have to make the following important decisions: firstly, which research questions are deemed most important to answer, and secondly, which process is best suited to finding these answers. The research process is thus best depicted as a sequential progression involving a number of steps (Cooper & Schindler, 2014:12) which directs the research being conducted. The steps however do not need to occur in sequence and may be adapted to the specific requirements of the study at hand (Cooper & Schindler, 2014:12). Moreover, the process is of such a nature that the researcher may return to each step with revisions until a logical argument can be developed resulting in an iterative process where each revision made

must be considered holistically (Verschuren & Doorewaard, 2010:25). The typical research process which was also used for this study is depicted in Figure 5.2.
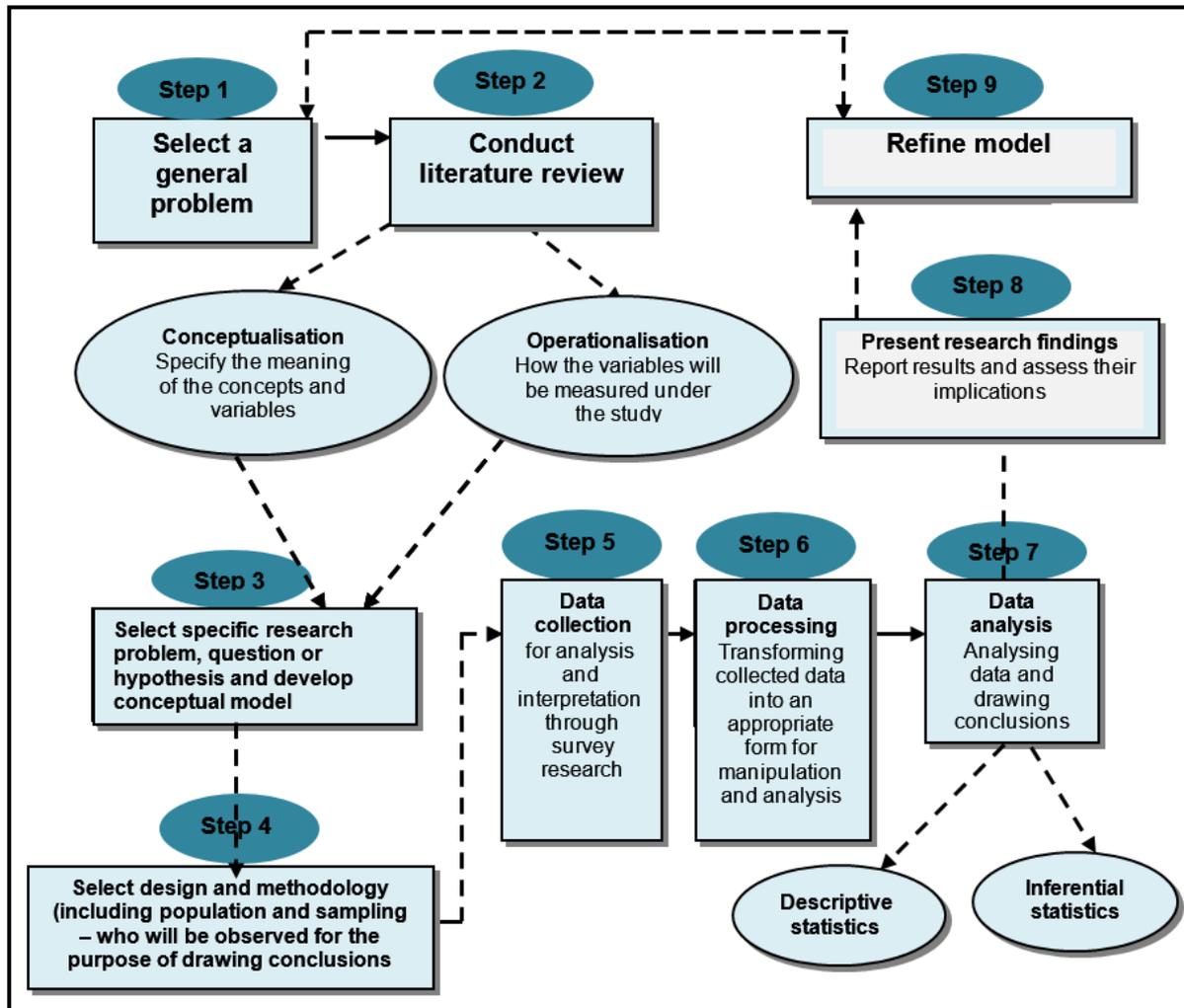
Figure 5.2: The research process

Source: Adapted from Babbie (2016:114); Mackenzie & Knipe (2006:205)

The steps in the research process, as depicted above, will now be briefly discussed.

5.3.1 Steps in the research process

As depicted in Figure 5.2 above, the following steps are typically followed during a research process:

- Step 1 of the research process involves **identifying and selecting a general research problem** (refer to Chapter 1). During this stage, the researcher will generate ideas on what type of research should be done, the purpose of the research, and the research questions which must be answered. In this case, the general research problem and departing premise would be that there is no

definitive model for measuring consumer-based, consumer-perceived brand equity for RCPA sport events.

- Step 2 involves the **compilation of a literature review** (refer to Chapter 2, 3 and 4). The literature review is one of the essential preliminary tasks when conducting research, as the researcher should be familiar with the existing body of knowledge in the literature. Not only does the literature review provide a theoretical background to the study, it also assists in refining the methodology and enables the researcher to contextualise the findings of the study (Kumar, 2011:30). During the literature review of this study, contextualisation was provided by exploring key concepts, such as brand equity and the various constructs that have been postulated to contribute towards the measurement of brand equity. The measurement techniques for each construct were identified during the literature review and a conceptual model was developed, flowing from the conceptualisation (specifying the meaning of the concepts and variables) and operationalisation (how the variables will be measured under the study) as given in the literature review.

- Step 3 involves the s**election of a specific research problem, question or hypothesis** (see Section 5.2). Formulating the research problem is crucial and determines the direction of the study. The research problem ultimately determines if the research to be conducted will be quantitative or qualitative in nature. In this case, the testing of the conceptual model required statistical analysis, and as such, a quantitative survey was more suitable for this study.

- Step 4 deals with **selecting the research design and methodology** to be used (refer to Section 5.4). This step includes the selection of the population and the sampling methods to be used. In this case, the design chosen was quantitative, and the population selected was the online Women For Tri Facebook community. As all of the population members had an equal chance of participating in the research, the study used a census approach. The primary data for this study was collected using an online self-administered questionnaire.

- Step 5 of the research process deals with the **collection of data** (refer to Section 5.9). The self-administered online questionnaire was administered through LimeSurvey, and distributed to the selected population through a series of 'posts' containing the link to the questionnaire that was posted on the Facebook group, Women For Tri.

- Step 6 involves the **processing of the data** collected during step 5 (refer to Section 5.10 and Chapter 6). During this step of the research process, raw data is edited and coded to reflect the measuring scale used in the questionnaire.

- Step 7 involves the **analysis of the data** (refer to Section 5.11 and Chapter 6 and Chapter 7). Several statistical analyses, including descriptive and inferential statistics, were used to analyse the data collected so that the research objectives might be achieved.

- Step 8 encompasses the **presentation of the findings** (refer to Section 5.13 and Chapter 8). The research findings for this study are presented in a doctoral thesis-format, as well as potential journal articles to be published in academic research journals.

- Step 9 of the research process, which falls outside the limits of this thesis, calls for the further **refinement of the model developed by this study**. Suggestions for further research will be provided in Chapter 8.

The next section discusses the research design which was used to conduct the research.

5.4   RESEARCH DESIGN

Any research project will require a framework according to which the research will be conducted. For this purpose, the research design guides the researcher in the design of the collection, measurement and analysis of the data, and aids in the allocation of resources by ensuring that the research questions are answered by the proposed investigation (Cooper & Schindler, 2014:138). Simply put, the research design can be seen as the 'blueprint' to be used for answering the research questions and achieving the research objectives (Cooper & Schindler, 2014:82). The research design therefore becomes the framework to be used when collecting and analysing data, indicating which research methods are most appropriate (Walliman, 2011:13). A clear research design makes it evident in advance what the research project is to produce and what is necessary in order to achieve the set outcomes (Verschuren & Doorewald, 2010:11).

The research design also motivates the reasoning behind the particular methodology chosen for the study, formulates the procedures necessary to obtain the information

required to address the research objectives, and allows the researcher to make informed decisions regarding the research to be conducted (Walliman, 2011:13). The research design should stipulate the following elements in a clear and concise manner (Cooper & Schindler, 2014:125):

- An activity and time-based plan, as based on the research questions.

- A guide for selecting types and sources of information.

- A framework for specifying the relationships between the variables of the study.

- A procedural outline for each research activity.

In addition to the above elements, the research design chosen for the study should reflect the decisions made during the research process. This includes how causal connections between variables need to be expressed, for example, if the results that are found can be generalised outside of the sample population chosen, how will certain behaviours be interpreted and explained, and how the interconnections and changes in social phenomena will be explained (Bryman *et al.*, 2014:100).

Research design therefore serves two main functions: it conceptualises the operational plan to undertake the various tasks and procedures necessary to complete the research, and it ensures that these procedures are adequate to obtain valid, objective and accurate answers to the research questions (Kumar, 2011:28).

It can be concluded that research design is an important component of research, as it provides the insight needed regarding the framework that can be used to collect the specific data required for a research study. In addition, research design is crucial when determining the criteria to be used to evaluate the research (Martensson, Fors, Wallin, Zander & Nilsson, 2016:594) and enables the researcher to arrive at valid findings, comparisons and conclusions (Kumar, 2011:19).

Research design thus refers to a collective of important research components, including research methodology, data collection methods, data analysis techniques, sampling design and instrument development (Kumar, 2011:19; Cooper & Schindler, 2014:89). It also encompasses concepts relating to validity, reliability, replication, trustworthiness and authentication (Harwell, 2011). Figure 5.3 visually depicts the components of the research design.
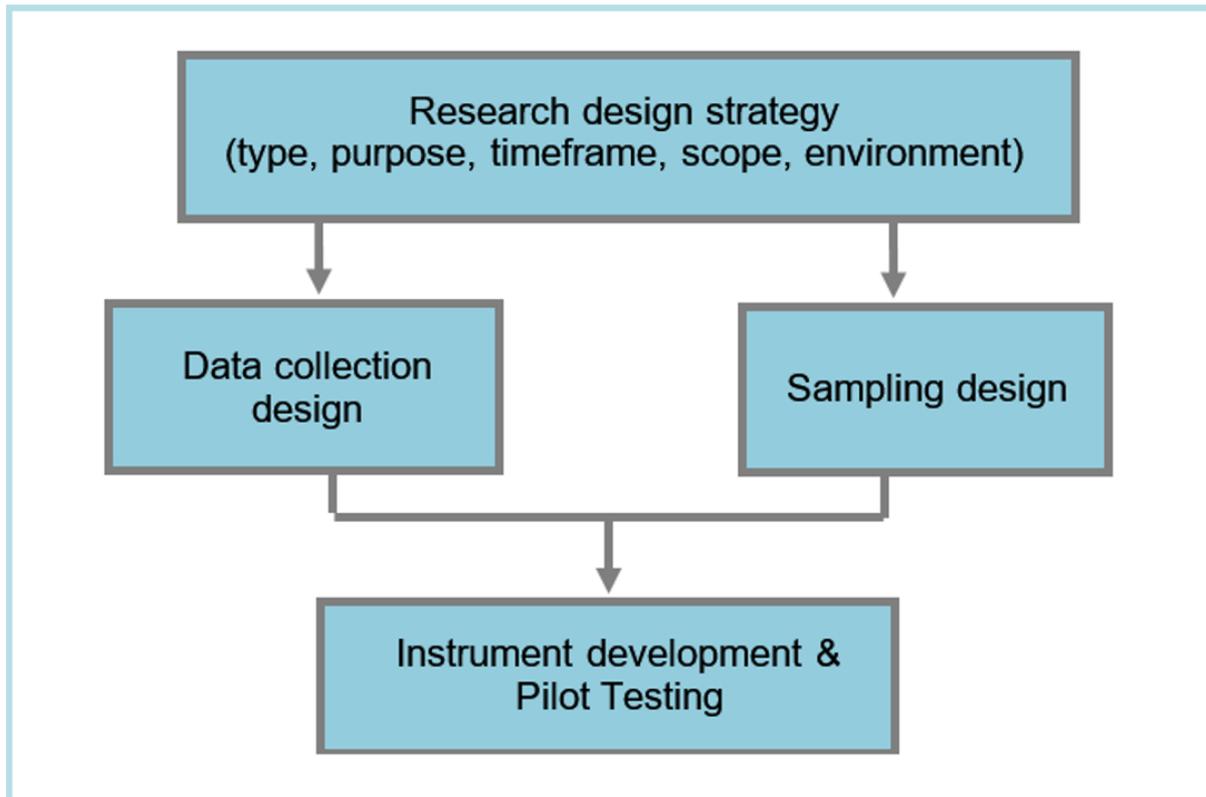
Figure 5.3: Components of the research design

Source: Adapted from Cooper & Schindler (2014:141)

These components contribute to the research process as described in Section 5.3 above, and will be discussed individually in the remainder of this chapter.

5.5   RESEARCH TERMINOLOGY

The terminology relating to the research process as used in this chapter and the rest of the thesis, will be briefly discussed below.

5.5.1   Ontology, epistemology and axiology

The research paradigm is a way of describing the worldview held by the researcher which is informed by philosophical assumptions (Chilisa & Kawulich, 2012:1). According to Schwandt, a paradigm can be defined as, "a shared worldview that represents the beliefs and values in a discipline and that guides how problems are solved" (in Chilisa & Kawulich, 2012:1). Paradigms set down the intent, motivation and expectations for the research (MacKenzie & Knipe, 2006:294). In order to describe paradigms, researchers make use of ontology, epistemology and axiology.

Ontology is concerned with the nature of reality and how the world operates (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009:110) and consists of mainly two dimensions; objectivism and subjectivism. Objectivism relates to the development of social phenomena, independent of participants. Subjectivism, on the other hand, argues that social phenomena are based on real world phenomena and that the world does not exist independently of participants' knowledge (Scotland, 2012:11).

Epistemology is largely concerned with the nature and forms of knowledge, and epistemological assumptions relate to how knowledge can be created, acquired and communicated (Scotland, 2012:9). In essence, it explains "what it means to know" (Scotland, 2012:9), and it enquires into the nature of knowledge and truth (Chilisa & Kawulich, 2012:1).

Axiology is concerned with what is believed to be true, and deals with the ethics and value system that can be found in the particular worldview (Chilisa & Kawulich, 2012:1). Axiology determines what role the researcher's judgements and values play in the research (Saunders *et al.*, 2009:116).

The above terms are essentially the core of a research paradigm, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

5.5.2   Deduction and induction

Deduction and induction represent the two approaches which can be followed when conducting research. If the deductive approach is being used, the mode of inquiry moves from the general to the specific, where hypotheses or research questions are developed from general principles (Babbie, 2016:22). The objective here is to verify or test theory, rather than to develop new theory (Creswell, 2014). This can be achieved by defining the concepts, collecting data and subjecting the collected data to a number of tests, so that conclusions may be reached which will either confirm or dismiss the set hypotheses (Saunders *et al.*, 2009:125). The deduction approach then starts with the 'why' before moving on to the 'whether' (Babbie, 2016:22).

The induction approach is the inverse of the deduction approach. With this approach, the researcher draws conclusions from particular facts or pieces of evidence (Cooper & Schindler, 2014:69). It is defined as the "logical model in which general principles are developed from specific principles" (Babbie, 2016:23). For the induction approach

the focus is on developing theory from the data obtained and it is mainly associated with qualitative research (Saunders *et al.*, 2009:126).

Given the above explanation, it is clear that this study will follow a deductive approach. Theory has been presented in Chapter 2 which will be tested during the data collection and data analysis steps of the research process using quantitative methods.

5.5.3   Empirical research, primary data and secondary data

Empirical research refers to a logical operation by which a research hypothesis or question is examined against reality through the use of data (Zikmund *et al.*, 2009:7; Cooper & Schindler, 2014:246). In addition, it describes an attempt by researchers to describe, explain or make predictions about information which is then processed through the use of mathematics or statistics (Cooper & Schindler, 2014:246). Empirical studies, such as the study being conducted for this thesis, can be classified according to the type of data involved: primary or secondary data. This is depicted in Figure 5.4 on the next page.
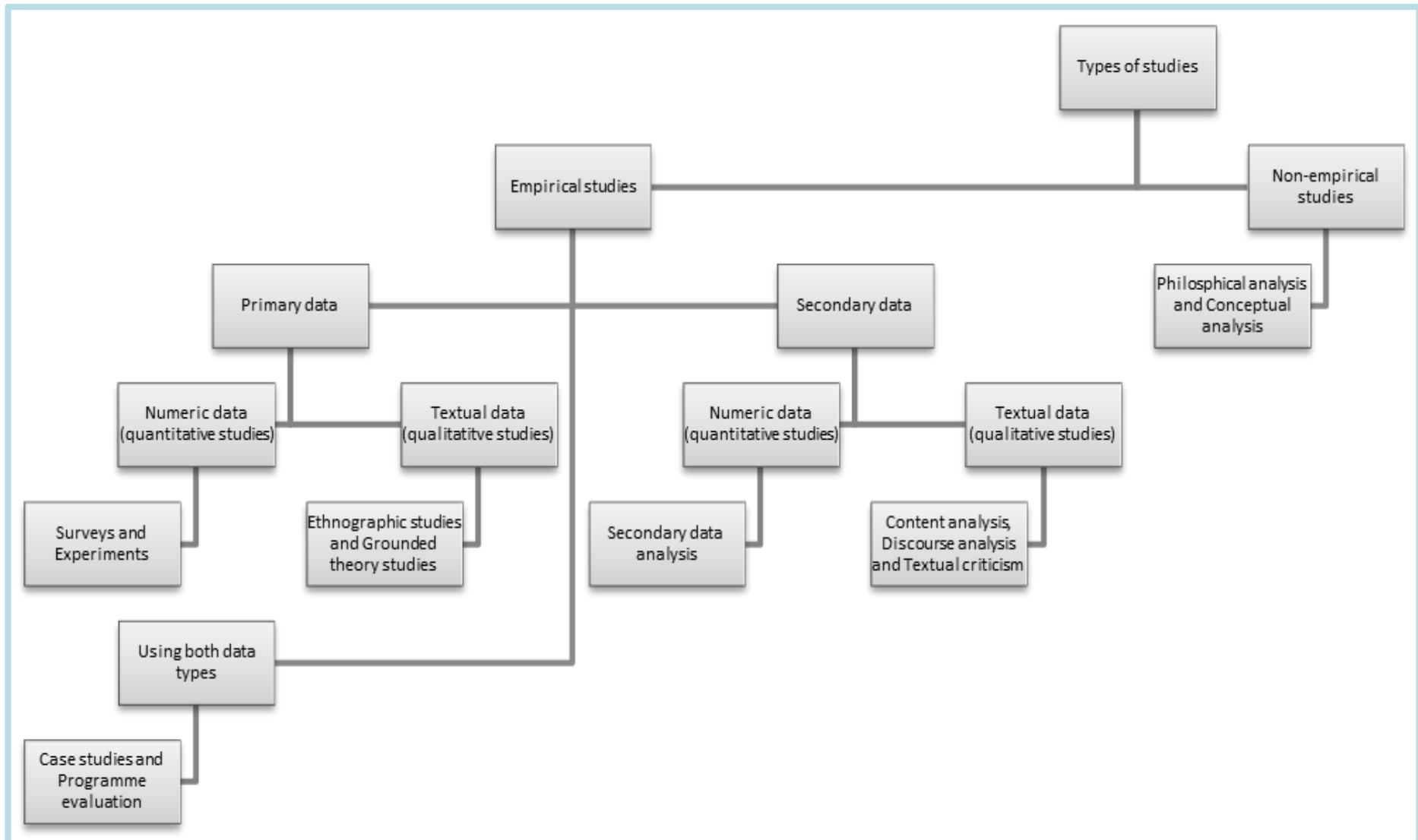
Figure 5.4: Classification of empirical and non-empirical studies

Source: Adapted from Babbie & Mouton (2001)

Empirical studies can be classified as based on primary data, secondary data or a combination of the two data types. Primary and secondary data can both be further divided into numeric data and textual data. Each one of these divisions can be further divided into surveys and experiments and ethnographic studies (primary data), and secondary data analysis and content analysis, discourse analysis and textual criticism (secondary data).

For this study, primary data was collected by means of an online survey which resulted in the collection of numeric data. The analysis of the primary data collected for this study can be found in Chapters 5 and 6 of this thesis.

Secondary research was done through the literature review and evolved with the development of the proposed model which was tested during the collection of primary data.

As the other concepts depicted in Figure 5.4 (on the previous page) have no relevance to this study and the data collected during the research process, no further discussion of the concepts is warranted.

5.5.4   Variables

A variable can be defined as "a symbol of an act, trait, characteristic or attribute, which can be measured and to which a value can be assigned" (Cooper & Schindler, 2014:55). Simply put, a variable is anything that may assume different numerical values and constitutes the empirical assessment of a concept (Zikmund *et al.*, 2009:42). Several variables can be used during the research process and may be included in the questionnaires used for survey research (Cooper & Schindler, 2014:55; Saunders *et al.*, 2014:417):

- Dichotomous variables will only have two values. These are typically yes or no questions, but may also include values such as male or female.

- Continuous variables can be measured in a range on a continuum and may contain decimal numbers. Examples include a respondent's weight or student's test scores.

- Nominal values are placed into categories which cannot be ordered by rank, have no natural order and do not have numerical values. This includes variables such as geographical locations or occupation.

- Ordinal variables include variables which can be ranked in some order of magnitude, but where there is no difference between the values. Typically, a Likert-scale is used to measure this type of variable.

- Interval variables refer to categories of variables which have identical distances between them. A good example of interval variables is temperature measured by Celsius where each degree is exactly the same. Interval variables, however, do not have a 'true zero'. Zero in the case of interval variables does not represent the absence of whatever is being measured, but represents a value like any other variable on the scale. In the case with temperature, the zero degree does not mean 'no temperature', the temperature can still be measured and is, for example, 10 degrees less than if the temperature was 10 degrees.

- Ratio variables also have identical distances between them. However, unlike interval ratios, they do have an absolute zero value. A good example here is income levels, where zero would represent 'no income'.

Variables can also be classified as dependent or independent variables. Dependent variables can be explained or predicted by another variable (Zikmund *et al.*, 2009:120) and are assumed to be caused by another variable (Babbie, 2016:16). Dependent variables are then dependent on another variable. An independent variable has an influence on, or causes, the dependent variable (Babbie, 2016:16). The dependent variable will change in response to variations in the independent variable, and the independent variable then causes changes in the dependent variable (Saunders *et al.*, 2009:442).

The variables used in this study can be found in Table 5.10 which appears later on in this chapter.

5.6 DESCRIPTORS OF THE OVERALL RESEARCH DESIGN OF THE STUDY

Cooper and Schindler (2014:139) list eight descriptors that can be used to style the specific research design used in the study by referring to different design dimensions.

The eight dimensions are listed in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2: Research design descriptors

Category	Options
Research paradigm	- Post-positivist - Constructivist
The degree to which the research question has been crystallised	- Exploratory study - Formal study
The method of data collection	- Monitoring - Communication study
The power of the researcher to produce effects in the variables under study	- Experimental - Ex post facto study
The purpose of the study	- Reporting - Descriptive study - Causal - Explanatory - Predictive
The time dimension	- Cross-sectional study - Longitudinal
The topical scope of the study	- Case study - Statistical study
The research environment	- Field setting - Laboratory setting - Simulation

Source: Cooper & Schindler (2014:139)

Each descriptor will now be discussed in detail.

5.6.1   Research paradigm

Research involves a collaboration between the research design, research method and the research paradigm. This relationship is depicted in Figure 5.5, on the next page.
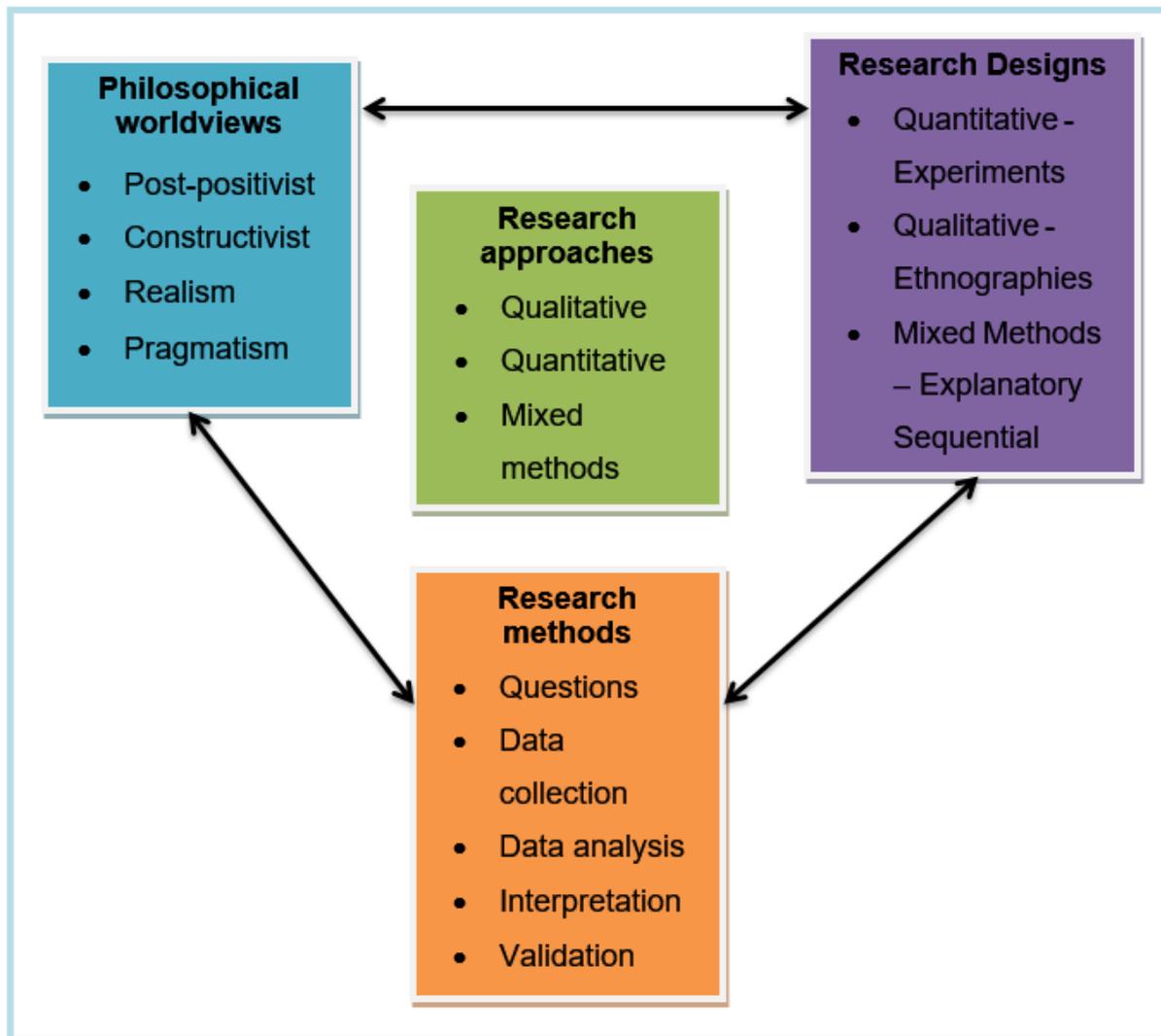
Figure 5.5: Intersection of research paradigms, research designs and research methods
Source: Adapted from Cresswell (2014:5)

A paradigm can be described as the fundamental models and frames of reference used to organise observations and reasoning made during the research process (Babbie, 2016:33). In essence, it represents the assumptions about the manner in which the researcher views the world (Saunders *et al.*, 2009:108), and is therefore also known as "philosophical worldviews" (Creswell, 2014:5).

Paradigms arise based on discipline orientations, supervisor inclinations and past research experiences (Creswell, 2014:6). The types of beliefs held by the individual researcher, based on the factors mentioned above will lead to the researcher's choice of research design: qualitative, quantitative or mixed method (Creswell, 2014:6).

A brief discussion is warranted on the main paradigms as presented in Figure 5.5 above.

5.6.1.1 Post-positivism

The post-positivist assumption has represented the traditional form of research and is most often found when conducting quantitative research (Creswell, 2014:7). It is also known as the scientific method, empirical science and post-positivism. Post-positivists hold a deterministic philosophy where causes will determine the outcomes (Creswell, 2014:7). The development of numeric measures of observations is vital for post-positivism. The scientific method involves beginning with a theory, collecting data that either supports or refutes that theory, and then making the necessary revisions to the theory and conducting additional tests. This is the approach to be used for this study.

The positivist approach involves the following principles (Bryman *et al.*, 2014:12; Cresswell, 2014:7):

- Only phenomena that can be observed by the senses can be verified as sources of knowledge.

- Knowledge is conjectural and evidence established in research is always imperfect and fallible.

- The purpose of theory is to generate hypotheses that can be tested. Most quantitative research starts with the testing of a theory.

- Research is the process of making claims, and then refining or abandoning them for other claims more strongly warranted.

- Knowledge is obtained by gathering facts that provide the basis for universal propositions. Data, evidence and rational considerations shape knowledge.

- Science should be conducted objectively. Researchers must examine methods and conclusions for bias.

To conclude, the purpose of researching, according to this paradigm, is to discover and confirm theories by testing them empirically.

As this study tests hypotheses to confirm the theory put forth in Chapters 2, 3 and 4, a post-positivism approach is used.

5.6.1.2 Constructivism

Constructivism is typically seen as an approach to qualitative research (Creswell, 2014:8) which views phenomena as social constructs with meanings that are produced

by individuals through social interaction (Bryman *et al.*, 2014:). The premise of this 'worldview' is that individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work and therefore develop subjective meanings of their experiences, directed towards certain objects or things (Creswell, 2014:8). The meanings created in this manner are varied and multiple, resulting in researchers having to look for the complexity of views, as opposed to narrowing meanings into a few categories or views. The goal of this type of research is to rely as much as possible on participants' views of the topic being researched.

Constructionists therefore believe that reality and knowledge are subjective concepts. That is, that they depend on the individual's point of view and their experiences in the world in which they live (Chilisa & Kawulich, 2012:60). Therefore, the basic principles of constructivism are that the world is constructed and given meaning in a subjective manner by individuals; the researcher in turn is part of what is being observed, and research is mainly driven by interest (Blumberg *et al.*, 2011:17).

In order to collect data that answers to this worldview, broad and open-ended questions are used, as an attempt must be made to understand and interpret the individual's experiences and meanings attached to the world (Creswell, 2014:8).

To conclude, constructivism begins with the generation or inductive development of a theory or pattern of meaning, instead of starting with a theory (such as is done with post-positivism) (Creswell, 2014:8).

5.6.1.3   *Pragmatism*

The pragmatic worldview originates out of actions, situations and consequences rather than antecedent conditions (as in post-positivism) (Creswell, 2014:10). The focus here is on applications and solutions to problems, and instead of focusing on methods, the research problem is emphasised, and all approaches available are used to understand the problem (Creswell, 2014:10). Thus, researchers who follow this approach believe that the research question (or problem) is the most important consideration when designing research (Saunders *et al.*, 2009:109). The argument here is that it is possible to integrate both positivist and constructivist positions in order to collect and interpret the data (Saunders *et al.*, 2009:109). Qualitative, quantitative and mixed-methods approaches can be used in conjunction with the worldview (Creswell, 2014:12).

The pragmatic approach has the following characteristics (Creswell, 2014:11):

- Pragmatism does not follow just one system of philosophy or reality.

- The researcher has the freedom to choose between the methods and techniques that best suit the purpose of the research in question.

- The world is not seen as an absolute entity. Rather, the truth is viewed as that which works at the current moment in time.

- The intended consequence of the research is to help understand the 'how' and 'what' of the research.

- Research occurs in a number of contexts, resulting in a world that is seen as both objective and subjective.

To conclude, pragmatism is not committed to any one system of philosophy or reality, and places the research problem at the centre of the research approach (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006:197).

5.6.1.4   *Realism*

The essence of this approach is that the senses identify reality which is seen as the truth (Saunders *et al.*, 2009:114). Reality, as a concept, is completely independent of the mind and individual experiences. Two types of realism can be identified (Saunders *et al.*, 2009:114):

- Direct realism which states that what individuals experience through their senses is an accurate portrayal of the world.

- Critical realism, in contrast, argues that individuals experience sensations, which can be deceived by the senses.

Table 5.3 on the next page offers a brief comparison between the four paradigms discussed above.

Table 5.3: Comparison between research paradigms

	Post-positivism	Constructivism	Pragmatism	Realism
Ontology	- Single reality - Constant over time - Independent of social actors	- Reality is socially constructed - Changeable - Possibility of many realities	- Paradigm which best answers research question is selected	- Reality is objective - Exists independently of human thoughts - Interpreted through social conditioning
Epistemology	- Only observable phenomena - Should be independent of values, interest and feelings in order to provide credible data	- Knowledge is subjective - Truth lies within human experience	- Both observable phenomena and subjective meanings can provide knowledge	- Observable phenomena can provide credible facts - Insufficient data can result in inaccuracies - Focus is on explaining sensations within context
Axiology	- Researcher is independent of data - Maintains an objective stance - Scientific methods of collecting data	- Research is value bound - Researcher is part of the research	- Researcher adopts both objective and subjective points of view during data interpretation	- Researcher is biased by world views and experiences - Research is value laden

Source: Adapted from Saunders *et al.* (2009:119); Chilisa & Kawulich (2012:54)

Given the above discussion, it is evident that this study followed a post-positivism approach, where hypotheses were tested through the use of quantitative research.

5.6.2   Degree to which the research question has been crystallised

Studies can be seen as either exploratory or formal, and differ in terms of structure and the immediate objective of the study. When the researcher has little or no scientific knowledge about the situation they wish to research, exploratory research is conducted (Stebbins, 2016). Exploratory research is mainly conducted in order to clarify ambiguous situations and is not intended to provide conclusive evidence (Zikmund *et al.*, 2009:54). The aim is to develop new hypotheses and research questions for future research (Cooper & Schindler, 2014:126).

Studies that aim to test hypotheses or answer specific research questions are considered to be formal studies. Through precise data collection, a formal study can answer a specific set of research questions (Cooper & Schindler, 2014:126).

However, most studies do contain some form of exploratory research and will often have at least an element of exploration before the final choice of design (Cooper & Schindler, 2014:126). This is evident in this study, although the main approach was formal in nature.

5.6.3   The method of data collection

The method used to collect data can either be a process of monitoring or through communication. Monitoring involves the collection of data through observations, while communication involves the researcher asking respondent's questions and capturing their responses (Cooper & Schindler, 2014:127).

To answer the research questions and objectives of this study, a communication study approach was selected as the method of data collection. Data collection occurred through an online, self-administered questionnaire (see Appendix A) made available to respondents via a link.

5.6.4   Researcher manipulation of study variables

The power of the researcher to manipulate the variables being measured can be deemed as either experimental or *ex post facto.* An experiment involves the researcher manipulating the independent variable, and is used when the researcher wishes to determine if a specific variable has an effect on another variable (Cooper & Schindler, 2014:127). An *ex post facto* design is used when the researcher has no ability to influence the variables and merely reports on what is found (Cooper & Schindler, 2014:127).

The researcher of this study did not attempt to manipulate or control the variables in the study and only reported on the perceptions of female triathletes regarding RCPA branded events. Therefore, the study is *ex post facto* and uses statistical manipulation of the findings to ensure that bias is not introduced that can affect the variables.

5.6.5   The purpose of the study

The purpose of a study can be reporting, descriptive, causal-explanatory or causal-predictive (Cooper & Schindler, 2014:127). A reporting study aims to create comparisons through the generation of statistics which leads to the development of a deeper understanding of a phenomenon. Descriptive studies aim to answer the 'who, what, where, when and how much' questions. Studies can also be causal in nature. In a causal-explanatory study the aim is to identify how one variable can cause a change in another variable. A causal-predictive study will predict how the manipulation of one variable will impact on another.

This study can be considered both reporting and descriptive, in the sense that the primary and secondary objectives are concerned with determining *who, what, where, when* or *how much*. The study will also look at creating comparisons between the data, so that the brand equity of RCPA sport events can be better understood.

5.6.6   The time dimension

A study can be carried out only once, representing it as a snapshot in time (cross-sectional), or it can be repeated over an extended period of time (longitudinal) (Cooper & Schindler, 2014:128). The advantages and disadvantages of each approach are set out in Table 5.4 below.

Table 5.4: Advantages and disadvantages of longitudinal and cross-sectional methods

Method	Advantages	Disadvantages
Cross-sectional method	- Inexpensive to carry out - Short time-span - Low dropout rate - No long-term administration needed	- Limits comparability of groups - Gives no idea about direction of change a group may take
Longitudinal method	- Can reveal an extensive amount of detail - High levels of comparability - Allows for modified speculation about relationships between variables	- Can be expensive - Potential for a high dropout rate

Source: Adapted from Van Zyl (2014:254)

Given the primary objective of this study, as well as the nature and time constraints, a cross-sectional method was selected to investigate the brand equity of RCPA sport events.

5.6.7 The topical scope

The scope of a study can be considered to be of either statistical nature or on a case study basis. Statistical studies aim to make inferences about a population's characteristics, which indicate that a quantitative research approach is used in an attempt to test hypotheses and research questions. Findings are generated and the results generalised. Case studies, on the other hand, place emphasis on the complete contextual analysis of fewer events, which rely mainly on qualitative data (Cooper & Schindler, 2014:128).

The topical scope of the current study, being reported on in this thesis, was statistical, in the sense that the study aimed to capture a population's characteristics, that of female triathletes who are members of the online Women For Tri Facebook group.

5.6.8 The research environment

Research can be conducted under either actual environmental conditions or under staged or manipulated conditions (laboratory conditions). Research conducted in a laboratory setting allows the researcher greater control over the study, and offers a greater amount of precision resulting in data with rigour (Saunders *et al.*, 2009:41).

The research environment for this study was determined to be under field conditions and was not staged or simulated in any sense (Cooper & Schindler, 2014:128).

5.7 RESEARCH APPROACH

The paradigms (as discussed above), the research design, and the methods all contribute to the research approach (Creswell, 2014:17). Two main options are available to researchers: quantitative approaches or qualitative approaches. Researchers may also use a combination between the two approaches resulting in a mixed-methods approach. It is important that proper care is taken when selecting the research approach for a study, as the approach determines the sampling technique, data collection method and data analysis techniques to be followed.

Table 5.5 provides a concise overview of each approach. As this study follows a quantitative approach, this approach will be discussed in more detail.

Table 5.5: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed-method approaches

Typical attributes	Qualitative approaches	Quantitative approaches	Mixed method approaches
Philosophical assumptions and strategies of inquiry	- Constructivist knowledge claims - Phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, case study and narrative	- Post-positivist knowledge claims - Survey and experiments	- Pragmatic knowledge claims - Sequential, concurrent and transformative
Methods	- Open-ended questions, emerging approaches, text or image data	- Close-ended questions, predetermined approaches, numeric data	- Both open- and closed-ended questions, both emerging and predetermined approaches, and both quantitative and qualitative data and analysis
Research practices	- Researcher is positioned - Collects participant meanings - Focuses on a single concept or phenomenon - Brings personal values into study - Studies the context or setting of participants - Validates the accuracy of findings - Makes interpretations of the data - Creates an agenda for change or reform - Collaborates with the participants	- Tests or verifies theory or explanations - Identifies variable to study - Relates variables in questions or hypotheses - Uses standards of validity and reliability - Observes and measures information numerically - Uses unbiased approaches - Employs statistical procedures	- Collects both quantitative and qualitative data - Develops a rationale for mixing - Integrates the data at different stages of inquiry - Presents visual pictures of the procedures in the study - Employs the practices of both qualitative and quantitative research

5.7.1 Quantitative research

Quantitative research involves the collection of data which generates numerical data (Saunders *et al.*, 2009:151). This type of research is mainly used to test objectives or hypothesis by examining the relationship between variables (Creswell, 2014). A structured method is used for data collection, providing numerical results which can then be analysed through statistical means (Clow & James, 2014:21). This type of data is therefore important when it comes to proving or disproving theories, and providing answers to specific questions (Greener, 2011:55). The aim is to precisely measure a concept and answer questions relating to how much, how often, how many, when and who (Cooper & Schindler, 2014:146).

Quantitative research provides the data required to measure concepts so that the fine differences in magnitude may be quantified (Bryman *et al.*, 2014:33). In addition, a consistent yard stick is established so that distinctions can be made or differences can be gauged. It also provides a more precise estimate on the extent of the relationship between concepts. Quantitative data permits more confident and defensible strategic and tactical recommendation, than data which is obtained through qualitative research (Keller, 2006:556).

Scale questions are used to obtain numerical representations and summaries of the respondents' answers, and often form the basis in tracking studies which monitor brand knowledge over a period of time (Keller, 2006:556).

A deductive approach is evident when determining the relationship between theory and research (Bryman *et al.*, 2014:40). There are four main considerations for deductive reasoning:

- Measurement: the data collection instrument must be both valid and reliable.
- Causality: the explanation of why things are the way they are.
- Generalisability: the results can be applied to the general population outside of the selected sample.
- Replication: the study can be reproduced by any researcher, as it was originally conducted independently and objectively.

The main attributes of quantitative research are summarised in Table 5.6.

Table 5.6: The main attributes of quantitative research

Research aspect	Attribute
Focus	To describe, explain or predict
Purpose	Test hypotheses or answer specific research questions
Approach	Measure and test data
Data collection approach	A structured approach with given categories
Independence of researcher	Researcher acts as an observer and, therefore, results are objective and free from bias
Sample design	Probability sampling is used
Sample size	Large sample sizes are used to produce generalised results
Research design	Descriptive and causal research designs are most often used
Data type and preparation	Verbal descriptions reduced to numerical codes for computerised analysis
Data analysis	Statistical and mathematical analyses which maintain a clear distinction between facts and judgements

Source: Adapted from Zikmund *et al.* (2009:136); Cooper & Schindler (2014:147)

This study made use of an online survey to gather data and the results were analysed by statistical means. A quantitative approach was used to develop a model which may be used to measure the CBCPBE of RCPA sport events.

It is, however, important to provide a brief juxtaposition by briefly discussed qualitative research in the section below.

5.7.2 Qualitative research

Qualitative research makes use of words and open-ended questions, instead of numerical data, to explore and understand the meaning individuals attach to phenomena or problems (Creswell, 2014). The focus tends to be on answering descriptive research questions (Greener, 2011:94) which enables the researcher to investigate less specific research objectives (Zikmund *et al.,* 2009:133). Qualitative research is therefore concerned with the 'how' (process) and 'why' things happen (meaning). The aim is to develop an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon (Cooper & Schindler, 2014:144).

The main attributes of qualitative research are summarised in Table 5.7 below.

Table 5.7: The main attributes of qualitative research

Research aspect	Attribute
Focus	Understand and interpret a phenomenon
Purpose	Discover ideas, used in exploratory research with general research objectives
Approach	Observe and interpret data
Data collection approach	Unstructured and free-form
Independence of researcher	Researcher is intimately involved, resulting in the results being subjective
Sample design	Nonprobability and purposive sampling usually used
Sample size	Small samples used, often in natural settings
Research design	Exploratory research designs are most often used
Data type and preparation	Verbal or pictorial descriptions which are reduced to verbal codes
Data analysis	Human analysis following computer or human coding

Source: Adapted from Zikmund *et al.* (2009:136); Cooper & Schindler (2014:147)

From the above discussion it is clear that quantitative and qualitative research designs differ in a variety of ways. This study will follow a quantitative approach, and as such, the remainder of this chapter will only discuss those elements pertinent to quantitative research design.

The next section will discuss sampling design and the approach used for this study.

5.8   SAMPLING DESIGN

After the concepts have been defined, as discussed above, it is important that the population that the researcher wishes to study is determined (Saunders *et al.*, 2009:43). In this section, the concepts that relate to sampling design are defined and the particular method chosen for this study is explored.

5.8.1 Population, population element, sample and census defined

The population of a research study can be defined as the collection of all units of analysis about which the researcher wishes to make specific inferences (Welman, Kruger & Mitchell, 2009:52). The target population for a study can therefore be seen as the collection of elements that possess the information a researcher seeks to obtain, and about which inferences will be made during the research process (Malholtra, 2004:315).

The population element refers to a single participant on which a measurement is taken, while the census is a count of all the participants in the population (Cooper & Schindler, 2014:662). A census attempts to include the entire population in the survey whereas a sample survey only studies some of the members in the population. These concepts are depicted in Figure 5.6 below.
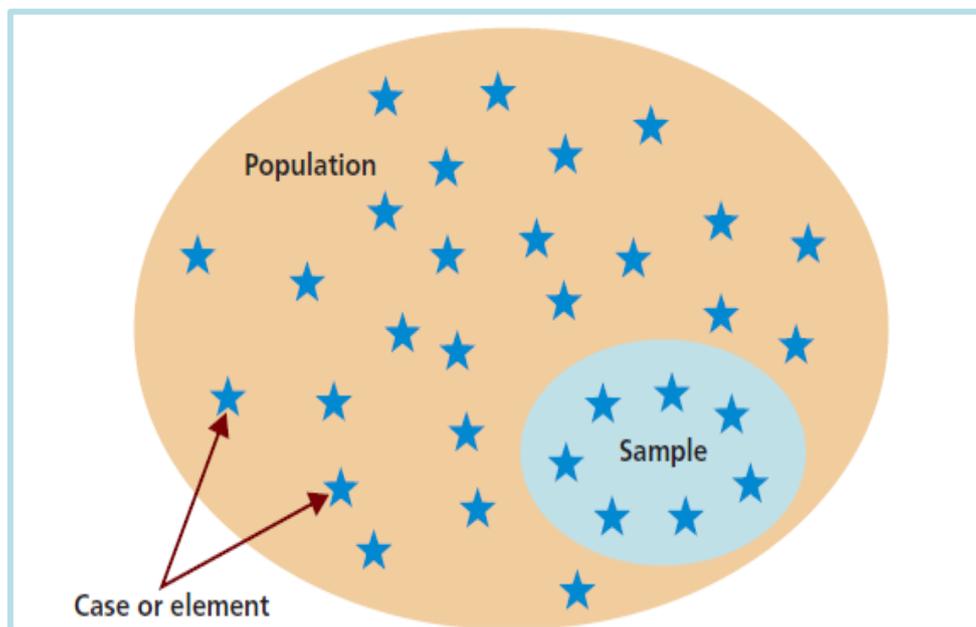
Figure 5.6: Population, sample and population element (or case)
Source: Saunders *et al.* (2012:211)

The target population for this thesis consists of members of the online, closed Facebook group[7], Women For Tri. The group was created and is administered by the

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[7] Facebook, as a form of social media, enables users to share things with a "small" group of friends. Groups on Facebook can be either Open, Closed or Secret. In an open group anyone can join and everything is viewable by everyone online, including search engines. In a closed group, admins must

IRONMAN and Life Time Fitness Women for Tri Board of Advisors with the aim to increase female participation at all levels of triathlon. Discussions are conducted on a women's-only basis, with specific reference to women's issues about training and racing, from beginners to professionals. The group's mission is to: "Identify and diminish primary barriers to entry, mobilise triathlon advocates to encourage and engage female athletes across all distances and represent all athletic abilities." At the time of doing the research, the group consisted of approximately 21 000 members. It should be noted that due to the nature of the group and the platform, group numbers are constantly changing with members being added on a daily basis. The population element is the individual female triathlete, as a member of the Facebook group. The target population was chosen as it holds significant academic relevance:

- The vast majority of research conducted on sport management focuses on sport teams and sport, where consumers consume the sport as a spectating activity. Very little research has been done on sport where the consumer consumes the sport by being an active participant. Research done on this topic has been mostly done on the health benefits of participating in sport, not on the business management and commercial aspects thereof. It can be reasonably expected that the consumption of sport as a participant will attract a different type of consumer with a different set of needs, than consumers who typically consume sport passively as spectators. These types of consumers will then require a different business and marketing approach.

- Sport research has traditionally focused on male participants' perceptions. However, due to global changes in the social environment, it is evident that female participation in sport is increasing, and with this uptake in female participation, a large gap in the research conducted within this field is becoming evident.

- The approach chosen for this study is from a consumer perspective. This means that the basis of the brand equity model is from the consumer perception of the brand, and not, as traditionally, from the company's perspective. The CBCPBE model was developed to specifically take into account not only the industry, but

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approve members and only group members can see posted content. Secret groups are off the grid, don't appear in members profiles, and only reveal information to members.

also the individual consumer. For this reason, only female triathletes were chosen to participate in this study, as it is expected that they will have a unique perspective on branded triathlons (the industry then chosen for this study being RCPA sport events).

5.8.2   Sampling method

Due to the size of populations, researchers frequently choose to select a sample, instead of conducting research on the entire population. It is often deemed impractical due to time constraints and costs. When selecting a sample, it is important to ensure that it is representative in order to generalise results. To achieve representativeness, the sample has to reflect the average characteristics of the population (Babbie, 2016:195). However, should there be an expected difference between the sample-based estimate and the actual population value, sampling error has occurred (Ornstein, 2014:3).

Two broad types of sampling techniques can be identified, namely, probability and non-probability sampling. As this study will not be making use of a sampling method, but a census, the two sampling techniques with their attributes and methods are briefly indicated in Table 5.8.

Table 5.8: Sampling methods

	Probability sampling	**Non-probability sampling**
Attributes	- Controlled random selection - Each individual has an equal chance of being selected - Findings can be generalised - Sampling biased is eliminated	- Arbitrary sample selection process - Probability of individual being selected in unknown - Best to be used if generalisation is not the goal - Easier to carry out - Requires less time and money - Often the most feasible method
Methods	- Simple random sampling - Systematic sampling - Stratified sampling - Cluster sampling - Multistage sampling	- Convenience sampling - Judgement (purposive) sampling - Quota sampling - Snowball sampling

Source: Adapted from Cooper & Schindler (2014)

The flow chart in Figure 5.7 visually represents the decision-making process when deciding between using a sample or census for the collection of data on a population (ABS, 2013).
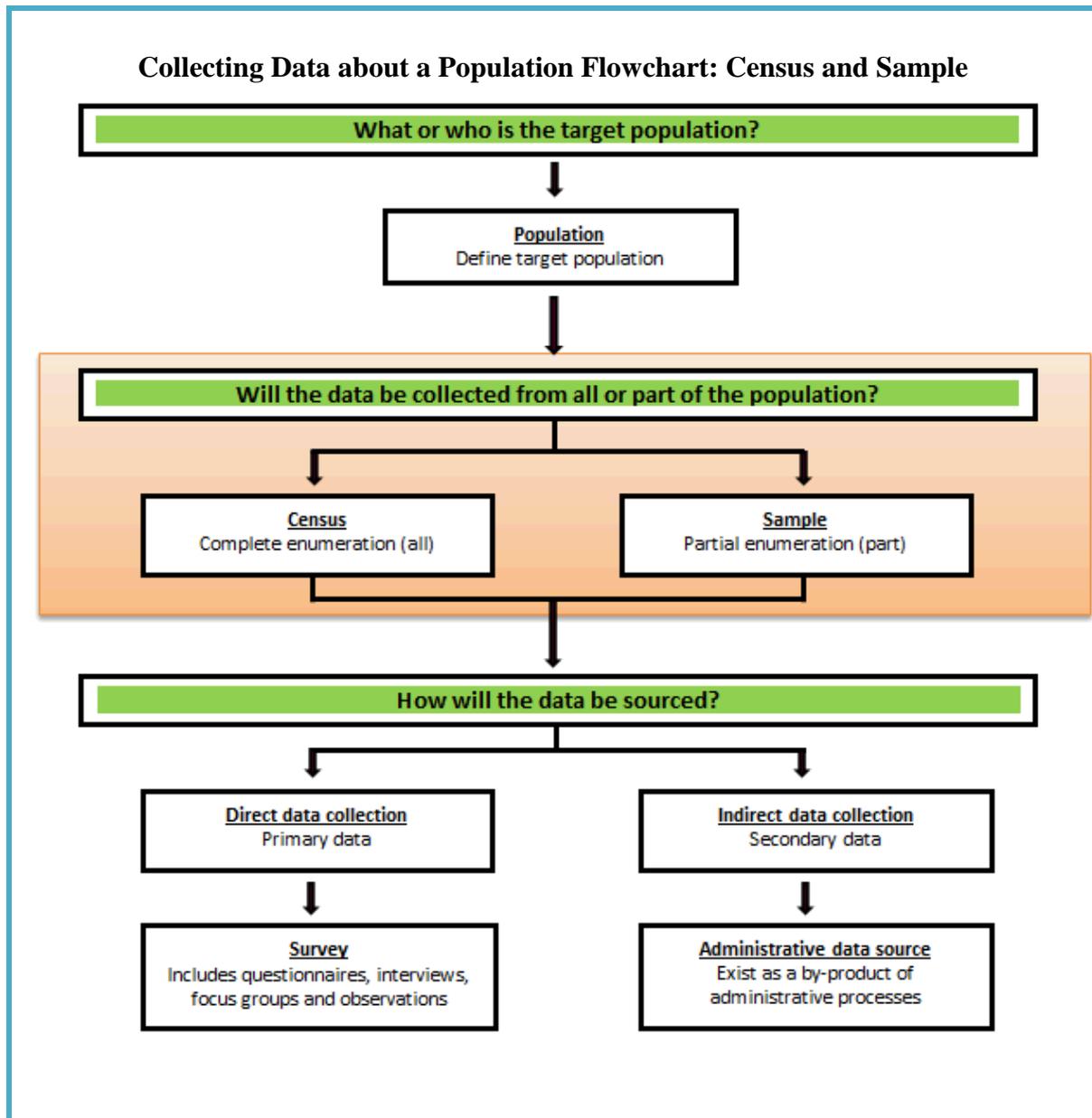
Figure 5.7: Collecting data from a population flow chart

Source: ABS, 2013

The data-collection instrument for this study was placed on the Women For Tri Facebook group, using several posts. Permission was obtained from the Women For Tri Board members to conduct the research on the group. An example of one such post is given in Figure 5.8 (later in this section).

As the link was posted on the Facebook group, the entire population had an equal chance of participating in the study. Data collected therefore was in relation to all units of the population, rather than in relation to a sample of units of the specific population and will be treated as census data (Bryman & Bell, 2007:182). The objective of a census is to determine the number of respondents in various categories of variables to be tested for the entire population, and members of the population are to be classified in terms of certain biological variables (Welman, Kruger & Mitchell, 2009:100). For this study, the biological variables chosen were: age, nationality and gender.

The reason for making the data collection instrument available to the entire population was to encourage a wider range of responses. In addition, the characteristics of the population are unknown, making sampling difficult. One of the research objectives for the study was to compile a consumer profile for female triathletes, a further motivation to use a census, rather than to use sampling. Also, as the link was posted on the group, it was not impractical to target the entire population, as there were no costs involved, nor did it take too much time to complete the questionnaire. In addition, the direct contact details of the Facebook members are not readily and publicly available. Table 5.9 briefly outlines the differences between sampling and a census.

Table 5.9: Comparison between a census and sampling

Basis for comparison	Census	Sampling
Meaning:	- Systematic method that collects and records the data about the members of the population	- Refers to a portion of the population selected to represent the entire group, in all its characteristics
Enumeration:	- Complete	- Partial
Study of:	- Each and every unit of the population	- Only a handful of units of the population
Time required:	- Time consuming process	- Fast process
Results:	- Reliable and accurate	- Less reliable and accurate, due to the margin of error in the data collected.
Cost:	- Expensive method	- Economical method
Error:	- Not present.	- Depends on the size of the population

Appropriate for:	- Population of heterogeneous nature.	- Population of homogeneous nature.

It is important to note that although all members of the population has an equal chance to participate in the research, not all members will do so. Although the use of a census generally encourages a wider range of responses, a low response rate was experienced in the census conducted in this study, which was a major limitation. At the time of conducting the research, the Facebook group consisted of nearly 21 000 members (the group is growing rapidly and it is difficult to determine an exact number). A response rate of only 1.7% was achieved (344 responses) which is low. However, a low response rate for online surveys is not uncommon and it has been found that online surveys have a lower response rate than paper-based questionnaires (Nulty, 2008:303; Dommeyer *et al.*, 2004). Research conducted by Nulty (2008:303) found that the only way to achieve high response rates with online surveys was to administer them in a face-to-face setting. This, however, would negate the benefits of conducting the survey online in the first place, which is especially true for this study. It would have been nearly impossible to conduct this study making use of a face-to-face setting, given the geographical dispersion of the population.

The study conducted by Nulty (2008:304) found that the most prevalent methods for boosting online survey responses were:

- Repeat reminder emails to non-respondents. For this study, this was not possible, as the email addresses of the population were unknown. The only method available to the researcher in terms of reminders was by posting the link to the questionnaire repeatedly. This was done on a weekly (and towards the end of the collection period, daily) basis.

- Repeat reminder emails to survey owners. As the researcher can be considered the 'owner' of the survey, this would not have made a difference in the response rate.

- Incentives to respondents in the form of prizes. Given the ethical implications of providing incentives, this was not a viable approach to increase the response rate. In addition, it is interesting to note that even in scenarios where small incentives

were given to participate in online surveys, response rates were not significantly different (Dommeyer *et al.*, 2004).

In the study by Nulty (2008), the online surveys were distributed through the use of email notifications (in other words, respondents were sent emails containing either the questionnaire or the link to the questionnaire). As such, participants could be contacted directly and be reminded to participate. In this study, however, the link was posted online and respondents could not be contacted or reminded individually to participate in the study. Given the low response rate of email-based online surveys, it is thus not surprising that such a low response rate was achieved by making use of Facebook as a distributing medium where no direct reminders could be given.

It is also worthwhile to point out that many respondents commented on the fact that clicking on the link opened a spam website. The link to the questionnaire, as well as the webpage containing the questionnaire, was well protected from viruses and malware, as it was created within the firewall at Unisa. However, individuals who participated in the research, who did not have proper anti-virus software and had picked up a virus on another site, opened a spam questionnaire claiming that they have won an iPhone. Such respondents were instructed to close the link and open it again, which allowed them to complete the correct survey. This was outside of the researcher's control, as the problem resided on the respondent's computer. Although the result of this technological impairment cannot be measured, it cannot be denied that it had an effect on the overall response rate.

Facebook also has several settings which could have prevented group members from seeing the postings containing the link (resulting in a low response rate). Some settings that could have prevented members from seeing the researcher's post include personal settings which limit posts on their Facebook walls to those of people with whom they have recently interacted. Some people might have settings where they only view posts from friends, and often, within a group format such as the Women For Tri group, settings could be set to only show 'popular' posts (that is, posts with the most 'likes' or 'comments').

In addition, some members might have only accessed their Facebook accounts during a certain time of day or only a certain day of the week. The researcher tried to circumvent this by posting the link on various days and at various times. It was also

evident that posts containing images drew more attention, and as such, images were included as well.

Figure 5.8, on the next page, shows the Facebook post containing the link to the survey questionnaire.

Figure 5.8: Example of 'post' on Women For Tri Facebook group

It is interesting to note that several studies have found that a low response rate does not necessarily mean a study is flawed. The earliest example here involves research conducted by Visser, Krosnick, Marquette and Curtin (1996) who found that surveys with lower response rates, in actuality yielded more accurate measurements than those surveys with higher response rates. Keeter, Dimock, Best and Craighill (2006) conducted a 5-day survey with a 25% response rate, and compared their results to a

similar, but more rigorous survey conducted over a longer period with a response rate of 50%, and found that the two surveys were statistically indistinguishable. Holbrook, Krosnick and Pfent (2007) specifically looked at how lower response rates affect the demographic representativeness of a sample. To do so, they examined 81 national surveys with response rates between 5% and 54%, and found that, although surveys with much lower responses, decreased demographic representativeness within the range examined, it was not by much and considered statistically insignificant.

Based on the arguments above, the low response rate for the type of data-collection method was to be expected and is not uncommon. In addition, a low response rate does not automatically render a study insignificant or lead to poor results. However, the limitation of a low response rate is noted, and the data, as well as any generalisations which were made, took this into account.

5.9 DATA COLLECTION

Once the sample has been selected, or as for the purposes of this study, the population identified, attention must be given to the choice of research method (data-collection method) and observation (collection of data).

There are several methods that can be used to gather data from respondents, and although the most popular method to obtain such data is questionnaires, researchers can also make use of interviews, telephone calls and observations (Maree, 2007:155). Each data collection method has its own advantages and disadvantages and needs to be selected to suit the type of data which is to be collected. Given the discussion above, it has already been established that quantitative research would be conducted in the current study, and as such, the most appropriate data-collection method or instrument would be a questionnaire.

In this section, the data-collection instrument used in this study will be discussed. The data collection process will also be detailed.

5.9.1 Data-collection instrument

For this study, a self-completion questionnaire (refer to Appendix A) was selected as the instrument to collect data. Self-administered questionnaires do not require the presence of an interviewer and can be distributed in a variety of ways (Zikmund *et al.*,

2009:219). The aim of a self-administered questionnaire, whether paper-based or electronic, is that respondents will answer the questions themselves and return the questionnaire to the researcher in the manner requested (Cooper & Schindler, 2014:222-225).

As the questionnaire will need to be answered by the respondents without any outside assistance, it is vital that proper care should be taken when developing and designing the instrument. Bryman *et al.* (2014:195-197) developed several principles that can be taken into account when designing a questionnaire:

- The survey should have a clear title, as well as a covering letter explaining the aim of the survey, any ethical considerations, and measures to protect the respondent's anonymity and confidentiality, as well as basic instruction for completing the survey.

- The questions' wording should be unambiguous to avoid any misunderstanding.

- Questions should be short, but detailed enough to collect data which is appropriate for analysis.

- A vertical format for answering the questions is preferable to a horizontal format, so as to minimise any confusion.

- Specific instructions for the questions must be provided.

- Do not split the question from its answers.

In line with the above principles, the cover letter for this study (refer to Appendix A), indicated the purpose of the research, as well as the time it would take to complete the questionnaire. Respondents were assured of their anonymity and confidentiality. Clear instructions were given (respondents were asked to place a tick in the box they wish to select) and respondents were assured that there are no right or wrong answers. Respondents were asked to confirm that: they understood the nature of participation in the study, they are prepared to participate in the study, participation is voluntary and that they might withdraw at any time, and the findings of this study will be anonymously processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings. Consent was given by proceeding with the survey.

Each question and its answers were placed on its own page for ease of completion, and all questions could be answered in a vertical format. During the pretesting of the

questionnaire it was ensured that the questions' wording was unambiguous so as to avoid any misunderstanding (the pretesting of the questionnaire is discussed in detail in Section 5.9.1).

A self-administered questionnaire was chosen for this study as it is cost-effective, takes less time to administer, and as such, can reach a larger geographic area, as was required for this study's population (Cooper & Schindler, 2014:227). Interviewer error can also be eliminated, as the questionnaire is consistent and each participant will complete the same set of questions. In addition, due to the geographical dispersion and time zones of the target population, a self-administered questionnaire is convenient, as the respondents can complete the questionnaire at their own pace and at their own time. This is especially true for questionnaires shared through social media, such as Facebook, (as was done in this study) or which are emailed to respondents (Kosinski, Matz, Gosling, Popov & Stillwell, 2016:70). The questionnaire offers anonymity as the researcher will not be able to identify respondents from the data collected through the data collection instrument.

Self-administered questionnaires do, however, pose some disadvantages which should be addressed. As no one is available to assist the respondent during the completion process, there might be scope for misunderstanding the questions. Also, the researcher is not able to probe a respondent to elaborate on a particular answer, which may lead to a loss of valuable information. To limit the effect of this error, questionnaires should be pretested to ensure that respondents understand the meaning of questions as they were intended to be understood. Respondents can be given comment boxes, where questions warrant it, so as to probe deeper understanding of their perceptions. However, this should be used sparingly, especially when conducting quantitative research.

Self-administered questionnaires cannot be too long, nor should they contain too many open-ended questions. In this study, theory is being tested statistically, and therefore the focus is on collecting quantitative data. Although open-ended questions would provide interesting information, it would not necessarily assist in the answering of the research objectives, and as such, the questionnaire (refer to Appendix A) only contains one open-ended question (Question 11). Questions 13, 15 and 19 also required respondents to fill in their answers, but these answers were numerical, and are therefore not considered to be open-ended questions.

There is little or no control over who completes the self-administered questionnaire. However, certain questions can be asked to ensure that only questionnaires completed by the selected target population are answered. For example, in this study respondents were asked to indicate their gender, despite the fact that the group is women-only. The reasoning behind the inclusion of this question was to ensure that it is indeed only females who completed the questionnaires. Questionnaires received which indicated the contrary, were discarded.

There is a greater risk of receiving incomplete or incorrectly completed questionnaires. Incomplete questionnaires can be reduced by pretesting the questionnaire and making sure that it is not too long. During the pilot test it is also important to ensure that the skip questions and instructions are correct and understandable, in order to avoid incorrectly completed questionnaires.

As discussed, questionnaires typically result in a lower response rate, which may lead to the results being biased or skewed for the population. Although there are ways to increase the response rate, for this study, none of these were practical or possible. As discussed in the section above, the low response rate has been noted as a limitation and will be dealt with accordingly.

5.9.1.1 Instrument design and development

Taking the principles that were discussed above into account, the first draft of the questionnaire was compiled after the compilation of the detailed literature review which can be found in Chapter 2. The theories discussed during Chapter 2 culminated into the development of a new CBCPBE model which could theoretically measure the brand equity of RCPA sport events. The pilot testing phase is discussed next.

5.9.1.2 Pilot testing of data collection instrument

Questionnaires should be pilot tested before they are disseminated to the sample, so that weaknesses in the design and instrument can be identified and corrected (Cooper & Schindler, 2014:84). It is crucial that the respondents selected to participate in the pilot test are part of the target population, and that the procedures and protocols that have been designed to collect the required data are followed in the pilot test.

Pretesting is often used as a pilot test and allows for the assessment of questions and instruments before the study commences (Cooper & Schindler, 2014:84). This is

considered to be an established practice for discovering errors in questions, question sequencing, instructions and other elements of the instrument such as skip directions. The process used to pilot test the research instrument is depicted in Figure 5.9 below:

First draft questionnaire reviewed by Professors with appropriate revision	→	Second draft questionnaire analysed by statistician with appropriate revisions	→	Questionnaire submitted for ethical clearance with appropriate revisions
Receive ethical clearance to proceed with research	→	Conduct in-depth interviews with respondents with appropriate revisions	→	Final review of questionnaire
Electronic processing of questionnaire and uploading on LimeSurvey	→	Final testing of questionnaire on LimeSurvey	→	Release of questionairre

Figure 5.9: Pilot testing process

The survey instrument for this study was pilot tested in the following way:

1. The first draft of the questionnaire was critiqued by two Professors in Marketing Management. Thereafter, corrections were made to the draft.

2. The second draft of the questionnaire was analysed by a statistician to ensure that the questions would provide statistically sound information.

3. Amendments were made and the questionnaire was submitted to the Business Management Ethics Review Committee for ethical clearance.

4. After corrections were made as requested by the Committee, the questionnaire (and the study) was approved. Only after ethical clearance has been received may respondents be contacted.

5. As it would have been difficult to select respondents for the pilot test from the Facebook group, due to geographical dispersion and the lack of direct contact details, it was decided to select female triathletes who were easily accessible to the researcher to participate in the pilot study. Three in-depth interviews were held

with female triathletes to test their understanding of the wording used in the questionnaire, the length of the questionnaire, and the flow of the questions. Each participant was given the opportunity to add to the questions or remove questions they deemed were unnecessary. After the interviews were conducted, appropriate amendments were made to the questionnaire.

6. The amended questionnaire was reviewed again by the two Professors as well as the statistician to ensure that all changes made were correct and statistically viable.

7. The questionnaire was then uploaded electronically on LimeSurvey. Once uploaded on the LimeSurvey platform, the questionnaire was tested by the researcher to ensure that the skip questions, online design and flow of the questions were appropriate for the online medium to be used. Once the researcher was satisfied that the questionnaire was correctly uploaded to LimeSurvey, it could be released to the respondents via Facebook.

The section below details the content of the self-administered questionnaire used for this study.

The content of the self-administered questionnaire (available in Appendix A)

The self-administered online questionnaire of this study comprised of an introductory paragraph, demographic questions and 18 questions relating to the respondents' experience at branded and unbranded triathlon events as well as their general triathlon experiences.

The introductory paragraph provided respondents with a brief outline of the purpose of the study, gave an indication of the amount of time it would take to complete the questionnaire, and assured respondents of their anonymity in completing the questionnaire. After the introductory paragraph, a series of questions followed on racing experiences at branded and non-branded triathlon events. The questionnaire concluded with a range of demographic questions.

The underlying principle of constructing a questionnaire is to ensure that each question relates to a research objective (Kumar, 2005:138). Each question in the questionnaire must therefore stem from the study's research objectives and/or hypotheses. Table 5.10 below indicates how the questions that appear in the questionnaire relate to the

various research objectives that were stated in Chapter 1 and again at the beginning
of this chapter.

Table 5.10: Research objectives and survey questions matrix

Research objective	Corresponding section of questionnaire			Type	Sources used to generate question/justification of inclusion
	No.	**Question**	**Classification of variable**		
To develop a model which may be used to measure the consumer-perceived consumer-based brand equity of RCPA sport events.	Q1 – Q20	Primary objective that will be answered by combining all the results	n/a	n/a	n/a
Filter questions	Q1 & Q2	Participation in branded and non-branded triathlon events	Nominal	Dichotomous question	Used to determine if respondent is eligible to complete the survey. In addition, these filter questions also determined with which set of questions the respondent would begin the questionnaire.
To investigate the constructs which contribute to dimension of '**quality**', a core component of brand equity.	Q3.1	Consistent race experience	Ordinal	5-point Likert- response format measuring agreement ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5)	Original scale item adapted (Baalbaki, 2012) - The reliability of (Brand X) is very high. Reliability refers to the consistency or repeatability of the outcome.
	Q3.2	Event will be run as advertised	Ordinal	5-point Likert-response format measuring agreement ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5)	Original scale item adapted (Baalbaki, 2012) – *(Brand X) performs consistently*. The brand is able to fulfil their obligation to the consumer in the manner in which they had agreed to.

Research objective	Corresponding section of questionnaire			Type	Sources used to generate question/justification of inclusion
	No.	Question	Classification of variable		
	Q3.3	Level of safety standard	Ordinal	5-point Likert-response format measuring agreement ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5)	Event Qualitymark (Triathlon England)[8].
	Q3.4	Easy to use race registration process	Ordinal	5-point Likert-response format measuring agreement ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5)	Tests ease of access to brand's event which relates to brand salience (Keller, 2009).
	Q3.5	Value for money	Ordinal	5-point Likert-response format measuring agreement ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5)	Forms part of the perceived quality dimension as defined by Aaker (Tuominen, 1999).
	Q3.6	Unique experience	Ordinal	5-point Likert-response format measuring agreement ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5)	Provides a reason to buy/differentiates the product/service offering. Originally part of the perceived quality dimension as defined by Aaker (Tuominen, 1999).

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[8] The Event Qualitymark given by Triathlon England to events is a scheme developed to provide a quality assurance standard for events, as well as providing a useful resource for new and established events. It is included in the measurement of the quality dimension of the proposed CBBE model, as the scale items represent quality considerations for sport events.

Research objective	Corresponding section of questionnaire			Type	Sources used to generate question/justification of inclusion
	No.	Question	Classification of variable		
	Q3.7	Appealing race 'swag'	Ordinal	5-point Likert-response format measuring agreement ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5)	Item generated during pilot test. However, can also relate to the 'tangible' side of service quality.
	Q3.8	Referee quality	Ordinal	5-point Likert-response format measuring agreement ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5)	Event Qualitymark (Triathlon England).
	Q3.9	Volunteer quality	Ordinal	5-point Likert-response format measuring agreement ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5)	Event Qualitymark (Triathlon England).
	Q3.10	Route layout quality	Ordinal	5-point Likert-response format measuring agreement ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5)	Author generated. Relates to 'tangible' aspects of service quality.
	Q5.1	Consistent quality	Ordinal	5-point Likert-response format measuring agreement ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5)	Original scale item (Baalbaki, 2012).
	Q5.2	High quality	Ordinal	5-point Likert-response format measuring agreement ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5)	Original scale item (Baalbaki, 2012).

Research objective	Corresponding section of questionnaire			Type	Sources used to generate question/justification of inclusion
	No.	Question	Classification of variable		
To determine which constructs contribute to the brand equity component '**preference**'.	Q5.3	First choice	Ordinal	5-point Likert-response format measuring agreement ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5)	Original scale item (Baalbaki, 2012).
	Q5.4	Exclusivity of brand	Ordinal	5-point Likert-response format measuring agreement ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5)	Wicker *et al.*, 2012. Based on triathletes' characteristic, this might be an important measure for CBCPBE.
	Q7	Do you have a preferred brand?	Nominal	Dichotomous	Skip question.
	Q8	Preferred brand		Open-ended question	This question was used to create context for Question 9 and will not necessarily be used for analysis purposes.
	Q9.1	Loyalty	Ordinal	5-point Likert-response format measuring agreement ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5)	Original scale item (Baalbaki, 2012).
	Q9.2	No participation in another brand's event	Ordinal	5-point Likert-response format measuring agreement ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5)	Original scale item (Baalbaki, 2012).
	Q9.3	Committed to preferred event	Ordinal	5-point Likert-response format measuring agreement ranging	Original scale item (Baalbaki, 2012).

Research objective	Corresponding section of questionnaire			Type	Sources used to generate question/justification of inclusion
	No.	Question	Classification of variable		
				from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5)	
	Q9.4	Participation on a recurring basis	Ordinal	5-point Likert-response format measuring agreement ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5)	Can be considered part of the brand loyalty component (Keller and Aaker).
To investigate the effect of '**sustainability**' on the brand equity of RCPA sport events.	Q5.6	Environmentally safe brands	Ordinal	5-point Likert-response format measuring agreement ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5)	Original scale item adapted for clarification (Baalbaki, 2012).
	Q5.7	Environmentally responsible brands	Ordinal	5-point Likert-response format measuring agreement ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5)	Original scale item adapted for clarification (Baalbaki, 2012).
	Q5.8	Sustainable brands	Ordinal	5-point Likert-response format measuring agreement ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5)	Original scale item adapted for clarification (Baalbaki, 2012).
	Q5.9	Protection of race environment	Ordinal	5-point Likert-response format measuring agreement ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5)	Author generated.

Research objective	Corresponding section of questionnaire			Type	Sources used to generate question/justification of inclusion
	No.	Question	Classification of variable		
To establish the constructs which contribute to the '**social influence**' dimension of brand equity.	Q3.11	Interaction with like-minded individuals	Ordinal	5-point Likert-response format measuring agreement ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5)	Author generated.
	Q3.12	Satisfaction of competitive nature	Ordinal	5-point Likert-response format measuring agreement ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5)	Author generated.
	Q3.13	Social interaction on race course	Ordinal	5-point Likert-response format measuring agreement ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5)	Author generated.
	Q.4.1	Improve the way others perceive me	Ordinal	5-point Likert-response format measuring agreement ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5)	Original scale item (Baalbaki, 2012).
	Q4.2	Create a good impression	Ordinal	5-point Likert-response format measuring agreement ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5)	Original scale item (Baalbaki, 2012).
	Q4.3	Gain social approval	Ordinal	5-point Likert-response format measuring agreement ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5)	Original scale item (Baalbaki, 2012).

Research objective	Corresponding section of questionnaire			Type	Sources used to generate question/justification of inclusion
	No.	Question	Classification of variable		
	Q4.4	Feel more accepted	Ordinal	5-point Likert-response format measuring agreement ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5)	Original scale item (Baalbaki, 2012).
	Q4.5	Personal challenge	Ordinal	5-point Likert-response format measuring agreement ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5)	Wicker *et al.* 2012. Based on triathletes' characteristic, this might be an important measure for CBCPBE.
	Q9.5	Proud to be associated with brand	Ordinal	5-point Likert-response format measuring agreement ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5)	Can be considered part of the brand resonance and reflects the nature of the relationship the consumer has with the brand (Keller, 2009).
To determine if '**leadership**' contributes to the brand equity of RCPA sport events.	Q3.14	Use of technology to improve race experience	Ordinal	5-point Likert-response format measuring agreement ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5)	Conway, 2011a.
	Q4.5	Leaders in field	Ordinal	5-point Likert-response format measuring agreement ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5)	Can be considered part of brand awareness (Tuominen, 1999).
	Q4.6	Contribute to society	Ordinal	5-point Likert-response format measuring agreement ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5)	Original scale item (Baalbaki, 2012).

Research objective	Corresponding section of questionnaire			Type	Sources used to generate question/justification of inclusion
	No.	Question	Classification of variable		
	Q4.7	Securing support of local communities	Ordinal	5-point Likert-response format measuring agreement ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5)	Author generated.
	Q4.8	Contribution to infrastructure	Ordinal	5-point Likert-response format measuring agreement ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5)	Author generated.
To compile a general consumer profile for female triathletes	Q13	Races competed		Open-ended question	May be used to determine 'usage' rate.
	Q14	Hours training per week	Ordinal	Multiple choice question requiring a single response	Wicker *et al.* 2012. Based on triathletes' characteristic, this might be an important element in creating a profile for female triathletes.
	Q15	Duration of involvement in triathlon		Open-ended question	Wicker *et al.* 2012. Based on triathletes' characteristic, this might be an important element in creating a profile for female triathletes.
	Q16	Performance categories	Ordinal	Multiple choice question requiring a single response	Wicker *et al.* 2012. Based on triathletes' characteristic, this might be an important element in creating a profile for female triathletes.
	Q17	Member of triathlon club	Nominal	Dichotomous question	Wicker *et al.* 2012. Based on triathletes' characteristic, this might

Research objective	Corresponding section of questionnaire			Type	Sources used to generate question/justification of inclusion
	No.	Question	Classification of variable		
					be an important element in creating a profile for female triathletes.
	Q18	Triathlon club specification		Open-ended question	
	Q19	Nationality		Open-ended question	Demographic criterion
	Q20	Age	Ordinal	Multiple choice question requiring a single response	Demographic criterion
	Q21	Gender	Nominal	Dichotomous question	Also to ensure that only females participated in the research.
Additional questions	Q6	Does brand play a role?	Ordinal	5-point Likert-response format measuring agreement ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5)	Basic determination of brand equity – brand adds value
	Q10	Considering a different brand	Ordinal	5-point Likert-response format measuring agreement ranging from definitely not(1) to definitely (5)	Brand loyalty?
	Q11a	Reason for choosing one brand over another	Nominal	Dichotomous	Understanding brand choices

Research objective	Corresponding section of questionnaire			Type	Sources used to generate question/justification of inclusion
	No.	Question	Classification of variable		
	Q11b	Elaboration if 'yes' was chosen		Open-ended question	Probe to offer deeper understanding of why certain brands are chosen.
	Q12	Different distance	Ordinal	5-point Likert-response format measuring agreement ranging from definitely not(1) to definitely (5)	Brands have more than one 'category' offering in terms of distance of event. Question was asked to probe if there is transfer between brand's event offerings.

5.9.2   Data-collection process

Once the instrument has been developed, the researcher must proceed with the collection and preparation of the data. The data is received from the self-administered questionnaire in a raw format which needs to be edited, coded and captured before it can be used to answer the research objectives. This process is discussed in Section 5.10 below.

The data for this study was collected during a 5-month period between February and June 2017 via an online self-administered survey. The link was posted on the Women For Tri Facebook group as shown in Figure 5.8. The duration for the collection period was extended several times due to a low response as discussed previously. As such, the link to the questionnaire was posted several times during the collection period. No incentives were offered for the completion of the questionnaire.

5.9.3   Errors in data collection

The rationale behind preserving data integrity is primarily to support the detection errors that might have occurred during the data collection process. These errors can either be intentional, as is the case with deliberate falsifications, or unintentional when systematic or random errors occur during the research process.

Most, Craddick, Crawford, Redican, Rhodes, Rukenbrod and Laws (2003) recommended that the two most appropriate approaches to preserve data integrity whilst ensuring the scientific validity of study results, are 'quality assurance' and 'quality control'. Whitney, Lind and Wahl (1998) illustrated that each approach should be implemented at different points in the research timeline.

In this study, quality assurance, which encompasses activities that occur prior to data collection, was used to ensure the preservation of the integrity of data. The main tool that was used to certify quality was the pilot test that is described in detail in Section 5.9.1.2.

5.10 DATA PROCESSING

The processing of data involves several steps in an effort to derive the information sought from the completed questionnaires so that it can be presented in a useful and

correct format (McDaniel & Gates, 2001:434). The following section will discuss how data was processed for this study.

5.10.1 Data capturing

During data capturing or data entry, information is converted into a medium suitable for viewing and manipulation (Cooper & Schindler, 2014:391).

Data for this study was captured electronically by making use of LimeSurvey, as the respondents completed the questionnaire online. Data was retrieved in the form of an Excel spreadsheet before being loaded onto SPSS.

5.10.2 Data coding

After the researcher has compiled and processed all of the information, data needs to be converted into manageable and understandable texts (Welman, Kruger & Mitchell, 2009:213). The purpose of coding is therefore to analyse and make sense of the data that has been collected, and can be defined as tags or labels that attach meaning to raw data (Welman *et al.*, 2009:214). Such tags or labels are then used to retrieve and organise data into specific categories (Welman *et al.*, 2009:214) which is done by assigning a numerical value to verbal responses provided by the respondent in the data collection instrument (Maylor & Blackmon, 2005: 303).

The majority of the questions, excluding questions 8, 18 and 19 (which required respondents to enter information manually) and question 11 (which was an open-ended question), were pre-coded and assigned categories and numbers during the design of the research instrument. Data was then captured taking the coding into consideration and, as such, virtually no coding had to be done after the data was collected.

5.10.3 Editing

After data has been captured and coded, it is important that data sheets be edited and cleaned by locating and correcting any possible errors made during the capturing process (Maylor & Blackmon, 2005:306). Data editing can therefore be seen as the customary first step in data analysis for detecting errors and data omissions, correcting such errors when possible and certifying that minimum data quality standards are met (Blumberg *et al.* 2011:492). It is crucial to remember that the quality of the following

data analysis can never be better than that of the raw data that was collected (Maylor & Blackmon, 2005:307).

The data in this study was closely scrutinised and edited with the purpose to identify and minimise errors, incompleteness and inconsistencies. The data contained in the Excel spreadsheet was carefully checked to ensure that numerical values awarded to each response was valid and accurate. Special attention was paid to question 21 to ensure that all respondents were indeed female.

This section dealt with the data processing involved in this study. The following section will focus on data analysis, which is the next step in the research process.

5.11 DATA ANALYSIS

Once data has been collected and processed, it can be analysed. Data analysis can be defined as the application of reasoning so that data which was collected can be understood (Zikmund *et al.*, 2009:70). During this step of the research process, data is edited and reduced to a manageable size, summaries are developed, patterns or trends are identified and a variety of statistical techniques are applied (Blumberg *et al.*, 2011:490). Data analysis for quantitative research usually involves descriptive statistical analysis and inferential statistical analysis, each with their own set of analysis techniques. Each of these techniques will now be discussed.

5.11.1 Descriptive statistics

Descriptive statistics is concerned with the characteristics of the location, spread and shape of an array of data (Blumberg *et al.*, 2011:491) and contains the description and/or summary of the data obtained for a specific group of individual units of analysis (Welman *et al.*, 2009: 231). This type of statistics is used to summarise and describe the information that has been gathered, and can be presented in both numerical and graphical formats (Zikmund *et al.*, 2009:413).

Common descriptive statistics that are widely used in research includes frequency tables and variance tables (Hallebone & Priest, 2009:88). The practical application of these descriptive statistics can be found in Chapter 5. A brief explanation of each concept is given below:

- **Frequency counts**, as used in this study, is a compact way of presenting information obtained from research (Maylor & Blackmon, 2005:307) providing the number of respondents and the percentages belonging to each category of the variable in question (Bryman & Bell, 2007:357). Graphs and tables are used to present frequency counts in a logical and reasonable manner.

- **Measures of central tendency** aim to use one score to describe all the scores and is determined through three concepts: the mode, median and the mean. The mode is the attribute that occurs the most frequent, the median is the middle attribute in a list and the mean refers to the average of the data (Cooper & Schindler, 2014:401). Measures of central tendency are also known as univariate data as they only measure a single variable (Mentz & Botha, 2012a).

- **Measures of variability** indicate how the scores differ from one score to another and is also known as the dispersion of spread (Cooper & Schindler, 2014:401). Typically, variance, standard deviation and range are measured. Variance measures how far an attribute is from the mean, standard deviation is the square root of the variance and measures how far from the average the values typically are, and range deals with the difference between the highest and the lowest values in the distribution (Cooper & Schindler, 2014:401).

Table 5.11 contains a summary of the techniques available.

Table 5.11: The methods of bivariate analysis according to variable

	Nominal variables	Ordinal variables	Interval/ratio variables	Dichotomous variables
Nominal variables	- Contingency table - Chi square - Cramér's V	- Contingency table - Chi square - Cramér's V	- Contingency table - Chi square - Cramér's V	- Contingency table - Chi square - Cramér's V
Ordinal variables	- Contingency table - Chi square - Cramér's V	- Spearman's rho	- Spearman's rho	- Spearman's rho
Interval/ratio variables	- Contingency table - Chi square - Cramér's V	- Spearman's rho	- Pearson's correlation coefficient	- Spearman's rho
Dichotomous variables	- Contingency table - Chi square - Cramér's V	- Spearman's rho	- Spearman's rho	- The phi coefficient

Source: Adapted from Bryman *et al.* (2014:321)

As mentioned, descriptive statistics can be presented in a graphical format. This allows the reader to understand complex data easier. The most common graphical representations of data include frequency tables, histograms, bar charts and pie charts (Cooper & Schindler, 2014:534).

To conclude, frequency counts, measures of central tendency, measures of variability and correlations are all part of the descriptive statistics that may be used when conducting quantitative research. The descriptive statistics for this study appear in Chapter 6.

Once the descriptive statistics have been done, the researcher may proceed to inferential statistics, should the data collected allow for this.

5.11.2 Model fit analysis

Given that the primary objective for this study is to develop a model which may be used to measure the CBCPBE for RCPA sport events, it is necessary to choose a particular statistical method with which to measure and determine the acceptability of the proposed model.

The Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) is a multivariate statistical procedure which is used to test how well the variables being measured represents the number of constructs. CFA is used when the researcher can specify the number of factors required in the data and which measured variable is related to which latent variable. As the particular variables were known to the researcher, as per the proposed model in Chapter 4, it was deemed appropriate to use the CFA to test the CBCPBE model.

Therefore, CFA is a statistical tool which is used to confirm or reject the measurement theory. The above entails only a brief introduction into the model fit analysis chosen for this study as an entire Chapter (Chapter 7) has been dedicated to this topic. A detailed discussion on model fit, CFA and the various statistical tests used during CFA to determine the goodness of fit of the model can be found in Chapter 7.

5.12 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

When conducting quantitative research, it is crucial that the measurement instruments (in this study, the self-administered questionnaire) is both valid and reliable. This ensures that the results and conclusions are accurate (Bryman *et al.*, 2014).

5.12.1 Reliability

Reliability is concerned with the credibility of the results obtained (Welman *et al.*, 2005:145) and the accuracy and precision of the measurement procedure (Cooper & Schindler, 2014:257). Reliability represents the internal consistency of a measurement instrument and represents the measure's ability to supply consistent results (Cooper & Schindler, 2014:260). A measure is considered reliable when various different attempts at measuring something achieve the same results (Zikmund, 2009:305). In short, research is considered to be reliable if the study can be repeated (Collis & Hussey, 2003:58). If the study is to be repeated, similar observations and interpretations should be probable, even if the study is conducted on different occasions and by different observers (Collis & Hussey, 2003:58).

As reliability is concerned with estimating the degree to which a measurement is free of random error, the distinction of time and condition is often the basis for determining reliability. Three reliability estimates exist (Cooper & Schindler, 2014:260):

- **Stability** can be tested by using the test-retest method which involves re-administering the same test to the same participants at different periods in time. In this study, a pilot test was used prior to the actual data collection process.

- **Internal consistency** measures the homogeneity of the instrument, in that each indicator of a concept relates to, and tests, the same concept. The split-half method, Cronbach's alpha or the coefficient alpha are all methods that can be used to measure internal consistency.

- **Equivalence** relates to the degree to which alternative forms of the same measure produce the same or similar results. These tests, in the form of parallel forms, can be administered simultaneously or after a period of delay.

When subjecting the data collection instrument to these measures, the researcher can claim to have a final data collection instrument which is reliable.

5.12.2 Validity

Validity of the research finding should also be established. This refers to the extent that the research findings accurately demonstrate or measure that which the researcher set out to measure (Collis & Hussey, 2003:59). The instrument has validity if it produces accurate results and represents a concept truthfully (Zikmund *et al.*, 2009:307). Validity is primarily measured through face validity, content validity and criterion validity:

- **Face validity** means that the scale's content logically appears to reflect what it intended to measure in the first place (Zikmund *et al.*, 2009:307).

- **Content validity** refers to the degree that a measure covers the domain of interest (Zikmund *et al.*, 2009:307) and to the extent to which a measuring instrument provides adequate coverage of the investigating questions guiding the research. The degree to which the content of the items adequately represents the universe of all relevant items under the study is measured either through judgement or a panel evaluation (Cooper & Schindler, 2014:257).

- **Criterion validity** indicates how well the instrument can estimate the present performance (concurrent validity) where criterion data are available at the same time as the predictor scores or predict future performance (predictive validity), where criterion data is only measured after a period of time has passed. In

essence, criterion reliability is the ability of a measure to correlate with other standard measures of similar constructs or established criteria (Zikmund *et al.*, 2009:308). The degree to which the predictor is adequate in capturing the relevant aspects of the criterion is measured through correlations (Cooper & Schindler, 2014:257).

Validity can also be measured through **construct validity** which measures the degree to which the instrument measures the underlying theoretical variables and tries to determine how well the test represents these variables. Correlations, convergent-discriminate techniques, factor analysis and multitrait-multimethod analysis can all be used to measure construct validity (Cooper & Schindler, 2014:257).

5.13 PRESENTATION OF DATA FINDINGS

The last step in the research process is to present the data findings. Findings must be presented in an easily understandable manner as this will affect both the quality and the academic worth of the study (Blumberg *et al.,* 2011:424). Chapter 6 of this thesis will deal with the detailed presentation of the study's data findings.

5.14 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethics are considered to be those standards of behaviour that guide the moral choices of behaviour and the relationship with others (Cooper & Schindler, 2014:28). During research design, the rights of the participant are often at the forefront of decision-making, and in general, research must be designed in such a manner that the participant does not suffer any physical harm, discomfort, pain, embarrassment or loss of privacy (Cooper & Schindler, 2014:28). Ethics then applies to both the conduct of the researcher and the collection of data. As a measure of safeguarding, the researcher can follow the following guidelines (Cooper & Schindler, 2014:28):

- Explain the study benefits;
- Explain participant rights and protections; and
- Obtain informed consent.

The use of these guidelines are incorporated into the Ethical policies and procedures used at the University of South Africa. Ethical clearance for this study was obtained

from the Business Management Research Ethics Review Committee at the University of South Africa prior to the pilot test and data collection. A copy of the ethical clearance certificate can be found in Appendix C. In addition, the researcher endeavoured to complete the research in full adherence to UNISA's Ethical Policies and Procedures. All ethical requirements were adhered to during the study. This applied especially to the collection of data and the analysis of the data collected. The main considerations regarding ethics during the data collection process will be discussed below:

5.14.1 Voluntary participation

All participation in the research must be done on a voluntary basis, and as such, should not intrude into people's lives (Saunders *et al.*, 2009:185). Participants should never be coerced to participate in research, which also implies that all participants are free to withdraw from the study at any point in time.

Respondents in this study indicated that they are aware that participation in the study is voluntary and that they may withdraw from the study at any point.

5.14.2 No harm to participants

A key component of research ethics is that respondents should come to no harm whilst participating in research (Saunders *et al.*, 2009:186). The implication is that respondents should not be subjected to physical, psychological or mental harm (Zikmund *et al.*, 2009:94). Participation in the study may therefore not lead to any stress or anxiety for participants.

The study's aim was to investigate respondents' perception of racing experiences at branded and non-branded events. As the research did not present a negative effect on the well-being of participants, no risks of participating in the study could be identified and the research was justifiable, it was deemed that this study would not harm participants. To reduce any possible stress and anxiety, respondents were warned of the time constraints of the study. Respondents were also reassured that there would be no right or wrong answers.

5.14.3 Anonymity and confidentiality

Anonymity means that a participant cannot be identified by the researcher, or any other person, based on the responses given by them. Confidentiality implies that the

information given to the researcher will not be shared with others (Zikmund *et al.*, 2009:91). Personal information provided by the respondent may not be shared and respondents cannot be victimised by participating in the study.

By giving their consent, respondents indicated that they are aware that:

- This is an anonymous and confidential survey.
- They cannot be identified and the answers they provide will be used for research purposes only.
- They are aware that the findings of this study will be anonymously processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings.

5.14.4   Informed consent

It is crucial that full and informed consent is obtained from participants in the study. Informed consent can be obtained by fully disclosing and explaining the procedures of the proposed research design to the participants before requesting permission to carry out the study (Cooper & Schindler, 2014:31). Informed consent denotes the personal right of an individual to agree to participate in a study after understanding the entire research process and the acknowledgement of possible risks (Saunders *et al.*, 2009:190).

The instructions given to participants and informed consent can be found in Appendix A. Usually respondents are asked to sign the informed consent letter, however due to the online nature of the study, by clicking on the 'next' button (which leads to the questions), respondents indicated consent to participate in the study.

The abovementioned requirements are just some of the important ethical considerations that should guide the data collection process. Figure 5.10 depicts the ethical issues which need to be taken into consideration during the research process in its entirety.
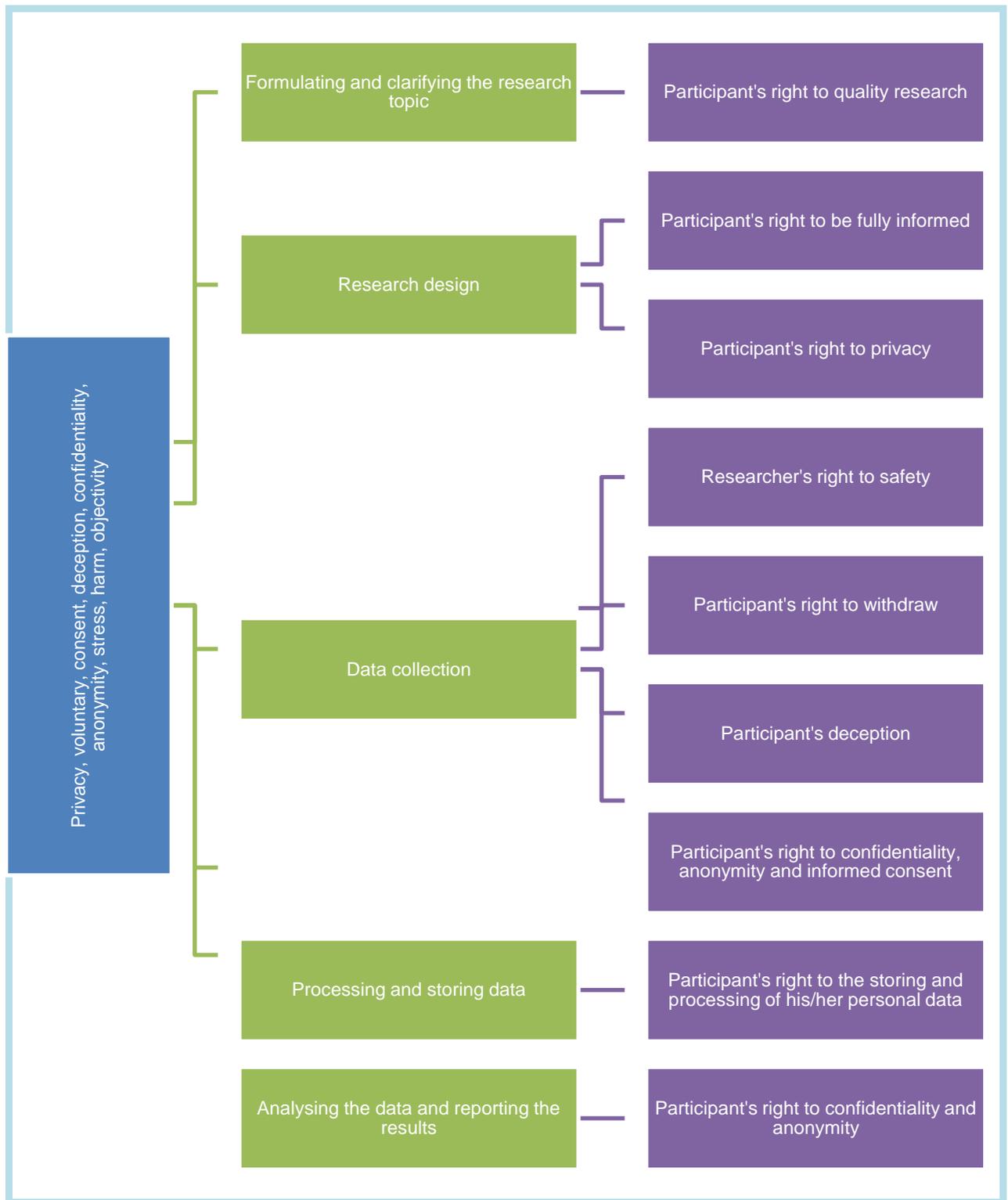
Figure 5.10: Ethical issues during the research process

Source: Adapted from Saunders *et al.* (2009:188)

The conclusion to the chapter follows below.

5.15 CONCLUSION

This chapter focused on the research methodology employed by this study. The first section of the chapter focused on the research process and the steps which need to be followed. The discussion then proceeded to research design and a brief explanation of the research terminology to be used in the remainder of the chapter. The descriptors of the overall research design for the study were detailed, followed by the research approach used. Sampling design was briefly discussed, although due to the nature of research, no sample was selected, but a census was rather used and an online self-administered questionnaire was developed.

The data collection process was described in detail. Primary data was collected through a self-administered online questionnaire, which was then edited, captured, coded and cleaned before being analysed. A discussion of data processing followed, as well as an outline of the data analysis employed by the study. The outcome of these analyses of the data, as well as the research findings will be discussed in detail in the next chapter. The chapter concluded with a discussion of the reliability and validity of the research instrument, the presentation of the data findings and the ethical considerations.

CHAPTER 6:
DESCRIPTIVE FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH

6.1   INTRODUCTION

A quantitative research approach was followed during the exploration of female triathletes' racing experiences at branded and non-branded events in an attempt to develop a consumer-based, consumer-perceived brand equity (CBCPBE) model for recurring, participative (RCPA) sport events. Descriptive findings (Chapter 6) and inferential statistical analyses (discussed in Chapter 7) were prepared to address the primary and secondary research objectives of this study, as listed in Table 6.1 below.

Table 6.1: Primary and secondary research objectives

Primary research objective
To develop a model which may be used to measure the CBCPBE of RCPA sport events.
Secondary research objectives
• To investigate the items which contribute to the dimension of 'quality' for RCPA sports events.   • To determine which items contribute to the brand equity component 'preference' for these events.   • To investigate the effect of sustainability on the brand equity of RCPA sport events.   • To establish the items which contribute to the 'social influence' dimension of brand equity.   • To determine if 'leadership' contributes to the brand equity of RCPA sport events.   • To compile a general consumer profile for female triathletes

The descriptive statistics, as discussed in this chapter, predominantly describe the demographic composition of the respondents and aim to develop a 'consumer profile' of the average participative female sport consumer, given the specific sport of triathlon. In addition, the descriptive statistics provide a response profile of the statements which

investigated respondents' race perceptions and experiences at branded and non-branded triathlon events.

The data analysis process was followed in a systematic manner, as described in Chapter 5, and the descriptive statistics are presented in the following sections.

6.2 DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

The frequency tables (presented in Appendix B), which report the frequency or incidences, of the respondents that selected an option, and valid percentages, were constructed with the use of the statistical software package, SPSS. Tables and figures were then converted with the use of Ms Excel. The measuring instrument (available in Appendix A) was designed to, amongst other functions, measure respondents' perceptions of their current racing experiences at branded (versus non-branded) triathlon events. The 21 questions, made up of a range of statements or items, were aimed at determining respondent's perceptions of branded triathlon events. Theoretically, these items should be able to provide a CBCPBE model for RCPA sport events.

As indicated above, this chapter deals with the descriptive analysis of the data and depicts the frequency tables of the demographic composition of the respondents that participated in the census.

6.3 DEMOGRAPHIC COMPOSITION OF THE RESPONDENTS

To compile a consumer profile of female participative sport consumers (specifically, triathletes), the following demographic information was collected:

- The number of races competed in during the past 12 months;
- The number of hours spent training per week;
- Experience of the respondent in years;
- Voluntary rating of performance category;
- Membership of a triathlon club;
- Nationality;
- Age; and

- Gender (as a control question).

The results of the demographic profiling questions are presented by means of frequency tables (refer to Appendix B). The discussions that follow highlight the most significant findings from the data analysis.

6.3.1 Number of races competed in

Respondents were asked to indicate how many races they had competed in during the last 12 months. This was an open-ended question which required the respondents to fill-in a numeric answer. Given the results collected, the responses were grouped in the following categories: 1 to 3 races, 4 to 6 races, and 7 or more races. The results for the variable 'number of races competed in' are presented in Figure 6.1 below, and statistically in Table B1, Appendix B.
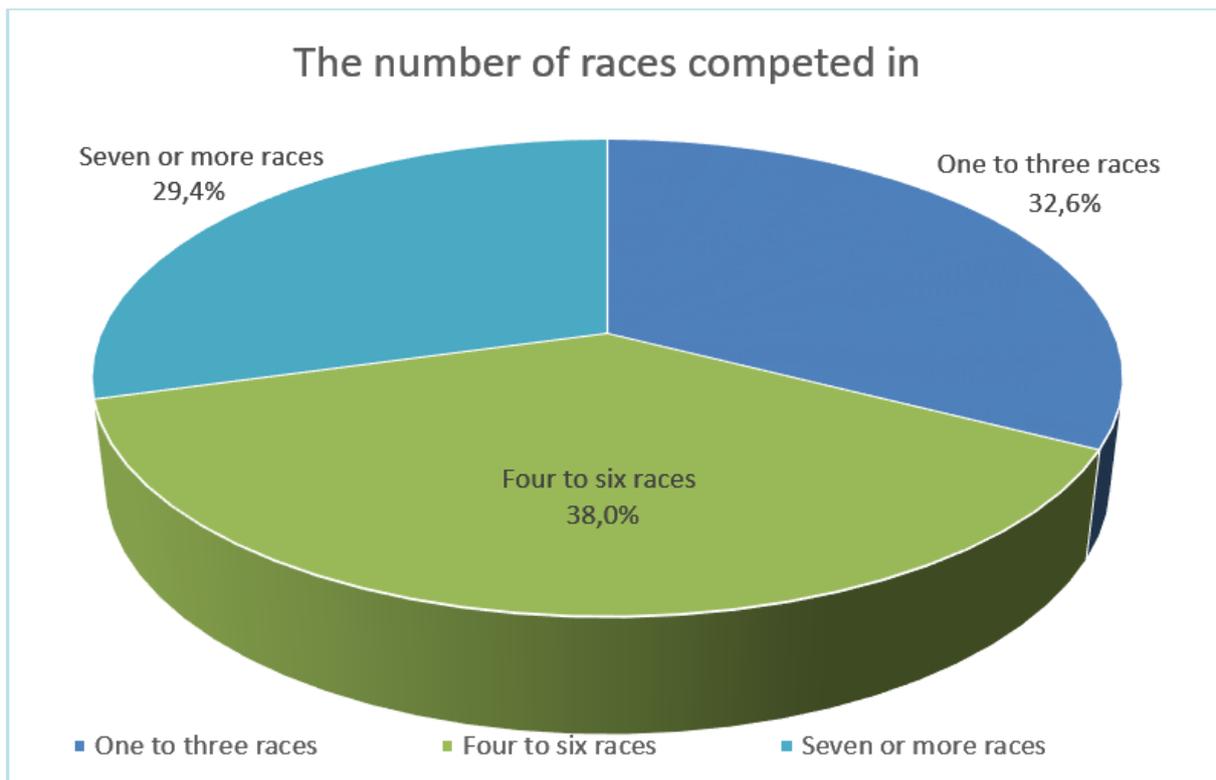
Figure 6.1: Number of races competed in (n=337)

According to the results as tabulated in Appendix B, 110 respondents (32,6%) competed in 1 to 3 races during the past year, and 128 respondents (38%) competed in 4 to 6 races, and 99 respondents (29,4%) competed in 7 or more races. The mean was 5,8 and the median 5,0. The minimum number of races competed in was 1 and the maximum 57.

6.3.2 Training hours per week

Respondents were asked to indicate, on average, how many hours per week they train. A multiple-choice, single-response question was used, with the following options: 0-3 hours, 4-7 hours, 8-11 hours, 12-15 hours, and more than 16 hours. The result for the variable 'number of hours spent training a week' is presented graphically in Figure 6.2 below and statistically in Table B2, Appendix B.
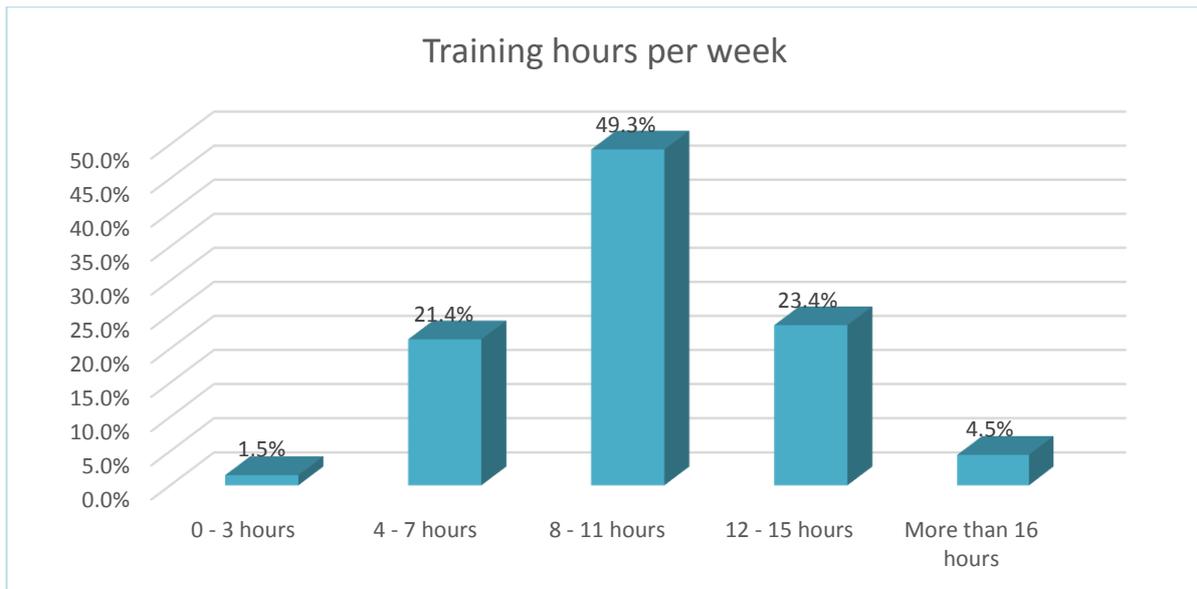
Figure 6.2: Training hours per week (n=337)

Nearly half of the respondents (49,8%; 166 respondents) spent 8 to 11 hours training a week, and 79 respondents (23,4%) trained 12 to 15 hours per week, while 72 respondents (21,4%) trained 4 to 7 hours per week. Only 1,5% of respondents (5 respondents) trained 3 hours or less, and 4,5% (15 respondents) trained more than 16 hours per week.

It is interesting to note that the study conducted by Wicker et al. (2012) found that the average triathlete in Germany trained 9 hours per week (the average triathlete in the Wicker et al. (2012) study was found to be male). The findings of this study indicate that the average female triathlete trains roughly the same number of hours per week as her male counterpart, albeit the population for this study was from an international perspective and not a single-origin country as the Wicker et al. (2012) study.

6.3.3   Participation duration in years

Respondents were asked to indicate how long they had been doing triathlons. This was an open-ended question which required the respondents to fill-in a numeric answer, specified to be in years. Given the results collected, the responses were grouped in the following categories: 1 to 3 years, 4 to 6 years, and 7 or more years. The result for the variable 'participation duration' is presented graphically in Figure 6.3 below and statistically in Table B3, Appendix B.
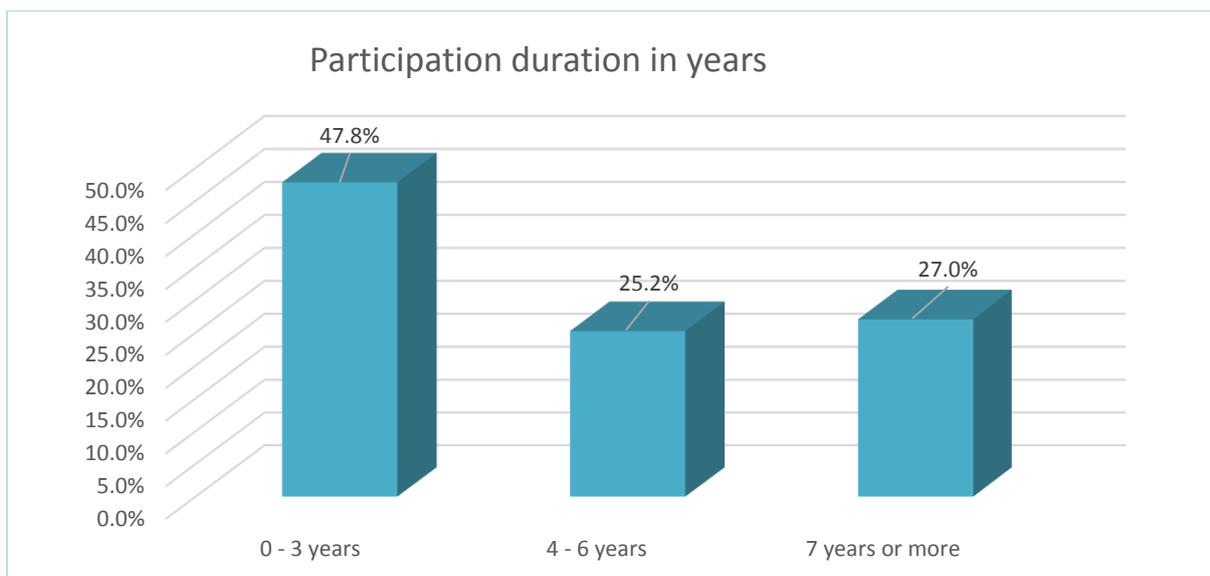
Figure 6.3: Participation duration (n=337)

Nearly half of the respondents (47,8%; 161 respondents) have only been participating in triathlons for the past 3 years, 85 respondents (25,2%) have been participating in triathlons for 4 to 6 years, and 91 respondents (27%) have been participating in triathlons for 7 years or more. The mean was 5,3 and the median 4,0. The minimum response recorded was 0,5 years, while the maximum number of years recorded was 30 years.

The Wicker et al. (2012) study found that the respondents had been participating in events for an average of 7,4 years (the average respondent in the study was male). Only 27% of the female respondents recorded an equivalent number of years. From the results, it can be deduced that female participation in triathlon is fairly new. It is interesting to note that Ironman started the Women For Tri development programme in 2015, with the main objective to encourage female participation in the sport. The

establishment of Women For Tri then corresponds with the 3-year period of participation in triathlon, as indicated by 47,8% of the respondents.

6.3.4   Performance categories

Respondents were asked to place themselves in 1 of 5 performance categories. A multiple-choice, single-response question was used with the following options: one-time participant, weekend warrior, dedicated participant, serious age grouper, and top-level athlete. The result for the variable 'performance categories' is presented graphically in Figure 6.4 below and statistically in Table B4 in Appendix B.

Of the respondents, 225 (66,8%) rated themselves as dedicated participants, 20,2% (68 respondents) indicated that they were serious age groupers, and 11,6% (39 respondents) considered themselves to be weekend warriors. Only 2 respondents (0,6%) said they were one-time participants, and 3 respondents (0,9%) were top-level athletes.
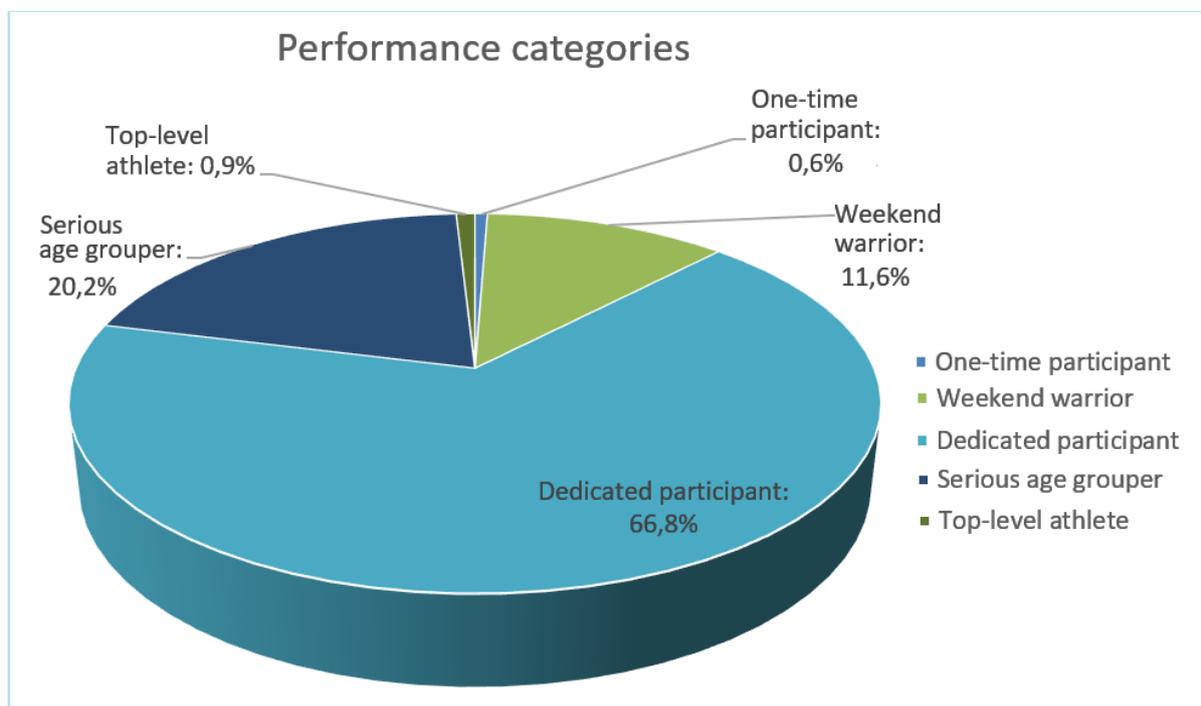
Figure 6.4: Performance categories of respondents (n=337)

Looking at this profile, it is evident that triathlon can be considered a 'lifestyle sport' where participants participate on a regular, recurring basis in the sport and events. It is especially valuable to take note of this consumption pattern when it comes to brand equity, as sport events can create their brand and brand equity with the knowledge

that participants are likely to become loyal to a brand, given their dedication to the sport in question.

6.3.5   Triathlon club membership

Respondents were asked to indicate whether they were a member of a triathlon club. A dichotomous question was used with the options 'yes' or 'no'. The result for the variable 'triathlon club membership' is presented graphically in Figure 6.5 below and statistically in Table B5, Appendix B.

Of the 337 respondents who answered this question, 230 respondents (68,2%) indicated that they do belong to a triathlon club, while 107 respondents (31,8%) indicated that they do not belong to a triathlon club.

Figure 6.5: Membership of a triathlon club (n=337)

It can be deduced that, as also confirmed by the Wicker et al. (2012) study, triathletes are often drawn to the sport for its social aspects. As such, and given the female tendency to foster relationships, it is expected that creating an environment which nurtures this social aspect of triathlon, will be an important consideration when determining the brand equity of sport events.

6.3.6   Nationality

Respondents were asked to indicate their nationality. This was an open-ended question which required the respondents to fill in their answer. Due to the range of

answers supplied by the respondents, the researcher collated the responses into several geographical areas. These areas are: North America, Australia and New Zealand, European countries, Canada, South and Central America, South Africa and Asian Countries. The result for the variable 'nationality' is presented graphically in Figure 6.6 below and statistically in Table B6, Appendix B.
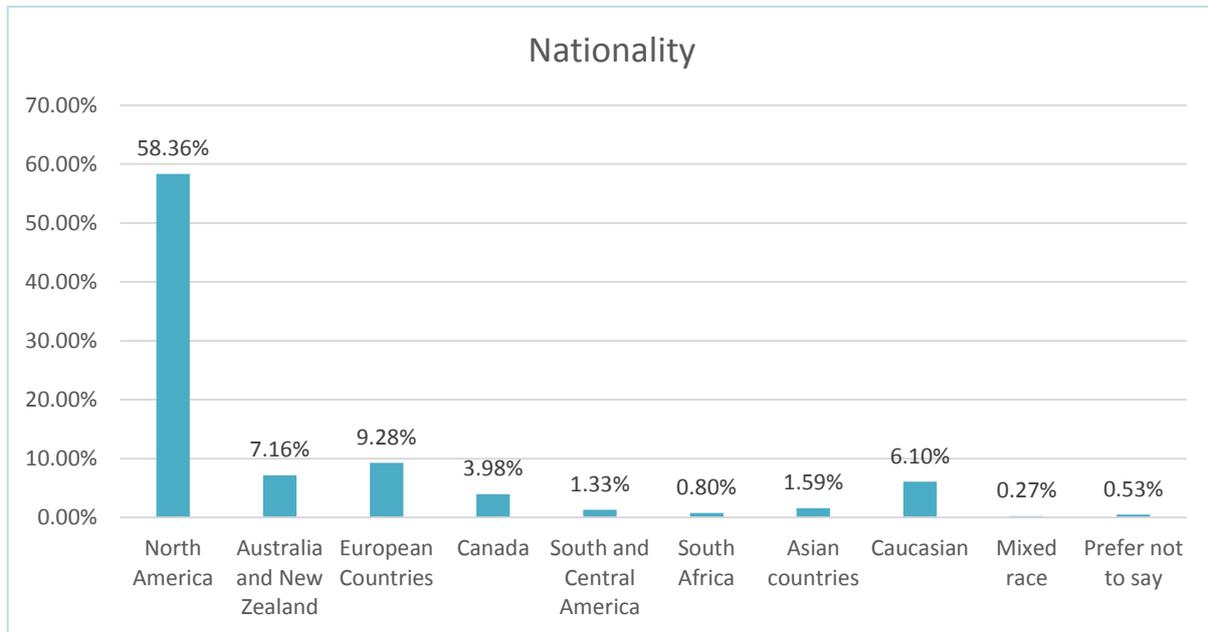
Figure 6.6: Nationality of respondents (n=337)

The following answers were recorded and collated by the researcher:

- 228 respondents (55,8%) indicated that they were of American descent. Responses included for the North American regional group were African-American, American (US and USA) and Puerto Rico.

- 27 respondents (7,16%) indicated that they were from Australia and New Zealand.

- 35 respondents (9,28%) indicated that they were from European countries. Responses included for the European countries regional group were France, Italy, Switzerland, Germany, Portugal, the UK and Ireland (for easier statistical analysis the UK and Ireland were included as part of Europe), Poland, the Netherlands, Finland, Sweden and Serbia.

- 15 respondents (3,98%) indicated that they were from Canada.

- 5 respondents (1,33%) indicated that they were from South and Central America. Responses included for the South and Central America region included Colombia, Guatemala, the Dominican Republic and Mexico.

- 3 respondents (0,80%) indicated that they were from South Africa.

- 6 respondents (1,59%) indicated that they were from Asian countries. Responses included for the Asian countries region included India, Japan, China and the Philippines.

Possibly, the following respondents misunderstood the term 'nationality' for 'race':

- 23 respondents (6,10%) indicated that they were Caucasian.

- 1 respondent (0,27%) indicated that she was of mixed race.

While 2 respondents (0,53%) indicated that they would prefer not to disclose their nationality.

The majority of respondents were American, which was expected. The Women For Tri Facebook group, although aimed at the international triathlon market, is based in the US and much of their groundwork is done there. In addition, triathlon originated in American. Although, the number of triathletes is the highest in the US, traction is rapidly being gained on a global scale. For example, South Africa continuously has one of the largest female fields in the world. The 2017 edition of the 70.3 South Africa event, held in East London, had a female participation rate of 26% of the total field, which is considered very high (Triathlon South Africa, 2017).

6.3.7 Age

Respondents were asked to indicate their age. A multiple-choice, single-response question was used with the following options: Under 18, 18 – 30, 31 – 40, 41 – 50, 51 – 60, and Over 60. The result for the variable 'age' is presented graphically in Figure 6.7 below and statistically in Table B7, Appendix B.

The age group which was represented by 35,3% of respondents (119 respondents) was the 41 to 50 years age grouping, 104 respondents (30,9%) were in the 31 to 40 age group, 62 respondents (18,4%) in the 51 to 60 group, 38 respondents (11,3%) in

the 18 to 30 group, and 14 respondents (4,2%) were older than 60 years of age. No respondents were recorded in the under 18 year age group.[9]
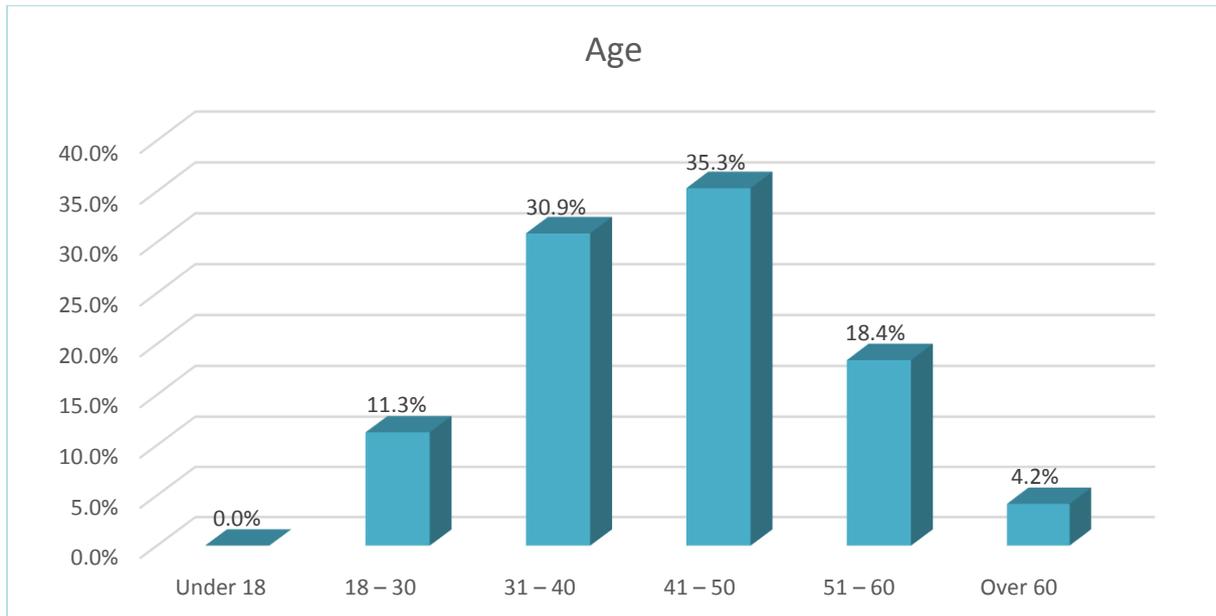
Figure 6.7: Age of respondents

It is interesting to note that the Wicker et al. (2012) study found that the average triathlete (who was male), was in his mid-30s. Given the above, the average female triathlete is between the ages of 31 and 50 years, and 53,3% of these respondents were in the older age group of 41 to 50 years.

6.3.8   Gender

Respondents were asked to indicate their gender as a control question. As the research is based only on a female consumer perspective, the gender question was included to ensure that all respondents were indeed female. The results reported that 100% of the respondents were female (this is listed in Table B8, Appendix B). As such, no data had to be omitted due to a respondent being male.

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[9] This finding was expected as many triathlons (especially the longer distance events) have an age limit of 18 years. In addition, ethical clearance obtained for this study excluded respondents younger than 18 as such respondents are deemed "vulnerable".

6.3.9 The average female participative sport consumer (triathlete)

Given the above descriptive statistics, the following consumer profile of the average female triathlete can be compiled (for comparison purposes, the results from the Wicker *et al.* (2012) study are given as well):

Table 6.2: The average female triathlete

Construct	Average female triathlete	Average male triathlete (as per Wicker *et al.* (2012)
Average number of races competed in per year	5 races per year (median) - Minimum of 1 race - Maximum of 57 - Most respondents reported between 4 and 6 races per year	Not part of the study.
Average number of training hours per week	8 to 11 hours a week	9 hours a week
Duration of triathlon participation	4 years (median) - Minimum of 0.5 years - Maximum of 30 years - Most respondents reported between 0 and 3 years	7.4 years
Performance category	Dedicated participant (66.8%), followed by serious age-groupers (20.2%)	Three groups were identified: - Serious pursuiters (similar to dedicated participant) - Sport lovers - Socialisers
Member of a triathlon club	Yes	Not part of the study.
Nationality	American	N/a (study was only conducted in Germany)
Age	Between 31 and 50 (most likely to be older)	Mid-30s

The next section of the descriptive statistics will deal with the remaining questions that dealt predominantly with respondents' perception of their current experience at branded triathlon events.

6.4 PARTICIPATION IN BRANDED AND UNBRANDED RACES

The first set of questions was used as skip questions to determine if respondents had competed in branded and unbranded triathlon events. The rationalisation for these skip questions was to ensure that a respondent could make a judgement call between events that were branded and events that were unbranded. In terms of brand equity, this is a crucial element as the fundamental principle of brand equity can be found in the premise that, if the product or service is branded it should result in a different outcome than if the product or service is not branded (Couvelaere & Richelieu, 2005:23). To determine if this is indeed the case when it comes to branded and unbranded triathlon events, it was first necessary to determine that the selected respondents could make this judgement call by confirming their participation in both a branded and a non-branded event.

To this end, 100% of the respondents indicated that they had participated in both branded and unbranded triathlon events during the 2015 to 2016 racing season. The frequency table is listed in Appendix B, Table B9. Question 2, which was to be answered should a respondent have indicated 'no' to Question 1, was thus discarded.

6.5 RACING EXPERIENCE

The item 'racing experience' was measured by looking at 14 constructs. Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement or disagreement with each statement and were given the express instruction to rate their agreement by referring to their most recent branded event. It was indicated that the statements related to their racing experiences at branded events as opposed to non-branded events. The scale used for all 14 constructs was a five-point Likert-type scale where 1 was strongly disagree, 2 disagree, 3 neither agree nor disagree, 4 agree, and 5 strongly agree.

The descriptive statistics for each one of the 14 constructs relating to racing experience is discussed below.

6.5.1 Consistent race experience

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statement "I know that when I participate in a branded event I can expect a consistent race experience".

This construct is presented graphically in Figure 6.8 below and appears in Table B10 in Appendix B.
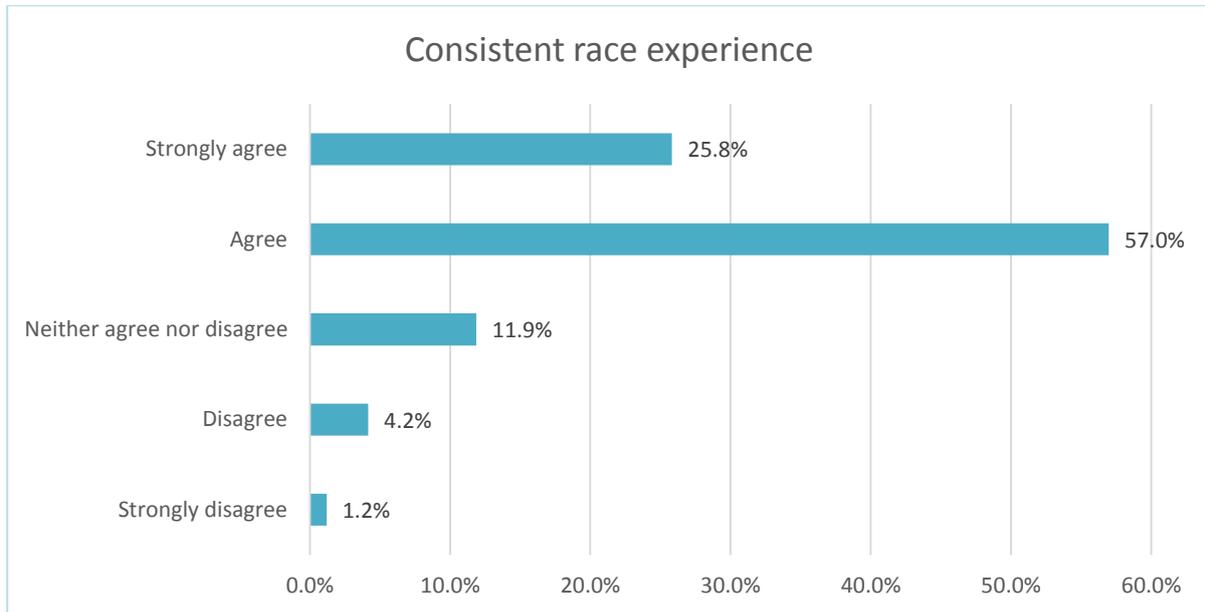
Figure 6.8: Consistent race experience (n=337)

More than half of the respondents (57%; 192 respondents) indicated that they agree with the statement that they know that when participating in a branded event (as opposed to a non-branded event), they can expect a consistent race experience, and 87 respondents (25,8%) indicated that they strongly agree with the statement, while 14 respondents (4,2%) disagreed with the statement, 4 respondents (1,2%) strongly disagreed, and 40 respondents (11,9%) indicated that they neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement.

As part of the original brand equity models (see Chapter 3, Section 3.5), brand consistency has traditionally been considered as one of the contributors to brand equity. Consistency relates to the reliability of the brand, ensuring that the outcome achieved during interaction with the brand is consistent and can be repeated. It is therefore encouraging to note that the majority of respondents (82,8%) felt positive that branded triathlon events provided consistent race experiences. Within the context of this study, race experiences can then be considered the 'product' in question.

6.5.2   Run as advertised

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statement: "I know that when I participate in a branded event the event will be run as advertised (within control of the event organisers' power)".

This construct is presented graphically in Figure 6.9 below and appears in Table B11, Appendix B.
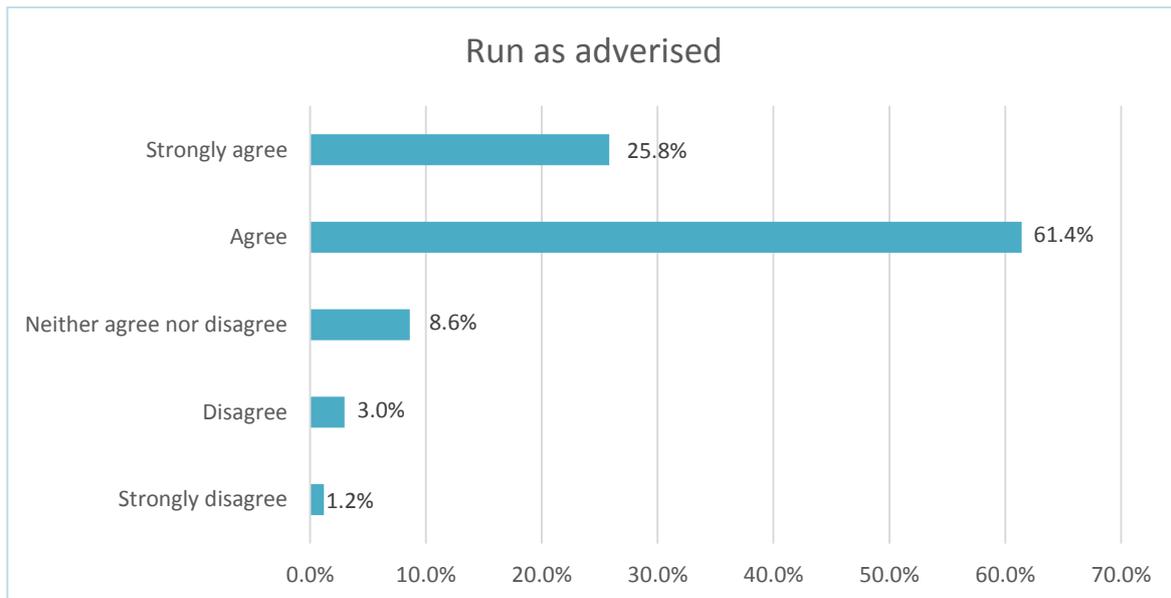
Figure 6.9: Run as advertised (n = 337)

More than half of the respondents (61,4%; 207 respondents) indicated that they agreed with the statement that they know that when they participate in a branded event, as opposed to a non-branded event, the event will be run as advertised, and 87 respondents (25,8%) indicated that they strongly agreed with the statement, while 4 respondents (1,2%) strongly disagreed with the statement, 10 respondents (3%) disagreed with the statement, and 29 respondents (8,6%) indicated that they neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement.

For events, the benchmark of running as per how it was advertised is similar to a product doing what it is advertised to do. In other words, the brand is able to fulfil its obligation to the consumer in the manner in which they had agreed to. This therefore relates to the basic quality of the product/service which, traditionally contributes to brand equity. As such, it is positive to note that 87,2% agreed with the statement that they know that when they participate in a branded event, it will be run as advertised.

6.5.3   Safety standard

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statement: "The safety standard of the last branded event I participated in, was very high".

This construct is presented graphically in Figure 6.10 below and appears in Table B12, Appendix B.
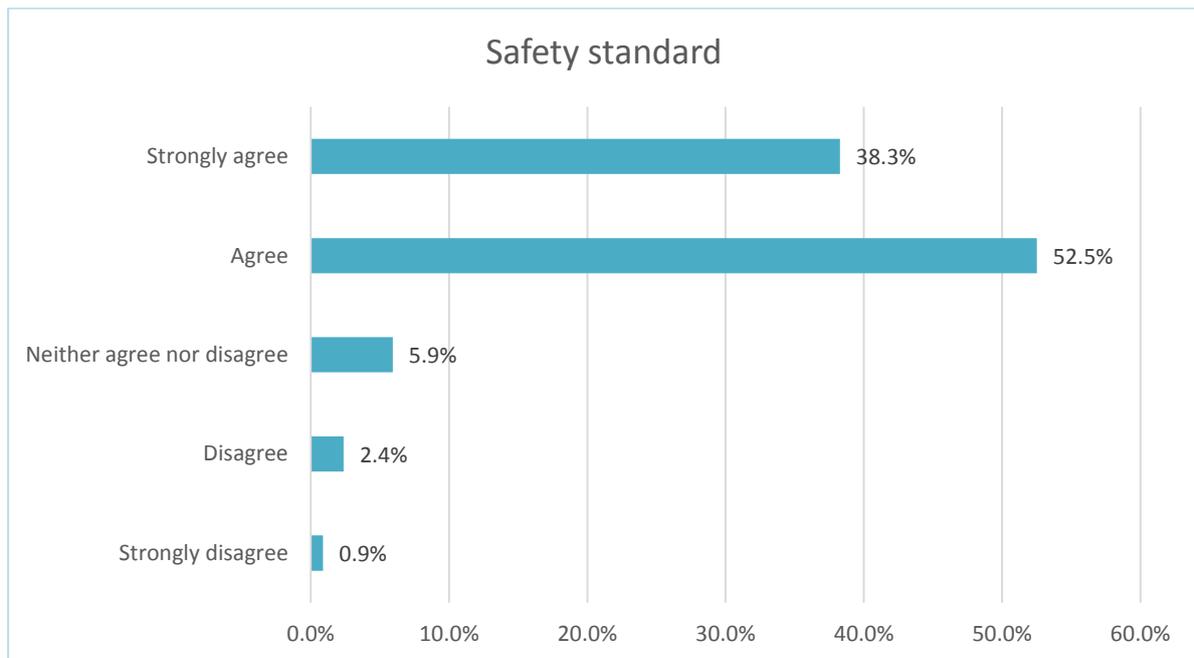
Figure 6.10: Safety standard (n = 337)

More than half of the respondents (177 respondents; 52,5%) indicated that they agreed with the statement that the safety standard at the last branded event they participated in was very high, and 129 respondents (38,3%) strongly agreed with the statement, while 3 respondents (0,9%) strongly disagreed, 8 respondents (2,4%) disagreed with the statement, and 20 respondents (5,9%) indicated that they neither agree nor disagree with the statement.

The safety standard of events contributes towards the quality dimension of brand equity. This element is included as part of the Event Qualitymark[10] introduced by Triathlon England which provides a quality assurance standard for events. It is therefore encouraging that 90,8% of the respondents responded favourably to this statement.

6.5.4   Race registration process

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statement: "The last branded event I participated in, provided an easy-to-use race registration process".

This construct is presented graphically in Figure 6.11 below and appears in Table B13, Appendix B.
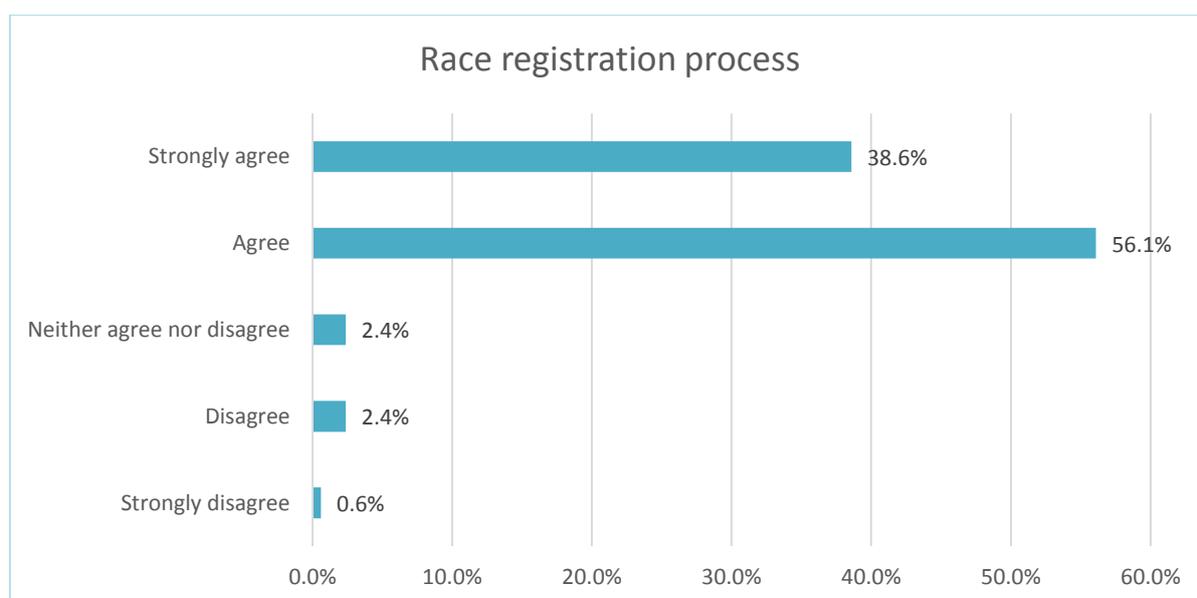
Figure 6.11: Race registration process (n = 337)

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[10] Sport England has introduced several Quality Marks for sport organisations to improve the quality of sport in England. Some examples include the Clubmark which is awarded to sport clubs that adhere to certain standards set out by Sport England and the School Games Mark which rewards schools for their commitment to the development of competition across their school and into the community. The Event Qualitmark is a similar scheme introduced to improve the quality of sport events. The aim of the scheme was to provide a quality assurance standard for events as well as to provide a useful resource for both new and established events.

More than half the respondents (189 respondents; 56,1%) agreed with the statement that the last branded event they had participated in had an easy-to-use race registration process, 130 respondents (38,6%) indicated that they strongly agreed with the statement, while 2 respondents (0,6%) strongly disagreed, 8 respondents (2,4%) disagreed, and 8 respondents (2,4%) indicated that they neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement.

An easy-to-use race registration process provides consumers with consumer-friendly access to the brand and its event. The ease of access to the brand relates to brand salience (part of the quality dimension), as proposed by Keller's (2009) brand equity model (refer to Chapter 3, Section 3.5.2). It is therefore encouraging to note that 94,7% of the respondents responded favourably to this statement.

6.5.5 Entry fee is value for money

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statement: "The entry fee charged by the last branded event I participated in, offered value for money".

This construct is presented graphically in Figure 6.12 below and appears in Table B14, Appendix B.
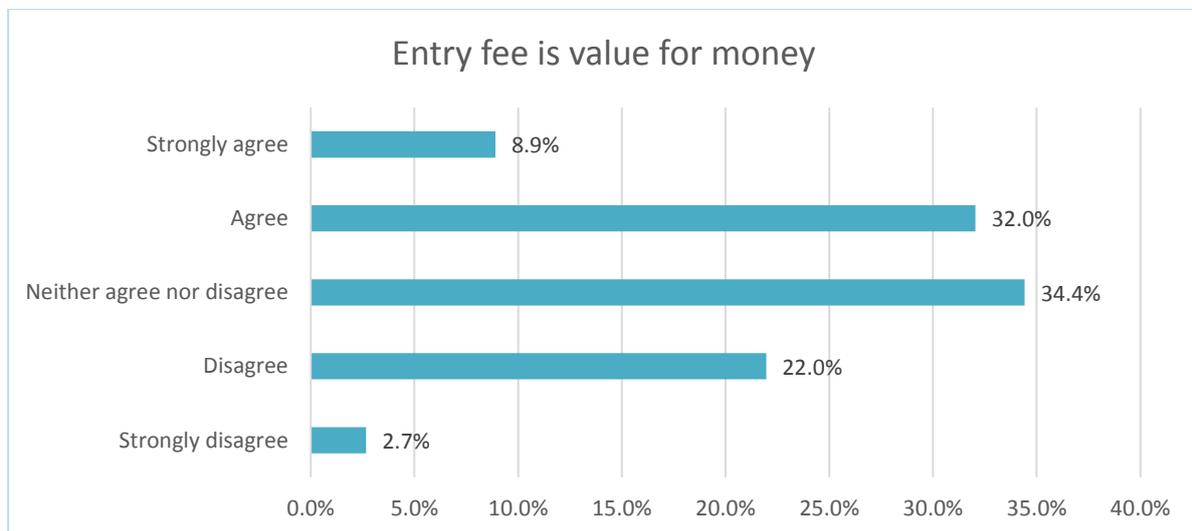
Figure 6.12: Entry fee is value for money (n = 337)

Of the respondents, 34,4% (116 respondents) indicated that they neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement that the entry fee of their last branded race provided value for money, 108 respondents (32%) agreed with the statement, and 30 strongly agreed (8,9%), while 74 respondents (22%) disagreed with the statement, and 9

respondents strongly disagreed (2,7%) with the statement that the entry fee provided value for money.

Value for money is included as part of the perceived quality dimensions, as defined by Aaker (in Tuominen, 1999) (refer to Chapter 3, Section 3.5.1). Although 40,9% of respondents indicated their positive agreement with the statement, it is interesting to note that 34,4% of respondents did not have a clear opinion on whether or not branded events provided value for money events. Of the respondents, 24,7% indicated in the negative when it came to value for money. Although, value for money has been traditionally considered to contribute to brand equity, as it plays a role in brand quality (Aaker in Tuominen, 1999), this result is not surprising. Several researchers have found that the price for sport consumption is inelastic. That means that for any increase in the price paid for the consumption of the sport product, there will not be a noticeable change in the demand for the product (Krautman & Berri, 2007:185).

It can be construed that price therefore does not play such an important role in the sport consumption pattern. However, it is important to mention the so-called Linder's disease which has become more apparent. Linder's disease describes the special impact of income on demand for time-consuming goods. Triathlon, or any other participative sport, can certainly be classified as such a type of 'goods' given the many hours participants have to devout to not only training for an event, but also to participate in the event. As wages increase, more consumer goods become available; however, the cost of the time required to consume these goods also becomes more expensive when viewed in terms of lost income (Løyland & Ringstad, 2009:602). Løyland and Ringstad's (2009:614) results suggest that the effect of Linder's disease would become more serious over time for sport activities and events, as a whole.

Attempts made to improve the utility of the time invested in sport, especially for high income consumers, have not yet managed to completely neutralise the adverse demand effect of Linder's disease. This is especially concerning, given the participants response to the item in question; the fee charged by branded events offer value for money.

6.5.6 Unique race experience

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statement: "The last branded event I participated in, provided a unique race experience (such as personalised race bibs, well organised race briefings and good crowds)".

This construct is presented graphically in Figure 6.13 and appears in Table B15, Appendix B.
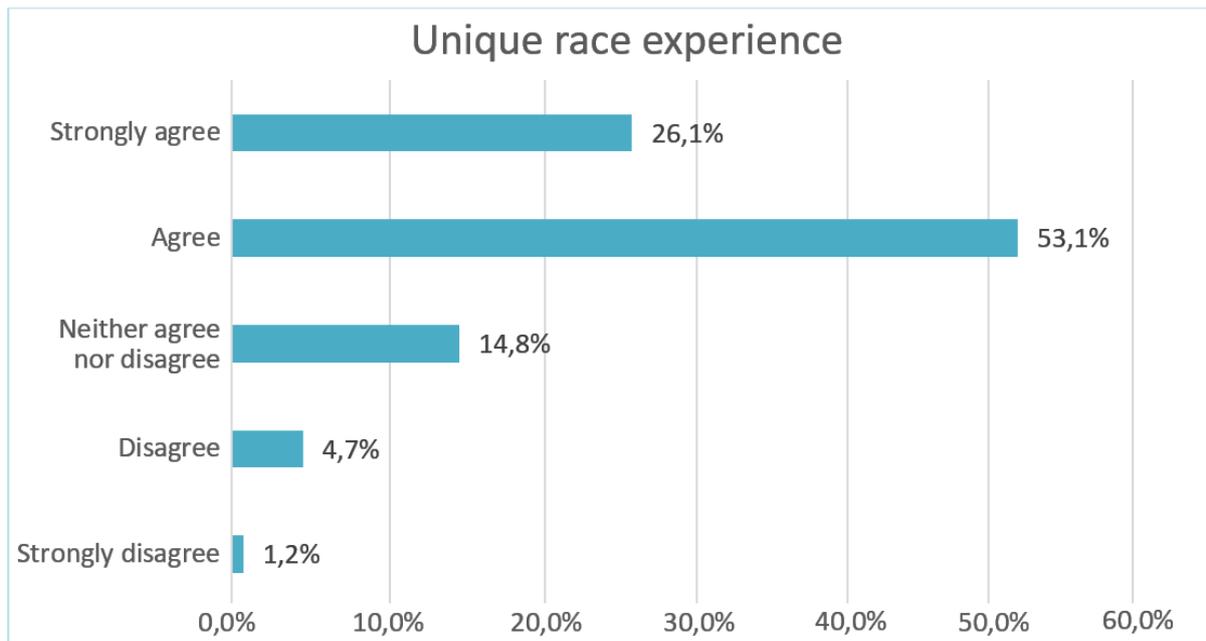
Figure 6.13: Unique race experience (n = 337)

Of the respondents, 197 (53,1%) agreed with the statement that their last branded event provided them with a unique race experience, 88 respondents (26,1%) strongly agreed with the statement, and 50 (14,8%) respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement, while 4 respondents (1,2%) strongly disagreed with the statement and 16 respondents (4,7%) disagreed with the statement.

By providing a unique race experience, organisers are able to create a reason for consumers to purchase their 'product' offering. A unique racing experience can be seen as a way of differentiating the event brand. This element traditionally formed part of the perceived quality dimension as defined by Aaker's brand equity model discussed in Chapter 3, Section 3.5.1. It is encouraging therefore to observe that 79,2% of respondents responded positively to the statement that the last branded event they participated in did create a unique race experience for them.

6.5.7   Appealing race 'swag'[11]

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statement: "The last branded event I participated in, provided appealing race 'swag' (medals, t-shirts or other finisher items)".

This construct is presented graphically in Figure 6.14 below and appears in Table B16, Appendix B.

More than half of the respondents (182 respondents; 54%) indicated that they agreed with the statement that the last brand races they participated in did provide appealing race 'swag', 87 respondents (25,8%) indicated that they strongly agreed with the statement, and 41 respondents (12,2%) neither agreed nor disagreed, while 6 respondents (1,8%) strongly disagreed with the statement, and 21 respondents (6,2%) disagreed.
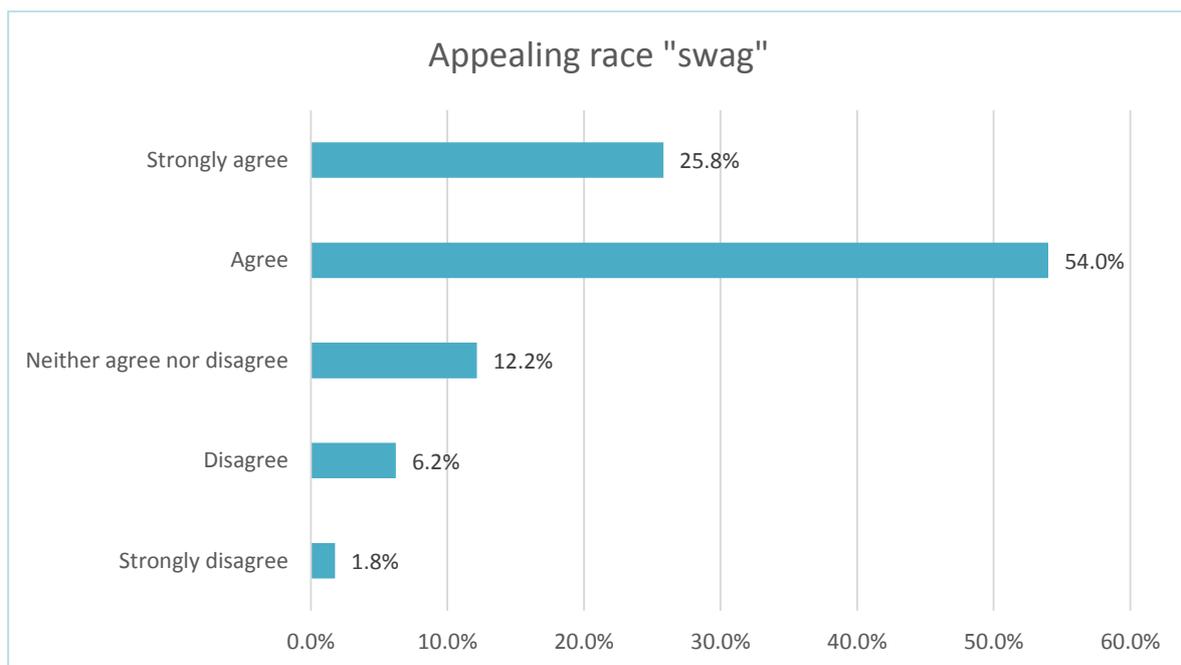
Figure 6.14: Appealing race 'swag' (n = 337)

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[11] Race swag is a colloquial term used frequently in endurance sport (especially triathlon) and is used to describe the 'goods' received in turn for completing the event. The type of goods then most often include finisher medals, t-shirts, caps and an array of other items such as towels, bottle openers and the like. Race swag is often branded and contributes to the "bragging rights" obtained when finishing a particular event.

Race 'swag' represents the tangible element of participating in a sporting event, which is largely service-based. When competing in an event, the participant leaves with only the memories of the race and the race swag. This tangible element of sporting events has become increasingly important over the years and offers sport event organisers an extremely valuable opportunity for not only word-of-mouth marketing, but also for creating brand equity. In some instances, race swag can even convince consumers to purchase the service offering (Running with Miles, 2014). Ultimately, this tangible element can create a certain exclusivity which in turn contributes to brand equity. It is therefore encouraging to note that 79,8% of respondents responded favourably towards the statement that branded events do provide appealing race swag.

6.5.8 Referees

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statement: "The referees that officiated the last branded event I participated in, enforced the course rules correctly". This construct is presented graphically in Figure 6.15 below and appears in Table B17, Appendix B.
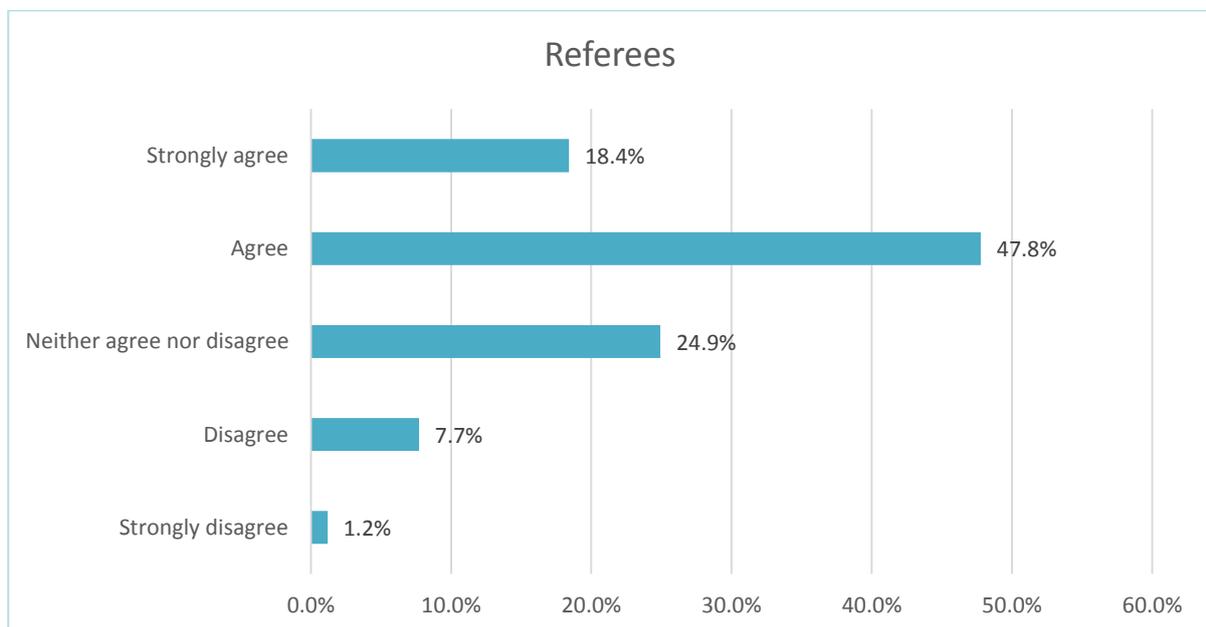
Figure 6.15: Referees (n = 337)

Of the respondents, 47,8% (161 respondents) indicated they agreed with the statement that the referees who officiated the last branded event in which they had participated, enforced the course rules correctly, and 62 respondents (18,4%) strongly agreed with the statement, while 4 respondents (1,2%) strongly disagreed, 26

respondents (7,7%) disagreed, and 84 respondents (24,9%) neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement.

The referees who officiate at events formed part of the Event Qualitymark which was introduced by Triathlon England. This item is also discussed in Chapter 2, Section 2.7.3.2 as one of the unique considerations of RCPA sport events. As such, this item was included to represent the quality dimension of brand equity as it contributes to the overall quality of the event being presented. It is therefore encouraging to note that 66,2% of respondents responded in a positive manner to the statement. It should be mentioned that often during a race, a participant might not have direct contact with the referees due to the logistical implications of running an endurance race across big distances. As such, respondents might not be able to make a judgement call which could contribute to the 24,9% of respondents who indicated neither agree nor disagree.

6.5.9   Volunteers

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statement: "The volunteers that worked at the last branded event I participated in, contributed positively to my racing experience".

This construct is presented graphically in Figure 6.16 below and appears in Table B18, Appendix B.
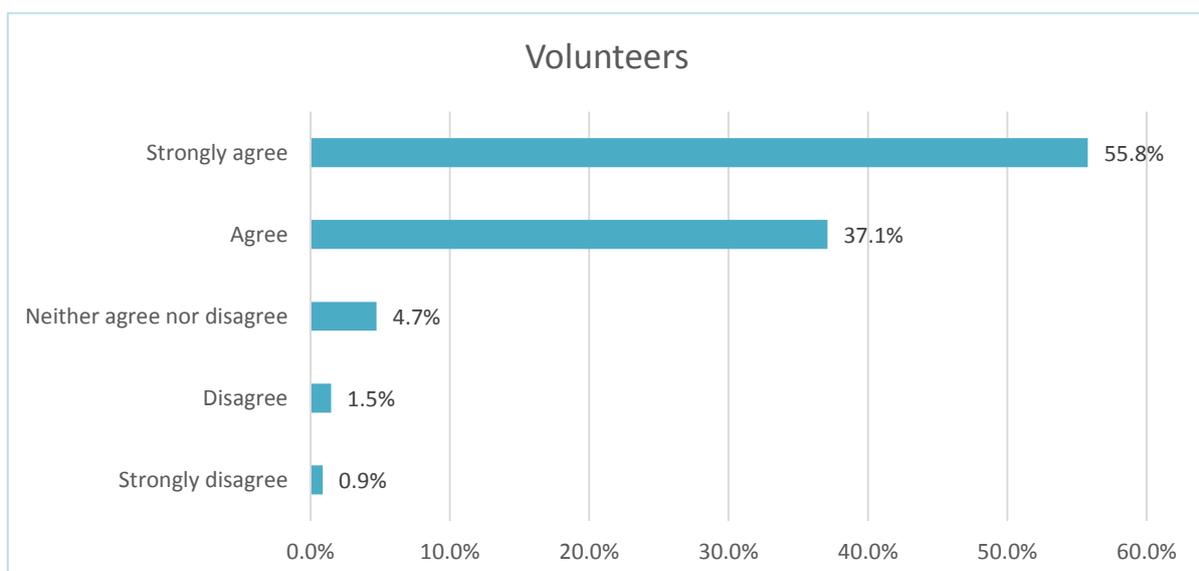
Figure 6.16: Volunteers (n = 337)

More than half the respondents (188 respondents; 55,8%) strongly agreed with the statement that the volunteers at their last branded event contributed positively to their racing experience, and 125 respondents (37,1%) agreed with the statement, while 3 respondents (0,9%) strongly disagreed with the statement, 5 respondents (1,5%) disagreed, and 16 respondents (4,7%) neither agreed nor disagreed.

The volunteers that assist during events, are one of the Event Qualitymarks used by Triathlon England as part of their quality scheme and is also discussed in Chapter 2, Section 2.7.3.2. The volunteers at an event can therefore be seen as part of the quality dimension of brand equity. It is therefore very encouraging to see that only 8 respondents responded negatively to this statement, and 16 respondents indicated neither agree nor disagree. As some smaller races might not have as many volunteers, some participants might not have had direct contact with the volunteers, and therefore could not make a judgement call in this regard, resulting in a neither agree nor disagree response.

6.5.10   Route layout

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statement: "The route layout of the last branded event I participated in was of a high quality".

This construct is presented graphically in Figure 6.17 and appears in Table B19, Appendix B.
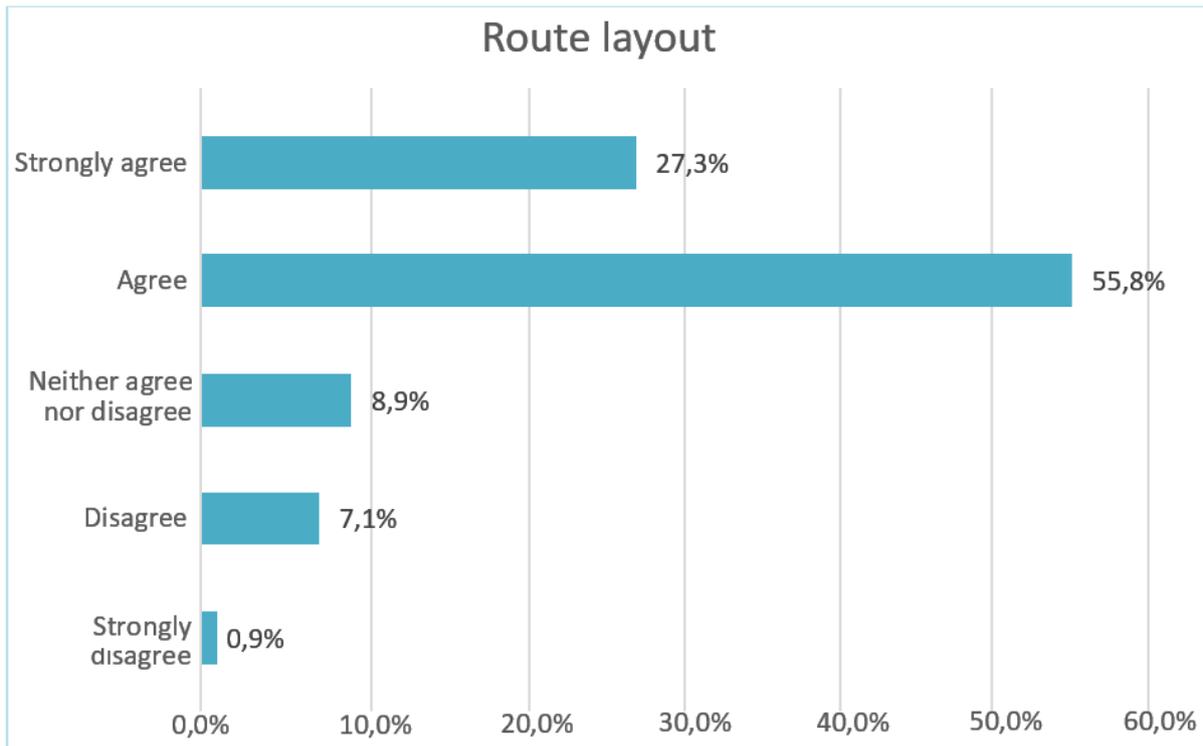
Figure 6.17: Route layout services (n = 337)

More than half the respondents (188 respondents; 55,8%) indicated that they agreed with the statement that the route layout of the last branded event they participated in was of a high quality, 92 respondents (27,3%) strongly agreed with the statement, while 3 respondents (0,9%) strongly disagreed, 24 respondents (7,1%) disagreed, and 30 respondents (8,9%) neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement.

The route layout for a participative event can make or break an event. The route layout relates to the 'tangible' aspect of service quality as it can be seen and touched by participants. The route layout of an event can greatly encourage the participation of athletes, and it is postulated that this aspect of participative events contributes to the quality dimension of brand equity. This is also discussed in Chapter 2, Section 2.7.1.2. As such, it is encouraging to note that 83,1% of respondents responded favourably that the route layout of their last branded race was of high quality.

6.5.11   Interaction with like-minded individuals

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statement: "The last branded event I participated in allowed me to interact with like-minded individuals". This construct is presented graphically in Figure 6.18 and appears in Table B20, Appendix B.
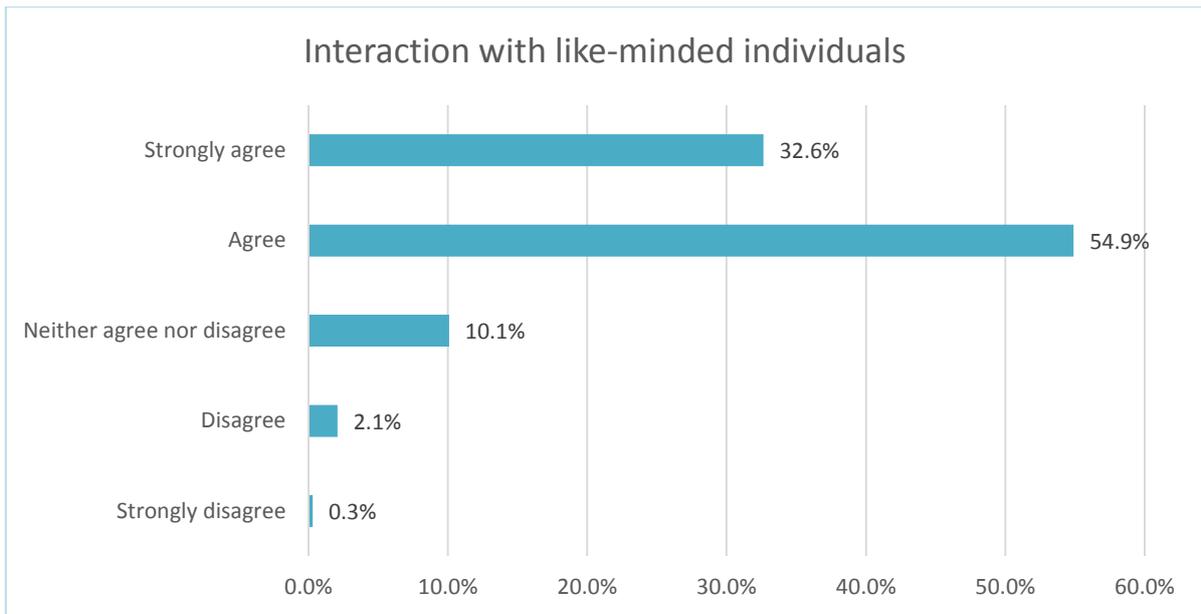
Figure 6.18: Interaction with like-minded individuals (n = 337)

More than half the respondents (185 respondents; 54,9%) agreed with the statement that the last branded event they participated in allowed them to interact with like-minded individuals. An additional 110 respondents (32,6%) indicated that they strongly agreed with the statement, while 1 respondent (0,3%) strongly disagreed with the statement, 7 respondents (2,1%) disagreed, and 34 respondents (10,1%) neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement.

This element closely relates to the new brand equity construct, social influence, developed by Baalbaki (2012) for the CBBE model (refer to Chapter 4, Section 4.7). The justification for including this scale item in the measurement of social influence, is the fact that many participative sport consumers participate in their chosen sport for social reasons (Wicker et al., 2012). It therefore stands to reason that brand equity can be created if an event allows for interaction between like-minded individuals during events. It is thus encouraging to note that 87,5% of the respondents responded favourably to the statement that branded events allowed them to interact with like-minded individuals.

6.5.12 Satisfied competitive nature

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statement: "The last branded event I participated in satisfied my competitive nature". This construct is presented graphically in Figure 6.19 and appears in Table B21, Appendix B.
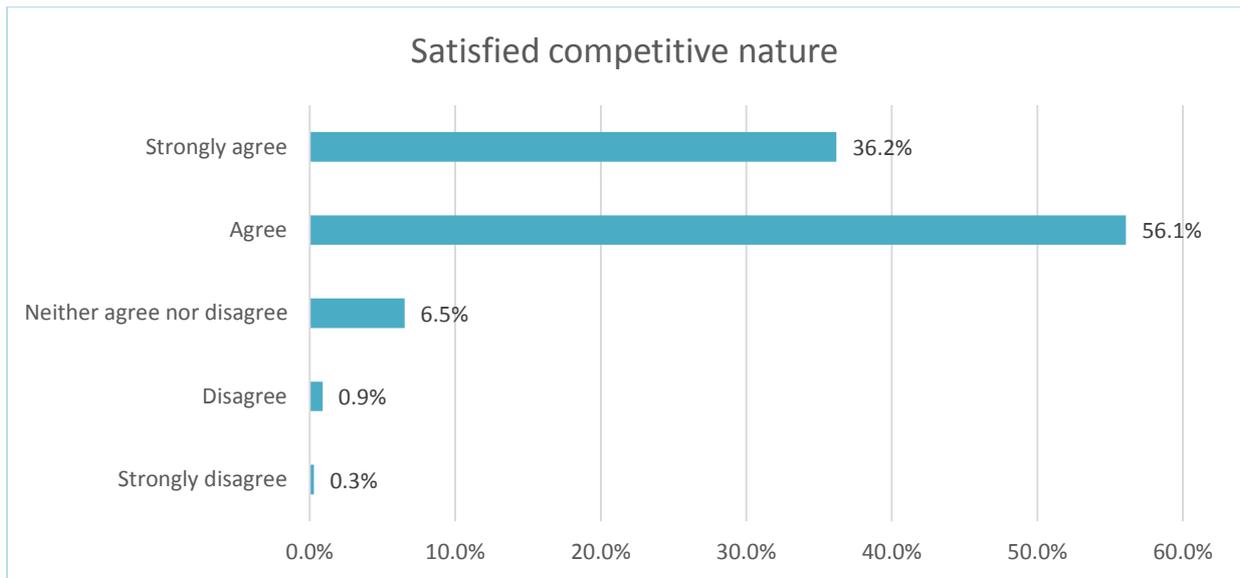
Figure 6.19: Satisfied competitive nature (n = 337)

More than half the respondents (189 respondents; 56,1%) indicated that they agreed with the statement that the last branded event they participated in satisfied their competitive nature, and 122 respondents (36,2%) strongly agreed with this statement, while 1 respondent (0,3%) strongly disagreed with this statement, 3 respondents disagreed (0,9%), and 22 respondents (6,5%) neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement.

This construct was included as part of the social influence dimension of brand equity. Research conducted by Wicker et al. (2012) determined that triathletes are generally quite competitive, and as such, it can be postulated that by satisfying participants' competitive nature, brand equity can be created. This item was also discussed in Chapter 2, Section 2.7.3.1 as a unique consideration for RCPA sport events. It is therefore encouraging to note that 92,3% of respondents responded favourably to the statement that branded events satisfied their competitive nature.

6.5.13 Sufficient social interaction

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statement: "The last branded event I participated in allowed me sufficient social interaction on the course".

This construct is presented graphically in Figure 6.20 and appears in Table B22, Appendix B.

Of the respondents, 157 (46,6%) indicated that they agreed with the statement that the last branded event they participated in provided them with sufficient social interaction on the course, and 82 respondents (24,3%) indicated that they strongly agreed with the statement, while 2 respondents (0,6%) strongly disagreed, 21 disagreed (6,2%), and 75 respondents (22,3%) neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement.
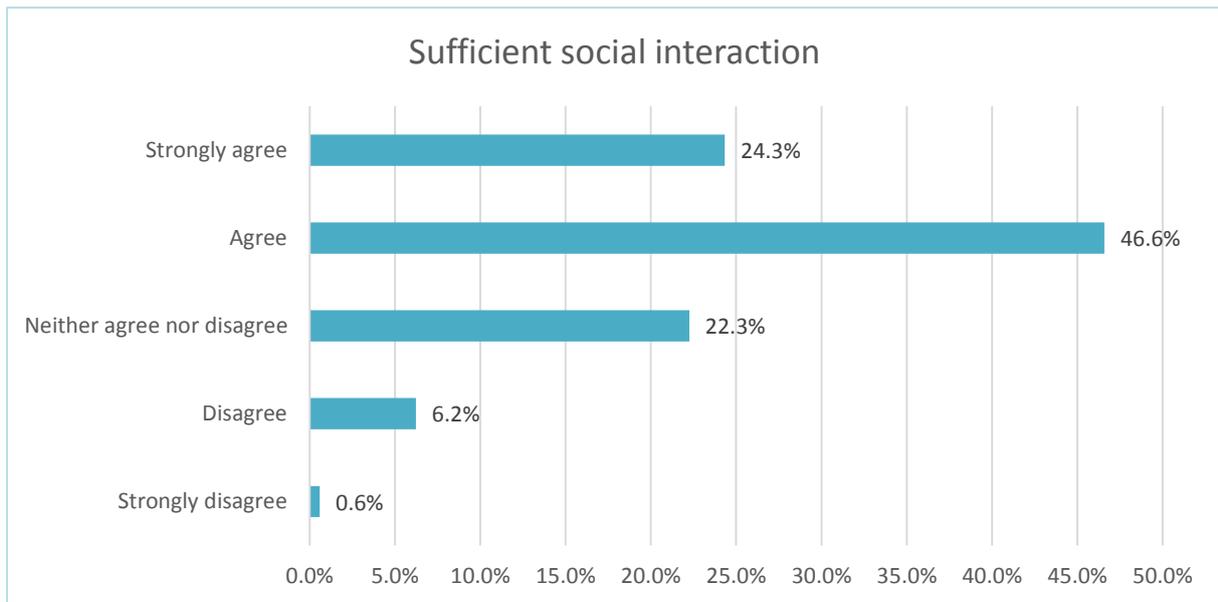

Figure 6.20: Sufficient social interaction (n = 337)

Social interaction on the course is included as part of the social influence element of brand equity. This construct was generated by the researcher to customise the set of constructs measuring social influence as presented by Baalbaki (2012). This is also addressed in Chapter 2, Section 2.7.3.1. It is therefore encouraging to note that 70,% of the respondents responded favourably to the statement that they did have sufficient social interaction on the course. It is also interesting to note that 22,3% of the respondents indicated neither agree nor disagree. Although it is not possible to determine the exact cause for this response it may be indicative that, when it comes to contributing to brand equity, social interaction on the course may not contribute to the race experience of these participants.

6.5.14 Technology

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statement: "The last branded event I participated in used technology in such a manner that my race experience was improved".

This construct is presented graphically in Figure 6.21 below and appears in Table B23, Appendix B.
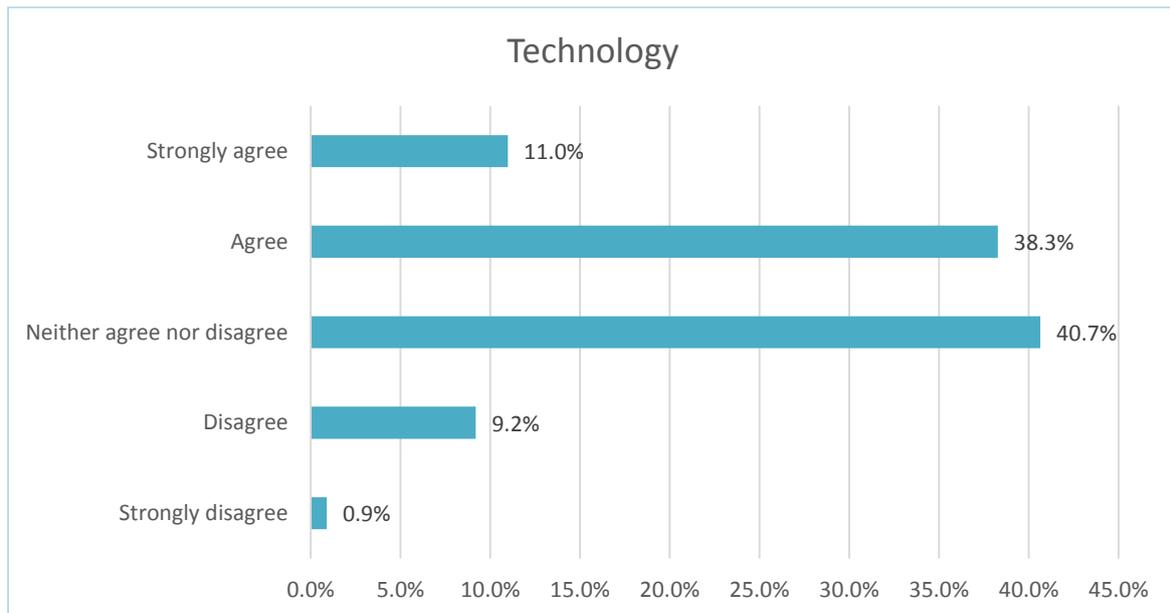
Figure 6.21: Technology (n = 337)

Of the respondents, 40,7% (137 respondents) indicated that they neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement that the last branded race in which they had participated, used technology in such a manner that their race experience was improved, 129 respondents (38,3%) agreed with the statement, and 37 respondents (11%) strongly agreed, while 3 respondents (0,9%) strongly disagreed, and 31 respondents (9,2%) disagreed.

The use of technology to improve the consumer experience is considered to be part of the leadership aspect of brand equity. The assumption is that by using technology in such a manner that the consumer benefits, the brand is demonstrating exceptional leadership in the particular industry. This construct was included in the question set for this dimension by the researcher and is discussed in Chapter 2, Section 2.7.1.3.

Of the respondents, 49,3% responded favourably to the statement that technology was used in such a manner that their race experience was improved. However, 40,7%

of the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement. Although the definitive reason for this particular response could not be clarified by the data collected for this study, several reasons for the lower rating may be presented.

The most compelling explanation would be that the participants were not aware of the technology being used during their race experience. It is virtually undeniable that technology is used to not only improve the race experience of participants, but also influences how the race is organised and presented. Technology is used in a myriad of ways which have improved the race experience of athletes. From online race registrations (previously done in a cumbersome manner through postal services or in person), tracking athletes on race day to ensure their safety, to quick race results which are accessible online, technology has made a big difference in the sport event industry. It would be interesting to see how this perception would change should participants be informed how technology is used on race day (and prior) to improve the race functioning, as well as participants' experiences.

Another possibility might be that, as the majority of the respondents indicated that they had only been participating in triathlon for three years or less, much of today's technology was already being used. As such, these respondents might not have had racing experiences without the use of technology, and can therefore not say that technology has made a difference as it has always been around. If this is the case, it might be postulated that technology no longer provides a distinct advantage to a branded event, but has rather become the acceptable norm.

The next set of descriptive statistics deals with the perceptions participants have about branded events.

6.6   PERCEPTIONS OF BRANDED EVENTS

The item 'perceptions of branded events' was measured by looking at nine constructs. The item was divided into two sections (each representing a dimension of brand equity): the social aspect or social influence and leadership. Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement or disagreement with each statement and were given the express instruction to rate their agreement by referring to their most recent branded event. It was indicated that the statements were related to their social experiences at branded and non-branded events, and the leadership shown at

branded events. The scale used for all nine constructs was a five-point Likert-type scale where 1 was strongly disagree, 2 disagree, 3 neither agree nor disagree, 4 agree and 5 strongly agree.

The descriptive statistics for each one of the nine constructs relating to brand perceptions are discussed below.

6.6.1 Improve others' perception of self

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statement: "Participating in branded events improves the way I am perceived by others".

This construct is presented graphically in Figure 6.22 and appears in Table B24, Appendix B.

Of the respondents, 39,2% (132 respondents) indicated that they neither agree nor disagree with the statement that participating in branded events improved the way they are perceived by others, 81 respondents (24%) agreed with the statement, and 26 respondents (7,7%) strongly agreed, while 72 respondents (21,4%) disagreed with the statement, and 26 respondents (7,7%) strongly disagreed with the statements.
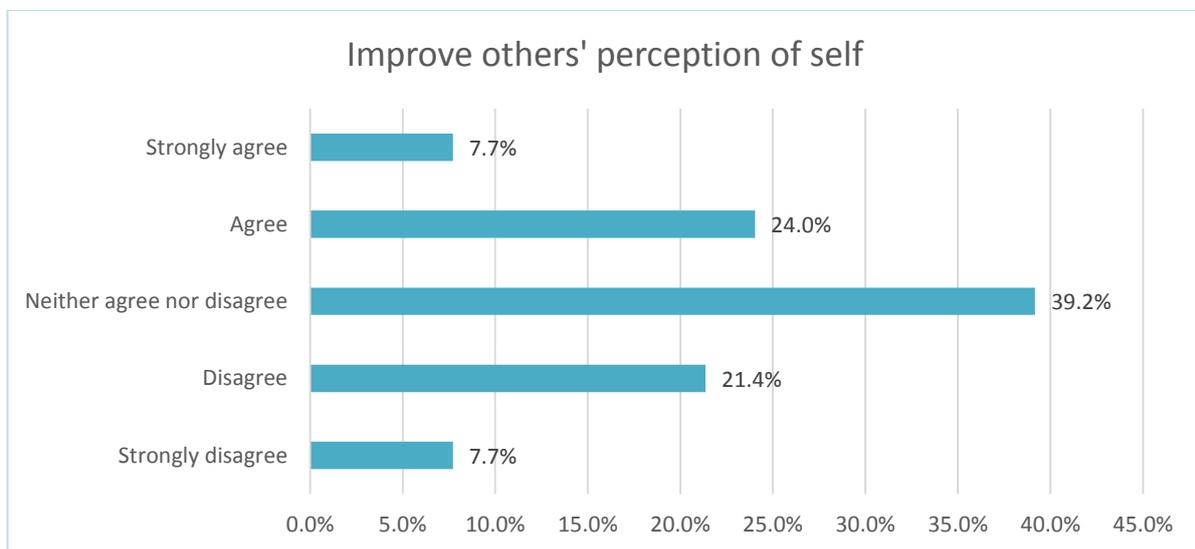
Figure 6.22: Improve others' perception of self (n = 337)

This scale item, 'Branded events improve the way I am perceived by others', formed part of the new CBBE model developed by Baalbaki (2012) (refer to Chapter 4, Section 4.7), and was included as part of the social influence dimension of brand equity. It is

interesting to note that 39,2% of the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement.

Literature has shown that many female athletes (especially in the age category of 30 to 45 years), are hesitant to share their triathlon successes due to unsupportive family members (Porter, 2003:181). Female athletes often tend to feel a fair amount of guilt for their participation in any sport which tends to consume their discretionary time, while limiting or impacting their time with regard to family or work responsibilities (Porter, 2003:181). It can be postulated that due to these feelings of guilt, women would perceive their participation in events as a negative occurrence, and that it would not improve others' perceptions of themselves. This 'deduction', however, falls well outside the scope of this study, and even the subject field of business management and marketing.

Another possibility is that respondents did not want to answer the question, as it would appear egotistical to do so. Indicating that participating in branded triathlons improves others' perception of them might represent a 'vain' reason for participating in triathlons in the first place, making females even more hesitant to admit to this. During 2016 and 2017, the Women For Tri board launched an aggressive international marketing campaign titled 'Why we tri' where women across the globe were encouraged to provide their motivations for participating in triathlon. A strong undercurrent was created to emphasise those motives that were considered socially acceptable, steering away from more 'egotistical' reasons. This could possibly be reason enough to avoid admitting to external 'praise' as a motivator. However, this is pure speculation on the researcher's side.

Irrespective of this high response rate of the neither agree nor disagree category, 31,7% of respondents did respond positively to the statement. When testing the proposed model for participative, recurring sport events, this dimension will warrant further scrutiny.

6.6.2   Good impression

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statement: "Participating in branded events makes a good impression on other people".

This construct is presented graphically in Figure 6.23 and appears in Table B25, Appendix B.
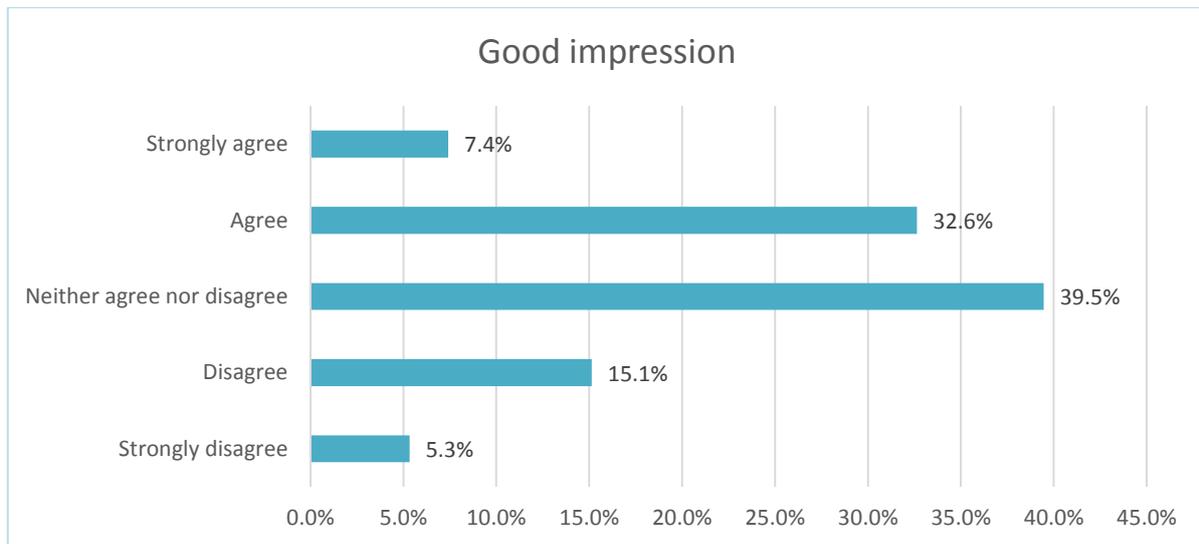
Figure 6.23: Good impression (n = 337)

Of the respondents, 39,5% (133 respondents) indicated that they neither agree nor disagree with the statement that participating in branded events made a good impression on other people, 110 respondents (32,6%) did agree with the statement, and 25 respondents (7,4%) strongly agreed, while 18 respondents (5,3%) strongly disagreed with the statement, and 51 respondents (15,1%) disagreed.

The scale item elicited a similar response as the item described in Section 5.6.1 above. Also included as part of the social influence dimension of brand equity, 39,5% of the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement that participating in branded events makes a good impression on other people.

As above, it is unknown whether or not this response was due to the fact that respondents did not know if participating in a branded event made a good impression, or if this particular item of social influence was not important to them. It is also possible that respondents did not want to answer the question as it might appear egotistical to do so. Irrespective of this high response, 40% of respondents did respond positively to the statement. When testing the proposed model for participative, recurring sport events, this dimension will warrant further scrutiny.

6.6.3   Gain social approval

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statement: "By participating in branded events I gain social approval".

This construct is presented graphically in Figure 6.24 and appears in Table B26, Appendix B.

Of the respondents, 39,5% (133 respondents) neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement that by participating in branded events they gained social approval, 75 respondents (22,3%) agreed with the statement, and 20 respondents (5,9%) strongly agreed, while 26 respondents (7,7%) strongly disagreed with the statement, and 83 respondents disagreed (24,6%).
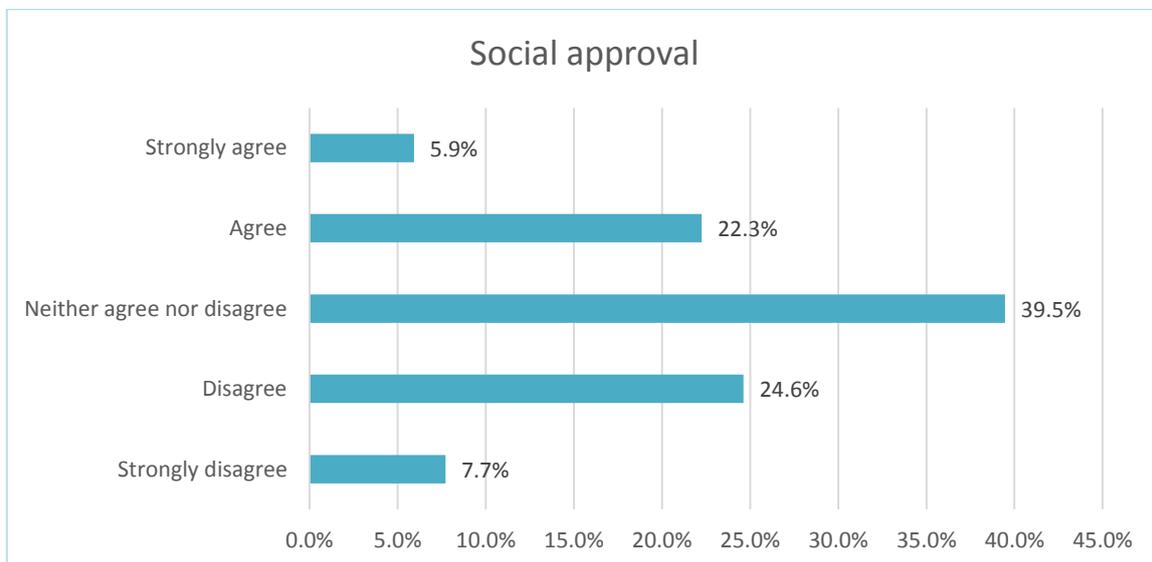
Figure 6.24: Social approval (n = 337)

The scale item elicited a similar response as the other items measuring social influence in this particular construct set. In fact, 39,5% of the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement that by participating in branded events they gain social approval. As above, it is unknown whether or not this response was due to the fact that respondents did not know if participating in a branded event made a good impression or if this particular item of social influence was not important to them. It is also possible that respondents did not want to answer the question as it might appear egotistical to do so.

For this particular item, more respondents (32,3%) indicated in the negative than in the positive (28,2%). When testing the proposed model for participative, recurring sport events, this dimension will warrant further scrutiny. It will be necessary to determine if gaining social approval contributes towards the brand equity of participative, recurring sport events when being determined from a female consumer perspective.

6.6.4   More acceptance

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statement: "By participating in branded events I feel more accepted in my social environment".

This construct is presented graphically in Figure 6.25 and appears in Table B27, Appendix B.

Of the respondents, 41,2% (139 respondents) neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement that by participating in branded events they felt more accepted in their social environment, 47 respondents (13,9%) agreed with the statement, and 18 strongly agreed (5,3%) with the statement, while 40 respondents (11,9%) strongly disagreed with the statement, and 93 respondents (27,6%) disagreed with the statement.
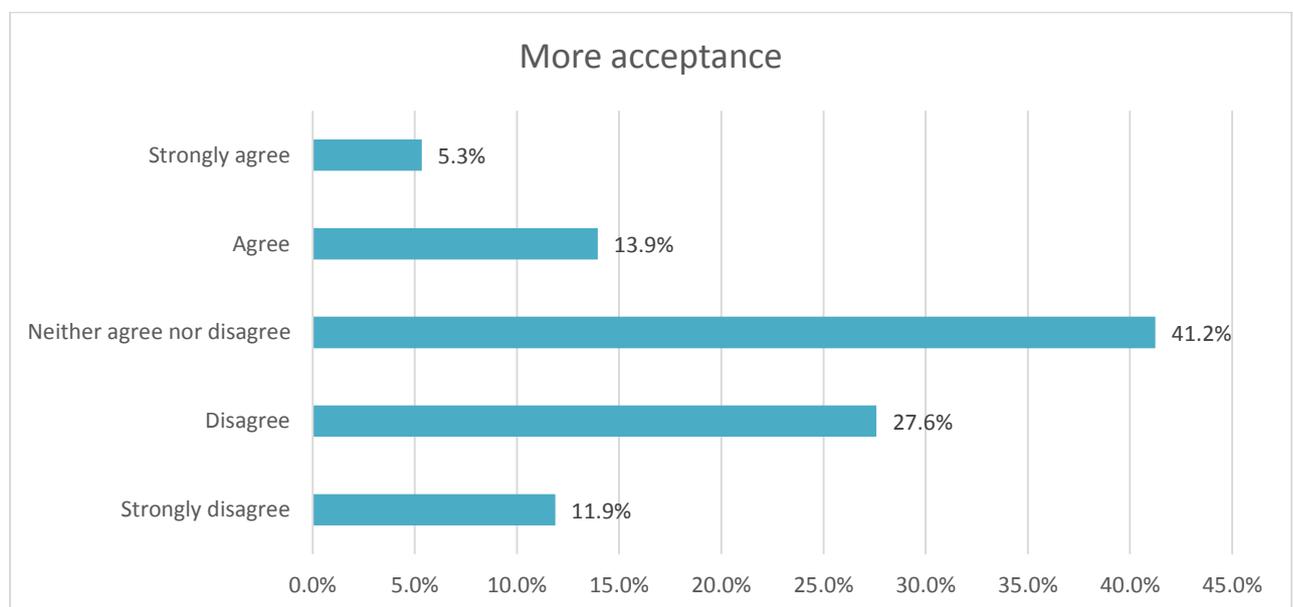
Figure 6.25: More acceptance (n=337)

The scale item elicited a similar response as the other items measuring social influence in this particular construct set. Of the respondents, *41,2% neither agreed nor*

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disagreed with the statement that by participating in branded events they feel more accepted in their social environment.

As above, it is unknown whether or not this response was due to the fact that respondents did not know if participating in a branded event made respondents feel more accepted in their social environments. It is also possible that respondents did not want to answer the question as it might appear egotistical to do so. In addition, there are many fewer female triathletes than males. As such, female triathletes' social environment most likely does not consist of individuals that would be more accepting of these athletes, based solely on their participation in triathlon, and specifically, in branded events.

From personal experience, the researcher can agree with this aspect, as it is often the case that the social environments, of especially female athletes, are not even aware of the particular details of triathlon events, much less the particular brands associated with these kinds of events. In fact, often the participation in triathlon in general has a negative effect on the social environment of athletes, and in particular female triathletes, due to the time commitment required by the sport. Nonetheless, this is merely a personal observation, and the reasons for this result fall outside the scope of this research.

For this particular item, considerably more respondents (39,5%) indicated in the negative than in the positive (19,2%). When testing the proposed model for participative, recurring sport events this dimension will warrant further scrutiny to determine if feeling more accepted in their social environment contributes towards the brand equity of participative, recurring sport events when determined from a female consumer perspective.

6.6.5   Personal challenge

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statement: "Branded events provide me with a personal challenge".

This construct is presented graphically in Figure 6.26 and appears in Table B28, Appendix B.
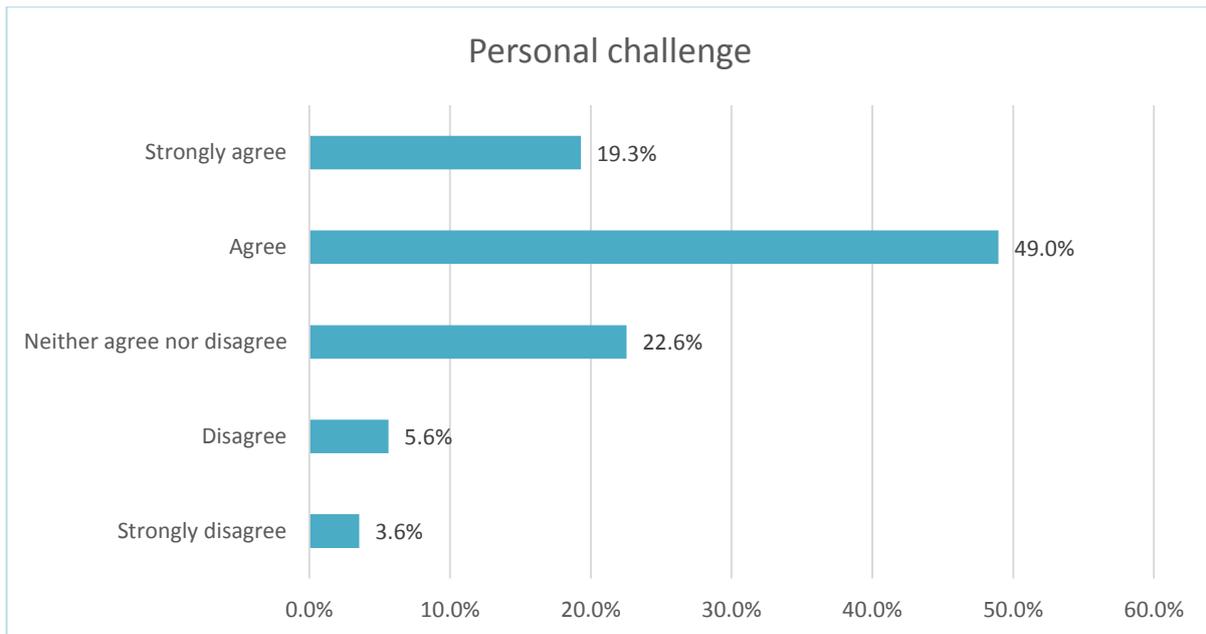
Figure 6.26: Personal challenge (n = 337)

Of the respondents, 49% (165 respondents) agree with the statement that branded events provided them with a personal challenge, 65 respondents (19,3%) strongly agreed with the statement, and 76 respondents (22,6%) neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement, while 19 respondents (5,6%) disagreed with the statement, and 12 respondents (3,6%) strongly disagreed.

The item, 'Branded events provide me with a personal challenge', was included in the set of constructs measuring social influence based on research conducted by Wicker et al. (2012). Given the characterises of triathletes as found by the study, it was postulated that due to their competitive nature, this item might contribute to the brand equity of participative, recurring sport events. It is therefore encouraging that 68,3% of respondents responded favourably to this statement.

6.6.6 Leaders in their field

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statement: "Branded events are leaders in their field".

This construct is presented graphically in Figure 6.27 and appears in Table B29, Appendix B.
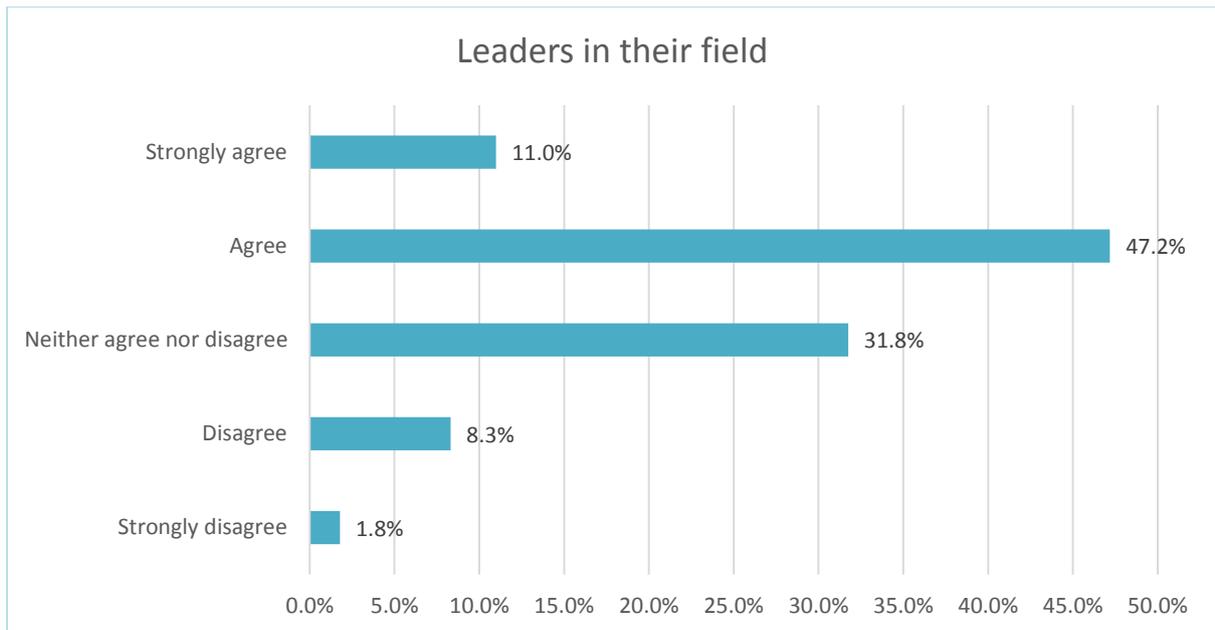
Figure 6.27: Leaders in their field (n = 337)

Of the respondents, 47,2% (159 respondents) agreed with the statement that branded events are leaders in their field, 127 respondents (31,8%) neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement, and 37 respondents (11%) strongly agreed with the statement, while 28 respondents (8,3%) disagreed with the statement and 6 respondents (1,8%) strongly disagreed.

This item was included as part of the leadership dimension of brand equity, a new dimension added by Baalbaki (2012) to the CBBE model (refer to Chapter 4, Section 4.7, as well as Chapter 2, Section 2.6.1). This item can also be considered to be a part of brand awareness as per the traditional brand equity models. It is therefore encouraging that 58,2% of respondents responded positively to the statement that branded events are leaders in their field.

6.6.7 Contribution to society

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statement: "Branded events contribute to society".

This construct is presented graphically in Figure 6.28 and appears in Table B30, Appendix B.
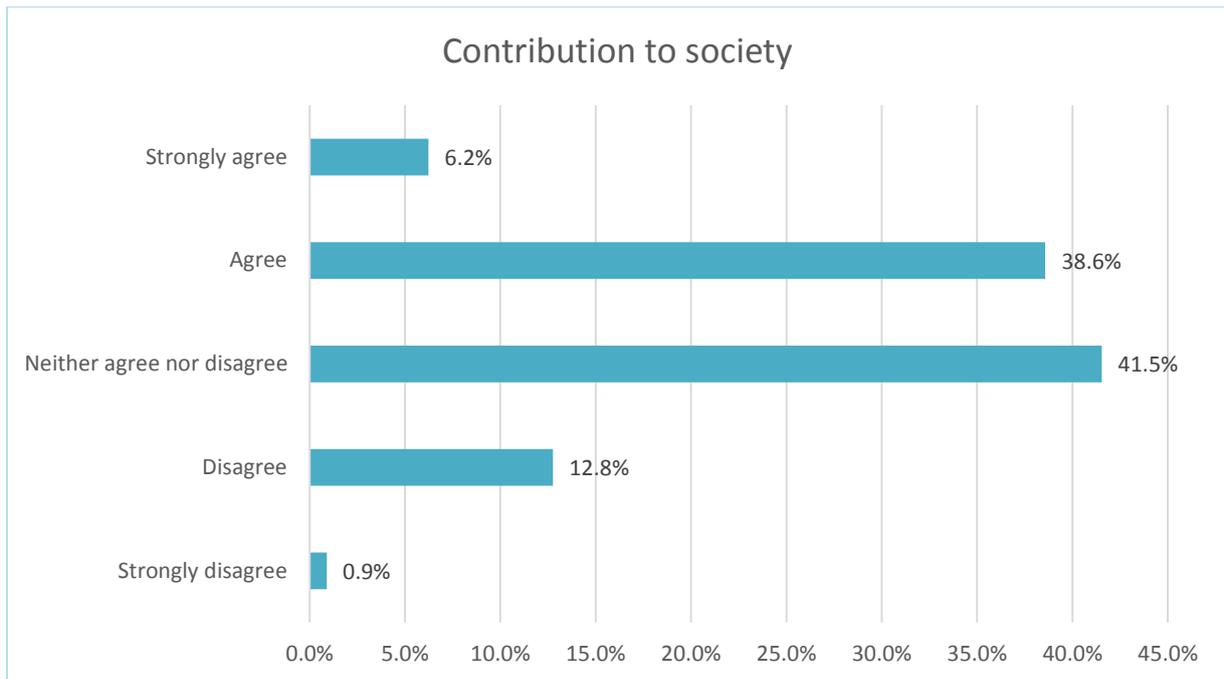
Figure 6.28: Contribution to society

Of the respondents, 41,5% (140 respondents) neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement that branded events contribute to society, 130 respondents (38,6%) agreed with the statement, and 21 respondents (6,2%) strongly agreed, while 43 respondents (12,8%) disagreed with the statement, and 3 respondents (6,2%) strongly disagreed.

This item, branded events contribute to society, was included as part of the leadership dimension of brand equity, a new dimension added by Baalbaki (2012) to the CBBE model (refer to Chapter 4, Section 4.7). This item was also discussed in Chapter 2, Section 2.7.2. It is interesting to note that 41,5% of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement. It might be that respondents were not aware of any contributions made to society, or that the item was not important to them. For example, the Ironman-distance, Ironman-branded event held in South Africa, also known as the Ironman African Championships, runs a NPO (Not For Profit organisation) called 'Ironman for the Kidz'. The NPO has been raising funds for 19 children's homes since 2005, and successfully raised R2.2 million during 2018 alone for their beneficiaries.

Ironman is not the only branded event to contribute towards charities. Indeed, many branded triathlon events (as well as other RCPA sport events) offer charity slots to athletes as a valuable means of raising money for the particular charity in question.

Despite this high response indicating neither agree or disagree, 44,8% respondents did respond favourably to this scale item. When testing the proposed model for participative, recurring sport events, this dimension will warrant further scrutiny.

6.6.8   Securing local support

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statement: "Branded events are successful in securing the support of the local community for the event".

This construct is presented graphically in Figure 6.29 below and appears in Table B31, Appendix B.
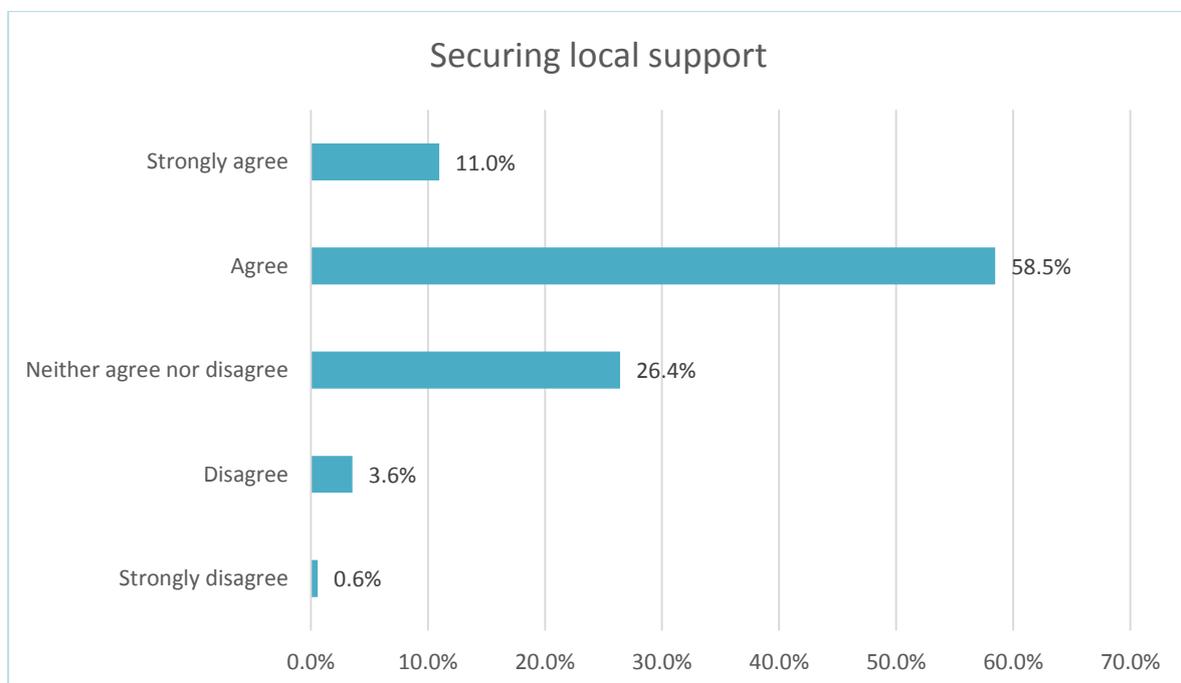
Figure 6.29: Securing local support (n = 337)

More than half of the respondents (197 respondents; 58,5%) agreed with the statement that branded events were successful in securing the support of the local community for the event, 89 respondents (26,4%) neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement, and 37 respondents (11%) strongly agreed with the statement, while 12 respondents (3,6%) disagreed with the statement, and 2 respondents (0,6%) strongly disagreed.

*Securing the support of local communities was included as part of the leadership dimension of brand equity. As participative events generally occur within communities,*

it is important to ensure that adequate support is obtained for the event. This is particularly important when the event is recurring, as the event can only be truly successful with buy-in from the local community. Events that can successfully convince the community to support their events demonstrate leadership in this regard. This is discussed in more detail in Chapter 2, Section 2.7.2.1. It is therefore encouraging that 69,5% of the respondents responded positively to the statement that branded events are successful in securing the support of the local community for the event.

6.6.9   Valuable contribution to infrastructure

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statement: "Branded events have made a valuable contribution to the infrastructure (such as roads) required for the event".

This construct is presented graphically in Figure 6.30 below and appears in Table B32, Appendix B.
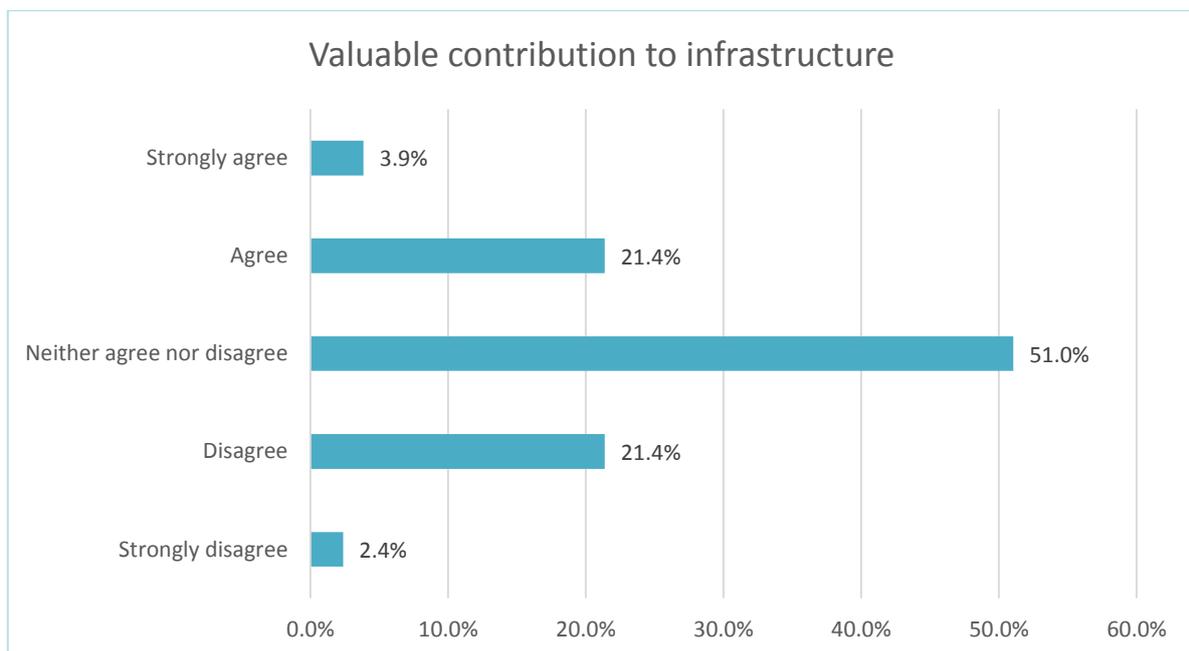
Figure 6.30: Valuable contribution to infrastructure (n = 337)

More than half of the respondents (172 respondents; 51%) neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement that branded events have made a valuable contribution to the infrastructure required for the event, 72 respondents (21,4%) agreed with the

statement, and 13 respondents (3,9%) strongly agreed, while 72 respondents (21,4%) disagreed with the statement, and 8 respondents (2,4%) strongly disagreed.

*Making a valuable contribution to the infrastructure required for the event was included as part of the leadership dimension of brand equity. By contributing to the infrastructure required for the event, brands can demonstrate leadership. Infrastructure may also be used for other purposes besides the event, and is considered one of the benefits of hosting sport events (refer to Chapter 2, Section 2.2.2.3 and Section 2.7.2.2).*

It is interesting to note that 51% of the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement. It might be that respondents were not aware of any contributions made to infrastructure, or that the item was not important to them. An almost equal number of respondents responded negatively (23,8%) and positively (25,3%) to the statement. When testing the proposed model for participative, recurring sport events, this dimension will warrant further scrutiny.

6.7 PERCEPTIONS OF IMPORTANT BRAND ELEMENTS WHEN SELECTING EVENTS

The item 'perceptions of important brand elements when selecting events' was measured by looking at nine constructs. The item was divided into three sections (each representing a dimension of brand equity): the quality of the event, brand preferences and the environment and sustainability.

Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement or disagreement with each statement. The scale used for all nine constructs was a five-point Likert-type scale where 1 was strongly disagree, 2 disagree, 3 neither agree nor disagree, 4 agree and 5 strongly agree.

The descriptive statistics for each one of the nine constructs relating to brand perceptions are discussed below.

6.7.1 Consistent quality

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statement: "It is important to me that the event must be consistent in the quality it provides, every time I race it".

This construct is presented graphically in Figure 6.31 below and appears in Table B33, Appendix B.
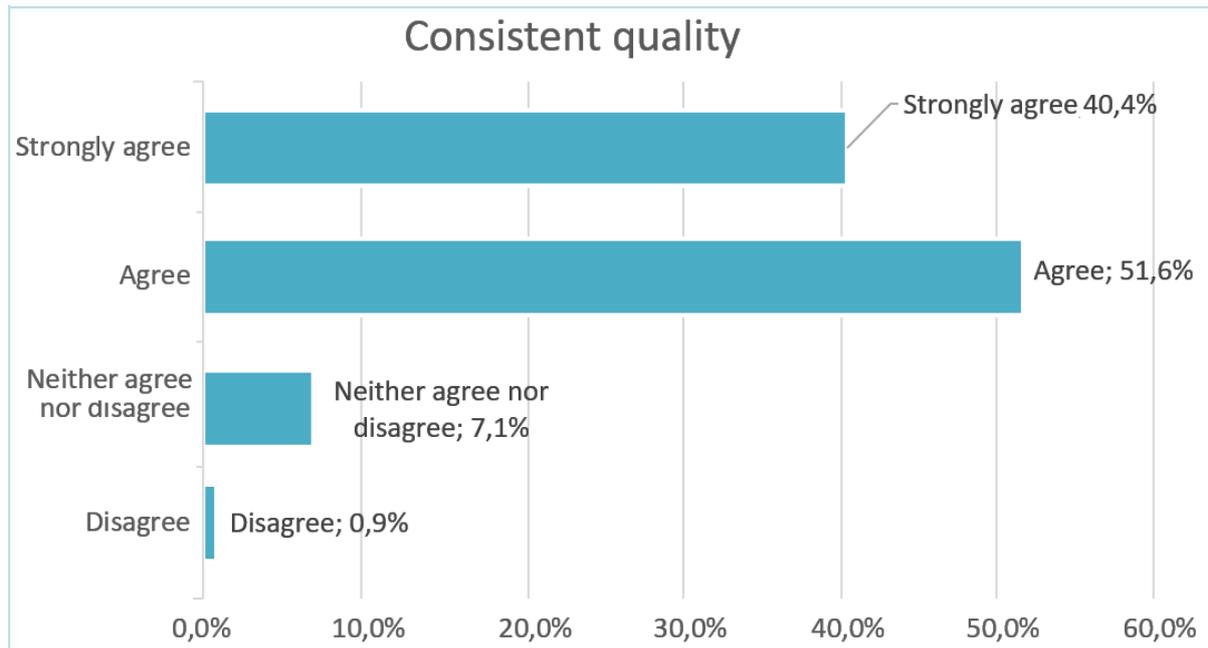
Figure 6.31: Consistent quality (n = 337)

More than half of the respondents (174 respondents; 51,6%) agreed with the statement that it is important to them that the event must be consistent in quality, every time they race the event, 136 respondents (40,4%) strongly agreed with the statement, and 24 respondents (7,1%) neither agreed nor disagreed, while 3 respondents (0,9%) disagreed. There were no respondents who strongly disagreed with the statement.

Consistent quality was an original scale item included in the CBBE model developed by Baalbaki (2012) (refer to Chapter 4, Section 4.7). It is therefore encouraging that the overwhelming majority of respondents (92%) responded favourably to the statement that it is important to them that the event must be consistent in the quality it provides, every time they race it.

6.7.2   High quality

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statement: "It is important to me that the quality of the event must be high".

This construct is presented graphically in Figure 6.31 below and appears in Table B34, Appendix B.
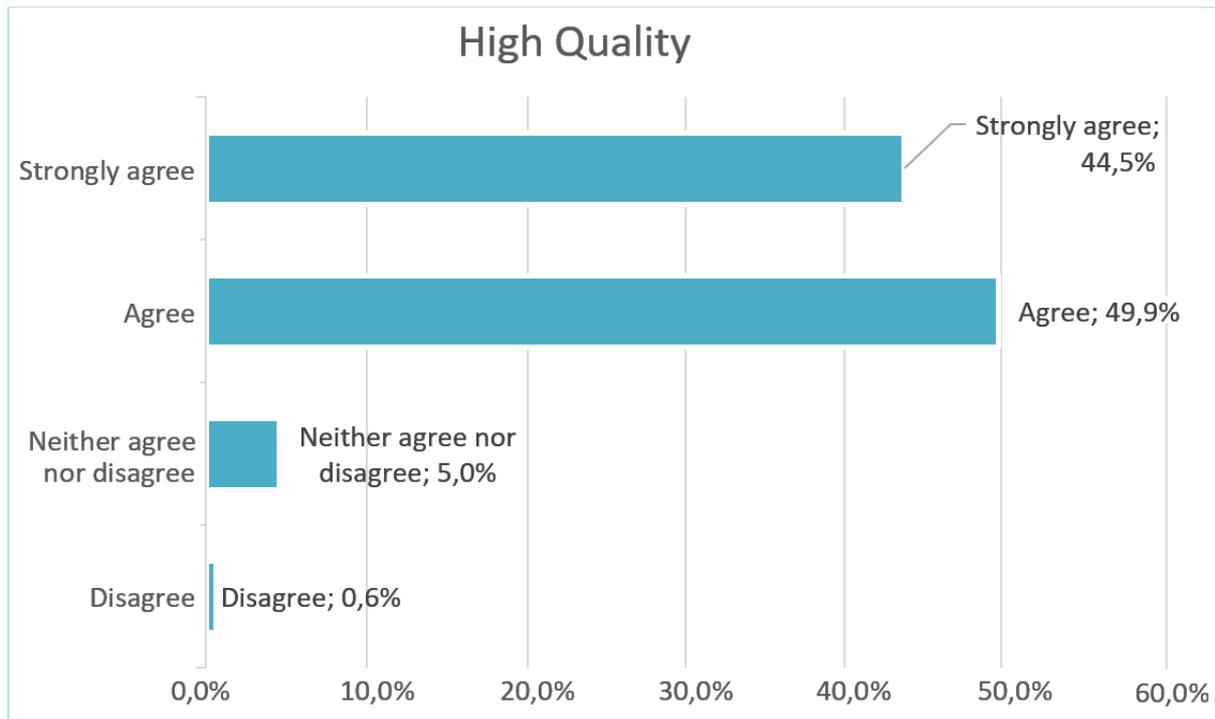
Figure 6.32: High quality (n = 337)

Of the respondents, 49,9% (168 respondents) indicated that they agreed with the statement that it is important to them that the quality of the event must be high, 44,5% of respondents (150 respondents) strongly agreed with the statement, and 17 respondents (5%) neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement, while 2 respondents (0,6%) disagreed with the statement. There were no respondents who strongly disagreed with the statement.

High quality was an original scale item included in the CBBE model developed by Baalbaki (2012) (see Chapter 4, Section 4.7). It is therefore encouraging that the overwhelming majority of respondents (94,4%) responded favourably to the statement that it is important to them that the quality of the event must be high.

6.7.3 First choice

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statement: "A branded event, as opposed to a non-branded event, would be my first choice".

This construct is presented graphically in Figure 6.33 below and appears in Table B35, Appendix B.
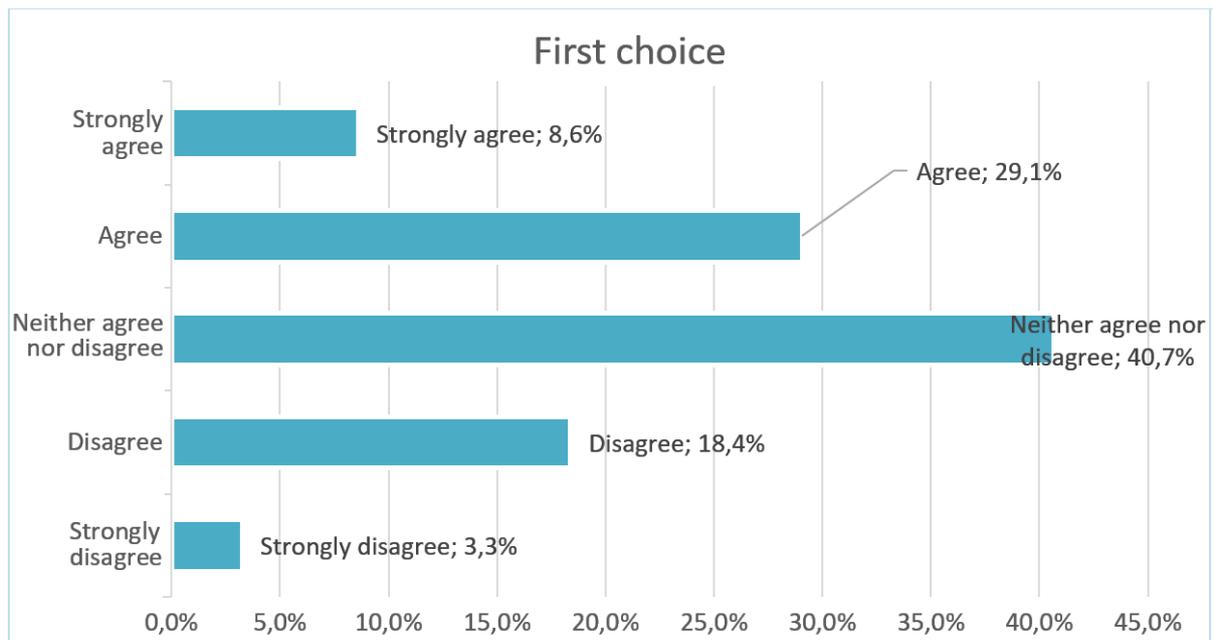
Figure 6.33: First choice (n = 337)

Of the respondents, 40,7% (137 respondents) neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement that a branded event, as opposed to a non-branded event, would be their first choice, 98 respondents (29,1%) agreed with the statement, and 29 respondents (8,6%) strongly agreed, while 62 respondents (18,4%) disagreed with the statement, and 11 respondents (3,3%) strongly disagreed.

The item, "A branded event will be my first choice", forms part of the brand equity component 'preference', and represents an original scale item developed by Baalbaki (2012). It is interesting to note that 40,7% of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement that their first choice would be a branded event, as opposed to a non-branded event. It can be deduced that given the product category, brand loyalty first lies with the sport and then with the actual brand of event.

In other words, participants are loyal to the sport first and then to their preferred brand of event. It can be further postulated that due to the average participants' experience in triathlon, they may not yet have reached a level of brand insistence that other brand conscientious consumers have.

This is an interesting notion, given the context of brand equity which will warrant further research and falls outside the scope of this thesis. Despite this high response, 37,7% of the respondents did respond favourably to the statement. When testing the

proposed model for participative, recurring sport events, this dimension will warrant further scrutiny.

6.7.4 Preference due to exclusivity

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statement: "I prefer branded events as they are more exclusive than non-branded events".

This construct is presented graphically in Figure 6.34 below and appears in Table B36, Appendix B.

Of the respondents, 37,7% (127 respondents) disagreed with the statement that they preferred branded events as they were more exclusive than non-branded events, 35,9% of the respondents (121 respondents) neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement, and 38 respondents (11.3%) strongly disagreed, while 36 respondents (10,7%) agreed with the statement, and 15 strongly agreed (4,5%).
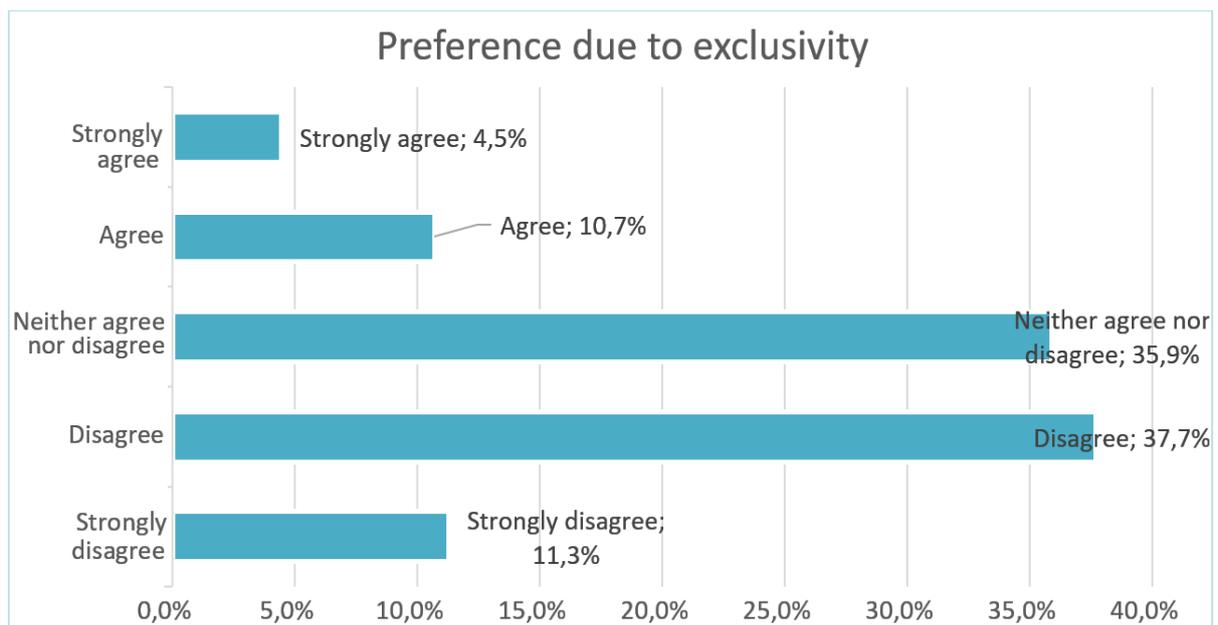
Figure 6.34: Preference due to exclusivity (n = 337)

The item, 'I prefer branded events as they are more exclusive than non-branded events', was included as part of the 'preference' dimension on the basis of research conducted by Wicker et al. (2012). Based on the findings of the research conducted by Wicker et al. (2012), it was deduced that due to the characteristics of triathletes, the exclusivity of triathlon events appealed to their nature. If branded events were more exclusive than non-branded events, it would be possible to create brand equity in this regard. What is interesting to note here is that the research conducted by Wicker

et al. (2012) was mainly based on the opinions of male participants and not females, as is the case with this study.

Of the respondents, 37,7% indicated that they neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement. It can be postulated that females might not want to answer this particular question, as it would appear to be egotistical to admit that they prefer exclusive events. Alternatively (and possibly more likely), exclusivity might not be an important consideration for female participants. However, 49% of the respondents responded negatively to this statement, as opposed to 15,2% who responded favourably. When testing the proposed model for participative, recurring sport events this dimension will warrant further scrutiny in order to determine if exclusivity contributes to the brand equity of participative, recurring events from the female consumer perspective. It may be worthwhile for branded events to investigate which type of differentiation would be valuable for female consumers, as it is evident that they are not quite 'sold on' the exclusivity of branded events.

Indeed, it would appear that female consumers prefer 'inclusiveness', rather than 'exclusiveness'. Research conducted by Barone and Roy (2010:121) noted a distinct response pattern for promotional offers. Female consumers were not enticed to purchase if special offers were targeted, as exclusive promotions and such promotions were viewed less favourably than inclusive offers. However, male consumers favoured exclusive deals over inclusive deals, provided that they have a history of purchasing from the marketer providing the offer. Clearly, the product category and function here are very different than the meaning of exclusivity indicated in this study, but it does provide an interesting point of view regarding the concept of inclusiveness vs exclusiveness and gender preferences.

As indicated above, the majority of respondents indicated that they disagree with the statement, possibly indicating that exclusivity is not an important consideration for female triathletes when choosing an event. Further research is warranted in this regard.

6.7.5   Preference for environmentally safe events

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statement: "I prefer events which do not negatively affect the environment (environmentally safe)".

This construct is presented graphically in Figure 6.35 below and appears in Table B37, Appendix B.

More than half of the respondents (179 respondents; 53,1%) agreed with the statement that they prefer events which do not negatively affect the environment, 114 respondents (33,8%) strongly agreed with the statement, and 39 respondents (11,6%) neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement, while 5 respondents (1,5%) disagreed with the statement. There were no respondents who strongly disagreed with the statement.
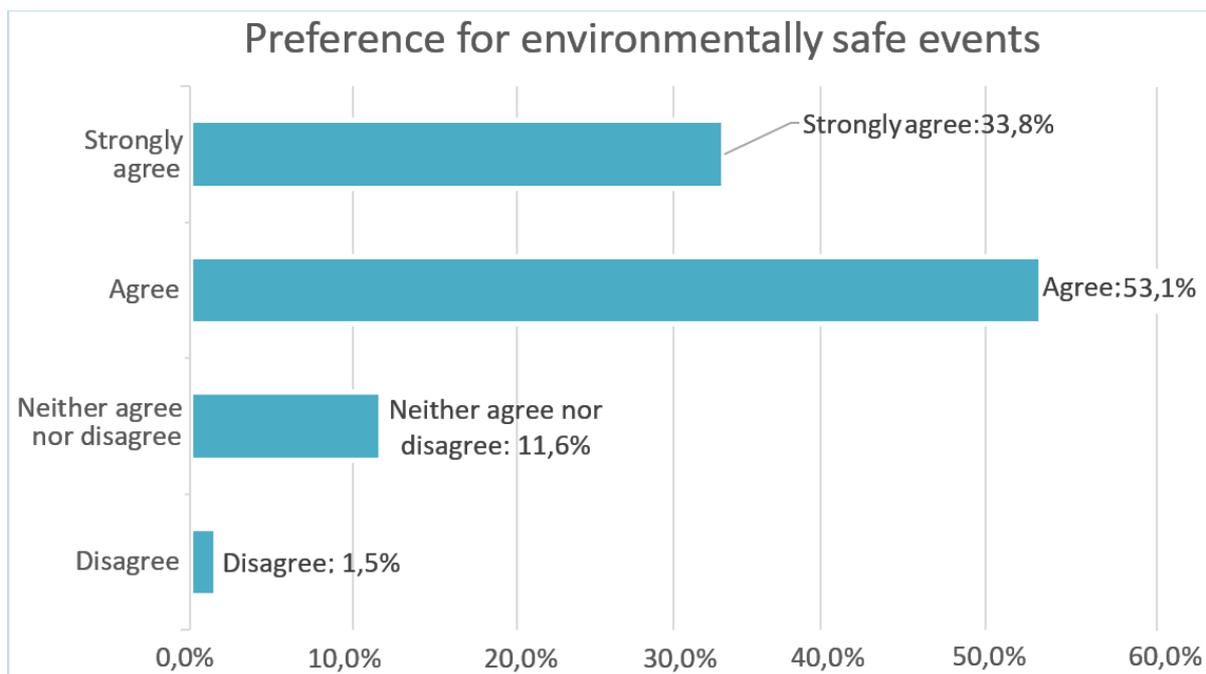
Figure 6.35: Preference for environmentally safe events (n=337)

Research done by Baalbaki (2012) added a new component to the brand equity model, namely, sustainability (refer to Chapter 4, Section 4.7). This item is also discussed in Chapter 2, Section 2.7.1.4. It was found that more and more consumers attach value to brands that conduct business in a sustainable and environmentally friendly manner, thus creating brand equity. Participants' preference for events which do not negatively affect the environment, in other words, which are environmentally safe, was one of the original scale items developed by Baalbaki (2012). It is therefore encouraging to note that the majority of respondents (86,6%) responded favourably to the statement.

6.7.6   Preference for environmentally responsible events

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statement: "I prefer events that are organised in such a manner that the environment is protected (environmentally responsible)".

This construct is presented graphically in Figure 6.36 below and appears in Table B38, Appendix B.
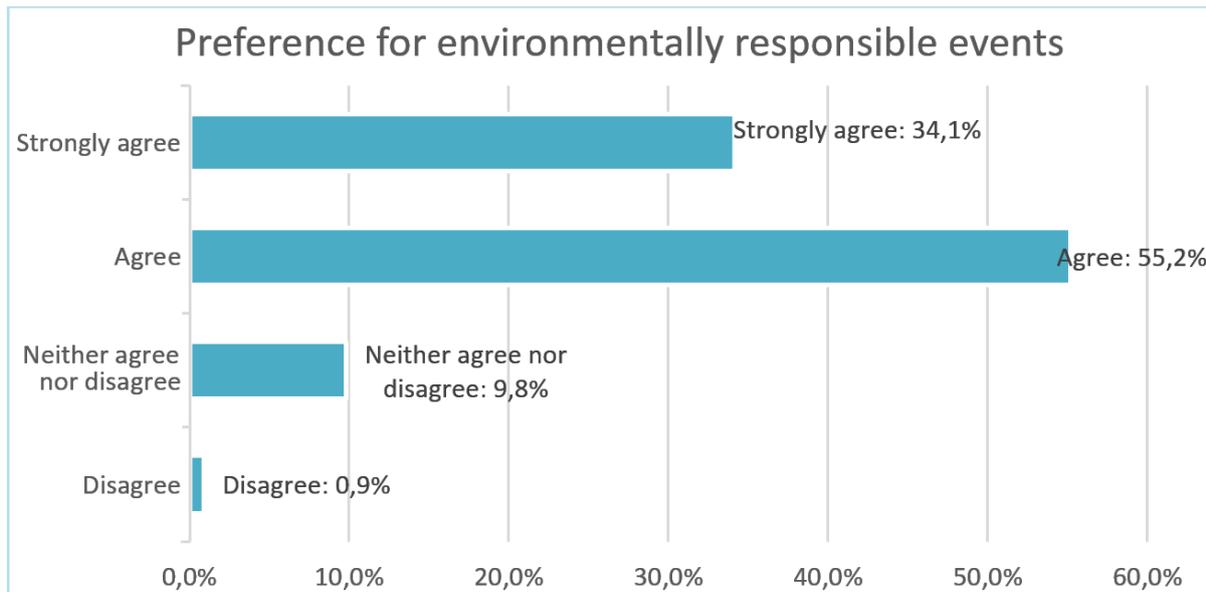
Figure 6.36: Preference for environmentally responsible events (n = 337)

More than half of the respondents (186 respondents; 55,2%) agreed with the statement that they preferred events which were organised in such a manner that the environment is protected, 115 respondents (34,1%) strongly agreed with the statement, and 33 respondents (9,8%) neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement, while 3 respondents (0,9%) disagreed with the statement. There were no respondents who strongly disagreed with the statement.

Preference for events that are organised in such a manner that the environment is protected, in other words events that are environmentally responsible, is an original scale item which is part of the sustainability dimension of brand equity. It is therefore encouraging that the majority of respondents (89,3%) responded favourably to the statement that they prefer events that are environmentally responsible.

6.7.7   Preference for sustainable events

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statement: "I prefer events whose activities do not use up, or completely destroy natural resources, so that the event may continue year after year (sustainable)".

This construct is presented graphically in Figure 6.37 below and appears in Table B39, Appendix B.
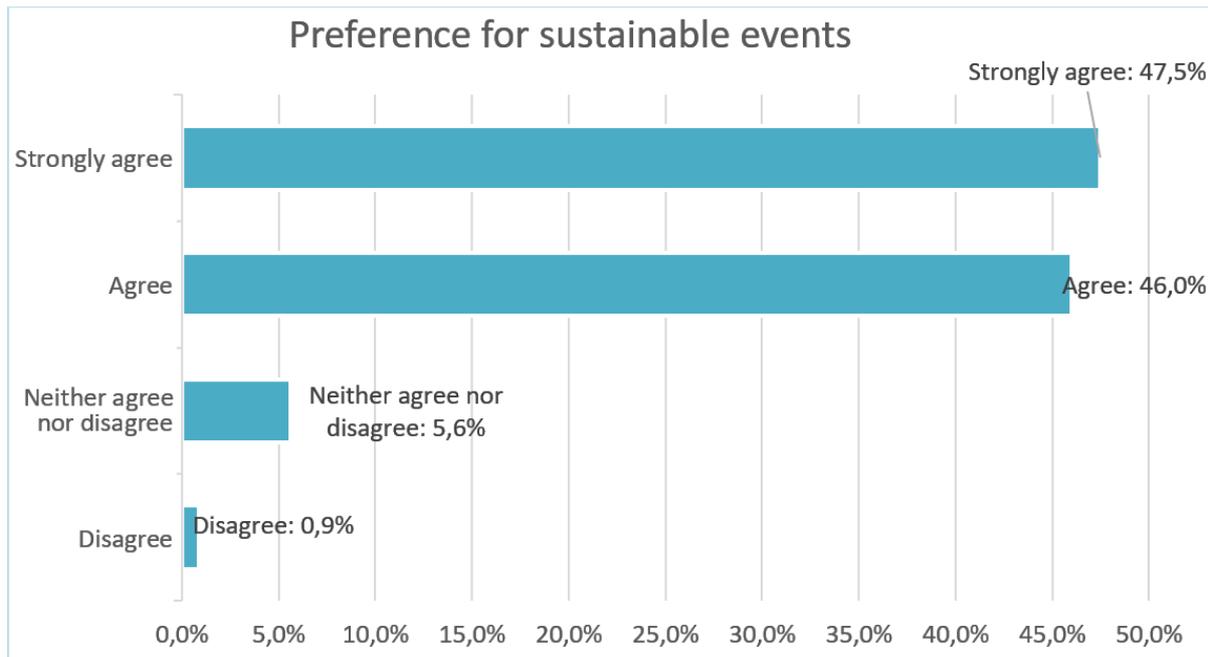
Figure 6.37: Preference for sustainable events (n = 337)

Of the respondents, 47,5% (160 respondents) strongly agreed, 46% (155 respondents) agreed with the statement that they prefer events whose activities do not use up or completely destroy natural resources so that the event may continue year after year, and 19 respondents (5,6%) neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement, while 3 respondents (0,9%) disagreed with the statement. There were no respondents who strongly disagreed with the statement.

Also an original scale item from Baalbaki (2012), the sustainability of brands form part of the sustainability dimension of brand equity. It is encouraging to note that the overwhelming majority of respondents (93,5%) responded positively to the statement that they prefer events which are sustainable.

6.7.8   Protecting the environment

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statement: "It is important to me that events protect the environment in which I race".

This construct is presented graphically in Figure 6.38 below and appears in Table B40, Appendix B.
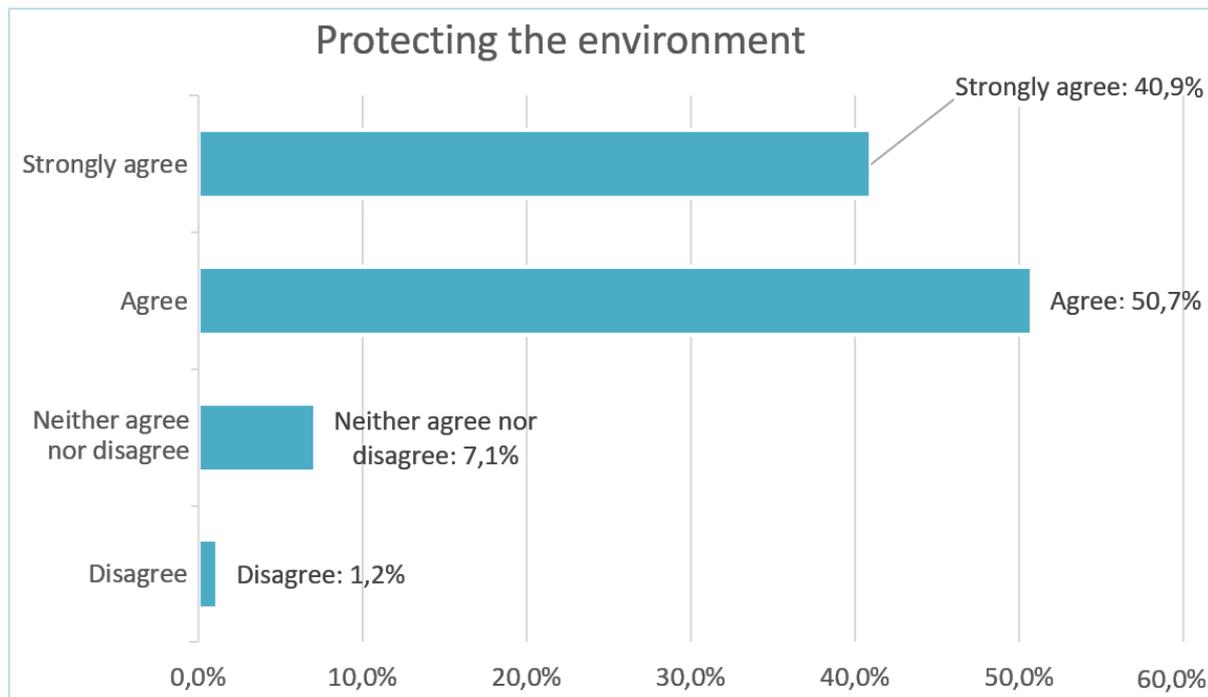
Figure 6.38: Protecting the environment (n = 337)

Of the respondents, 171 (50,7%) agreed with the statement that it is important to them that sport events protect the environment in which they race, 138 respondents (40,9%) strongly agreed with the statement, and 24 respondents (7,1%) neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement, while 4 respondents (1,2%) disagreed. There were no respondents who strongly disagreed with the statement.

Although not part of the original scale items developed by Baalbaki, this item is included under the sustainability dimension of brand equity. It is encouraging to note that the overwhelming majority of respondents (91,6%) agreed that it is important to them that events protect the environment in which they race. It is evident then, that for the participants of this study, the protection of the environment and the sustainability of the event are important considerations when choosing events to participate in. Sport events are notorious for their large carbon footprints and gross consumption of natural

resources. They can become 'ecological nightmares' given the large amount of single-use plastics they consume; for example, the London Marathon uses approximately 750 000 bottles of water, equating 7 tonnes of waste (Gabbatiss, 2018).

Events are increasingly embracing the green culture as it not only leads to lower operations costs, but has proven to be a very successful public relations opportunity (Hermes, 2017). It is evident that there is a wider trend within the sporting community to acknowledge the harm events can cause the environment (Gabbatiss, 2018). For example, in South Africa, the Ironman-branded triathlon events have acknowledged the sensitive, ecological environments in which their races are conducted, and in response, have issued a disqualification penalty for any athlete found littering.

Both mass participation sport events and spectator sport events are looking to reduce their impact on the environment (Gabbatiss, 2018). This is mirrored in the consumer response where an increase in environmental awareness is evident from the data collected for this study.

As can be seen from the results discussed above, consumer preference clearly aligns with more environmentally responsible events. It is recommended that events actively pursue sustainability and incorporate any such actions and endeavours into their marketing campaigns, as it is a contributor to brand equity.

6.8   BRAND'S ROLE IN DECISION-MAKING

The item 'brand's role in decision-making' was measured by asking respondents to indicate whether the brand of the event plays a role in their decision-making process when deciding on an event in which to participate. The scale used was a five-point Likert-type scale where 1 was strongly disagree, 2 disagree, 3 neither agree nor disagree, 4 agree, and 5 strongly agree.

The descriptive statistics for this question is presented graphically in Figure 6.39 below and appears in Table B41, Appendix B.
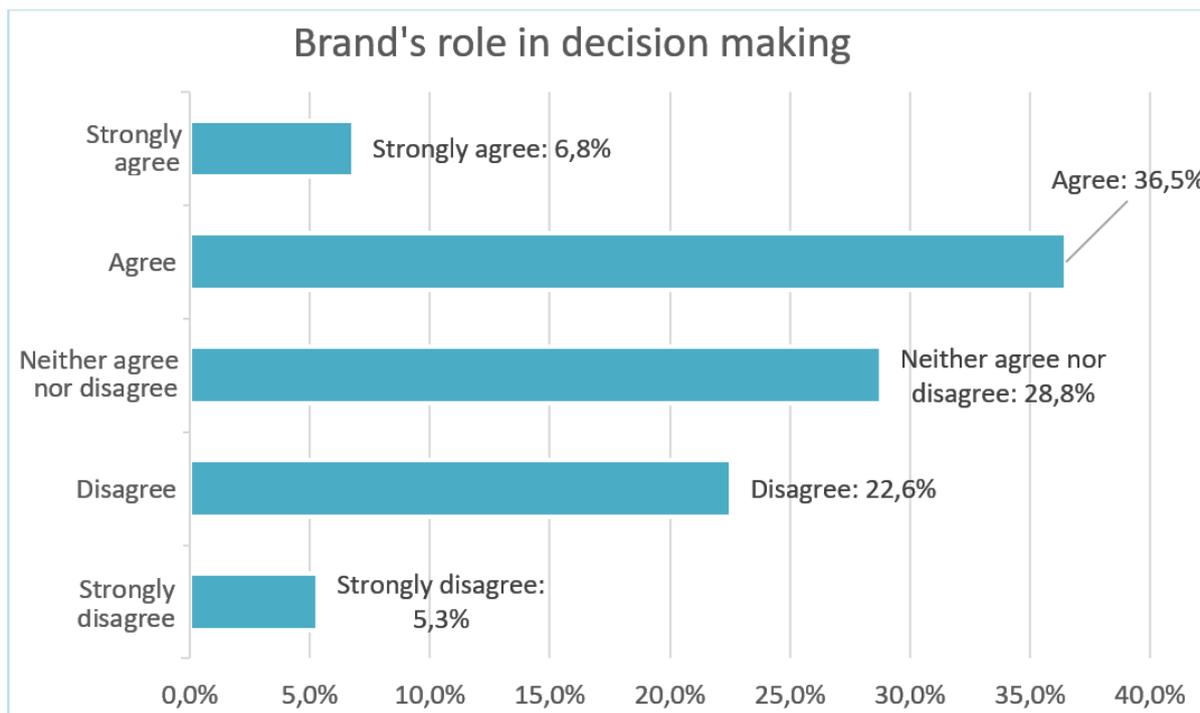
Figure 6.39: Brand's role in decision making (n = 337)

Of the respondents, 36,5% (123 respondents) agreed that when deciding on an event in which to participate, the brand of the event plays a role, 6,8% of the respondents (23 respondents) strongly agreed with the statement, and 28,8% of the respondents (97 respondents) indicated they neither agree nor disagree, while 22,6% disagreed (76 respondents) and 5,3% (18 respondents) strongly disagreed with the statement.

The basic determination of brand equity is that a brand adds additional value for the consumer, as opposed to a non-branded item, and will therefore influence the consumer's decision-making process. It is therefore interesting to note that 28,8% of the respondents indicated that they neither agree nor disagree, and 27,9% responded negatively to the statement, while 43,3% of the respondents did respond positively to the statement that brands do play a role in their decision-making process.

Once again, the issue regarding the sport of triathlon coming before the brand of event can be raised. As mentioned, the reasoning behind this perception falls outside the scope of research for this thesis and it can be recommended that further research be done in this regard.

6.9   PREFERRED BRAND

Respondents were firstly asked if they did have a preferred brand of event when participating in triathlons. Respondents who indicated 'yes' were prompted to indicate their preferred brand. The descriptive statistics for this question is presented graphically in Figure 6.40 below and appears in Table B42, Appendix B.

More than half of the respondents (216 respondents; 64,1%) indicated that they did not have a preferred brand when participating in triathlons, while 121 respondents (35,9%) indicated that they did have a preferred brand.
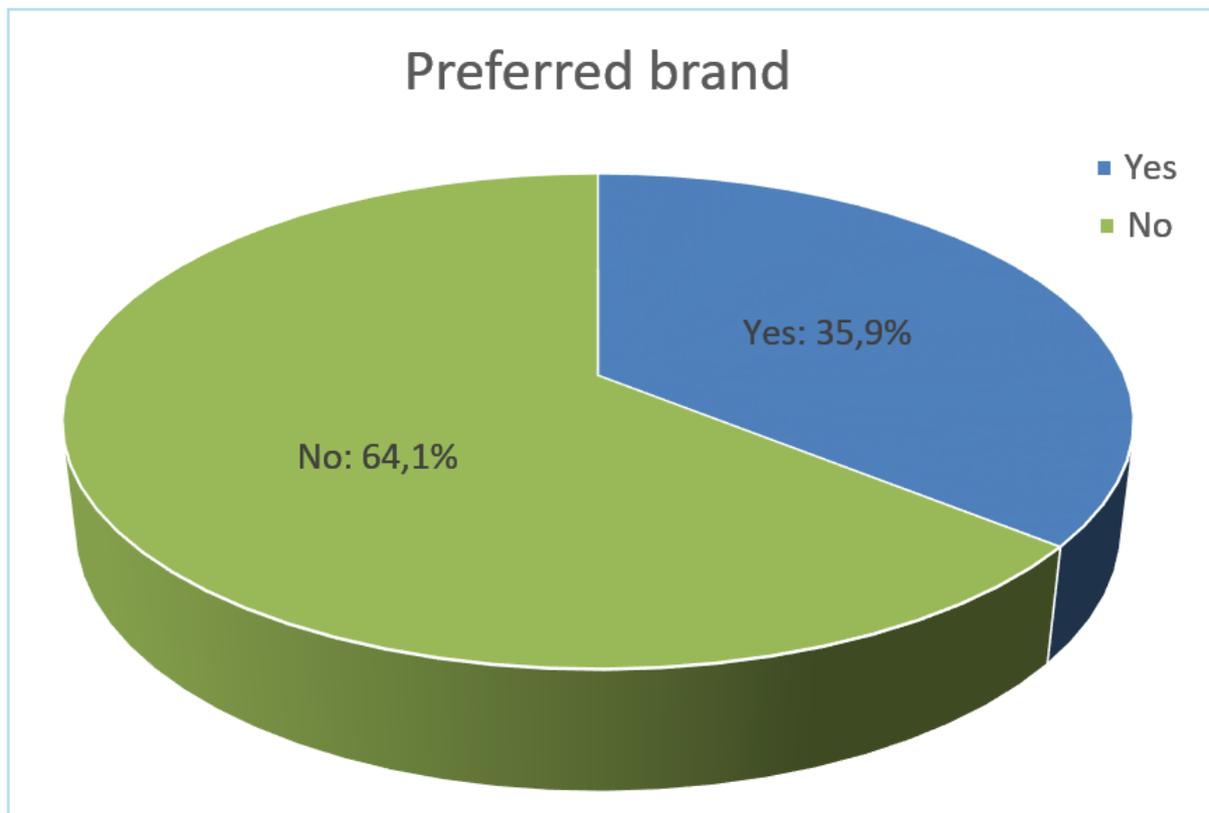
Figure 6.40: Preferred brand (n = 337)

Answers collected from the prompt to provide their preferred brand's name resulted in the following: Ironman (arguably the most preferred brand indicated, as it was mentioned 95 times), Rev3 (mentioned seven times), and Delmo Sport (mentioned

three times[12]). Several other brands were listed by individual respondents. The full list appears in Table B43, Appendix B.

The 121 respondents who indicated that they did have a preferred brand were asked to complete an additional set of three questions regarding their specified preferred brand. The **first question** dealt with their perception of their preferred brand of triathlon event. The item 'perceptions of preferred brand' was measured by looking at five constructs. Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement or disagreement with each statement. The scale used for all five constructs was a five-point Likert-type scale where 1 was strongly disagree, 2 disagree, 3 neither agree nor disagree, 4 agree, and 5 strongly agree.

The descriptive statistics for each one of the five constructs relating to brand perceptions are discussed below.

6.9.1 Loyal to preferred brand

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statement: "I consider myself loyal to my preferred brand".

This construct is presented graphically in Figure 6.41 below and appears in Table B44, Appendix B.

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[12] Both Rev3 and Delmo are American-based triathlon brands who offer a similar triathlon portfolio of event as Ironman. Events range from sprint distances to full ironman distance events.
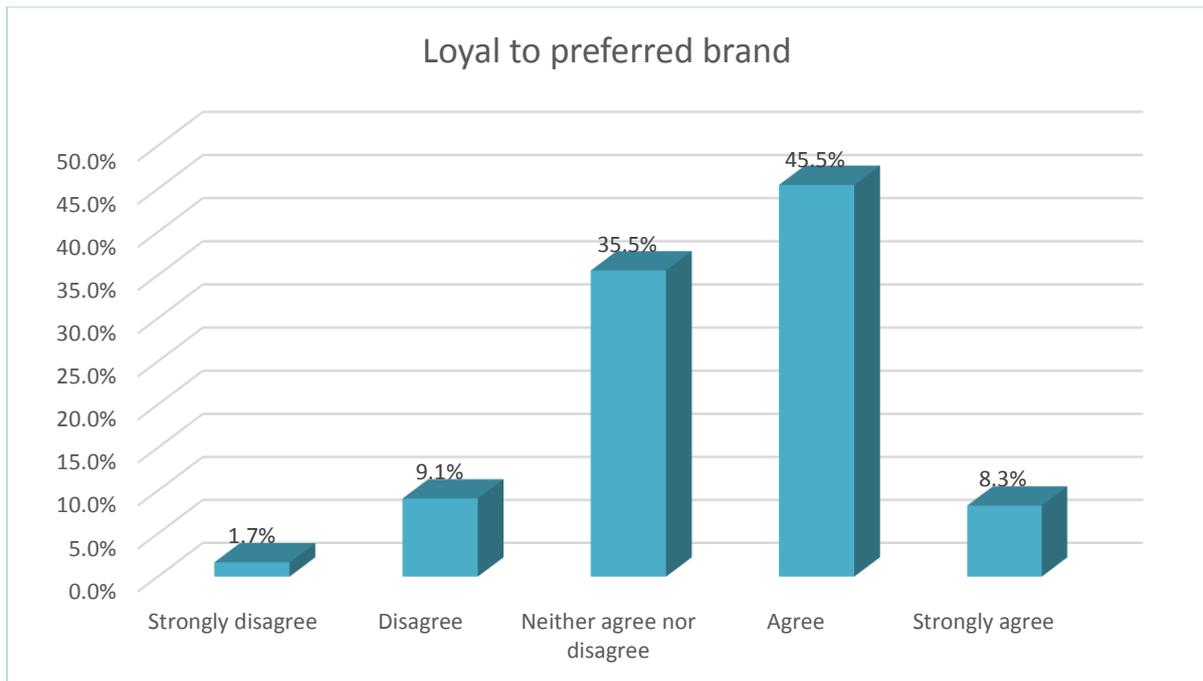
Figure 6.41: Loyal to preferred brand (n = 121)

Of the respondents, 45,5% (55 respondents) agreed with the statement that they considered themselves to be loyal to their preferred brand, 10 respondents (8,3%) strongly agreed with the statement and 43 respondents (35,5%) neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement, while 11 respondents (9,1%) disagreed with the statement, and 2 respondents (1,7%) strongly disagreed with the statement.

Brand loyalty is part of both the traditional brand equity models, as well as an original scale item of the CBBE model, and forms part of the preference dimension. It is thus encouraging to note that 53,8% of respondents responded favourably to the statement that they consider themselves loyal to their preferred brand. What is interesting to note is the high response rate of the neither agree nor disagree category (35,5%). It would appear that despite the fact that they had a preferred brand, they could not say if they were loyal to this preferred brand. Indeed, for 10,8% of the respondents, having a preferred brand did not equate them to being loyal to the brand.

This brings about interesting perceptions and views regarding preference and loyalty. It is recommended that further research be done on this topic as it appears that there is a gap in the understanding of these two concepts.

6.9.2 No participation in another brand's event

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statement: "I will not participate in another brand's events if I am able to participate in my preferred brand's event". This construct is presented graphically in Figure 6.42 below and appears in Table B45, Appendix B.
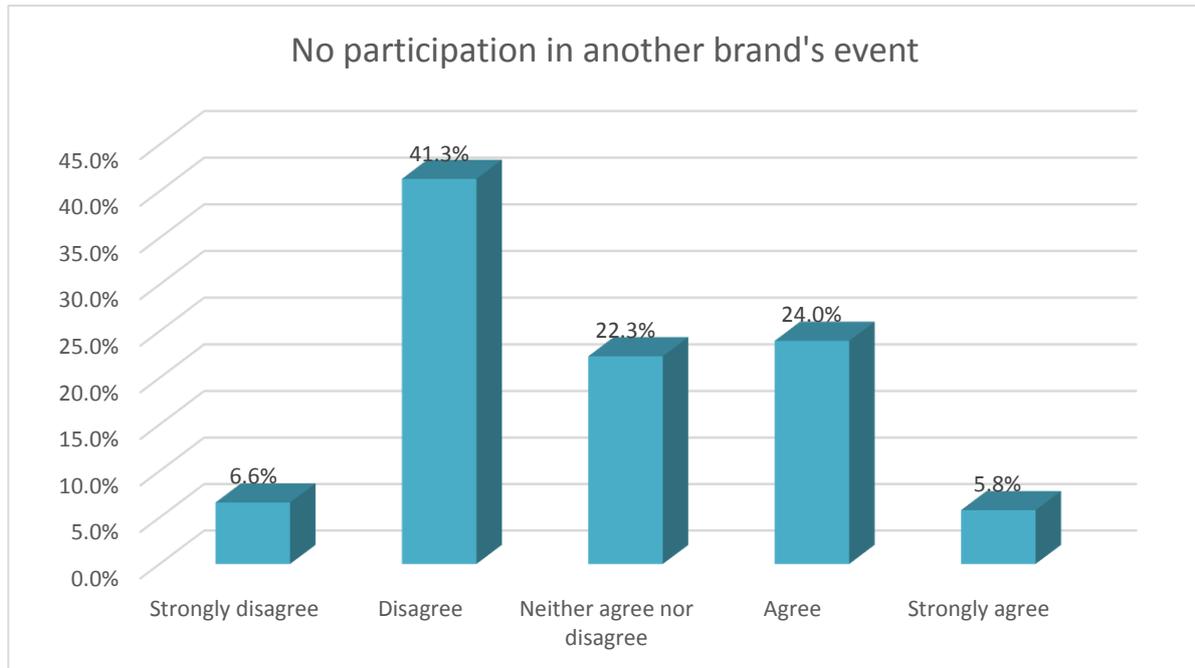
Figure 6.42: No participation in another brand's event (n = 121)

Of the respondents, 41,3% (50 respondents) disagreed with the statement that they will not participate in another brand's events if they are able to participate in their preferred brand's event, 8 respondents (6,6%) strongly disagreed with this statement, and 27 respondents (22,3%) neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement, while 29 respondents (24%) agreed with the statement, and 7 respondents (5,8%) strongly agreed.

This item falls within the preference dimension of brand equity and represents an original scale item taken from Baalbaki (2012). It is interesting to note that 47,9% of respondents responded negatively to the statement that they will not participate in another brand's events, if they are able to participate in their preferred brand's events. This result is counter to the brand loyalty phases which states that consumers will move through three phases of loyalty: brand recognition, brand preference and brand insistence (Erasmus et al., 2016:440).

The respondents have already confirmed that they have a preferred brand which represents the second phase of brand loyalty, namely, brand preference. However, brand insistence, where consumers insist on the specific brand and refuse to accept a substitute, has clearly not yet been reached. It might be likely that they have not yet been participating in triathlon long enough to have reached the brand insistence phase. Or, they might firstly be loyal to the sport of the triathlon and then to their preferred brand. Nonetheless, cross-tabulations done on the data revealed that there were no correlations significant enough to report on (as such, none are included in this thesis).

6.9.3 Committed to participating

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statement: "I am committed to participating in my preferred brand's event". This construct is presented graphically in Figure 6.43 below and appears in Table B46, Appendix B.
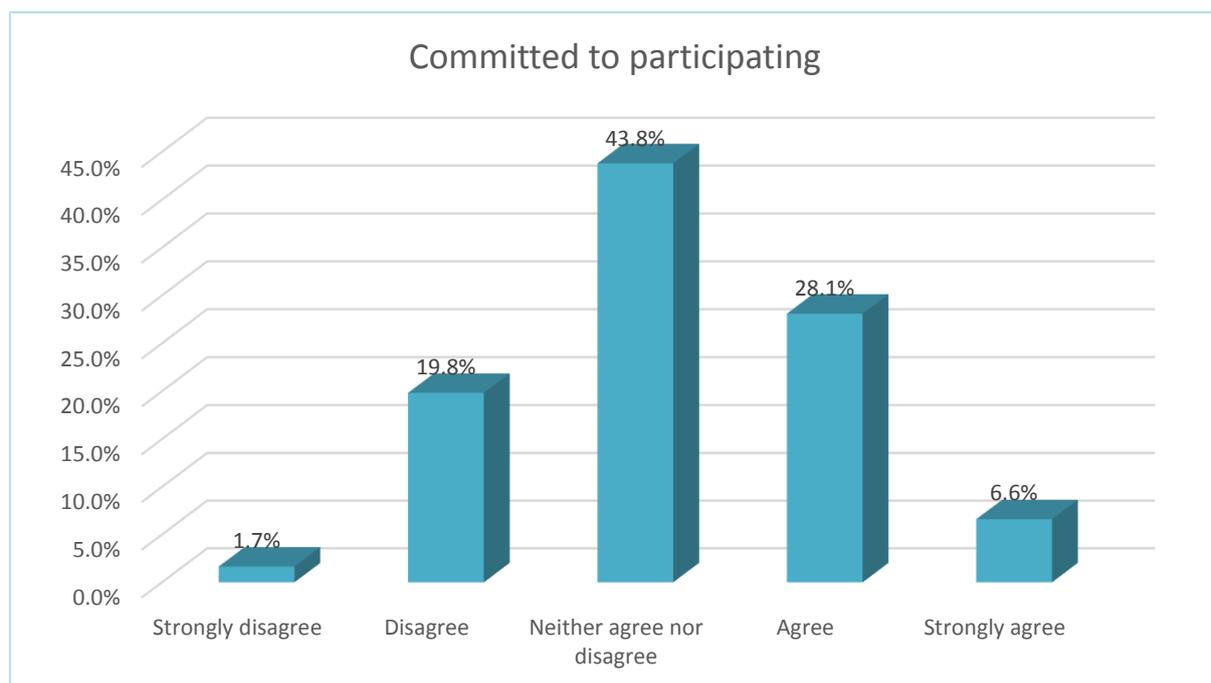
Figure 6.43: Committed to participating (n = 121)

Of the respondents, 43,8% (53 respondents) neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement that they were committed to participating in their preferred brand's event, 34 respondents (28,1%) agreed with the statement, and 8 respondents (6,6%) strongly agreed, while 24 respondents (19,8%) disagreed with the statement, and 2 respondents (1,7%) strongly disagreed.

Commitment to the brand has traditionally been a measure of brand loyalty, a component of brand equity. Part of preference and loyalty is commitment to the brand. A consumer who is loyal to a brand, is also generally considered to be committed to participating in the brand's event. Given the Baalbaki (2012) CBBE model, commitment is also an original scale item contributing to the preference dimension of brand equity.

It is therefore significant to note that 43,8% of respondents chose to neither agree nor disagree with the statement that they are committed to participate in their preferred brand's events. It seems atypical that 53 respondents who had indicated that they do have a preferred brand could not agree or disagree with the statement that they are committed to participate in their preferred brand's events. It is encouraging to note that, despite the high response for this category, more respondents (34,7%) responded positively to the statement than negatively (21,5%).

6.9.4   Participate on a recurring basis

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statement: "I participate in my preferred brand's events on a recurring basis". This construct is presented graphically in Figure 6.44 below and appears in Table B47, Appendix B.
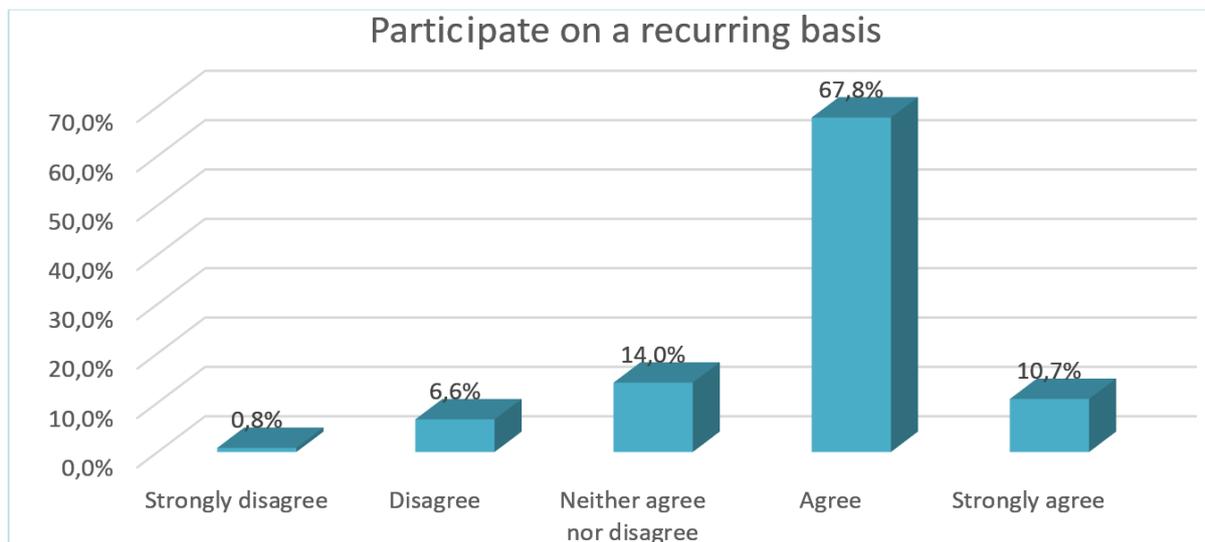
Figure 6.44: Participate on a recurring basis (n = 121)

More than half of the respondents (82 respondents; 67,8%) agreed with the statement that they participated in their preferred brand's event on a recurring basis, 13 respondents (10,7%) strongly agreed with the statement, and 17 respondents (14%)

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neither agreed nor disagreed, while 8 respondents (6,6%) disagreed and 1 respondent (0,8%) strongly disagreed with the statement.

Brand loyalty results in consumers repurchasing the product or brand as defined by Keller (1993) and Aaker (1991) (refer to Chapter 3, Sections 3.5.1 and 3.5.2). By participating in the brand's event on a recurring basis, this item can be considered to be part of the brand loyalty component which forms part of the preference dimension of brand equity. It is encouraging to note that 78,5% of respondents responded favourably to the statement that they participate in their preferred brand's event on a recurring basis.

Once again, it is perplexing that, although the respondents exhibit the behaviour of a brand loyal consumer, when prompted for their perception on their loyalty, they do not indicate that they are indeed loyal. It may be that the respondents do not actually think they are brand loyal, or they may not want to admit to that fact for whichever reason, but that they could very well be considered to be loyal.

6.9.5   Proud to be associated with brand

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statement: "I am proud to be associated with my preferred brand". This construct is presented graphically in Figure 6.45 below and appears in Table B48, Appendix B.
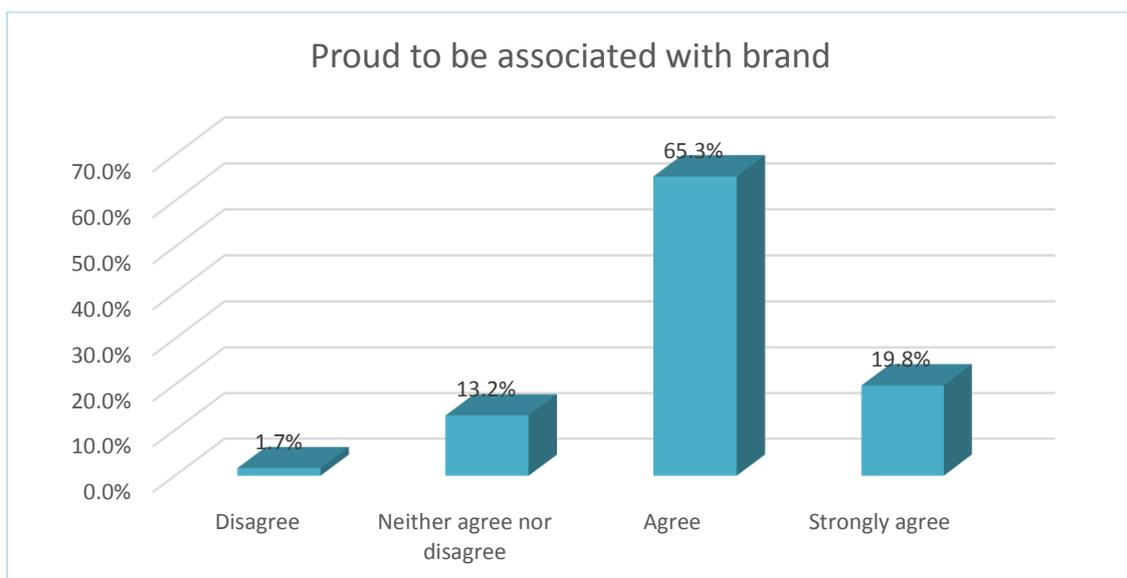
Figure 6.45: Proud to be associated with brand (n = 121)

More than half of the respondents (79 respondents; 65,3%) agreed with the statement that they were proud to be associated with their preferred brand, 24 respondents

(19,8%) strongly agreed with this statement, and 16 respondents (13,2%) neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement, while 2 respondents (1,7%) disagreed with the statement. There were no respondents who strongly disagreed.

This item can be considered to be part of the brand resonance and reflects the nature of the relationship the consumer has with the brand (Keller, 2009). In addition, according to Tuominen's (1999:81) brand loyalty pyramid (refer to Chapter 3, Section 3.2), the highest level of brand loyalty is when a consumer feels pride in being a brand user.

Given this, it can then be assumed that, as also indicated above, the respondents are indeed exhibiting the behaviour of brand-loyal consumers, although they are not perceiving themselves to be brand loyal.

The 121 respondents who indicated that they did have a preferred brand were asked to complete an additional set of three questions regarding their specified preferred brand. The **second question** asked the qualifying respondents to indicate if they were considering participating in a different brand's event within the next year. A multiple-choice, single-response question was used. Response options included the following: definitely not, unlikely, not right now, perhaps and definitely. The response to this question is presented graphically in Figure 6.46 below and appears in Table B49, Appendix B.
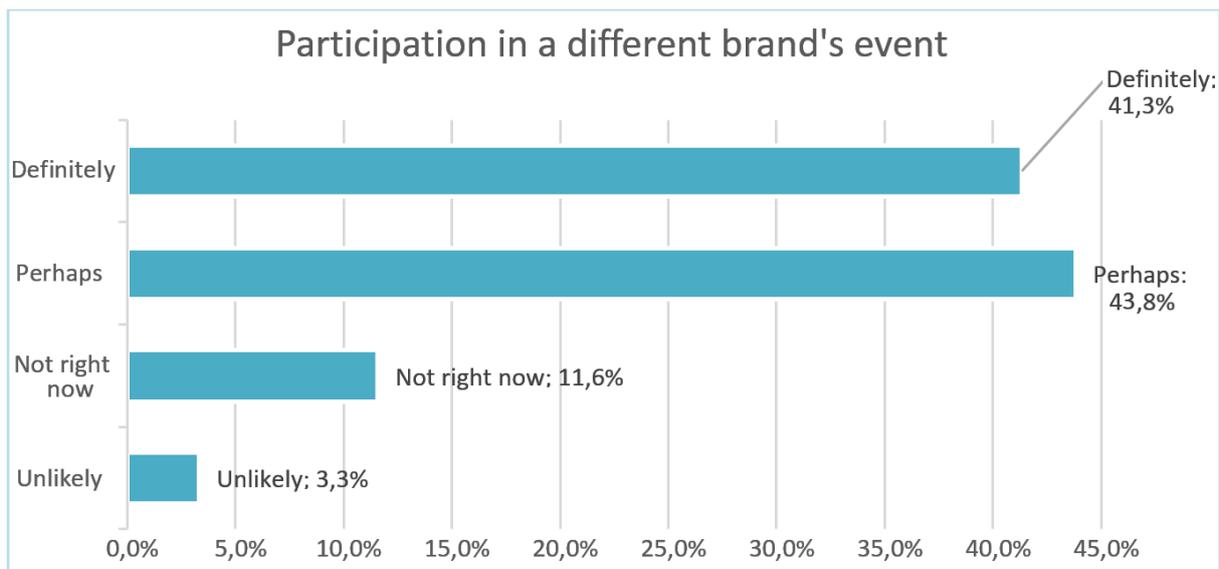
Figure 6.46: Participation in a different brand's event

Of the respondents, 43,8% (53 respondents) indicated that they would perhaps consider participating in another brand's event within the next year, 41,3% of respondents (50 respondents) indicated that they would definitely consider participating in a different brand's event, and 11,6% of respondents (14 respondents) indicated that they would not consider participating in another brand's event right now. However, 3,3% of respondents (4 respondents) indicated that it is unlikely that they will participate in a different brand's event. No respondents indicated that they would definitely not consider participating in another brand's event.

This question was included as another measure to determine brand loyalty which forms part of the preference dimension of brand equity. Once again it would appear that most respondents, although indicating that they did have a preferred brand, were not particularly brand loyal.

It can again be postulated that perhaps for participative sport consumers brand loyalty can be ascribed to the sport itself and not the individual event brands. This will, however, require additional research which falls outside the scope of this thesis.

The 121 respondents who indicated that they did have a preferred brand were asked to complete an additional set of three questions regarding their specified preferred brand. The **third question** asked respondents to indicate if there was any particular reason why they would choose one brand over another. Respondents were given a dichotomous question with the options 'yes' and 'no'.

The response to this question is presented graphically in Figure 6.47 below and appears in Table B50, Appendix B.

A significant number of respondents (92 respondents; 76%) indicated that was a particular reason why they would consider one brand over another when considering which brand's event to enter. However, 24% of the respondents (29 respondents) indicated there was no such reason.
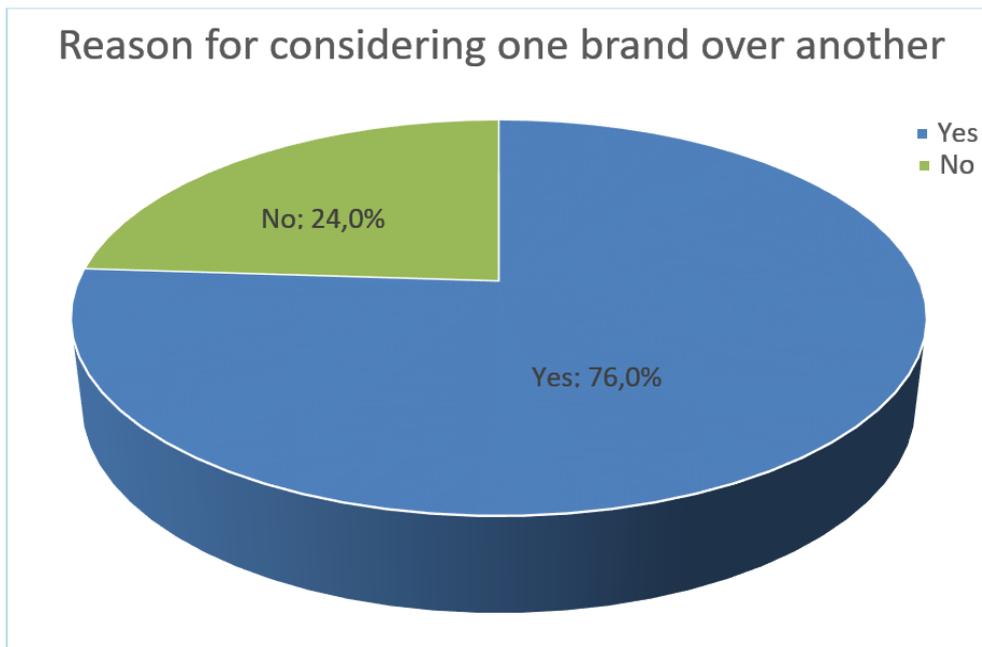
Figure 6.47: Is there a reason for considering one brand over another (n = 121)

The 92 respondents who indicated that there was a particular reason why they would consider one brand over another were prompted to give the reason why they would consider one brand above another. A variety of answers were recorded in this regard and have been tabulated in Table B52, Appendix B.

It is interesting to note that many of these reasons given for choosing one brand over another, were included as items which contributed to the final CBCPBE model (as discussed in Chapter 7) proposed by this study.

6.10 PARTICIPATE IN A DIFFERENT DISTANCE EVENT

All of the respondents were asked to indicate if they were considering participating in a different distance event within the next year. A multiple-choice, single-response question was used. Response options included the following: definitely not, unlikely, not right now, perhaps and definitely.

The response to this question is presented graphically in Figure 6.48 and appears in Table B51, Appendix B.
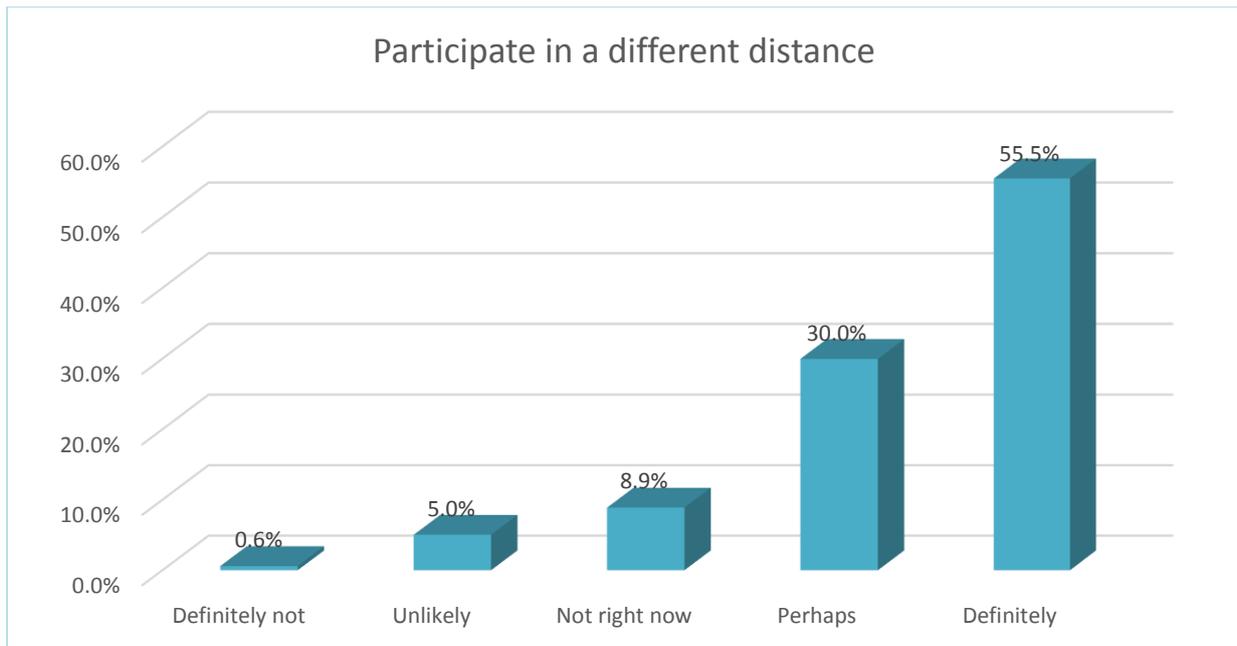
Figure 6.48: Participate in a different distance event (n = 337)

More than half of the respondents (187 respondents; 55,5%) indicated that they would definitely consider participating in a different distance event within the next year, 101 respondents (30%) indicated that they would perhaps consider participating, and 30 respondents (8,9%) indicated that they are not considering it right now, while 17 respondents (5%) indicated that it would be unlikely that they would consider it, and 2 respondents (0,6%) indicated that they would definitely not consider participating in a different distance event.

Triathlon event brands frequently offer consumers a variety of event categories. The primary classification of these events is the distances they cover. The distances covered by each event are pre-determined and, as such, are standard across the globe (refer to Chapter 1, Section 1.4). A triathlete will generally start with a shorter distance event and move up the scale to longer distances, although this is not always the case.

This question was thus included to probe if there is any transfer between the event offerings. It is encouraging to note that 55,5% of respondents are definitely considering a different distance within the next year, while 30% of the respondents indicated that they would perhaps consider it.

It would thus appear that there is some transfer between event distances, possibly indicating that there is commitment and loyalty to the sport.

6.11 CONCLUSION

Chapter 6 discussed the descriptive data analysis conducted for the purposes of the research study. The first section of the chapter provided a demographic composition of the respondents and an attempt was made to develop a profile of the average female participative sport consumer. This was followed by an account of the findings of the respondents' perceptions of their current racing experience, perceptions they hold of branded events, perceptions of important brand elements when selecting events, the brand's role in their decision making process, and their perceptions regarding preferred brands.

In this section important conclusions were drawn that address the research aim, objectives and overall purpose as set out in Chapter 1 of this research study.

In the next chapter, Chapter 7, an attempt will be made to test the model proposed in Chapter 4 of this thesis.

CHAPTER 7:
MODEL FIT ANALYSIS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

The data analysis for this study was divided into two chapters: the previous chapter, Chapter 6 dealt with the descriptive findings of the study, whereas this chapter, Chapter 7, will present the model fit analysis.

In this chapter, the proposed consumer-based, consumer-perceived brand equity model (CBCPBE) for recurring, participative (RCPA) sport events was tested and modified by considering the CFA and the goodness of fit of the model to the data. In addition, the reliability and validity values are also be presented. Consequently, a specific model for CBCPBE, that best fits the data collected for this study, is developed and discussed.

A quantitative research approach was followed during the exploration of female triathletes' racing experiences at branded and non-branded events in an attempt to develop a CBCPBE model for RCPA sport events. This process has been discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

The preliminary or baseline model is depicted in Figure 7.1 (to follow after Table 7.1). The inferential statistics discussed in this chapter aim to address the primary and secondary research objectives of this study as listed in Table 7.1 below.

Table 7.1: Primary and secondary research objectives

Primary research objective
To develop a model which may be used to measure the CBCPBE of RCPA sport events.
Secondary research objectives
• To investigate the items which contribute to the dimension of 'quality' for RCPA sports events. • To determine which items contribute to the brand equity component 'preference' for these events.

- To investigate the effect of sustainability on the brand equity of RCPA sport events.

- To establish the items which contribute to the 'social influence' dimension of brand equity.

- To determine if 'leadership' contributes to the brand equity of RCPA sport events.

- To compile a general consumer profile for female triathletes

The inferential statistics, as discussed in this chapter, are predominantly used to determine the model fit of the items listed in Figure 7.1 (on the next page). In this regard, the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) has been used to assess the reliability and validity of the various scale measures and to measure the hypothesised measurement model.

The chapter will first introduce the concept and model fit indices used for CFA, before presenting the CFA findings for the baseline model. The findings for the revised model will be presented before concluding the chapter.
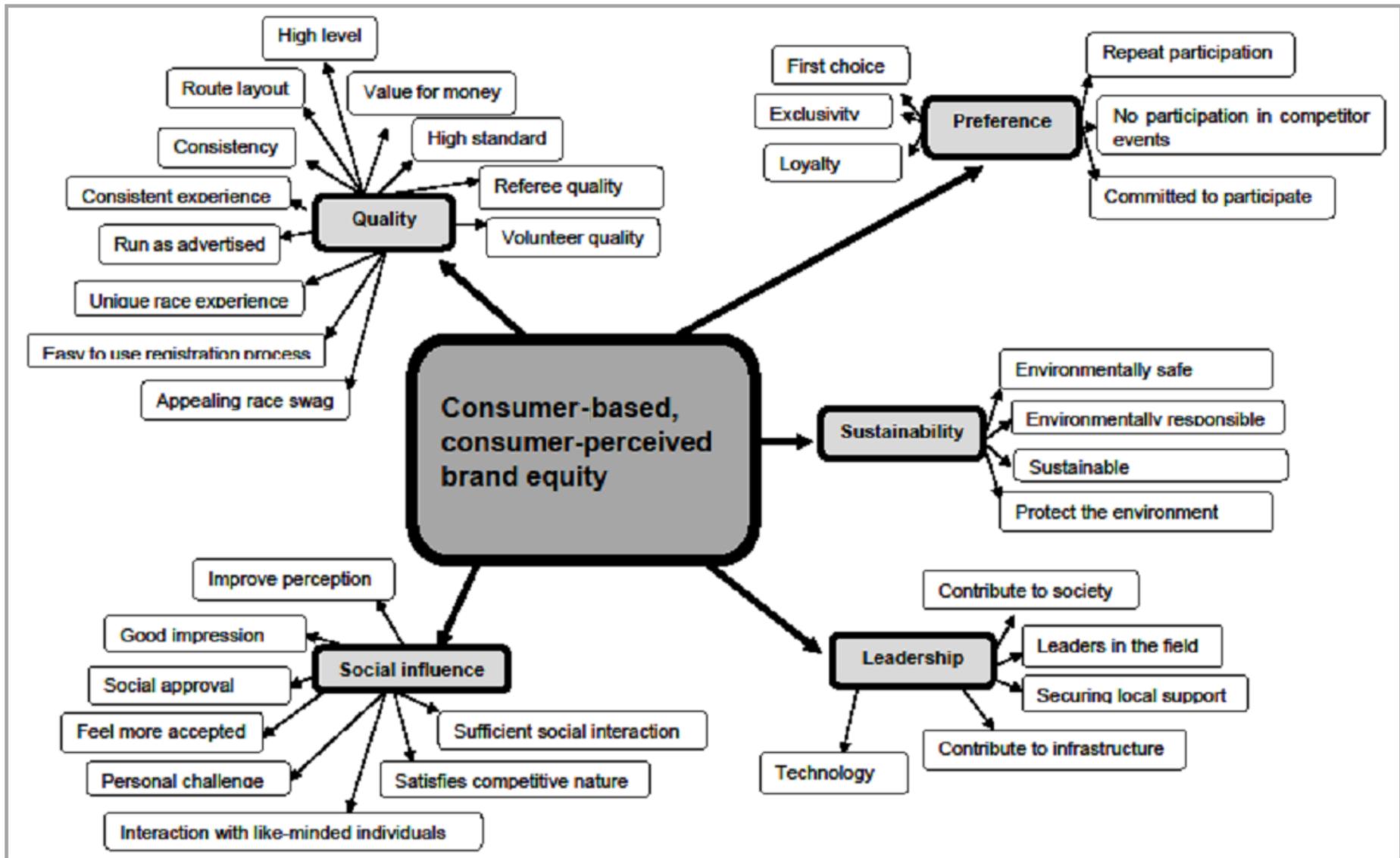
Figure 7.1: Proposed model for consumer-based, consumer-perceived brand equity for RCPA sport events

7.2   CONFIRMATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS

In order to determine if the data collected fitted the proposed CBCPBE model developed in Chapter 4, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was used.

The CFA is a type of structural equation modelling used specifically with the measurement of models (Lewis, 2017:239). This analysis is used to infer the relationship between the measures or indicators observed during data collection and the latent variables or factors (Brown & Moore, 2012:2). The CFA is used to test how well the measured variables represent the number of constructs, as the researcher specifies the number of factors required in the data, and which variable is related to which latent variable or variables (Statistics Solutions, 2013).

Thus, the researcher uses the knowledge obtained from theory and/or empirical research to postulate the relationship pattern and then tests the hypothesis statistically (Suhr, 2006:1).

Typically, a set process is followed when conducting CFA. Such a set process was followed by this study and is depicted in Figure 7.2 below.
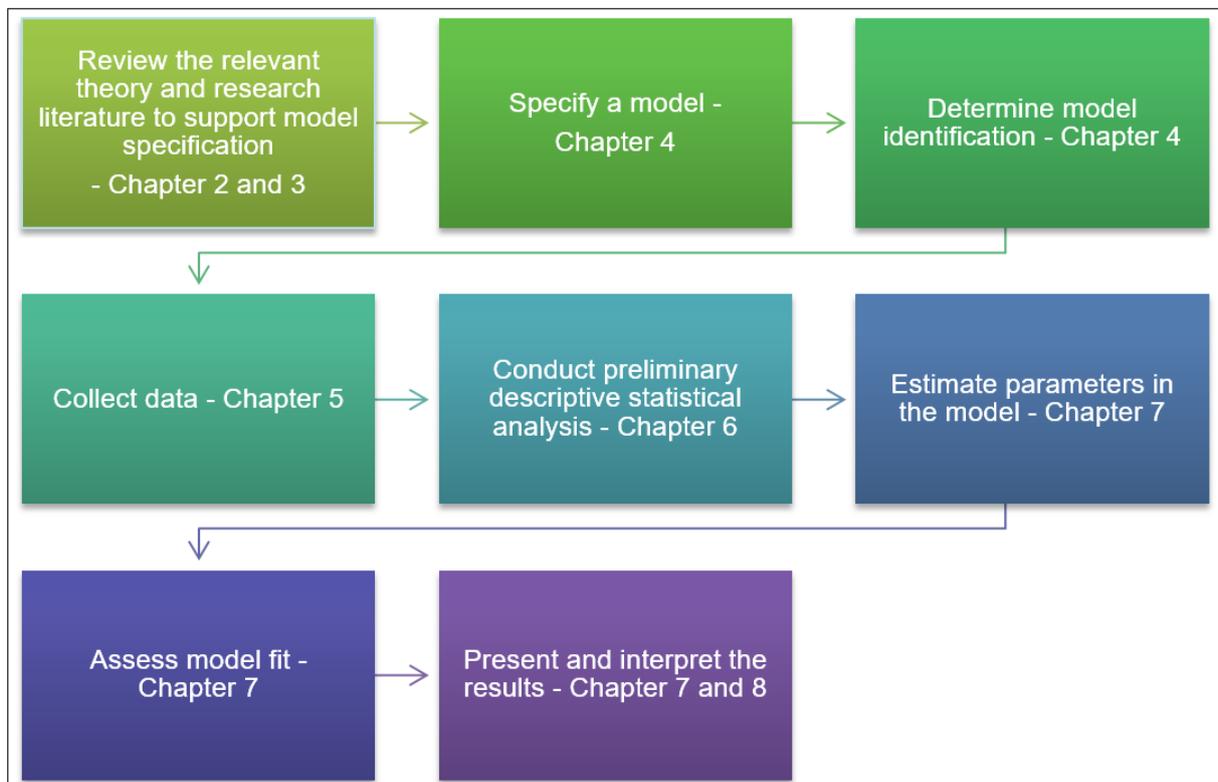
Figure 7.2: The suggested approach to CFA

Source: Adapted from Suhr (2006:1)

The goal of measuring latent variables is to establish the number and nature of factors which will account for the variation and covariation amongst a set of indicators (Brown & Moore, 2012:2). By using the CFA, a more ungenerous understanding of the covariation among a set of indicators can be achieved, as the number of factors is less than the number of measured variables (Brown & Moore, 2012:2). It is therefore likely to test if there is consistency with the measures of a construct and the proposed measurement of that construct. In other words, the researcher can determine if the construct is measuring what the researcher set out to measure.

The CFA is a tool that is used to either confirm or reject the proposed measurement theory (Statistics Solutions, 2013). However, using the CFA can be impacted by several factors: the research hypothesis being tested, the requirement of a sufficient sample size, the measurement instrument used, multivariate normality, parameter identification, outliers, missing data, and the interpretation of model fit indices (Suhr, 2006:1).

Another statistical approach to measuring model fit is known as exploratory factor analysis (EFA) where the aim is to explore the relationship among the variables, and it does not have a pre-determined number of factors. The researcher might have some idea about what the results will indicate, but there is some sense of uncertainty as to the specific hypothesis to be tested (Schumacker & Lomax, 2010:164). Given that, for the purposes of this study, a previously established model was being tested, EFA was not used.

The CFA approach was chosen in this study, as the factor analysis was done with a well-founded idea of the number of factors to be encountered and about which variables would most likely load onto each other, as the proposed CBCPBE model has been previously validated. The purpose here was to determine if the variables in this study loaded onto the factors in the same way as they did in the original research conducted by Baalbaki (2012).

As the researcher has clear expectations about what the results will be, the CFA's criteria for variable inclusion are more stringent than for an EFA. The rule of thumb for CFA factor loading is that any variable with a factor load of less than 0.7 should not be included (Rahn, n.d.; Statistics Solutions, 2013; Kim, Ku, Kim, Park & Park, 2016:4).

In addition, CFA produces important information about the psychometric properties of the instrument (that is, the reliability and validity of the instrument). Several CHI-SQUARE tests may be used for the CFA test; these include CMIN (normed Chi-Squared/df), GFI (Goodness-of-fit), CFI (Comparative Fir Index) and RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation). In order to estimate the convergent and discriminatory validity of the tests more accurately, the size of the loading of factors presenting the constructs, for which CFA allows, must be tested.

In order for the data to validate the relationships amongst variables, the model should present a reasonable fit (Ockey & Choi, 2015:307). Model fit should then adhere to certain rules as to what constitutes an acceptable fit. A number of factors may be present which can influence model fit. These include sample size, model complexity, estimation method, the amount and type of misspecification, and the type and normality of the data. As such, several indices are used to determine model fit.

The indices used to determine this study's model fit will now be discussed in more detail.

7.2.1 Chi-square goodness of fit test (x^2)

The Chi-square test is commonly used for testing relationships between categorical variables. The null hypothesis in the test reads that there exists no relationship between the categorical variables in the population, as they are independent.

The chi-square measures how close the observed values are to the expected values under the fitted model. This is valuable in determining the fit of a statistical model in relation to observed data, in the sense of how well the model actually reflects the data. The test is intended to test how likely it is that an observed distribution is to chance. The goodness of fit is determined by measuring how well the observed distribution of data fits with the distribution that is expected if the variables are independent.

A Chi-square test is designed to analyse categorical data and will not work with parametric or continuous data. Data must therefore be counted and divided into categories.

A model that is considered to have a good fit will have a chi-square value of 0.05 or more. If the value is less than 0.05 it can be concluded that there is no relationship

between the variables and therefore no goodness of fit (Parry, n.d.; Schumacker & Lomax, 2010:76).

7.2.2 Normal chi-square (CMIN/DF)

The normal chi-square test measures goodness of fit in order to provide additional support for the chi-square test. As the chi-square test is sensitive to sample size, it is important to incorporate an additional goodness of fit test to assure that the model is correct.

The normal chi-square is the minimum discrepancy divided by its degree of freedom (Moss, 2016). Researchers differ in the threshold values which will determine if a model can be accepted or should be discarded, but general consensus indicates that values between 1 and 3 deem a satisfactory model (Moss, 2016). Some researchers indicated that values as high as 5 can still be accepted where others feel that the ratio should be close to 1 for correct models.

Given the wide range of acceptable threshold values, for this study it is accepted that any value between 1 and 3 will be deemed appropriate.

7.2.3 Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)

This measure is based on the population discrepancy, rather than on the sample the data was obtained from, and is a measure of model adequacy (Kenny, 2015). The population discrepancy function is the value of the discrepancy function obtained by fitting a model to the population moments rather than the sample moments (Steiger & Lind, 1980).

It is generally accepted that a value of 0.05 or less is indicative of a close fit of the model in relation to the degrees of freedom (Arbuckle, 2005). However, statistically speaking, this figure cannot be regarded as infallible or correct (Moss, 2016), but it is more reasonable than the requirement of an exact fit, which would require the RMSEA to be 0.

As such, a reasonable error of approximation could still be achieved with a value of 0.08 or less (Parry, n.d; Moss, 2016), and any model with a RMSEA greater than 0.1 should be rejected (Browne & Cudeck, 1993).

7.2.4 *p* of Close Fit (PCLOSE)

The PCLOSE test is a one-sided test of the null hypothesis that the RMSEA equals 0.05 which indicates a close-fitting model (Kenny, 2015).

Given a p-value of 0.05, the model still contains a specification error, but not by much. The alternative hypothesis is then that the RMSEA is greater than 0.05, so if the PCLOSE value is greater than 0.05 then it can be concluded that the fit of the model is 'close'.

If the p is less than 0.05 the model's fit is worse than close fitting and the RMSEA is greater than 0.05. Sample size is, however, a critical factor, as is the model df[13] (the lower the df the less significant this test is).

7.2.5 The Tucker Lewis coefficient (TLI) and the Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI)

The Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) is an incremental fit index and is used as a comparison to a baseline model. It is also known as the NNFI which was developed as the Normed Fit Index and is negatively affected by sample size, where the NNFI is not affected significantly from sample size (Kenny, 2015; Moss, 2016).

The typical range for TLI lies between 0 and 1, and the bigger the TLI value, the better fit for the model (Parry, n.d.; Schumacker & Lomax, 2010:76).

7.2.6 The Comparative Fit Index (CFI)

The comparative Fit Index (CFI) is a revised form of the NFI and compares the proposed model with an alternative model, such as the null or independence model (Kenny, 2015). The CFI is not too sensitive to sample size (Parry, n.d). Also known as the Bentler Comparative Fit Index, CFI compares the fit of a target model to that of an independent model, in other words, a model in which the variables are assumed to be uncorrelated. Fit, in this context, then refers to the difference between the observed and predicted covariance matrices, as represented by the chi-square index. The CFI represents the ratio between the discrepancy of the target model to the discrepancy

---

[13] The df of a model refers to the degrees of freedom of a model. This is the numbers of known parameters minus the number of free parameters; used in many measures of fit. The degrees of freedom can be viewed as the number of independent over-identifying restrictions.

of the independent model. In simple terms, the CFI indicates the extent to which the target model is better than the independent model.

CFI values close to 1 indicate a good fit; values smaller than 0.9 are generally indicative of a bad fit.

7.2.7 Goodness-of-Fit Index and Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index

The Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI) represents the proportion of variance which can be accounted for by the estimated population covariance. The Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit (AGFI) favours parsimony and takes into account the degrees of freedom available for testing the model (Parry, n.d.).

THe GFI should always be less than, or equal to 1. The closer to 1, the better the fit and 1 indicates a perfect fit (Schumacker & Lomax, 2010:76). The same applies for AGFI.

A summary of the various fit indices, as discussed above, is presented in Table 7.2 below:

Table 7.2: Model fit thresholds

Measure	Name	Description	Threshold valued
x^2	Model Chi-square	Assesses overall fit and the discrepancy between the sample and fitted covariance matrices.	>0.05
CMIN/Df	Normal chi-square/normed chi-square	Minimum discrepancy divided by its degree of freedom.	Between 1 and 3 (although measures of as high as 5 might still be acceptable)
(A)GFI	(Adjusted) Goodness of Fit index.	A measure of fit between the hypothesised model and the observed covariance matrix. Measure the percentage of variances which are explained by the specified model structure. The adjusted index corrects GFI, which is affected by a number of indicators of each latent variable.	GFI > 0.90 AGFI > 0.80 (where a value close to 1 indicates a perfect fit)
CFI	Comparative Fit Index	Compares the fit of the target model to the fit of an independent (or null) model.	>0.90 (where 1 indicates a very good fit)
RMSEA	Root Mean Square Error of Approximation	A parsimony-adjusted index. Values close to 0 represent a good fit.	<0.05 (indicates a close fit). A value of 0.0 indicates the exact fit of the model. A value of 0.08 or less indicates a reasonable error of approximation. Should not be greater than 1.
PCLOSE	*p* of Close Fit	Test of a close fit. Computed in conjunction with RMSEA.	>0,05

(N)NFI TLI	(Non) Normed fit Index Tucker Lewis Index	An NFI of 0.9 indicates that the model of interest improves the fit by 95% relative to the null model. Sometimes called the Tucker Lewis Index.	≥ 0.95 ≥ 0.90 (where a value close to 1 indicates a very good fit)
(S)RMR	(Standardised) Root Mean Square Residual	The square-root of the difference between the residuals of the sample covariance matrix and the hypothesised model.	RMR<0.08 (some sources state that it should ideally be <0.05) SRMR <0.08

Sources: (Hair *et al.* (2010); Kline (2011); Shahin & Malekmohammadi, (2013); Parry, n.d.; Schumacker & Lomax, 2010:76)

It has been suggested that, at a minimum, the following indices should be reported on when performing a CFA (Kline, 2005; Parry, n.d.):

- The model chi-square
- RMSEA
- CFI
- SRMR

According to Hair *et al.* (2010) and Kline (2011), the following model fit indices should be included in addition to the above:

- CMIN/DF
- GFI
- AGFI
- TLI
- PCLOSE

Given the above explanation of CFA and the indices to report on, the next section will report on the CFA and relevant indices for the original CBCPBE, as proposed in Chapter 4 and depicted in Figure 7.1 at the beginning of this chapter.

7.3   REPORTING ON THE CFA FOR THE ORIGINAL MODEL

As indicated in the approach depicted above, CFA has been used in this study to validate and confirm the manner in which the researcher has chosen to measure the latent variables, as proposed in the CBCPBE model presented in Chapter 3 (Garson, 2015:24). In addition, the CFA was used to establish convergent and divergent validity of the proposed model, with the assumption that, should the CFA uphold the measurement model, the structural model can be tested (Garson, 2015:24).

During the literature review, a proposed model for CBCPBE was developed (see Figure 7.1 earlier in this chapter). This proposed model was tested during the first stage of CFA. The first default model for CBCPBE (as presented for RCPA sport events) is presented in Figure 7.3 below. This is followed by the model fit statistics as well as and assessment of the validity and reliability (refer to Table 7.4 and Table 7.5, respectively).
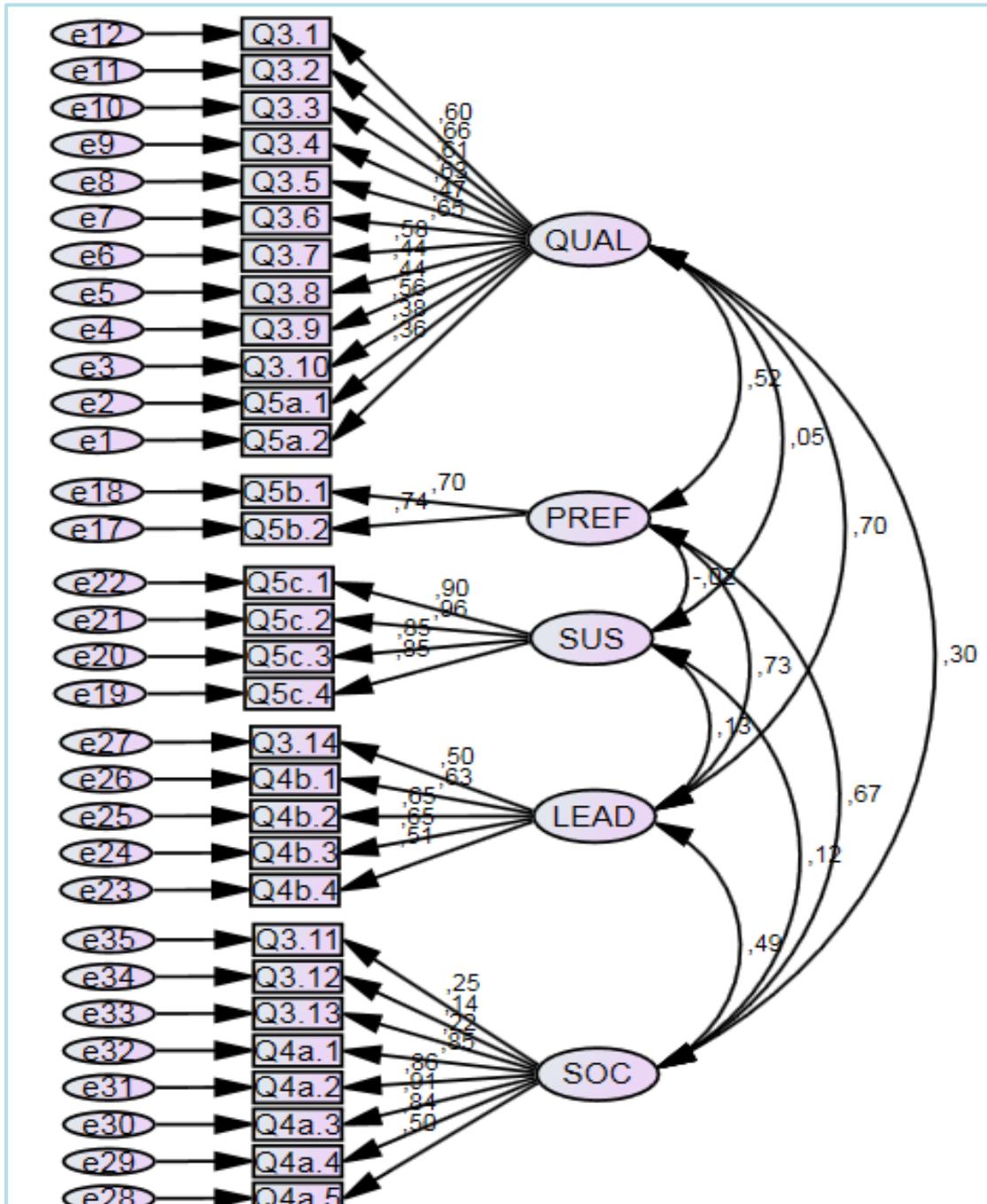
Figure 7.3: Baseline model for CBCPBE model

As indicated in the figure above, the original model then tested the data fit between the following elements:

- QUAL (refers to the brand equity element of quality) consists of:

  o   Consistent race experience (e12)

  o   Run as advertised (e11)

  o   High safety standards (e10)

- o Easy to use registration process (e9)

- o Value for money (e8)

- o Unique race experience (e7)

- o Appealing race swag (e6)

- o Referees (e5)

- o Volunteers (e4)

- o Route layout (e3)

- o Consistent quality (e2)

- o High quality (e1)

- PREF (refers to the brand equity element of preference) consists of:

  - o First choice (e18)

  - o Exclusivity (e17)

- SUS (refers to the brand equity element of sustainability) consists of:

  - o Environmentally safe (e22)

  - o Environmentally responsible (e21)

  - o Sustainable (e20)

  - o Protecting the environment (e19)

- LEAD (refers to the brand equity element of leadership) consists of:

  - o Technology (e27)

  - o Leaders in their field (e26)

  - o Contribute to society (e25)

  - o Local support (e24)

  - o Contribution to infrastructure (e23)

- SOC (refers to the brand equity element of social influence) consists of:

  - o Interaction with like-minded individuals (e35)

  - o Satisfy competitive nature (e34)

  - o Social interaction on the course (e33)

  - o Improve others' perception of self (e32)

- o   Make a good impression (e31)

- o   Gain social approval (e30)

- o   Feel more accepted (e29)

- o   Provide personal challenge (e28)

Not only was the fit measured between the broad elements of brand equity, but also the fit between the individual scale items that made up each brand element. This was done to ensure that the model measured what it set out to measure.

The **model fit statistics** of the original CBCPBE model is given in Table 7.3 on the next page.

As is evident from Table 7.3, the original model proposed during the literature discussion in Chapter 4, to measure the consumer-based, consumer-perceived brand equity of RCPA sport events, has a poor fit against the data.

Nearly all of the values (as reported in Table 7.3) fall outside the prescribed threshold sets (also refer to Table 7.2).

Table 7.3: Model fit for original CBCPBE model

	P	CMIN/DF	GFI	AGFI	TLI	CFI	RMSEA	PCLOSE	SRMR
Default model	0.00	4.02	0.74	0.70	0.73	0.75	0.10	0.00	0.11
Threshold values	>0.05	<3	>0.90	>0.80	>0.90	>0.90	<0.05	>0.05	<0.08
Accepted (A)/ Not accepted (NA)	A	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	A	NA

Given the values obtained above, the validity and reliability of the model were evaluated, as shown in Table 7.4 below.

Table 7.4: Reliability and validity for baseline CBCPBE model

	CR	AVE	MSV	MaxR (H)	Leadership	Quality	Preference	Sustainability	Social
Leadership	0.727	0.351	0.534	0.738	**0.592**				
Quality	0.829	0.295	0.491	0.892	0.701	**0.543**			
Preference	0.682	0.518	0.534	0.912	0.731	0.521	**0.720**		
Sustainability	0.939	0.795	0.016	0.970	0.125	0.052	-0.022	**0.891**	
Social	0.818	0.421	0.452	0.978	0.492	0.302	0.672	0.123	**0.649**

Table 7.4 above reports on the validity and reliability statistics generated for the baseline model. The reliability of the model is reported by looking at the CR value generated; that is Composite Reliability which indicates the reliability and internal consistency of a latent variable (Awang, 2012:55). For the reliability to be acceptable this value needs to be at least 0.70 or higher (Hair *et al.*, 2010), although some sources indicate a value of higher than 0.60 is indicative of composite reliability for a construct (Awang, 2012:55). The baseline model exhibits overall reliability with only the Preference dimension having a CR value of less than the recommended 0.70.

When looking at the convergent validity (AVE), three dimensions are significantly lower than the prescribed threshold of 0.5 (Hair *et al.*, 2010). These dimensions are leadership, quality and social. Further, it is also evident that there are several concerns regarding the discriminant validity of the model. The AVE value is smaller than the MSV value for all of the dimensions, except for Sustainability. Given these values, it is evident that the baseline model does not possess internal reliability and validity.

To improve model fit, as well as reliability and validity, some modifications were made and a revised model was tested. The revised model is discussed in the following section.

7.4   REPORTING ON THE CFA FOR THE REVISED MODEL

After making modifications to the original model by removing factors with low loads, the CFA test was done again to determine model fit and the reliability and validity of the new, revised model. The new model fit is presented in Figure 7.4 on the next page.
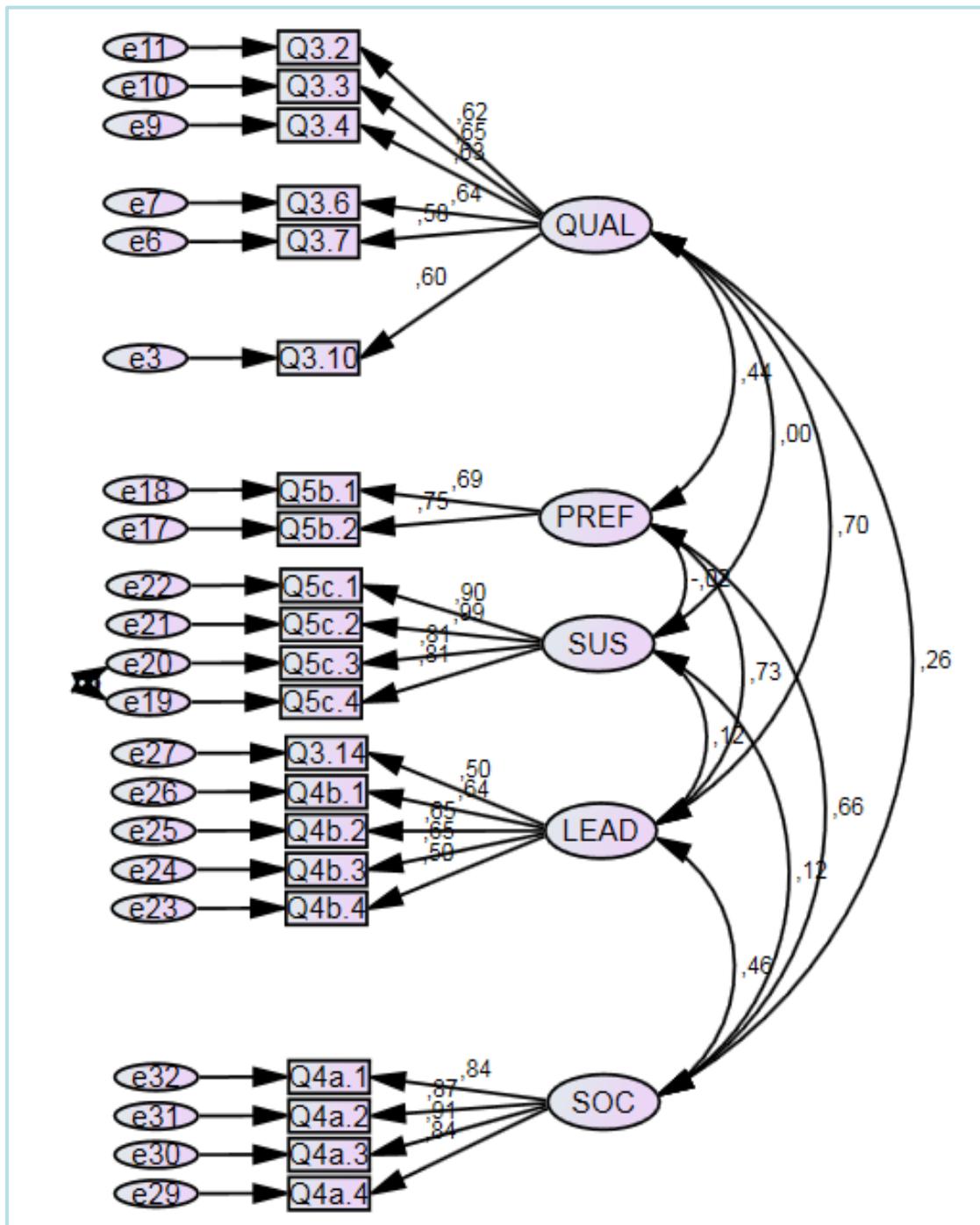
Figure 7.4: Revised model for CBCPBE

As can be seen from Figure 7.4 above, several modifications were made to the original to improve the model fit. Specifically items with a load of less than 0.05 were omitted from the new model. The new, revised model tested the data fit between the following brand equity elements:

- QUAL (refers to the brand equity element of quality) consists of:
    - Run as advertised (e11)

- o High safety standards (e10)

- o Easy to use registration process (e9)

- o Unique race experience (e7)

- o Appealing race swag (e6)

- o Route layout (e3)

- PREF (refers to the brand equity element of preference) consists of:

  - o First choice (e18)

  - o Exclusivity (e17)

- SUS (refers to the brand equity element of sustainability) consists of:

  - o Environmentally safe (e22)

  - o Environmentally responsible (e21)

  - o Sustainable (e20)

  - o Protecting the environment (e19)

- LEAD (refers to the brand equity element of leadership) consists of:

  - o Technology (e27)

  - o Leaders in their field (e26)

  - o Contributes to society (e25)

  - o Local support (e24)

  - o Contribution to infrastructure (e23)

- SOC (refers to the brand equity element of social influence) consists of:

  - o Improve others' perception of self (e32)

  - o Make a good impression (e31)

  - o Gain social approval (e30)

  - o Feel more accepted (e29)

The **model fit indices** of the revised CBCPBE model are given in Table 7.5 on the next page.

Table 7.5: Model fit for revised CBCPBE model

	P	CMIN/DF	GFI	AGFI	TLI	CFI	RMSEA	PCLOSE	SRMR
Default model	0.00	2.162	0.8971	0.866	0.935	0.945	0.059	0.037	0.0463
Threshold values	>0.05	<3	>0.90	>0.80	>0.90	>0.90	<0.05	>0.05	<0.08
Accepted (A)/ Not accepted (NA)	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A

Given the above indices, it is evident that the new, revised model has a good fit with the data. When compared to the threshold values listed in Table 7.2, most of the values fall within the accepted norms.

The RMSEA value of 0.059 is slightly above the threshold value of 0.05, but some authors have argued that a RMSEA value smaller than 0.08 can still be deemed acceptable. In addition, the PCLOSE value for this model is less than the accepted 0.05 value. However, given that the PCLOSE value is generated in conjunction with the RMSEA, this is a negligible difference which may still be accepted, given the good fit of the other indices.

Given the reliability and validity concerns of the baseline model, it was necessary to confirm the new model's reliability and validity. The results of the revised model's **reliability and validity** are summarised in Table 7.6 on the next page.

Table 7.6: Reliability and validity of the revised CBCPBE model

	CR (>0,7)	AVE	MSV	MaxR (H)	Leadership	Quality	Preference	Sustainability	Social
Leadership	0.726	0.350	0.531	0.738	**0.592**				
Quality	0.789	0.384	0.490	0.868	0.700	**0.620**			
Preference	0.683	0.520	0.531	0.898	0.729	0.443	**0.721**		
Sustainability	0.931	0.773	0.015	0.983	0.123	0.002	-0.022	**0.879**	
Social	0.923	0.750	0.437	0.986	0.464	0.265	0.661	0.121	**0.866**

The table above details the reliability and validity of the revised model. As can be seen there are still some reliability and validity concerns evident. The reliability of the model has not been significantly improved, as the Preference dimension still falls slightly short of the 0.7 cut-off. The convergent validity (AVE) has been improved; however, two dimensions still fall short of the 0.5 cut off. The MSV values have improved, although three dimensions still fall slightly under the threshold values.

However, despite the low values reported above, the model fit may still be deemed acceptable, as these lower values are extremely close to cut-off values. In addition, the majority of the fit indices fall well within the recommended ranges. It is also worthwhile to point out, that for most fit indices, the values are only recommended, and that fit ranges are updated and amended as statistics are improved and revised.

As such, given the discussion above regarding the model fit statistics and reliability and validity values, the revised model meets the basic requirements to be accepted. The final model is then presented in Figure 7.5 on the next page.

Given the data obtained for this study, it is deemed that the research objectives have been achieved, as summarised in Table 7.7 that follows after Figure 7.5.
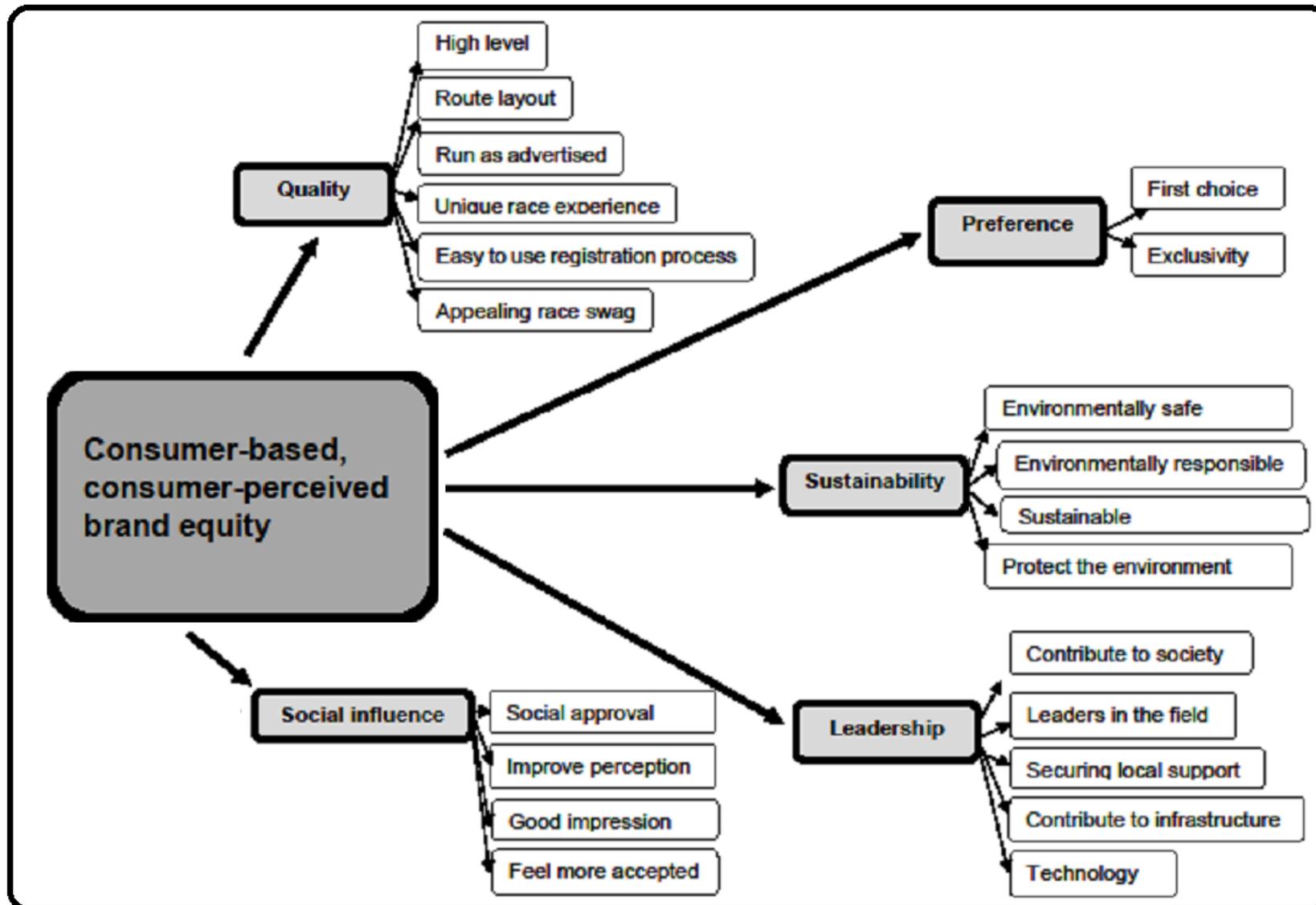
Figure 7.5: Final CBCPBE model

Table 7.7: Outcome of research objectives following CFA

<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">Primary research objective</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">To develop a model which may be used to measure the consumer-perceived consumer-based brand equity of RCPA sport events.

As per the baseline model: The proposed, baseline model is depicted in Figure 7.1 at the beginning of the chapter.

As per the final model: The final model, best fitting the data collected for this study, is depicted in Figure 7.5 above.</td></tr>
<tr><th>Secondary research objectives</th><th>As per baseline model</th><th>As per the final model</th></tr>
<tr>
<td>To investigate the constructs which contribute to the dimension of 'quality', a core component of brand equity.</td>
<td>It was proposed that the following would contribute to the CBCPBE:
- Consistent race experience
- Run as advertised
- High safety standards
- Easy-to-use registration process
- Value for money
- Unique race experience
- Appealing race swag
- Referees
- Volunteers
- Route layout
- Consistent quality
- High quality</td>
<td>The data found that the following can contribute to CBCPBE:
- Run as advertised
- High safety standards
- Easy-to-use registration process
- Unique race experience
- Appealing race swag
- Route layout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To determine which constructs contribute to the brand equity component 'preference'.</td>
<td>It was proposed that the following would contribute to the CBCPBE:
- First choice
- Exclusivity</td>
<td>The data found that the following can contribute to CBCPBE:
- First choice
- Exclusivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To determine if 'sustainability' contributes to the brand equity of RCPA sport events.</td>
<td>It was proposed that the following would contribute to the CBCPBE:
- Environmentally safe
- Environmentally responsible
- Sustainable</td>
<td>The data found that the following can contribute to CBCPBE:
- Environmentally safe
- Environmentally responsible
- Sustainable</td>
</tr>
</table>

	- Protecting the environment	- Protecting the environment
To establish the constructs which contribute to the 'social influence' dimension of brand equity.	It was proposed that the following would contribute to the CBCPBE: - Interaction with like-minded individuals - Satisfy competitive nature - Social interaction on the course - Improve others' perception of self - Make a good impression - Gain social approval - Feel more accepted - Provide personal challenge	The data found that the following can contribute to CBCPBE: - Improve others' perception of self - Make a good impression - Gain social approval - Feel more accepted
To determine if 'leadership' contributes to the brand equity of RCPA sport events.	It was proposed that the following would contribute to the CBCPBE: - Technology - Leaders in their field - Contribute to society - Local support - Contribution to infrastructure	The data found that the following can contribute to CBCPBE: - Technology - Leaders in their field - Contribute to society - Local support - Contribution to infrastructure
To compile a general consumer profile for female triathletes	Addressed in Chapter 6	Addressed in Chapter 6

As summarised in Figure 7.5 and Table 7.7 above, the research objectives set out for this study have been achieved.

7.5   CONCLUSION

Chapter 7 discussed the inferential data analysis, namely the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), conducted for the purposes of the research study. Several statistical tests were conducted as part of the CFA which assisted in determining the model fit, as well as the validity and reliability of the CBCPBE model proposed in Chapter 4. The first set of statistics proved that there was a poor model fit. After modifications, a second analysis was done, after which it was determined that a better model fit could be achieved with the revised CBCPBE model.

In this section, important conclusions were drawn that addressed the research aim, objectives and overall purpose as set out in Chapter 1 of this research study.

In Chapter 8 the conclusions of this study will be summarised, the limitations set out, and the recommendations for further studies will be made.

CHAPTER 8:
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1   INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to conclude this study which aimed to develop a consumer-based, consumer-perceived brand equity (CBCPBE) model for recurring participative (RCPA) sport events. By using an established consumer-based, consumer-perceived (CBBE) model developed by Baalbaki in 2012, this research aimed to extend the work conducted by this researcher by replicating the original methodology.

The study will be concluded by providing a brief overview of the research that was conducted, as well as a summary of the objectives and the research aims addressed during this process. This chapter also aims to discuss the conclusions drawn from the data analysis provided in Chapters 6 and 7. The primary and secondary objectives of the research will be addressed and concluded. This will be followed by recommendations for the management of sport organisations and also future research projects that can address the limitations of this research study. Lastly, the limitations will be highlighted and the chapter and research study concluded.

8.2   OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The overall aim of this research study was to develop a CBCPBE model for RCPA sport events. The purpose was to gain a better understanding of the different dimensions that contribute to the brand equity of such sport events. In addition, each individual dimension of brand equity was explored to determine the specific items that contribute to each dimension.

To achieve the overall objective of the study, a CBCPBE model was proposed in Chapter 4. The proposed model was developed by collating previous literature on sport brands, events and consumers, and incorporating this literature into the CBBE model developed by Baalbaki (2012) which provided the general structure for the proposed CBCPBE model. The proposed model was tested using the Confirmatory Factor Analysis, after which the model was refined. During the process of addressing the primary objective, the following secondary objectives were set:

- To investigate the items which contribute to the dimension of 'quality', a core component of brand equity.

- To determine which items contribute to the brand equity component 'preference'.

- To investigate the effect of sustainability on the brand equity of RCPA sport events.

- To establish the items which contribute to the 'social influence' dimension of brand equity.

- To determine if 'leadership' contributes to the brand equity of RCPA sport events.

- To compile a general consumer profile for female triathletes.

The dimension of brand equity within the parameters of a CBCPBE for RCPA sport events was investigated by exploring the original dimensions as proposed by the Baalbaki (2012) model. Additional items were included in the model by the researcher. The full justification for including these additional items can be found in Table 5.10 in Chapter 5, but the predominant rationalisation for these inclusions was sport-specific literature as discussed in Chapter 2, most notably section 2.7. This was deemed necessary, given that the Baalbaki model (2012) focused on cellular phones, a very different consumer offering than sport events.

The primary and secondary objectives of the study were therefore addressed by designing a questionnaire that allowed the researcher to measure the perceptions of female triathletes of the relevant items in relation to branded triathlon events they had recently (within the past 12 months) participated in.

The exact methodology used to obtain this data was discussed in detail in Chapter 5. After the data had been collected, it was analysed using descriptive (Chapter 6) and inferential (Chapter 7) statistics. The conclusions and recommendations that can be made, given the analyses of data, will be discussed next. The recommendations made in this chapter may assist sport and brand managers with appropriate brand equity material to manage RCPA sport events.

8.3   CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section will attempt to conclude the results of the descriptive statistics (Chapter 6) as well as the CFA test (Chapter 7). Recommendations are made as required. A

summary of the results discussed in section 8.3, in relation to the set objectives, also appear in Table 8.10.

8.3.1 Demographic profile of respondents

The overall findings relating to the demographic profile of respondents can be summarised as follows (refer to Chapter 6, Section 6.3):

Table 8.1: Demographic profile of respondents

Construct	Average female triathlete	Average male triathlete (as per Wicker *et al.* (2012)
Average number of races competed in per year	5 races per year (median) - minimum of 1 race - maximum of 57 - Most respondents reported between 4 and 6 races a year	Not part of the study.
Average number of training hours per week	8 to 11 hours a week	9 hours a week
Duration of triathlon participation	4 years (median) - Minimum of 0.5 years - Maximum of 30 years - Most respondents reported between 0 and 3 years	7.4 years
Performance category	Dedicated participant (66.8%), followed by serious age-groupers (20.2%)	Three groups were identified: - Serious pursuiters (similar to dedicated participant) - Sport lovers - Socialisers
Member of a triathlon club	Yes	Not part of the study.
Nationality	American	N/a (study was only conducted in Germany)
Age	Between 31 and 50 (most likely to be older)	Mid-thirties

Taking into account that the study conducted by Wicker *et al.* (2012) only looked at athletes in Germany who were predominantly male, and that this study had an international participation base, it is still worthwhile to conclude that the average

female triathletes, although certainly less experienced (for now), exhibit core attributes similar to their male counterparts.

As this was not one of the main research objectives, it can be recommended that further research be done to determine if there are any distinct differences or similarities between the two genders when it comes to triathlon participation. The results of this study, in terms of consumer profile, provided an interesting insight into the female triathlete.

The following section outlines the conclusions and recommendations that can be made regarding the various dimensions which relate to brand equity. The section will conclude with a brief summary of the model fit analysis, as can be found in Chapter 7. The first dimension to be discussed is quality.

8.3.2   Conclusions and recommendations: Quality

The literature defined perceived quality as the consumer's perception of the overall quality or superiority of the brand when compared to competitors (see Chapter 3, Section 3.5.1.3). Baalbaki's new CBBE model (2012) included the following items as contributors to the 'quality' dimension: reliability, consistency, performance, high quality and functionality.

The following represent some key findings and conclusions regarding the 'quality' dimension:

- More than half of the respondents (57%) indicated that they agreed with the statement that when participating in a branded event they could expect a consistent race experience. **Given the importance of a consistent product or service offering for the establishment of brand equity, it is encouraging that the respondents were indeed able to identify a differentiation between the consistent experiences offered by branded events and those offered by non-branded events.** What is interesting to note though, is that the model fit, according to the data collected for this study, improved after removing this item from the brand quality dimension.

- **Relating to the quality dimension of brand equity, it is positive to note that 87,2% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that branded events will be run as advertised.**

- **Of the respondents, 90,8% either agreed or strongly agreed that the safety standards at branded events were of a high standard.** This particular item was included as safety standards form part of the Event Qualitymark introduced in the UK. It was therefore postulated that this item could possibly contribute to brand equity of sport events and **the data collected during this research did indeed confirm this.**

- **Only 5,4% of respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that branded events provide an easy-to-use race registration, while 38,6% of the respondents strongly agreed and 56,1% agreed with this statement.** This item was included as it was proposed that it would contribute to brand salience (consumer-friendly access to the brand) which contributed to brand equity, according to Keller (2009). Indeed, according to the data collected for this study, **an easy-to-use race registration process did contribute to the CBCPBE for RCPA sport events.**

- **Furthermore, 34,4% of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement that branded events' entry fees provided value for money.**

- More than half of the respondents (53,1%) agreed that branded events were able to provide a unique race experience. **Given the number of events held annually, it is important for events to differentiate themselves from their competitors. A unique race experience is one such a reason for consumers to repeatedly participate in a brand's event.**

- The majority of respondents (79,8%) responded positively to the statement that branded events provided appealing race 'swag'[14]. It was proposed that this element could likely contribute to the brand equity of RCPA sport events. **The data then confirmed that this item does contribute to the quality dimension of CBCPBE.**

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[14] Race swag is a colloquial term used frequently in endurance sport (especially triathlon) and is used to describe the "goods" received in turn for completing the event. The type of goods then most often include finisher medals, t-shirts, caps and an array of other items such as towels, bottle openers and the like. Race swag is often branded and contributes to the "bragging rights" obtained when finishing a particular event.

- Of the respondents, 47,8% indicated that they agreed with the statement that the referees at their last branded event enforced the course rules correctly. This specific item was included in the brand equity dimension of quality as it was included as part of the Event Qualitymark. **It is interesting to note that, according to the data collected by this study, referees did not contribute to the quality dimension of brand equity.**

- **More than half of the respondents (55.8%) strongly agreed that the volunteers that worked at their last branded race contributed to their race experience in a positive manner.** As one of the Event Qualitymarks used by Triathlon England, it was expected that the volunteers would contribute to the quality dimension of brand equity, but the data collected for this study showed that it did not.

- **The majority of respondents (83.1%) agreed or strongly agreed that the route layout of their last branded event was of a high quality.** The route layout of an event can be seen as one of the 'tangible' aspects of the mainly service-driven product offering. **It was postulated that the route layout would contribute to the brand equity and the data collected during this study found that it does.**

- **The majority of respondents agreed (51,6%) or strongly agreed (40,4%) that it is important to them that an event must be consistent in the quality, every time they race.** Despite the positive response from the respondents and the inclusion of this item in the Baalbaki (2012) model, the data collected for this study showed that **it did not contribute to the brand equity of RCPA sport events.**

- **Of the respondents, 44,5% strongly agreed and 49,9% agreed that it is important to them that the quality of the event is high.**

Table 8.2 summarises the outcomes of the model fit analysis conducted in Chapter 7 for the quality dimension. The contributing items to the dimension of quality, as proposed by the data collected for this study are listed below.

Table 8.2: The CBCPBE Quality dimension

Quality dimension	← Run as advertised
	← High safety standard

	← Easy-to-use registration process
	← Unique race experience
	← Appealing race swag
	← Route layout

The next section provides the conclusions and recommendations of the descriptive analysis of the brand equity dimension, 'preference'. The section will conclude with a brief summary of the model fit analysis done for this dimension.

8.3.3   Conclusions and recommendations: Preference

According to the literature (as discussed in Chapter 3, Section 3.5.1.1), brand preference (originally seen as an element of loyalty) encompasses the following items: the brand as the consumer's first choice, how loyal consumers are towards the specific brand, consumers' willingness to purchase other brands, and how committed they are to purchasing the brand (Baalbaki, 2012). Baalbaki (2012) opted to include preference as a dimension of CBBE so as to not only measure loyalty, but also preference, which is perceived to be the consumer's 'number one' brand which they prefer to purchase no matter what (see Chapter 4, Section 4.5).

Although, 37,7% of the respondents did respond favourably to the statement that their first choice would be a branded event as opposed to a non-branded event, it is concerning to note that the majority of the respondents (40,7%) neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement. This type of preference for choosing to participate in a branded event, rather than in a non-branded event, can be seen as an imperative part of brand equity, as established by Baalbaki (2012) as well as other seminal researchers. **Indeed, the data collected for this research, also indicate that it would contribute to brand equity.**

It is recommended that further research be done to determine why this level of brand preferences has been noted. In addition, the organisers of branded events will need to take cognisance of the fact that they are not necessarily a consumer's first choice,

and should act accordingly in terms of their value proposition, marketing efforts and communications with the consumer.

The majority of respondents (49%) responded negatively to the statement that they preferred branded events, as they are more exclusive than non-branded events. **This is interesting to note, as brands are often differentiated based on their 'exclusivity', and it can be a valuable means of creating additional value when it comes to brand equity. Indeed, the same data set has indicated that exclusivity would contribute to brand equity.**

It is recommended that further research should be done on this particular aspect of brand equity. In addition, the organisers of branded events will need to pay closer attention to the female perspective on preference for branded events.

Table 8.3 summarises the outcomes of the model fit analysis conducted in Chapter 7 for the 'preference' dimension. The contributing items to the dimension of 'preference', as proposed by the data collected for this study, are listed below.

Table 8.3: The CBCPBE Preference dimension

Preference dimension	← First choice
	← Preference due to exclusivity

The concepts of preference and brand loyalty were further explored in this study. However, due to the low response rate on these items, the results of these explorations did not contribute to the primary objective of this study; namely, to develop a CBCPBE model for RCPA sport events. As such, these items will not be discussed in this chapter and the full discussion of these items can be found in Chapter 6, Section 6.8 and Section 6.9. *It is recommended that these items be revisited when conducting future research.*

The next section provides the conclusions and recommendations of the descriptive analysis of the dimension 'sustainability'. The section will conclude with a brief summary of the model fit analysis done for this dimension.

8.3.4   Conclusions and recommendations: Sustainability

Sustainability, as defined in Chapter 2, Section 2.7.1.4, is a new dimension included in the Baalbaki (2012) model which has not been previously included in brand equity models. However, the concept of sustainability and the increasing importance of sustainability to not only organisations, but also consumers, constituted one of the major gaps in traditional brand equity as identified by Baalbaki (2012). Research conducted by Baalbaki (2012) confirmed that a brand can add value by providing consumers with a sustainable brand (refer to Chapter 4, Section 4.5).

The results can be briefly summarised as follows:

- 53,1% of the respondents agreed that they prefer events which do not negatively affect the environment;

- 55,2% agreed that they prefer events which protect the environment;

- 47,5% of the respondents strongly agreed that they prefer events where the activities do not use up the natural resources so that the event may continue year after year; and

- 50,7% of respondents agreed that it is important to them that the event should protect the environment in which they race.

It is evident then, that for the participants of this study, the protection of the environment and the sustainability of the event are important considerations when choosing events to participate in.

It is recommended that events actively pursue sustainability and incorporate any such actions and endeavours into their marketing campaigns, as it is a contributor to brand equity.

Table 8.4 summarises the outcomes of the model fit analysis conducted in Chapter 7 for the 'sustainability' dimension. The contributing items to the dimension of 'sustainability', as proposed by the data collected for this study, are listed below.

Table 8.4: The CBCPBE Sustainability dimension

	← Environmentally safe

Sustainability dimension	← Environmentally responsible
	← Sustainable
	← Protects the environment

The next section provides the conclusions and recommendations of the descriptive analysis of the dimension 'leadership'.

8.3.5   Conclusions and recommendations: Leadership

Leadership is one of the new dimensions included in the Baalbaki (2012) model. Although not one of the traditional contributors to brand equity, Baalbaki (2012) stated that from a consumer perspective, 'leadership' can be seen as longevity (more applicable to products than services), good workmanship and contributing to society (refer to Chapter 4, Section 4.5). Being perceived as a 'leader brand' by consumers, will add value, thereby creating brand equity.

Of the respondents, 40,7% indicated that they neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement that their last branded event used technology in such a manner that their race experiences were improved. Despite getting a low score by the respondents, the model fit data collected for this study did confirm that this item **does contribute to brand equity**.

It can be recommended that further research be conducted in this area. It is evident that although technology has a role to play in brand equity, it is not a visible aspect of the brand as such. By making technology more visible to participants, branded events could likely increase the perception of the value offering they provide to participants, thereby creating an additional means of differentiation and value.

The majority of respondents (58,2%) agreed or strongly agreed that branded events were leaders in their field. The model fit analysis of the data collected for this study confirmed that this item would **contribute to the brand equity** of RCPA sport events.

A high number of respondents (41,5%) indicated that they neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement that branded events contributed to society. The

data collected for this study confirmed that this item would contribute to the brand equity of an event. **In this sense, it is problematic that a high percentage of participants opted to neither agree nor disagree with the statement, as many branded events do make a contribution to society**. Many branded triathlons offer participants the chance to race for charities, an effective way for charities to raise funds. It can therefore be postulated that participants might not be aware of these type of activities. It might also be that even if they are aware of these type of charities, it is not perceived that they make a contribution to society.

Nonetheless, the data collected during this study cannot explain the high response rate for the 'neither agree nor disagree' response and it can be recommended that further research be done to determine the cause. In addition, it can be recommended that events promote their contributions to society more visibly, as it does play a role in the creation of brand equity.

The majority of respondents (69,5%) agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that branded events were successful in securing the support of the local community for the event. Due to the nature of sport events, it is crucial that the local community supports the event. This becomes even more important if the event is recurring, as the event will be returning to the community on a continuous basis. **It is therefore very encouraging to note that participants perceived branded events being successful in this regard, both from a brand equity perspective and an organisational perspective.** The data collected for this study thus confirmed that this item would **contribute to brand equity**.

More than half of the respondents (51%) neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement that branded events made a valuable contribution to the infrastructure required for the event. **This is concerning, as one of the biggest benefits of hosting a sporting event, according to literature (refer to Chapter 2, Section 2.2.3 and section 2.7.2.2), is the contribution and improvement to local infrastructure.** For recurring events, the contribution to infrastructure is even more important, as the event itself will be making use of the infrastructure again in future.

Given that the data collected for this study found that making a valuable contribution to infrastructure would contribute to brand equity, it is recommended that events actively promote the contributions they make to infrastructure.

Table 8.5 summarises the outcomes of the model fit analysis conducted in Chapter 7 for the 'leadership' dimension. The contributing items to the dimension of 'leadership', as proposed by the data collected for this study are listed below.

Table 8.5: The CBCPBE Leadership dimension

Leadership dimension	← Technology
	← Leaders in their field
	← Contribute to society
	← Local support
	← Contribution to infrastructure

The next section provides the conclusions and recommendations of the descriptive analysis of the dimension 'social influence'. The section will conclude with a brief summary of the model fit analysis done for this dimension.

8.3.6   Conclusions and recommendations: Social influence

Although not a traditional component of brand equity, Baalbaki (2012) included this dimension in the new CBBE model (refer to Chapter 4, Section 4.5). The literature indicated that consumers gain value from social approval, feeling accepted and making a good impression (Baalbaki, 2012). Thus, by allowing the consumer to be perceived by others in a specific way, the brand is able to create an identity for a consumer, something the modern consumer attaches value to (Baalbaki, 2012).

The majority of respondents (87,5%) agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that branded events allowed them to interact with like-minded individuals. According to the Wicker *et al.* (2012) study, male triathletes justified some of their triathlon participation on the social interaction the sport provided. **As such, it was suspected that social interaction would also be of importance for female**

triathletes. The data collected for this study, however, shows that it is not a contributing factor to brand equity.

The majority of respondents (92,3%) agreed or strongly agreed that branded events satisfied their competitive nature. Included as part of the social dimension, it was postulated that, due to the characteristics of triathletes (Wicker *et al.* 2012), brand equity could be created by satisfying participants' competitive natures. However, the data collected for this study, **found that it did not contribute to the social construct of brand equity.**

The majority of respondents (70,9%) agreed or strongly agreed that branded events allowed sufficient social interaction on the course. Included in the item scale for the social dimension of brand equity, it was postulated that, for those athletes participating in triathlon in order to gain social benefits, the level of social interaction on the course could contribute to the brand equity of that particular event[15]. **The data collected for this study, however, found that this did not contribute to the brand equity of the event.**

A significant number of respondents (39,2%) indicated that they neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement that participating in branded events improved the way they are perceived by others. This item was included in the scale items to measure the social influence dimension as part of the brand equity model proposed by Baalbaki (2012). It is not evident why so many respondents opted to neither agree nor disagree with the statement, as research has shown that consumers often tend to use a particular brand as they perceive the usage of that brand to have an effect on the way other people perceive them. **It would appear then, that within this particular category (participate, recurring events), respondents are not able (or willing) to make a judgement call on the effect their participation in branded events has on others. What is interesting to note here is, that despite the**

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[15] Generally, triathlons are considered to be individual sport where athletes are not allowed any outside assistance. However, some events would, for example, allow family members to run down the finisher shoot with the athlete, where in other events, an athlete would be disqualified for doing that. Some triathlons would then offer more social interaction than others. The question then arose if this kind of leniency actually created additional value for the athlete.

responses given by the respondents, the data collected for this study indicated during the model fit analysis that this item would still contribute to brand equity.

It is thus highly recommended that organisers of branded triathlon events investigate this phenomenon; it is evident from this data that social influence, and in particular, the improvement of others' perception, does contribute to the brand equity of the event, but that the participants for some reason are hesitant to admit to this fact. It can also be recommended that further research on this topic should be done, as it will provide interesting and valuable insight into how female consumers perceive not only themselves from the viewpoint of others, but also the brands with which they interact and how these brands influence their lives.

A similar response pattern was noted when respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement that branded events made a good impression on other people. **Of the respondents, 39,5% chose to neither agree nor disagree with the statement.** Given that the data collected found that this item **would also contribute to brand equity**, a similar conclusion can be reached as indicated above, namely, that respondents are unwilling or unable to make a judgement call on how others perceive them.

It is recommended that further research be done on this particular aspect, as it represents a contributor to brand equity, but one which has not been acknowledged by this particular group of respondents.

When asked if respondents gained social approval by participating in branded events, 39,5% of the respondents indicated that they neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement. A further 24,6% of the respondents disagreed with the statement. More respondents thus responded negatively to this statement than positively. It might be possible that social approval for female athletes through sport functions differs from that of males.

In any event, it can be recommended that more research be done on this topic. This is important as, according to the model fit analysis of the data collected for this study, this item did contribute to brand equity.

The majority of respondents (41,2%) neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement that participating in branded events made them feel more accepted in their social environment. **More respondents responded negatively to this statement (39,5%) than positively (19,2%).** Given the limited knowledge on the social effect sport has on females, it is difficult to make valid conclusions in this regard. **What can be stated here definitively is, that even though this item was rated negatively, the data found that this item would contribute to brand equity.**

As such, it can be highly recommended that further research be done on the effect branded events will have on the social environment of female athletes, as there should be an opportunity to create value for the consumer in this regard.

It is interesting to note that the only scale item in this range which received an overall positive response referred to branded events creating a personal challenge for the participants. **Of the respondents, 49% agreed with the statement and 19,3% strongly agreed with the statement.** It was postulated that due to the competitive characteristics of triathletes (Wicker *et al.*, 2012), this item could contribute to the social influence dimension. In order to satisfy their competitive nature and thus provide a personal challenge, an event should be able to provide sufficient competition among the athletes. **However, the model fit analysis indicated that this item does not contribute to the brand equity of RCPA sport events.**

Given the high positive response rate, it is recommended that further research should be done on this item to determine if it could not contribute to brand equity in a different form or function.

Table 8.6 summarises the outcomes of the model fit analysis conducted in Chapter 7 for the 'social influence' dimension. The contributing items to the dimension of 'social influence', as proposed by the data collected for this study are listed below.

Table 8.6: The CBCPBE Social Influence dimension

	← Improve others' perception of self

Social influence dimension	← Make a good impression
	← Gain social approval
	← Feel more accepted

The next section will conclude this section on the conclusions and recommendations by addressing the primary research objective, the development of a CBCPBE model for RCPA sport events.

8.3.7 A Consumer-based, Consumer-perceived Brand Equity (CBCPBE) model for recurring, participative (RCPA) sport events

The primary objective for this research study was to develop a model which may be used to measure the CBCPBE of RCPA sport events.

To address and conclude the primary research objective, the final CBCPBE model as presented in Chapter 7 will be briefly discussed. Specific attention in this section will be paid to those items that were discarded after the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) of the baseline model was done.

The final model is presented in Table 8.7, and the particular items that contributed to the final model will be discussed in more detail in Section 8.4 of this chapter.

Table 8.7: The CBCPBE model for RCPA sport events

	According to Baalbaki (2012) CBBE model	**According to new CBCPBE model for RCPA sport events**
Quality dimension	The reliability of (Brand X) is very high. (Brand X) is consistent in the quality it offers. The performance of (Brand X) is very high. The functionality of (Brand X) is very high. (Brand X) has consistent quality. (Brand X) performs consistently. (Brand X) has an acceptable standard of quality. (Brand X) is made well.	← Run as advertised ← Appealing race swag ← Route layout ← High safety standard ← Easy-to-use registration process ← Unique race experience

	The quality of (Brand X) is extremely high.		
Preference dimension	(Brand X) would be my first choice.	←	First choice
	I consider myself loyal to (Brand X).	←	Preference due to exclusivity
	I will not buy other brands if (Brand X) is available at the store.		
	I am committed to buying (Brand X).		
Sustainability dimension	(Brand X) is an environmentally safe brand.	←	Environmentally safe
	(Brand X) is an environmentally responsible brand.	←	Environmentally responsible
	(Brand X) is a sustainable brand.	←	Sustainable
		←	Protects the environment
Leadership dimension	(Brand X) would last a long time.	←	Technology
	(Brand X) has good workmanship.	←	Leaders in their field
	(Brand X) contributes something to society.	←	Contribute to society
		←	Local support
		←	Contribution to infrastructure
Social influence dimension	(Brand X) improves the way I am perceived by others.	←	Improve others' perception of self
	(Brand X) would make a good impression on other people.	←	Make a good impression
	(Brand X) would give its owner social approval.	←	Gain social approval
	(Brand X) helps me feel accepted.	←	Feel more accepted

It was found that the following items did not contribute to the final brand equity model, given the data collected for this study:

Table 8.8: Items that were discarded from the final CBCPBE model

Quality dimension	≠ Consistent race experience
	≠ Value for money
	≠ Referees
	≠ Volunteers
	≠ Consistent quality
	≠ High quality

Preference dimension	No items were discarded
Sustainability dimension	No items were discarded
Leadership dimension	No items were discarded
Social influence dimension	≠ Interaction with like-minded individuals
	≠ Satisfies competitive nature
	≠ Social interaction on the course

It is interesting to note that, for the majority of the items that were discarded, the participants responded favourably.

It is therefore recommended that further research should be done to explore if these items would contribute to brand equity, given a different population and/or product group.

In the next section, the findings of the study will be synchronised with the objectives set out for this study.

8.4   ADDRESSING THE RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The research objectives of this study are listed in Table 8.9 and Table 8.10. Table 8.9 summarises the primary research objective (discussed in section 8.3.7 above), whilst Table 8.10 addresses the secondary research objectives (discussed in section 8.3.1 to 8.3.6).

In order to address each specific objective, the main findings for each objective are provided. To facilitate the discussion, some of the most pertinent descriptive findings can also be found in this table.

Table 8.9: Addressing the research objectives: Primary research objective

Primary research objective	
To develop a model which may be used to measure the consumer-perceived consumer-based brand equity of RCPA sport events.	
The CFA determined that the following model provides the best fit, given the data collected for this study.	
Quality dimension	← Run as advertised
	← High safety standard
	← Easy-to-use registration process
	← Unique race experience
	← Appealing race swag
	← Route layout
Preference dimension	← First choice
	← Preference due to exclusivity
Sustainability dimension	← Environmentally safe
	← Environmentally responsible
	← Sustainable
	← Protects the environment
Leadership dimension	← Technology
	← Leaders in their field
	← Contribute to society
	← Local support
	← Contribution to infrastructure
Social influence dimension	← Improve others' perception of self
	← Make a good impression
	← Gain social approval
	← Feel more accepted

Table 8.10: Addressing the research objectives: Secondary research objective

Secondary research objectives	Main findings
To investigate the items which contribute to the dimension of '**quality**', a core component of brand equity.	The data found that the following items can contribute to the quality dimension of the CBCPBE model for RCPA sport events: - **Run as advertised**: 87,2% of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that branded events give them the assurance that the event will run as advertised. - **High safety standards**: 90,8% of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that the safety standards at branded events are high. - **Easy-to-use race registration**: 94,7% of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that branded events provided an easy to use race registration. - **Unique race experience**: 79,2% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that branded events were able to provide a unique race experience. Given the high levels of competition in the industry, a unique experience not only contributes to brand equity, but also represents a lucrative differentiation point. - **Appealing race swag:** 79,8% of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that branded events provide appealing race 'swag'. Race swag represents a tangible element for a mainly service-oriented offering, and can contribute to the exclusiveness of the event. It is a visible and touchable identifier of quality. - **Route layout:** 83,1% of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that the route layout of their last branded event was of a high quality. Route layout represents another tangible element that participants may use to make a quality judgement.

Secondary research objectives	Main findings
To determine which items contribute to the brand equity component of '**preference**'.	The data found that the following items can contribute to the preference dimension of the CBCPBE model for RCPA sport events: • **First choice:** 40,7% of the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement that branded events, as opposed to non-branded events would be their first choice. It was interesting to note that a branded event was not necessarily the participants' first preference, contrary to the current literature on brands, brand preference and brand loyalty. Despite the majority of respondents opting for a neutral response, this item was found to still contribute to brand equity. • **Exclusivity:** 37,7% of the respondents disagreed with the statement that they preferred branded events, as they were more exclusive than non-branded events. Literature has shown that brands are often considered to be more exclusive than non-branded products/services, a notion that creates the basis for various marketing activities and decisions made by brands. Despite the majority of respondents disagreeing on this statement, exclusivity still contributed to brand equity according to the CFA of both the baseline and final model.
To investigate the effect of '**sustainability**' on the brand equity of RCPA sport events.	Given that the dimension of sustainability was a new addition to the brand equity model by Baalbaki (2012), it was necessary to determine if this dimension would contribute to the CBCPBE of RCPA sport events. The CFA conducted confirmed that sustainability would contribute to CBCPBE. In addition, the data found that the specific items that would contribute to this dimension are as follows: • **Environmentally safe**: 86,9% of the respondents indicated that they either agreed or strongly agreed that

Secondary research objectives	Main findings
	they prefer events which do not negatively affect the environment.
	• **Environmentally responsible:** 89,3% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they prefer events which were organised in such a manner that the environment is protected.
	• **Sustainable:** 93,5% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they prefer events whose activities do not use up natural resources, so that the event may continue year after year.
	• **Protecting the environment**: 91,6% of the respondents agreed that it is important to them that events protect the environment in which they race.
To determine if '**leadership**' contributes to the brand equity of RCPA sport events.	Given that the dimension of leadership was a new addition to the brand equity model by Baalbaki (2012), it was necessary to determine if this dimension would contribute to the CBCPBE of RCPA sport events. The CFA conducted confirmed that leadership would contribute to CBCPBE. In addition, the data found that the specific items that would contribute to this dimension are as follows:
	• **Technology**: Although 49,3% of the respondents did agree or strongly agree with the statement that branded events use technology in such a manner that their race experience was improved, 40,7% of the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement. It is evident that, for the most part, the use of technology to improve race experience might not be as visible as it could be.
	• **Leaders in their field:** 58,2% of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that branded events were leaders in their field.

Secondary research objectives	Main findings
	• **Contribution to society:** Although 41,5% of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed that branded events contributed to society, 44,8% of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed. It is suspected that such contributions are not made visible enough as many triathlons do make a contribution to society and local communities. • **Securing local support:** 69,5% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that branded events were successful in securing the support of the local community for the event.
To establish the constructs which contribute to the '**social influence**' dimension of brand equity.	The data found that the following items can contribute to the social influence dimension of the CBCPBE model for RCPA sport events: • **Improve others' perception of self:** 39,2% of the respondents indicated that they neither agree nor disagree with the statement that participating in branded events improved the way they are perceived by others. Despite the negative response, this item still contributes to brand equity according to the data collected for this study. • **Make a good impression:** 39,5% of the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement that branded events make a good impression on other people. Despite the negative response, this item still contributes to brand equity, according to the data collected for this study. • **Gain social approval:** Again, 39,5% of the respondents indicated neither agree nor disagree to the statement that by participating in branded events they gained social approval. Despite the negative response, this item

Secondary research objectives	Main findings
	still contributes to brand equity according to the data collected for this study. • **More acceptance**: 41,2% of the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement that by participating in branded events they felt more accepted in their social environment. Despite the negative response, this item still contributes to brand equity according to the data collected for this study.
To compile a general consumer profile for female triathletes.	The data collected for this study was used to compile a general profile of the female triathlete: *see table below*

Construct	Average female triathlete
Average number of races competed in per year	5 races per year (median) - minimum of 1 race - maximum of 57 Most respondents reporting between 4 and 6 races a year
Average number of training hours per week	8 to 11 hours a week
Duration of triathlon participation	4 years (median) - Minimum of 0.5 years - Maximum of 30 years Most respondents reporting between 0 and 3 years
Performance category	Dedicated participant (66.8%), followed by serious age-groupers (20.2%)
Member of a triathlon club	Yes
Nationality	American
Age	Between 31 and 50 (most likely to be older)

The table above represents a summary of the research objectives, together with the respective research findings addressing each objective. In the next section, the

contribution that this research study has made to the body of knowledge will be discussed.

8.5 CONTRIBUTION TO BODY OF KNOWLEDGE

This study has made a modest contribution to knowledge by exploring the emerging issue of female-centred research. In this case, only the perceptions of female athletes were used to develop a new CBCPBE model for RCPA sport events. During this process, the study made additional contributions by:

- Filling a gap in the knowledge available on female athletes, in particular triathletes. To date, very little literature has been compiled which focuses specifically on the female triathlete. This study has attempted to compile a general consumer profile, by assimilating the demographic data and certain consumption patterns collected for this study in a logical manner.

- Combining the previously established concepts from the literature on brand equity in a new way, so that brand equity can be viewed from the consumer's perspective, instead of an organisational view.

- Combining the field of business management with specific reference to sport management and marketing, to develop an appropriate model for the measurement of CBCPBE for RCPA sport events.

- Displaying originality by focusing on recurring sport events where the main source of income is not from spectators, but from participants. Much of the current sport management research and literature that has been published focuses on mega-events, such as the Olympics, which will only occur once every few years. In addition, very little research has been done on events where the main source of income comes from drawing participants to enter the event (in other words, the consumers pay to actively engage in the event and participate), but rather focuses on events that draw spectators (in other words, consumers who pay to watch the sport and are thus not actively engaged in the event).

- Field-testing the newly created CBCPBE model for RCPA sport events. The data then shows that a similar model for CBCPBE may be used, as was established by Baalbaki (2012), for RCPA sport events, but with a few key differences:

➢ In terms of *quality*, the evidence shows that for RCPA sport events brand equity can be created by **running the event as was advertised.** This means that branded sport events can create additional value for their consumers by staying true to their brand promises, as far as possible. Weather permitting, it is important to consumers to know that the event distances will be as promised when the event was advertised. Another key difference when it comes to participative sport events in the creation of quality, is the **safety standards** of events. High quality events can create additional value for their participants by ensuring that they are safe. Other items that contribute to the quality dimension of brand equity for RCPA sport events are an **easy-to-use race registration process**, a **unique race experience**, **appealing race swag** and **route layout**. It is interesting to note that the evidence showed that traditional contributors to quality, such as consistency, high levels of quality, and value for money, did not contribute to this model. Indeed, model fit was improved when these items were removed.

➢ In terms of *preference*, the model established by Baalbaki (2012) and the new model for RCPA sport events were very similar. The evidence showed that for this dimension, brand equity is created through being the **consumer's first choice** (the concept of being the consumers 'first brand'). The researcher anticipated that value can be created through **exclusivity,** as proposed by the research conducted by Wicker *et al.* (2012) on male triathletes. According to the CFA, both these items would contribute to preference as part of brand equity. What was interesting to note here, regarding the descriptive results, was that these items received an overwhelmingly negative rating. It would appear that for female consumers, this dimension would need some additional scrutiny. The data also pointed to interesting observations about brand loyalty towards RCPA sport event brands. Given the evidence provided by the data collected for this study, it can be suggested that female consumers, at least, are first loyal to the sport and then the particular event brands. Further research is required to provide clarity on this emerging issue.

➢ For the *sustainability* dimension, no differences were noted between the new model for sport events and the model proposed by Baalbaki (2012). The evidence clearly shows that for this group of participants, the issue of

environmental protection and sustainability is a crucial consideration, and event brands will do well to incorporate (and promote) sustainable practices for their events.

➢ The *social influence* dimension proposed by the Baalbaki (2012) model showed great similarities when compared with the new model proposed for sport events, according to the CFA. The evidence from the descriptive analysis, however, indicates that, for female athletes, there appears to be some hesitation (or neutrality) regarding the contribution branded events make to their lives and social environment. This is interesting to note, given the literature on brands, and as such, warrants further research.

➢ In terms of *leadership*, some similarities between the Baalbaki (2012) model and the new model for sport events can be noted. It is important to firstly indicate that the Baalbaki model focused on products, and as such, several items were discarded immediately as they would not be applicable to a sport event. The item which was kept, namely, making a **contribution to society**, proved to be a contributing item for sport events as well. All of the additional items, as proposed by the researcher, were found to contribute to leadership as part of the brand equity for sport events. These were **technology, leaders in the field, local support** and **contribution to infrastructure**.

The next section will briefly summarise the recommendations (taken from Section 8.3 in this chapter) made to the management of branded sport events.

8.6   RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MANAGEMENT

After conducting scientific research, such as done in this thesis, it is required that recommendations are made, based on the findings and results of the study. The recommendations in this section can be used by the management of sport event brands. As highlighted in Chapter 1, sport organisations increasingly have to incorporate traditional business concepts into their management structure so as to accommodate the commercialisation of the industry. In addition, given the unique nature of consumers who are participating in their events, the steady increase in female participation, and industry competition being at an all-time high, it is important for organisers and management teams of branded events to take note of the ways in

which they can create value for their consumers. This value-creation must be done in a manner that is important to the individual consumer, whilst simultaneously creating brand equity for the event.

Briefly then, the following recommendations can be made for managers of branded sport events:

- According to the data collected for this study, it is evident that branded events do not provide a value for money offering. It is also true that the evidence as collected for this study, indicated that value for money is not a contributing factor for the brand equity of RCPA sport events. It is, however, still important for sport event brands to take cognisance that their entry fees are not considered value for money. One only needs to take a brief look at social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter, to realise cash-strapped consumers are starting to consider alternative options for expensive, branded triathlon events. Indeed, it should be concerning for branded events that many athletes, once they have earned the coveted right to call themselves an 'Ironman' (or whichever branded label they have earned), prefer to switch to more cost-effective, non-branded races. Of course, there will be an influx of new athletes that will continue to race branded events for the prestige, but this is a risky strategy, given the rise of many non-branded events. Branded events should then re-evaluate their value offering to ensure the continued participation of 'veteran' athletes by strategically engaging in relationship marketing. This re-evaluation of the value offering could likely also make a difference in the dubious brand loyalty patterns of their consumers which the evidence is pointing to.

- As pointed out above, the evidence indicated that branded events were not identified as the consumer's first choice. What is even more concerning, is that this particular data was collected only from participants who had confirmed they had a preferred branded event. As such, it is evident, that even for consumers who have a preferred brand, the preferred brand did not constitute their first choice when choosing an event to participate in. Given the literature on branding, this provides an interesting conundrum for the brand event manager. It is highly recommended, as above, that the value offering to consumers should be re-evaluated. This particular issue came up again when the same set of respondents were prompted to indicate if they would continue to participate in their preferred brand's event if there was another brand's event available. The majority of the respondents

disagreed, indicating that they are not insisting on participating in their preferred brand's events. There is clearly some disjointedness between these female triathletes, and that which has traditionally been considered to be brand loyalty.

- It was noted that although the item of exclusivity contributed to brand equity, the respondents disagreed with the statement that branded events were more exclusive than non-branded events. The evidence points to an inconsistency between the female perception of exclusivity and what branded events are currently offering. Given the increase in female participation, it will become progressively more important for branded events to consider what exclusivity means for their entire consumer base within the context of the sport.

- Given the evidence provided by the data collected for this study, it is clear that the concept of sustainability and environmental protection are already important aspects for consumers. It is recommended that branded events actively pursue sustainable goals and practices which protect the environment. In addition, these sustainable practices should be actively communicated to the consumers and public, as the visibility of sustainability is valuable in the creation of consumer-based, consumer-perceived brand equity.

- The use of technology is an important contributor to brand equity, as shown by the evidence of this study. However, it is also evident that consumers are not always aware of how technology is being used by branded events to improve and contribute to the participants' race experiences. It can thus be recommended that branded events incorporate their innovative use of technology into their marketing material, and make a concerted effort to inform race participants of the technological measures taken to improve their race experiences. By making technology more visible to participants, branded events could likely increase the perception of the value offering they provide to participants, thereby creating an additional means of differentiation and value.

- The evidence noted that the contributions branded events make to society can contribute to brand equity. Such contributions should be made visible to participants and the local public, to not only encourage awareness but also increase participation in these initiatives. In addition, any contributions made to local infrastructure (which also contributes to brand equity) should be made visible and communicated to not only the participants, but also the local community.

- When it comes to the social influence of branded events, it is evident from the data that this dimension contributes to the brand equity of the branded event. However, nearly all of the items associated with this dimension were negatively scored by the respondents. Branded events should take cognisance of the fact that social influence might differ between male and female triathletes. It can be recommended that branded events could improve this aspect by possibly making the event more family orientated to accommodate the growing number of mothers participating in their events.

From the above, it is evident that sport event brands can create more value for their consumers, especially female consumers, by reconsidering their value offering, as well as by communicating on aspects that are not directly related to the actual event, but are still creating value for their participants.

The next section will briefly summarise the recommendations for future research.

8.7   RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

When considering the research scope of this study and the results derived, the following recommendations can be made for future research:

- Further research should be done to determine if there are any distinct differences or similarities between male and female athletes from a consumer point of view.

- Additional research is required to fill the gaps between the value proposition of branded RCPA sport events and the different indicators of brand loyalty. In addition, the behaviour of athletes towards their preferred brand should be investigated to determine if there are differences between brand loyalty towards events and products. Further research would be able to clarify the relationship between loyalty towards the sport and loyalty towards events.

- A valuable contribution to the literature can be made by investigating the role brands play during the decision-making process of athletes when selecting an event in which to participate.

- It was noted in Section 8.3.3 that several items regarding preferences were omitted during the testing of the new model for CBCPBE for RCPA sport events. It would

be valuable for future research to determine if these items would contribute to the CBCPBE of RCPA sport events.

- The use of technology within sport events is considered to be a new field of knowledge, given its application to brand equity, and it is evident that the industry could benefit from research dedicated to the use of technology and the contribution it makes to not only participants, but also the organisation.

- It is evident that there is a gap in the understanding of female perception and the brand's influence on their social environment. Future research can do much to create more understanding as to how female consumers, specifically those that consider themselves to be athletes, deal with others' perceptions of them, given the brands they use or engage with.

- It is recommended that future research continues to explore if the different items, as contributors to the dimensions of brand equity, continue to contribute to brand equity across different consumer profiles and different product categories. It is important to note that due to the highly individual nature of a consumer-based, consumer-perceived model, continued research will be required in this regard to address the changing consumer perceptions and needs.

The above discussion was aimed at making certain recommendations based on the interpretations, findings and conclusions formulated in this research thesis. The final section of this study focuses on the limitations of the research that was conducted and the effect this has on the outcomes of the study.

8.8   LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

When reading this thesis, some limitations need to be considered and taken into account.

The focus of this study was to develop a model that may be used to measure the CBCPBE of RCPA sport events. In the selection of the topic and the related primary objective of the research, certain limitations already existed:

- Given that this model is based on the consumer, it is expected that the data will not hold true for all consumers. This model is then acceptable given the population selected for this study, namely, female triathletes. As had been established by the

demographic profile, there are some distinct differences and similarities between male and female athletes which will most likely affect their perception of the value created by the brand.

- Although not necessarily a limitation, it is important to take note of the large number of American-based respondents as this likely had an effect on the data collected and the results obtained.

- In addition, to facilitate the development and field-testing of the model, a specific category, namely triathlon events, was selected. Although it is expected that there will be similarities between other RCPA sport events and triathlon events, the use of triathlon events does present a limitation, as the data will most likely not hold true for all RCPA sport events.

Further, the response rate for the questionnaire was low. Given the nature of the instrument (an online self-administered questionnaire), this was expected and the necessary precautions and justifications made in this regard are discussed in detail in Chapter 5, Section 5.8.2.

As such, this study does not aim to generalise the findings as being indicative of all RCPA sport events' CBCPBE profiles. Instead, this model presents a starting point for determining brand equity from a consumer point of view for this particular category of sport event. Indeed, the study has highlighted the need for a brand equity model that specifically takes the perceptions of the individual consumer into account when determining the value the brand can add for the consumer.

The above presents some of the major limitations of this study and places the results, conclusions and recommendations in an appropriate context.

8.9   CONCLUSION

The overall aim of the research was to develop a CBCPBE model for RCPA sport events. During this process, it was hoped that it could be determined which items would contribute to brand equity by looking at five specific dimensions: quality, preference, social influence, sustainability, and leadership (as proposed by the Baalbaki (2012) CBBE model). This was accomplished by looking at the race experiences of female triathletes at branded and non-branded triathlon events.

Using the model proposed by Baalbaki (2012) as a guide for the methodology, a quantitative approach was followed to collect the required data. Following intensive descriptive analysis of the data collected, Confirmatory Factor Analysis was used to test the baseline model. The results of this analysis were used to further refine the model, arriving at the new CBCPBE model for RCPA sport events. It can thus be concluded that the research study succeeded in its aim and objectives, and that the study successfully developed an acceptable CBCPBE model, given the data, for RCPA sport events, whilst establishing the unique items which would contribute to each dimension of brand equity. In addition, a general consumer profile of female triathletes was developed.

The research conducted during this study has led to a better understanding of the concept of CBCPBE, in addition to the unique needs and perceptions of female triathletes. Interesting and unexpected results from the data collected have opened up a substantial amount of scope for future research which will contribute to the understanding of the female perspective of brands, which will hopefully not only be restricted to the sport industry. Important revelations regarding brand loyalty (or the lack thereof) can be utilised by sport event brands to ensure that they continue to provide value to their diverse range of consumers. Furthermore, the contribution to knowledge made by this study should assist RCPA sport events in determining their own contributors to brand equity.

To conclude, brand equity (as defined in Chapter 3, Section 3.3) represents the promise that is made to consumers to meet their expectations and deliver value on a continuous basis. It is clear that the consumer should be the protagonist behind brand equity and their expectations should be central to the creation and delivery of this value. Thus, in order for all brands (not just RCPA sport event brands) to fulfil this promise, and to do so on a continuous basis, it has become imperative to consider brand equity from the consumer's point of view.

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APPENDIX A:

- DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT -

Resp.
no.

Dear Respondent

The purpose of the survey is to explore your current racing experiences at branded and non-branded triathlons and to determine what is important to you as a female triathlete when selecting events to compete in. The survey should not take you more than **10-15 minutes** to complete. This is an anonymous and confidential survey. You cannot be identified and the answers you provide will be used for research purposes only. The questions should be answered by placing a cross (**x**) in the specific block (there are no right or wrong answers).

Q1.   Have you participated in **branded and non-branded triathlon events*** during the 2015-2016 racing season?

****Branded events** *refer to those events presented under a specific name, symbol or design that identifies and differentiates the event from other events.* **Non-branded events** *refer to those events that are not differentiated or easily identifiable from other non-branded events as they are not presented under a specific name, symbol or design. Examples of branded events are Ironman®, Challenge or TriRock to name but a few. Non-branded events include smaller, regional or local triathlon events not presented by a specific event brand.*

Yes [1]	No [2]
➡ If you ticked **YES** please continue with **QUESTION 3** below.	➡ If you ticked **NO**, please continue with **QUESTION 2** below

Q2.   Have you participated in a **branded triathlon event*** during the 2015-2016 racing season?

*Branded events *refer to those events presented under a specific name, symbol or design that identifies and differentiates the event from other events. Examples of branded events are Ironman®, Challenge or TriRock to name but a few.*

Yes ¹	No ²
➔ If you ticked **YES** please continue with **QUESTION 5** below.	➔ If you ticked **NO**, thank you for your time. Please do not complete the rest of the questionnaire

Q3. Below are statements that relate to your **racing experience**s **at branded events as opposed to non-branded events**. Think of the **most recent branded event** you completed and then use the following scales to indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each statement.

Branded events refer to those events presented under a specific name, symbol or design that identifies and differentiates the event from other events. Non-branded events refer to those events that are not differentiated or easily identifiable from other non-branded events as they are not presented under a specific name, symbol or design. Examples of branded events are Ironman®, Challenge or TriRock to name but a few.

	Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
3.1	I know that when I participate in a branded event I can expect a consistent race experience.	1	2	3	4	5
3.2	I know that when I participate in a branded event the event will be run as advertised (within control of the event' organisers power)	1	2	3	4	5
3.3	The safety standard of the last branded event I participated in, was very high.	1	2	3	4	5
3.4	The last branded event I participated in, provided an easy to use race registration process.	1	2	3	4	5
3.5	The entry fee charged by the last branded event I participated in, offered value for money.	1	2	3	4	5
3.6	The last branded event I participated in, provided a unique race experience (such as personalised race bibs, well organised race briefings and good crowds).	1	2	3	4	5

3.7	The last branded event I participated in, provided appealing race "swag" (medals, t-shirts or other finisher items).	1	2	3	4	5
3.8	The referees that officiated the last branded event I participated in, enforced the course rules correctly.	1	2	3	4	5
3.9	The volunteers that worked at the last branded event I participated in, contributed positively to my racing experience.	1	2	3	4	5
3.10	The route layout of the last branded event I participated in was of a high quality.	1	2	3	4	5
3.11	The last branded event I participated in allowed me to interact with like-minded individuals.	1	2	3	4	5
3.12	The last branded event I participated in satisfied my competitive nature.	1	2	3	4	5
3.13	The last branded event I participated in allowed me sufficient social interaction on the course.	1	2	3	4	5
3.14	The last branded event I participated in used technology in such a manner that my race experience was improved.	1	2	3	4	5

Q4. Below are statements which relate to your **perceptions about branded events as opposed to non-branded events in which you have participated**. The questions relate to your social experiences at branded and non-branded events and the leadership shown at branded events. Think of the **most recent branded event** you completed and then use the following scales to indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each statement.

	Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	The social aspect of my triathlon racing					
4.1	Participating in branded events improve the way I am perceived by others.	1	2	3	4	5
4.2	Participating in branded events make a good impression on other people.	1	2	3	4	5
4.3	By participating in branded events I gain social approval.	1	2	3	4	5
4.4	By participating in branded events I feel more accepted in my social environment.	1	2	3	4	5
	Branded events provide me with a personal challenge.	1	2	3	4	5
	Leadership					
4.5	Branded events are leaders in their field.	1	2	3	4	5
4.6	Branded events contribute to society.	1	2	3	4	5
4.7	Branded events are successful in securing the support of the local community for the event.	1	2	3	4	5
4.8	Branded events have made a valuable contribution to the infrastructure (such as roads) required for the event.	1	2	3	4	5

Q5. Below are statements that relate to your **perception of brand elements which are important to you when selecting an event to participate in**. The questions deal with the quality of event, your race preferences regarding branded events and your preferences regarding the environment and sustainability. Use the following scales to indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each statement.

	Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree/ It is not important to me	Agree	Strongly Agree
	The quality of the event					
5.1	It is important to me that the event must be consistent in the quality it provides, every time I race it.	1	2	3	4	5
5.2	It is important to me that the quality of the event must be high.	1	2	3	4	5
	My race preferences					
5.3	A branded event, as opposed to a non-branded event, would be my first choice.	1	2	3	4	5
5.4	I prefer branded events as they are more exclusive than non-branded events.	1	2	3	4	5
	The environment and sustainability					
5.5	I prefer events which do not negatively affect the environment (environmentally safe).	1	2	3	4	5
5.6	I prefer events that are organised in such a manner that the environment is protected (environmentally responsible).	1	2	3	4	5

5.7	I prefer events whose activities do not use up or completely destroy natural resources so that the event may continue year after year (sustainable).	1	2	3	4	5
5.8	It is important to me that events protect the environment in which I race.	1	2	3	4	5

Q6.　When deciding on an event in which to participate, does the brand of the event play a role in your decision making process?

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

Q7.　Do you have a preferred brand of event when participating in triathlons?

Yes ¹	No ²
➤ If you ticked **YES** please continue with **QUESTION 8** below.	➤ If you ticked **NO**, please continue with **QUESTION 12**.

Q8.　Please indicate your preferred brand: _____

Q9.　Below are statements that relate to your **perception of your preferred brand of triathlon event**. Use the following scales to indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each statement.

	Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
9.1	I consider myself loyal to my preferred brand.	1	2	3	4	5
9.2	I will not participate in another brand's events if I am able to participate in my preferred brand's event.	1	2	3	4	5
9.3	I am committed to participating in my preferred brand's event.	1	2	3	4	5
9.4	I participate in my preferred brand's events on a recurring basis.	1	2	3	4	5
9.5	I am proud to be associated with my preferred brand.	1	2	3	4	5

Q10.   Are you considering participating in **different brand's event** within the next year?

1	2	3	4	5
Definitely not	Unlikely	Not right now	Perhaps	Definitely

Q11.   When considering which brand's event to enter is there any particular reason why you would choose one brand over another? For example, one brand might offer a single loop bike route whilst the other brand offers two loops.

1	2
Yes	No

If yes, please elaborate.

_____
_____

Q12.   Are you considering participating in a **different distance event** within the next year (365 days)?

1	2	3	4	5
Definitely not	Unlikely	Not right now	Perhaps	Definitely

Q13.   How **many races** have you competed in during the last twelve months? _____

Q14. On average, how many **hours** a week do you train?

0-3 hours	1
4-7 hours	2
8-11 hours	3
12-15 hours	4
More than 16 hours	5

Q15. How **long** have you been doing triathlons? _____ in years

Q16. In which of the following **performance categories** would you place yourself?

One-time participant	1
Weekend warrior	2
Dedicated participant	3
Serious age grouper	4
Top-level athlete	5

Q17. Are you a member of a triathlon club?

| 1 | 2 |
| Yes | No |

Q18. If yes, which one? _____

Q19. What is your nationality? _____

Q 20. Age (in years)

Under 18	1
18 – 30	2
31 – 40	3
41 – 50	4
51 – 60	5
Over 60	6

Male	Female
1	2

Q21.   Gender:

Thank you for your willingness to complete the survey.

APPENDIX B:

- FREQUENCY TABLES AND DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Table B1: Races competed in

Races competed in	Frequency	Valid percentage
One to three races	110	32.6%
Four to six races	128	38.0%
Seven or more races	99	29.4%
Total	337	100%

Table B2: Training hours per week

Training hours per week	Frequency	Valid Percent
0-3 hours	5	1.5%
4-7 hours	72	21.4%
8-11 hours	166	49.3%
12-15 hours	79	23.4%
More than 16 hours	15	4.5%
Total	337	100.0

Table B3: Participation in triathlon (in years)

Participation duration	Frequency	Valid Percent
Zero to three years	161	0.3
Four to six years	85	1.7
More than seven years	91	0.7
Total	298	100.0

Table B4: Performance categories

Performance categories	Frequency	Valid Percent
One-time participant	2	0.6
Weekend warrior	39	11.6
Dedicated participant	225	66.8
Serious age grouper	68	20.2
Top-level athlete	3	0.9
Total	337	100.0

Table B5: Triathlon club membership

Triathlon club membership	Frequency	Valid Percent
Yes	230	68.3
No	107	31.8
Total	337	100.0

Table B6: Nationality

Nationality	Frequency	Valid Percent
North America	220	58.36
Australia and New Zealand	27	7.16
European countries	35	9.28
Canada	15	3.98
South and Central Americas	5	1.33
South Africa	3	0.80
Asian countries	6	1.59
Caucasian	23	6.10
Mixed race	1	0.27
Prefer not to say	2	0.53
Total	337	100.0

Table B7: Age (in years)

Age (in years)	Frequency	Valid Percent
Under 18	0	0.0
18 – 30	38	11.3
31 - 40	104	30.9
41 - 50	119	35.3
51 - 60	62	18.4
Over 60	14	4.2
Total	337	100.0

Table B8: Gender

Gender	Frequency	Valid Percent
Female	337	100
Male	0	0
Total	337	100.0

Table B9: Participation in branded and unbranded triathlon events

Participation in both branded and unbranded triathlon events	Frequency	Valid Percent
Yes	337	100
No	0	0
Total	337	100.0

Table B10: Racing experience – consistent experience

Racing experience	Frequency	Valid Percent
Strongly disagree	4	1.2
Disagree	14	4.2
Neither agree nor disagree	40	11.9
Agree	192	57.0
Strongly agree	87	25.8
Total	337	100.0

Table B11: Racing experience – run as advertised

Run as advertised	Frequency	Valid Percent
Strongly disagree	4	1.2
Disagree	10	3.0
Neither agree nor disagree	29	8.6
Agree	207	61.4
Strongly agree	87	25.8
Total	337	100.0

Table B12: Racing experience – safety standards

Safety standards	Frequency	Valid Percent
Strongly disagree	3	0.9
Disagree	8	2.4
Neither agree nor disagree	20	5.9
Agree	177	52.5
Strongly agree	129	38.3
Total	337	100.0

Table B13: Racing experience – Race registration process

Race registration process	Frequency	Valid Percent
Strongly disagree	2	0.6
Disagree	8	2.4
Neither agree nor disagree	8	2.4
Agree	189	56.1
Strongly agree	130	38.6
Total	337	100.0

Table B14: Racing experience – Value for money

Value for money	Frequency	Valid Percent
Strongly disagree	9	2.7
Disagree	74	22.0
Neither agree nor disagree	116	34.4
Agree	108	32.0
Strongly agree	30	8.9
Total	337	100.0

Table B15: Racing experience – Unique race experience

Unique racing experience	Frequency	Valid Percent
Strongly disagree	4	1.2
Disagree	16	4.7
Neither agree nor disagree	50	14.8
Agree	179	53.1
Strongly agree	88	26.1
Total	337	100.0

Table B16: Racing experience – Appealing race "swag"

Appealing race swag	Frequency	Valid Percent
Strongly disagree	6	1.8
Disagree	21	6.2
Neither agree nor disagree	41	12.2
Agree	182	54.0
Strongly agree	87	25.8
Total	337	100.0

Table B17: Racing experience – Referees

Referees	Frequency	Valid Percent
Strongly disagree	4	1.2
Disagree	26	7.7
Neither agree nor disagree	84	24.9
Agree	161	47.8
Strongly agree	62	18.4
Total	337	100.0

Table B18: Racing experience – Volunteers

Volunteers	Frequency	Valid Percent
Strongly disagree	3	0.9
Disagree	5	1.5
Neither agree nor disagree	16	4.7
Agree	125	37.1
Strongly agree	188	55.8
Total	337	100.0

Table B19: Racing experience – Route layout

Route layout	Frequency	Valid Percent
Strongly disagree	3	0.9
Disagree	24	7.1
Neither agree nor disagree	30	8.9
Agree	188	55.8
Strongly agree	92	27.3
Total	337	100.0

Table B20: Racing experience – Interaction with like-minded individuals

Interaction with like-minded individuals	Frequency	Valid Percent
Strongly disagree	1	0.3
Disagree	7	2.1
Neither agree nor disagree	34	10.1
Agree	185	54.9
Strongly agree	110	32.6
Total	337	100.0

Table B21: Racing experience – Satisfied competitive nature

Satisfied competitive nature	Frequency	Valid Percent
Strongly disagree	1	0.3
Disagree	7	2.1
Neither agree nor disagree	34	10.1
Agree	185	54.9
Strongly agree	110	32.6
Total	337	100.0

Table B22: Racing experience – Sufficient social interaction

Sufficient social interaction	Frequency	Valid Percent
Strongly disagree	2	0.6
Disagree	21	6.2
Neither agree nor disagree	75	22.3
Agree	157	46.6
Strongly agree	82	24.3
Total	337	100.0

Table B23: Racing experience – Use of technology

Use of technology	Frequency	Valid Percent
Strongly disagree	3	0.9
Disagree	31	9.2
Neither agree nor disagree	137	40.7
Agree	129	38.3
Strongly agree	37	11.0
Total	337	100.0

Table B24: Perceptions of branded events – Improve others' perception of self

Improve others' perception of self	Frequency	Valid Percent
Strongly disagree	26	7.7
Disagree	72	21.4
Neither agree nor disagree	132	39.2
Agree	81	24.0
Strongly agree	26	7.7
Total	337	100.0

Table B25: Perceptions of branded events – Participation makes a good impression

Participation makes a good impression	Frequency	Valid Percent
Strongly disagree	18	5.3
Disagree	51	15.1
Neither agree nor disagree	133	39.5
Agree	110	32.6
Strongly agree	25	7.4
Total	337	100.0

Table B26: Perceptions of branded events – Participation gains social approval

Participation gains social approval	Frequency	Valid Percent
Strongly disagree	26	7.7
Disagree	83	24.6
Neither agree nor disagree	133	39.5
Agree	75	22.3
Strongly agree	20	5.9
Total	337	100.0

Table B27: Perceptions of branded events – Feel more accepted in social environment

Feel more accepted in social environment	Frequency	Valid Percent
Strongly disagree	40	11.9
Disagree	93	27.6
Neither agree nor disagree	139	41.2
Agree	47	13.9
Strongly agree	18	5.3
Total	337	100.0

Table B28: Perceptions of branded events – Personal challenge

Personal challenge	Frequency	Valid Percent
Strongly disagree	12	3.6
Disagree	19	5.6
Neither agree nor disagree	76	22.6
Agree	165	49.0
Strongly agree	65	19.3
Total	337	100.0

Table B29: Perceptions of branded events – Leaders in their field

Leaders in their field	Frequency	Valid Percent
Strongly disagree	6	1.8
Disagree	28	8.3
Neither agree nor disagree	107	31.8
Agree	159	47.2
Strongly agree	37	11.0
Total	337	100.0

Table B30: Perceptions of branded events – Contribute to society

Contribute to society	Frequency	Valid Percent
Strongly disagree	3	0.9
Disagree	43	12.8
Neither agree nor disagree	140	41.5
Agree	130	38.6
Strongly agree	21	6.2
Total	337	100.0

Table B31: Perceptions of branded events – Support of local community

Support of local community	Frequency	Valid Percent
Strongly disagree	2	0.6
Disagree	12	3.6
Neither agree nor disagree	89	26.4
Agree	197	58.5
Strongly agree	37	11.0
Total	337	100.0

Table B32: Perceptions of branded events – Contribution to local infrastructure

Contribution to local infrastructure	Frequency	Valid Percent
Strongly disagree	8	2.4
Disagree	72	21.4
Neither agree nor disagree	172	51.0
Agree	72	21.4
Strongly agree	13	3.9
Total	337	100.0

Table B33: Perceptions of brand elements – consistent quality

Consistent quality	Frequency	Valid Percent
Disagree	3	0.9
Neither agree nor disagree	24	7.1
Agree	174	51.6
Strongly agree	136	40.4
Total	337	100.0

Table B34: Perceptions of brand elements – high quality

High quality	Frequency	Valid Percent
Disagree	2	0.6
Neither agree nor disagree	17	5.0
Agree	168	49.9
Strongly agree	150	44.5
Total	337	100.0

Table B35: Perceptions of brand elements – first choice

First choice	Frequency	Valid Percent
Strongly disagree	11	3.3
Disagree	62	18.4
Neither agree nor disagree	137	40.7
Agree	98	29.1
Strongly agree	29	8.6
Total	337	100.0

Table B36: Perceptions of brand elements – exclusivity

Exclusivity	Frequency	Valid Percent
Strongly disagree	38	11.3
Disagree	127	37.7
Neither agree nor disagree	121	35.9
Agree	36	10.7
Strongly agree	15	4.5
Total	337	100.0

Table B37: Perceptions of brand elements – environmentally safe

Environmentally safe	Frequency	Valid Percent
Disagree	5	1.5
Neither agree nor disagree	39	11.6
Agree	179	53.1
Strongly agree	114	33.8
Total	337	100.0

Table B38: Perceptions of brand elements – environmentally responsible

Environmentally responsible	Frequency	Valid Percent
Disagree	3	0.9
Neither agree nor disagree	33	9.8
Agree	186	55.2
Strongly agree	115	34.1
Total	337	100.0

Table B39: Perceptions of brand elements – sustainable

Sustainable	Frequency	Valid Percent
Disagree	3	0.9
Neither agree nor disagree	19	5.6
Agree	155	46.0
Strongly agree	160	47.5
Total	337	100.0

Table B40: Perceptions of brand elements – protect environment

Protect environment	Frequency	Valid Percent
Disagree	4	1.2
Neither agree nor disagree	24	7.1
Agree	171	50.7
Strongly agree	138	40.9
Total	337	100.0

Table B41: Brand's role in decision making process

Brand's role in decision making process	Frequency	Valid Percent
Strongly disagree	18	5.3
Disagree	76	22.6
Neither agree nor disagree	97	28.8
Agree	123	36.5
Strongly agree	23	6.8
Total	337	100.0

Table B42: Preferred brand

Preferred brand	Frequency	Valid Percent
Yes	121	35.9
No	216	64.1
Total	337	100.0

Table B43: Preferred brand - names

Preferred brand	Frequency
Ironman	95
AA Sport	1
Delmo Sports	3
Elite Energy	1
Playtri	1
HITS	1
Rev3	7
Challenge	3
ITU	1
Oton	1
Outlaw	1
RaceHawk Races (Florida)	1
Ramblin Rose (offered in North Carolina USA)	1
Subaru	1
Tri Family	1
Ultraman	1
Ultramax	1
USAT	2
Xterra	1
Total	124

Table B44: Preferred brand – loyal to preferred brand

Loyal to preferred brand	Frequency	Valid Percent
Strongly disagree	2	1.7
Disagree	11	9.1
Neither agree nor disagree	43	35.5
Agree	55	45.5
Strongly agree	10	8.3
Total	121	100.0

Table B45: Preferred brand – No participation in other brand's event

No participation in other brand's event	Frequency	Valid Percent
Strongly disagree	8	6.6
Disagree	50	41.3
Neither agree nor disagree	27	22.3
Agree	29	24.0
Strongly agree	7	5.8
Total	121	100.0

Table B46: Preferred brand – Committed to brand

Committed to brand	Frequency	Valid Percent
Strongly disagree	2	1.7
Disagree	24	19.8
Neither agree nor disagree	53	43.8
Agree	34	28.1
Strongly agree	8	6.6
Total	121	100.0

Table B47: Preferred brand – Participate on a recurring basis

Participate on a recurring basis	Frequency	Valid Percent
Strongly disagree	1	0.8
Disagree	8	6.6
Neither agree nor disagree	17	14.0
Agree	82	67.8
Strongly agree	13	10.7
Total	121	100.0

Table B48: Preferred brand – Proud to be associated with brand

Proud to be associated with brand	Frequency	Valid Percent
Disagree	2	1.7
Neither agree nor disagree	16	13.2
Agree	79	65.3
Strongly agree	24	19.8
Total	121	100.0

Table B49: Participate in another brand's event

Participate in another brand's event	Frequency	Valid Percent
Unlikely	4	3.3
Not right now	14	11.6
Perhaps	53	43.8
Definitely	50	41.3
Total	121	100.0

Table B50: Reason for choosing one brand over another

Preferred brand	Frequency	Valid Percent
Yes	92	76.0
No	29	24.0
Total	121	100.0

Table B51: Participate in different distance

Participate in different distance	Frequency	Valid Percent
Definitely not	2	0.6
Unlikely	17	5.0
Not right now	30	8.9
Perhaps	101	30.0
Definitely	187	55.5
Total	337	100.0

Table B52: Reason for considering one brand over another

Reason for considering one brand over another	Frequency	Valid Percent
A local brand changed timing companies. The new company takes down the timing mat before athletes are finished-i cancelled my upcoming race with them and I may choose a different brand now.	1	.3
Attention to detail and safety	1	.3
Certain brands do a great job with marking courses and also closing the course to traffic. Safety is paramount and smaller, non-branded races don't seem to have that kind of pull in my area.	1	.3
Consistency	1	.3
Cost of race, travel distance and costs associated with travel.	1	.3
Cost of registration and the cost of the hotels.	1	.3
Cost, course cut-off, location	1	.3
Course and location are more important than brand	1	.3
Course and price point	1	.3
Course design	1	.3
Course is always a choice I use as well as distance and swag	1	.3
Course layout, aid stations available and positive energy of the volunteer and spectators	1	.3
Course length, location of swim (pool vs OWS), reputation, charitable organisation being supported by race proceeds.	1	.3
Crowd support and level of competition / number of competitors	1	.3
Date of race	1	.3
Distance of event and course - at my level, I do not like a hilly bike course	1	.3
Early season races	1	.3
Ease and layout of course	1	.3
Entry fee	1	.3
Hilly route, laps for the run instead of one long loop	1	.3
I choose races based upon time of year, the location, race venue and courses.	1	.3
I chose Ironman 140.6 distant races because of the number of people participating and the volunteers	1	.3

I don't race on Sunday, so having Saturday races affects how I choose. Location is also important. I will travel far for my A race, but other races I like to be able to drive to.	1	.3
I know the course, the organisers and trust them to give me a good race experience.	1	.3
I like the high quality of the IRONMAN and USAT events.	1	.3
I like to try new races.	1	.3
I look for better swim starts. Rolling starts clean water. Lakes without history of cancelled swims.	1	.3
I prefer branded events over non-branded because they typically have a higher participation rate. In my experience the more athletes that are racing the more organised the event is, the race day experience is better and the courses are typically one or two loops instead of three.	1	.3
I prefer events relatively close to home, within driving distance. I will also participate in fundraising events.	1	.3
I prefer Ironman events above all else. I even have an mdot tattoo. The events are reliable, well run, bring out great crowds and great competition. It feels good to be part of that brand and what that brand has created. I earned AWA within the brand and have the goal of making it to Kona. I have raced other brands, such as Rev3 and have done local no name races. When challenge took over Rev3 quassy, the race was disappointing compared to the way Rev ran it. If ironman took it over, I would be thrilled. It is a local race for us and a very challenging one, which makes it a great warm up for IMLP.	1	.3
I prefer lake swims and not "point to point" races.	1	.3
I prefer single loops or out and backs. I prefer flatter bike courses because I live in FL and it's hard to train hills here. I also prefer ocean swims to lake swims	1	.3
I prefer that an Ironman race only has one distance at each race. For example, the local 70.3's in MI have Olympic, sprint, and even 140.6 races going at the same time. I like the focus of one race for one event and the simplicity that it provides. I also like high participation numbers, especially for long distance races. The energy of 2400 athletes sharing one experience is so much more exciting than only seeing/interacting with a handful of athletes over the course of a race.	1	.3
I race Ironman because I am guaranteed a high quality race that is well supported. I also race Lifetime Tri for shorter races, for the same reasons. They are high quality and well supported.	1	.3
I tend to enjoy participating in events that I have not completed before. If another brand's race was presented on the same day I may run that one year.	1	.3
IRONMAN events consistently provide top notch events.	1	.3
It is often logistically easier to get to smaller local triathlon races rather than Ironman races. If there were more local Ironman races in my area I would do them.	1	.3
Less congestion, better race fees, good swag	1	.3
level of safety and road closures, if its a timed event which you get results for and the goodie bag :-)	1	.3
Location based decision	1	.3

Location or date would be a factor	1	.3
Location, location, location	1	.3
Location, travel/hotel needs	1	.3
More consistent with measuring distances for each leg	1	.3
Multiple loops vs out and back for bike routes invite increased risk for injury on turns	1	.3
Name recognition	1	.3
Number of participants	1	.3
Organisation of event and safety features of events	1	.3
Points	1	.3
Prefer rolling swim start, closed bike course, cool gear, vacation spot, no 2 loop swim, organised transition area, prepared roads (rocks swept, potholes repaired	1	.3
Price	1	.3
Price and location are usually what determines my races.	1	.3
Price of non-branded events is much lower (e.g. $750 for an Ironman-branded race versus $425 for a locally run Iron-distance event)	1	.3
Price, course difficulty, weather, location	1	.3
Price. I love Ironman but it's getting too expensive and oversaturated. I'm hoping Hits or another brand will come out with more races so there will be more competition among the races and more races/locations/courses to choose from.	1	.3
Quality of event and brand awareness. Also this brand has the widest choices of events	1	.3
Race course and ease for spectators	1	.3
Race course ie bike loops and run loops impact my decision. I prefer out and backs for the most part. Location. Distance from home, and price of accommodations place a factor as well. The other decision is time of year and how it impacts training and work/life balance.	1	.3
Race date - brand doesn't matter when I am trying to fit in B races on a particular schedule	1	.3
Race transportation. General organisation. Dates and location	1	.3
Rev3, in my opinion, pays more attention to the racers and their families and seek to provide a positive, safe race experience for participants and spectators.	1	.3
Road conditions. Past race experiences	1	.3
Run course # of loops, single transition area	1	.3
Safety and support - some brands offer safer, closed routes and better course support	1	.3
Safety of the course	1	.3
Single or double lap runs and single loop bike is preferred	1	.3
Some brands allow you to have family in the finish shoot. Some have better swag than others, better post race food etc.	1	.3
Some routes offer a unique experience while riding through the area which helps get through the painful distances	1	.3
Swag and swim course	1	.3
Swag, course support and volunteers	1	.3
Swag, location, safety	1	.3
The course itself is the most important factor. Weather, climbing , humidity etc	1	.3

The course layout such as flat vs rolling hills and also race date and location.	1	.3
The Ironman races are expensive...so much so that it limits the number of races I get to do annually.	1	.3
The local race brands all differ in course preparation and utilisation. I prefer the brand locally that I know holds very consistent races and course structure and also supports the local community.	1	.3
The safety of the course, such as how the swim is organised or how the bike routes are (open road, partially closed road) would significantly sway my decision in which event to participate in.	1	.3
Time of year, location, course	1	.3
Transportation to race and available hotels close to venue.	1	.3
Trying to qualify for the world champs or it can be just location of race that is the deciding factor	1	.3
Two lap swim or mass start swims	1	.3
Wetsuit strippers at any race are important to me!	1	.3
Would choose Ironman brand for the Kona slots and the familiarity of most NA courses. I will use local or non-branded races as tune up and training mostly because they are less expensive and shorter travel time.	1	.3
Total	92	100.0

APPENDIX C:

- ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE -

UNISA

30 May 2016

Ref#: 2016_CEMS_BM_040
Mrs Petri Bester
Student #:47865571

Dear Mrs Petri Bester,

Decision: Ethics Approval

Name: Mrs Petri Bester – Principal Researcher (BESTEP1@UNISA.AC.ZA: 082 837 9361)
Proposal: A consumer-based brand equity model for recurring sport events.
Supervisor: Prof Johan Strydom and Prof Sharon Rudansky-Kloppers (Staff #: 194429 and 1983385)
Qualification: Postgraduate degree

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the Department of Business Management Research Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Final approval is granted from 30 May 2016 to 29 May 2018.

For full approval: The application was reviewed in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics by the Department of Business Management on 30 May 2016.
The proposed research may now commence with the proviso that

1) The researcher/s will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics

2) Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study, as well as changes in the methodology, should be communicated in writing to the Department of Business Management Ethics Review Committee. An amended application could be requested if there are substantial changes from the existing proposal, especially if those changes affect any of the study-related risks for the research participants.

3) The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study

Kind regards,

Dr Thea Visser
Deputy Chairperson of the sub-unit RERC
Department of Business Management
visset@unisa.ac.za

Prof Thomas Mogale
Executive Dean
College of Economic and Management Sciences

University of South Africa
Preller Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane
PO Box 392, UNISA 0003 South Africa

Open Rubric

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DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS MANAGEMENT RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

2 November 2016

Ref # 2016_CEMS_BM_040
Mrs Petri Bester
Student # 47965571

Dear Mrs Petri Bester,

Decision: Approval of amendments

Name: Mrs Petri Bester – Principal Researcher (BESTEP1@UNISA.AC.ZA; 082 837 9381)
Proposal: A consumer-based brand equity model for recurring sport events.
Supervisor: Prof Johan Strydom and Prof Sharon Rudansky Kloppers (Staff #: 194429 and 1983365)
Qualification: Postgraduate degree

Thank you for informing the Department of Business Management Research Ethics Review Committee about the amendments in the approved application for the above mentioned research. This memo serves as confirmation that the Department of Business Management Research Ethics Review Committee approved the amendments on the 2nd of November 2016. As this application was approved on 30th of May 2016, the time period for final approval granted will change to **2 November 2016 until 1 November 2018**.

Kind regards,

D. Visser

Dr Thea Visser
Deputy Chairperson of the sub-unit RERC
Department of Business Management
vissed@unisa.ac.za

UNISA

DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS MANAGEMENT RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

2 November 2016

Ref #: 2016_CEMS_BV_049
Mrs Petri Bester
Student #: 42935571

Dear Mrs Petri Bester,

Decision: Approval of amendments

Name: Mrs Petri Bester – Principal Researcher (BESTEP1@UNISA.AC.ZA; 062 037 9904)
Proposal: A consumer-based brand equity model for recurring sport events.
Supervisor: Prof Johan Strydom and Prof Sharon Rudansky-Kloppers (Staff #: 194429 and 1983365)
Qualification: Postgraduate degree

Thank you for informing the Department of Business Management Research Ethics Review Committee about the amendments in the approved application for the above mentioned research. This memo serves as confirmation that the Department of Business Management Research Ethics Review Committee approved the amendments on the 2nd of November 2016. As this application was approved on 30th of May 2016, the time period for final approval granted will change to 2 November 2016 until 1 November 2018.

Kind regards,

D. Visser.

Dr Thea Visser
Deputy Chairperson of the sub-unit RERC
Department of Business Management
vissed@unisa.ac.za

Approved
Valid until 31 December 2019

Student
05/12/2016

APPENDIX D:

- EDITOR'S CERTIFICATE -

Dear Ms Bester

This letter is to record that I have completed a language edit of your thesis entitled "A consumer-based, consumer-perceived brand equity model for recurring, participative sport events: a female triathlete perspective".

The edit that I carried out included the following:

-Spelling	-Grammar
-Vocabulary	-Punctuation
-Pronoun matches	-Word usage
-Sentence structure	-Correct acronyms (matching your supplied list)
-Formatting	-Captions and labels for figures and tables

-Spot checking of ten in-text references

The edit that I carried out excluded the following:

-Content
-Correctness or truth of information (unless obvious)
-Correctness/spelling of specific technical terms and words (unless obvious)
-Correctness/spelling of unfamiliar names and proper nouns (unless obvious)
-Correctness of specific formulae or symbols, or illustrations.

Yours sincerely

Retha Burger

4 February 2019