

## THE IMPACT OF EMOTIONAL ATTACHMENT ON PURCHASE INTENTIONS IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN LUXURY STREETWEAR INDUSTRY

Tasha Tseng, Bryce Baker, Cailin O'Brien & Pragasen Pillay\*

### ABSTRACT

Over the last decade, luxury streetwear consumption has increased worldwide, particularly among Millennials and Generation Z. The high-end streetwear brands have continually contributed to economic growth as it is a global multi-billion-dollar industry and South Africa is no exception to these trends. The purpose of this study is to determine what factors affect the purchase intention of these streetwear brands and develop insights that are unique to the South African landscape. Specifically, this research investigates the impact of personality factors, social media influence and brand experience on customers' purchase intentions in the luxury streetwear fashion industry, mediated by emotional attachment.

Descriptive quantitative research was conducted on customers between the ages of 18 to 38 in Cape Town: an online questionnaire was distributed among 150 respondents. The results suggested that all the relationships among the above-mentioned variables can be said to be influential besides the relationship between social media and emotional attachment. Therefore, personality factors and brand experience increase consumer emotional attachment towards the tested brands and thus increase purchase intention.

It was found that personality factors influence emotional attachment as consumers feel a sense of status and superiority when wearing luxury streetwear brands. Furthermore, a good brand experience causes consumers to have positive emotions towards the brand. On the basis of these findings, a number of recommendations are made.

### — Ms T Tseng

University of Cape Town  
School of Management Studies  
Rondebosch  
Cape Town  
7701  
South Africa  
Tel: +86 136 1267 9607  
E mail: tsengtasha@gmail.com

### — Mr B Baker

University of Cape Town  
School of Management Studies  
Rondebosch  
Cape Town  
7701  
South Africa  
Tel: +27 (0)78 472 4475  
E mail: Bakerbryce0@gmail.com

### — Ms C O'Brien

University of Cape Town  
School of Management Studies  
Rondebosch  
Cape Town  
7701  
South Africa  
Tel: +27 (0)72 017 4733  
E mail: cailinaobrien@gmail.com

### — Dr P Pillay\*

University of Cape Town  
School of Management Studies  
Rondebosch  
Cape Town  
7701  
South Africa  
Tel: +27 (0)21 650 5909  
E mail: P.Pillay@uct.ac.za  
\* Corresponding Author

**ARTICLE INFO**

Received April 2020

Revised June 2020

Accepted November 2020

**KEYWORDS**

luxury streetwear, emotional attachment, purchase intentions, Cape Town

influenced by peers or social media (Mittal, 2018).

**PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Khan et al. (2016) argued that emotional attachment does have an impact on brand loyalty; however, they found that some corporate branding strategies have no significance in driving emotional attachment. Grisaffe and Nguyen (2011) found that emotional attachment results in repurchase intentions and ultimately brand loyalty, although limited, which variables they used as drivers for emotional attachment. O' Cass and McEwan (2004), Brakus, Schmitt and Zarantonello (2009), Ahmad, Salman and Ashiq (2015) all found that valid drivers of emotional attachment are personality factors, brand experience and social media influence; however, they did not test it as a mediating effect. Therefore, the research question that guides this investigation is:

*Does emotional attachment impact purchase intentions of consumers in the luxury streetwear fashion industry?*

The objectives of the research were:

- To determine the impact of the personality factors on emotional attachment to luxury streetwear.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of social media on emotional attachment to luxury streetwear.
- To establish the impact brand experience has on emotional attachment to luxury streetwear.
- To examine whether emotional attachment influences purchase intentions toward luxury streetwear.
- To develop a model which examines the effect of emotional attachment to luxury streetwear
- To quantify whether the overall model is structurally sound

**INTRODUCTION**

The luxury streetwear fashion industry is growing at a substantial rate (Khan, Rasheed, Islam, Ahmed and Rizwan, 2016). Internationally renowned brands like Nike and Adidas are the leading brands in athletic footwear and apparel on a global level. Individuals who are interested in and use streetwear fashion are often associated with being part of a specific aesthetic group known as 'sneakerheads' (defined as a 'sports shoe enthusiast' originating in the 1990s) (Oxford Dictionaries, n.d.) and 'hypebeasts' alike (defined as a 'person who is devoted to acquiring fashionable items') (Sulima, 2018).

Thus, customers regularly find themselves purchasing items from brands that fulfil their wants, not necessarily their needs, because brands with prominent reputations provide benefits such as a sense of belonging, social position/status and identity confirmation in the customer perception (Bills and Tabot, 2017). Advances in technology allow brands the opportunity to make use of social media in marketing campaigns or sponsorship agreements with celebrities, professional sports teams and influencers, many of which become brand ambassadors (Statista, 2017).

This research is of practical importance considering that these luxury streetwear fashion brands are worn and purchased frequently by customers who are interested in fashion, predominantly Millennials and Generation Z whose fashion sense is often inspired and

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Theoretical framework

Understanding the purchase intentions for luxury fashion brands in a South African context is the basis for the objectives and aim of this study. To fully comprehend the purchase intentions of consumers of luxury streetwear fashion brands and the factors within the emerging South African market landscape, previous research and its theoretical groundwork relating to these topics is presented. Although these constructs have been studied within the western context, there has been little research within the South African luxury streetwear industry (Bills and Tabot, 2017).

### Review of prior literature and gaps in the literature

Clothing can be considered a form of nonverbal communication, allowing consumers to engage with products and brands that mirror their self-concept to represent their personal identity (Rahman, 2014). Fashion products are more heavily differentiated than products in other industries because fashion sells an identity, which can be unique or allow for membership of specific social or reference groups.

South Africa has an environment for the streetwear movement to grow and dominate the South African fashion industry due to its unique range and variety of cultures nuanced by a vocal youth culture and disparate subcultures which differ from western cultures (Bills and Tabot, 2017; Mkhondo, 2018). Thus, significant value lies in research specifically related to South African consumers and the current economic significance of luxury brands in South Africa (Bills and Tabot, 2017).

The South African market has been transformed over the past decades as individuals have moved from the lower class to the middle class. Customers who were previously economically disadvantaged now have the opportunity to be exposed to luxury brands and acknowledge parts of their personality they have not yet

explored and have been unable to satisfy (Bills and Tabot, 2017). This previously dormant consumer segment has become active with increased purchasing power (Bills and Tabot, 2017). Furthermore, this transformation of the South Africa market has resulted in more consumers with greater access to technology and information about luxury brands. This provides a basis for the examination of the construct of social media influence to determine its effect on emotional attachment and ultimately on purchase intention (Bills and Tabot, 2017).

The construct of brand experience differs from affective, evaluative and associative constructs and is instead related to specific feelings, cognitions, sensations and behavioural responses which are triggered by brand-related stimuli (Burkas, Schmitt and Zarantonello, 2009; Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975; Murphy and Zajonc, 1993). This construct looks at alternative factors that would inspire purchase intentions for consumers that are not necessarily affected by personality factors and social media influence when it comes to the luxury fashion industry. The brand experience construct is relevant as it aims to account for consumers whose positive brand experience causes emotional attachment towards the brand and thus, purchase intention and repurchase intention. This study focuses on the following luxury streetwear fashion brands: Nike, Adidas, Puma, Fila, Kappa and Redbat (Redbat is a proudly South African streetwear brand).

### Purchase intention

Purchase intent refers to the objective of obtaining a luxury brand, which acts as an indicator of purchasing behaviour and thus the likelihood of a consumer to purchase a product/brand (Bills and Tabot, 2017; Theng, Parsons and Yap, 2013). Consumer Culture theory is used as a framework to describe purchase intentions. It asserts that consumers use products as a tool to modify their identities to match their own projections of what their desired self is (Bills and Tabot, 2017). Consumer Culture is conceived in essentialist terms as a homogenous structure (e.g., way of life or

shared values) that shapes the behaviour of its members (Bajde, 2014). However, it does not casually determine behaviour but rather “frames consumers’ horizons of conceivable action, feeling, and thought, making certain patterns of behaviour and sense-making interpretations more likely than others” (Arnould and Thompson, 2005:Page 869).

Consumer Culture theory proposes that consumers have purchase intentions of specific fashion products or brands as a way of creating an identity that represents the reference group’s collective identity that the style relates to. Emotional attachment offers special promise to be an effective basis of loyal brand repurchasing (Grisaffe and Nguyen, 2011).

### **Customer emotional attachment**

In the context of marketing literature, customer emotional attachment is considered a crucial construct that describes the power and vigour that bonds customers with the brand. As a result, this bond influences customer behaviour and thus purchase intention (Arnould and Thompson, 2005; Bills and Tabot, 2017). Brand identity includes attributes that the brand or enterprise identifies with, differentiating itself from other brands or enterprises. Brand identity includes associations that organisations promise to their clients – an identity their products offer and a value proposition that promises benefits (emotional, functional and self-expressive), to stimulate relations with the customer based on feelings and their personal resonance with the brand (Bilotti, 2011). Companies have been increasingly focused on finding significant ways to create strong emotional brand connections with consumers (Malar, Krohmer, Hoyer and Nyffenegger, 2011), which is motivated by findings which indicate that strong customer emotional brand attachment results in increased repurchase intent (Malar et al., 2011).

### **Brand experience**

Brand experience is a concept in which sensations, cognitions, feelings and behavioural responses are evoked by brand-related stimuli

(Brakus, Schmitt and Zarantello, 2009). Brand-related stimuli are comprised of the brand’s packaging, communications, environments, identity and design (Brakus, Schmitt and Zarantonello, 2009). For the purpose of this study; brand experience focuses on product and consumption experience as streetwear fashion is experiential. When consumers interact with products, they form judgements, preferences, attitudes and purchase intents (Brakus et al., 2009).

Product experience can be direct (physical contact with the product) or indirect (virtual representation or advertising of the product). Consumption experiences are multidimensional as they arise in a variety of settings, both directly and indirectly. When consumers shop, buy and consume products, the experience is direct. Indirect experiences occur when consumers are exposed to advertising, marketing communications, and in recent years, communications through social media (Brakus et al., 2009). If consumers encounter a positive product and consumption experience of a specific brand, it culminates into a positive brand experience, the opposite holds true if the experience is negative. The accumulation of indirect and direct experiences of the product and consumption process form part of the brand experience as a whole (Brakus et al., 2009).

### **Social media influence**

Social media in the fashion industry context refers to social networking websites and other online platforms that allow the fashion industry to connect with their customers while marketing their brand and products (Ahmad et al., 2015). Social media influence is a marketing term that describes an individual’s ability to affect other people’s thinking in an online social community (Rouse, 2011). Additionally, social media are used by brands and companies to analyse trends to anticipate future fashion behaviour (Ahmad et al., 2015).

Before the advent of social media, fashion was mostly presented through channels such as magazines and catwalk shows (Richardson,

2018), which were controlled by designers and magazine editors (Richardson, 2018). Social media platforms, specifically Instagram, allows for customers to choose what content they are exposed through internal algorithms and choice of what or who to follow which makes fashion more personalised, interactive and fluid, giving fashion brands alternative ways to connect with their core audience (Richardson, 2018).

### Customer personality factors

Personality traits are described as the inner psychological attributes that contribute to the individuality of humans and the way they respond to a variety of situations (Bills and Tabot, 2017). In this study, two personality factors are analysed: need for status or conspicuousness and the need for social comparison. Status consumption can be defined as “the motivational process by which individuals strive to improve their social standing through the conspicuous consumption of consumer products that confer and symbolise status both for the individual and surrounding significant others” (Visser, 2015:Page 1). Customers with the need for status or conspicuousness tend to have rivalry within the group they associate with or they want to mirror those in the group to attain more social status by demonstrating their economic position to others (Visser, 2015).

Individuals have an innate drive to have their opinions or abilities evaluated or externally validated (Bilotti, 2011). However, when objective sources for assessment are not available, such evaluation is only possible through social comparison (Bilotti, 2011). The process of social comparison considers how information about others relates to the self (Bilotti, 2011). Through the observation of others, people have the ability to observe themselves and, by transference, how they are perceived by others (Bilotti, 2011).

Organisational behaviour researchers and social psychologists have long investigated how people form impressions of others based on their fashion styles (Choi and Mattila, 2016). Findings by Choi and Mattila (2016) were that

clothing is an important aspect of impression formation, allowing others to make inferences about someone’s economic background, social status and worth.

Considering all the research that has been gathered and based on the constructs mentioned above, the following hypotheses were formed.

*H<sub>1</sub>: There is a positive relationship between personality factors and emotional attachment.*

*H<sub>2</sub>: There is a positive relationship between social media and emotional attachment.*

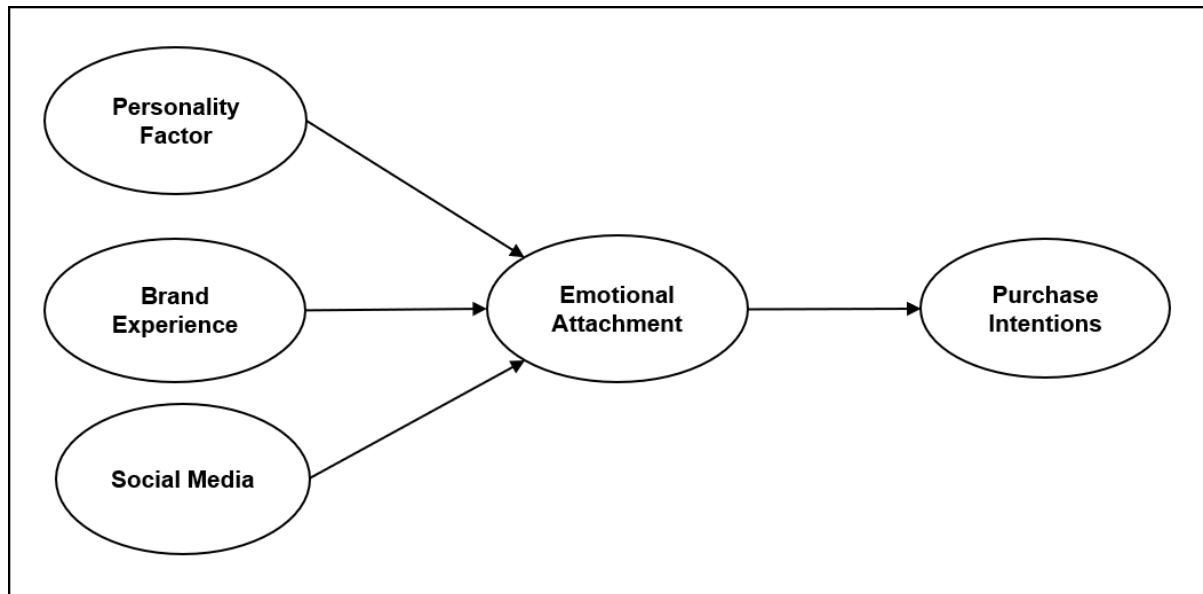
*H<sub>3</sub>: There is a positive relationship between brand experience and emotional attachment*

*H<sub>4</sub>: There is a positive relationship between emotional attachment and purchase intentions.*

## METHODOLOGY

### Research design and method

This study used a conclusive descriptive research design to investigate the five constructs identified by Khan et al. (2016) hypothesized model adapted to include elements which could influence consumers purchase intentions, Figure 1. Figure 1 shows a conceptual model, adapted from Khan et al. (2016), which acted as a guideline for the research conducted by this study. The constructs examined were as follows: personality factors, brand experience and social media influence, emotional attachment and purchase intentions. The study follows a descriptive approach to detail market characteristics in the South African luxury streetwear fashion industry, namely, identifying which construct has the most influence on emotional attachment to describe drivers for consumer purchase intentions (Malhotra, 2010). This study analysed consumers’ evaluations of luxury streetwear fashion brands in South Africa to assess the degree of emotional attachment to these brands. Furthermore, the study assessed the influence that emotional attachment has on consumer purchase intentions.



SOURCE: (Khan et al., 2016), (O’Cass & McEwan, 2004), (Burkas, Schmitt & Zarantonello, 2009), (Ahmad, Salman & Ashiq, 2015), (Karaosmangolu, Bas & Zhang, 2011)

**FIGURE 1: THE ROLE OF EMOTIONAL ATTACHMENT AS A MEDIATOR FOR DETERMINING CONSUMER PURCHASE INTENTIONS**

This study followed a single cross-sectional design, collecting data from a single sample once (Malhotra, 2010). In a study conducted by Karaosmangolu, Bas and Zhang, (2011), the researchers adopted a similar research approach which proved instrumental in testing their emotional attachment construct and therefore was employed by this study. A similar study had been undertaken with a modified methodology, conducted by Khan et al. (2016), which studied the emotional attachment of fashion brands in Pakistan and the degree to which it influenced brand loyalty. This study expanded on the knowledge gathered by Karaosmangolu et al, (2011), and Khan et al. (2016), using the a modified version of the methodology employed by Khan et al. (2016) as it was applied in a South African context with new variables identified by Bills and Tabot, (2017), Burkas et al. (2009), Ahmad et al. (2015) and Karaosmangolu et al. (2011).

### Sampling

A convenience non-probability sampling approach was employed by this study because there was no formal sampling frame (Malhotra, 2010). The target population of this study was

18–38-year-olds in South Africa who wear luxury sportswear fashion brands as they have significant spending power (Jordaan, 2019). The bulk of respondents were from the University of Cape Town (UCT) because the study made use of convenience sampling. Convenience sampling is based on the assumption that members of the target population are homogenous. Thus, as UCT students reflect the type of consumer that these sportswear fashion brands appeal to, the UCT students make an excellent target audience (Etikan, Musa and Alkassim, 2016).

The study selected a younger age demographic based on the primary target market for these luxury streetwear fashion brands (Mittal, 2018). The sample size for this study consisted of 150 respondents. In a study conducted by Iacobucci (2009:Page 92), evidence was found that a sample size of 150 would “usually be sufficient for a convergent and proper solution” with regard to structural equation modelling (SEM) testing. Khan et al. (2016) used a sample size of 150 surveys and this principle guided the sample size for this study.

**TABLE 1: CRONBACH'S ALPHA SCORE OF SCALES**

Construct	No of Items	Type of Scale	Source	Cronbach Alpha
Personality Factors (2 dimensions)	6	5-point likert scale	(O'Cass & McEwan, 2004). (Zhang & Kim, 2015). (Bills & Tabot, 2017)	0.84-0.89
Brand experience (2 dimensions)	10	7-point likert scale	(Burkas, Schmitt & Zarantonello, 2009)	0.72-0.79
Social media Influence	7	5-point likert scale	(Ahmad, Salman & Ashiq, 2015)	0.7
Emotional attachment	3	7-point likert	(Karaosmangolu, Bas & Zhang, 2011)	0.93
Purchase Intentions	4	7-point likert	(Karaosmangolu, Bas & Zhang, 2011)	0.84

### Measurement and scaling

This paper used non-comparative (itemised rating) Likert scaling which was previously employed by Khan et al. (2016), Karaosmangolu et al. (2011) and Bills and Tabot, (2017). Table 1 summarises each construct in the model and how it was measured, along with the source of the scale (Refer to Appendix A). All scales that were adapted from Bills and Tabot, (2017), Karaosmangolu et al. (2011), Burkas et al., (2009) and Ahmad et al. (2015) displayed a good level of internal consistency reliability, with Cronbach alphas ranging from 0.7 to 0.93, meeting the threshold of 0.7 argued by Malhotra (2010) as acceptable. This is shown in Table 1 below:

### Data collection and analysis

The questionnaire was distributed electronically via the survey platform Qualtrics. Qualtrics was used by the study because there is no cost in using the software and its ease of use. Raw data was extracted from the Qualtrics platform and placed into an Excel spreadsheet. This Excel spreadsheet was then used as an input form to perform statistical tests via SPSS and SmartPLS software. Thereafter, Structural Equation Modeling was used to analyse the data using SmartPLS (Hair, Hult, Ringle and Sarstedt, 2014).

### Ethical considerations

The study took specific ethical considerations into account to ensure the integrity and reliability of the overall conclusions. All information disclosed by respondents was kept confidential as stipulated in the cover letter of the questionnaire. The cover letter presented at the beginning of the online survey gave the researcher consent to use all data collected. Participation was completely voluntary as stipulated in the cover letter, and participants could also omit questions if they felt uncomfortable about answering them. The study design in its entirety was approved by the University of Cape Town's ethics committee.

## RESULTS

### Measurement model

When using partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM), the goodness-of-fit, reliability and validity of the model are tested using the measurement model. The goodness-of-fit for the model is assessed using two measures, the Standardised Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR), which should be less than 0.1 thereafter, ideally less than 0.08, and the Normed Fit Index (NFI), which should be greater than 0.9. From the fit summary table in Appendix A, it can be seen that the estimated model value for SRMR is 0.1 and the NFI value is 0.64. The SRMR value meets its respective threshold

while the NFI value does not meet its threshold; thus, the data can be classified as a marginal fit.

The model reliability can be divided into internal consistency reliability and indicator reliability. Internal consistency requires checking the Cronbach's Alpha, which should be greater than 0.7, and the Composite Reliability, which should be greater than 0.8. Looking at the construct reliability and validity table in Appendix A, it can be seen that all Cronbach's Alpha scores are greater than 0.7 and all Composite Reliability scores are greater than 0.8 with the exception of brand experience (0.79). Therefore, this model can be said to have internal consistency reliability.

Indicator reliability requires checking the model outer loadings, which should be greater than 0.7 (or, if negative, the squares outer loadings should be greater than 0.5). Looking at the outer loadings table in Appendix A, it can be seen that all outer loading scores are positive and greater than 0.7 besides from items in brand experience and personality factors. Therefore, this model does not have indicator reliability.

Additionally, as the model has internal consistency reliability and weak indicator reliability, the model can be said to be reliable. The model validity can be divided into convergent and discriminant validity. Convergent validity requires checking the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) scores, which should be greater than 0.5. Looking at the construct reliability and validity table in Appendix A, it can be seen that all AVE scores are greater than 0.5 except brand experience (0.29) and personality factors (0.49). Therefore, the model does not have convergent validity.

Discriminant validity requires checking the Fornall-Larcker criterion, the Heterotrait Monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT) and the model cross-loadings. The Fornall-Larcker criterion states that the square root of the AVE for a construct should be greater than the construct's correlations with other constructs. Looking at the Fornall-Larcker criterion table in Appendix A, it can be seen that the square root

of the AVE is highest for each construct's correlation with itself.

The HTMT values should all be significantly smaller than 1. Looking at the HTMT table in Appendix A, it can be seen that all the values are smaller than 1. Cross-loadings require that each item loads highest on its associated construct. Looking at the cross-loadings table in Appendix A, it can be seen that each item does indeed load highest on its associated construct. Therefore, with the Fornall-Larcker criterion, HTMT and cross-loading criterion being met, the model can be said to have discriminant validity. Furthermore, as the model has no convergent validity but has discriminant validity, the model can be said to be valid, based on certain criteria that have been met.

### **Structural model**

The structural model is used to show how constructs are related to other constructs and is shown in Appendix A. The following aspects need to be checked for structural integrity: the model fit, the path coefficients and the effect sizes. The model fit requires checking the R square values, which are loaded for each endogenous variable. An R square of 0.19 is considered a weak fit, 0.33 is considered a moderate fit, and 0.67 is considered a strong fit (Ghozali and Latan, 2012). The R square for emotional attachment is 0.3 which can be considered a weak fit and the R square for purchase intentions is 0.4 which can be considered a moderate fit. Therefore, the model can be said to have an overall moderate fit.

The path coefficients give value to the relationships between variables in order to assess which relationships in a model are influential and, indeed, which are the most influential. Relationships can be considered suitable if the path coefficients are greater than 0.2 or less than -0.2. Looking at the path coefficients table in Appendix A, it can be seen that all path coefficients are greater than 0.2 except the path coefficient between social media and emotional attachment (0.1). Therefore, all the relationships in the model can be said to be



influential except the relationship between social media and emotional attachment. Among the influential relationships, the strongest relationship was between emotional attachment and purchase intentions (0.63). The weakest relationship was shown to be between social media and emotional attachment (0.1).

The effect sizes are used to assess the impact of one construct in the model on another. The effect sizes are assessed using the output in the F square table shown in Appendix A. The effect size is considered weak when the value is between 0.02 and 0.15, it is considered moderate when the value is between 0.15 and 0.35 and is considered strong when the value is greater than 0.35. Looking at the F square table, it can be seen that all effect sizes are weak with the exception of the emotional attachment-purchase intentions which had a value of 0.65 and could be considered extremely strong. The weak effect sizes align with their respective path values which are fairly strong with the exception of social media to emotional attachment. As the model has a moderate fit, all relationships are considered influential with the exception of social media to emotional attachment and the model is impacted significantly by certain constructs, the model can be considered to be structurally sound.

### Overall model

The structural model in Figure 2 below has been shown to be both moderately reliable and valid, with a suitable goodness-of-fit. Additionally, the model has been shown to have a moderate fit, and all path values in the model are above 0.2 or below -0.2 indicating that all relationships in the model are suitably influential with the exception of social media to emotional attachment. However, the significance of the model relationships is yet to be determined.

The following are the hypothesis tests detailing the significance of all model relationships.

H<sub>1</sub>: There is a positive relationship between personality factors and emotional attachment.

We can reject the null hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>) at the 5% level of significance with a p-value of 0.02 and a t-stat of 2.38. It can therefore be concluded that personality factors have an influence on emotional attachment. The path value of 0.2 meets the threshold of 0.2 and indicates that there is a relationship between the two constructs.

H<sub>2</sub>: There is a positive relationship between social media and emotional attachment.

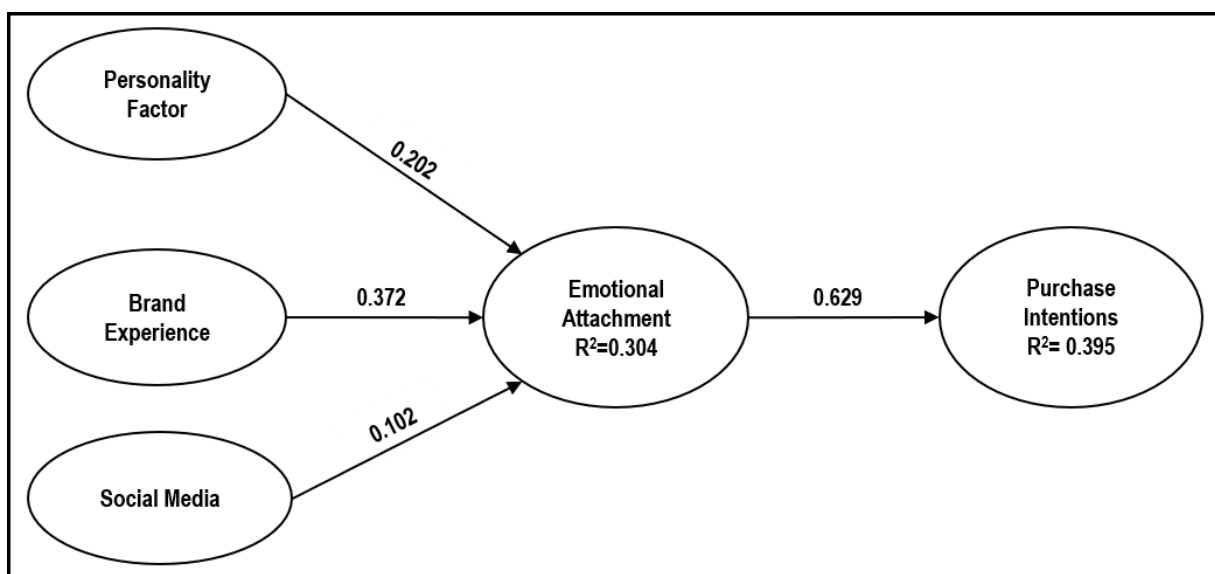


FIGURE 1: STRUCTURAL MODEL

We fail to reject  $H_0$  at the 5% level of significance as the relationship has a p-value of 0.22 and a t-stat of 1.23. It can therefore be concluded that social media do not have an influence on emotional attachment. The path value of 0.1 indicates that there is no relationship between the two variables as it does not meet the 0.2 threshold therefore making it the weakest relationship in the model.

$H_3$ : There is a positive relationship between brand experience and emotional attachment.

We can reject  $H_0$  at the 1% level of significance with a p-value of 0.00 and a t-stat of 5.39. It can therefore be concluded that there is a positive relationship between brand experience and emotional attachment. The path value of 0.37 indicates that the relationship is a fairly strong, positive relationship.

$H_4$ : There is a positive relationship between emotional attachment and purchase intentions.

We can reject  $H_0$  at the 1% level of significance with a p-value of 0.00 and a t-stat of 10.91. It can therefore be concluded that there is a positive relationship between emotional attachment and purchase intentions. The path value of 0.63 indicates that the relationship is extremely strong and is the strongest relationship in the model.

Thus, all relationships in the model are significant and could be considered suitably influential except from social media to emotional attachment. Disregarding the insignificance of social media to emotional attachment, all relationships inside the model are positive.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The literature review highlighted three variables and a mediator which could influence consumer purchase intentions for luxury streetwear fashion brands. The gaps in literature arise mainly from the lack of South African based information as well as the effect that emotional attachment has on purchase intentions. The study provided

valuable insights into what influences emotional attachment and thus, purchase intention towards these specific brands. The most popular brands among consumers were Nike and Adidas respectively, indicating that the results pertain mostly to these brands although the model would apply more widely.

The results indicated that there is a relationship between personality factors and emotional attachment. Two personality factors were analysed: need for status or conspicuousness and the need for social comparison. Respondents felt that the Nike and Adidas brands gave them a sense of status and superiority when wearing them, allowed them to compare themselves with others socially and gave them a sense of superiority. It is clear that Nike and Adidas were the dominantly preferred brands.

The weakest relationship in the model was the influence of social media on emotional attachment where the results rejected a positive relationship between the two variables. Although social media proved to be ineffective in influencing emotional attachment, it may have a direct effect on purchase intention which can be explored in future research.

Brand experience had a fairly strong, positive relationship with emotional attachment. Having a good brand experience when wearing the Nike and Adidas brands causes respondents to have positive emotions and feelings towards the brands. This indicated that the quality of the product is a significant influencer of emotional attachment and thus, purchase intention.

The strongest relationship in the model is that of emotional attachment and its influence on purchase intention.

## MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

Following the findings of the study, various managerial implications were deduced. Creating emotional attachment between the consumer and the brand is very important when

considering purchase intention. Through the creation of emotional attachment towards a brand, consumers are more likely to purchase said brand. Thus, marketing efforts should be directed towards consumer self-enrichment (emotional branding) as it is found to be the most important factor in determining emotional attachment (Vlacho, Theotokis, Pramataris and Vrechopoulos, 2010), as confirmed by the findings of this study. Emotional branding then, is creating an emotional connection to one company that separates it from the rest, creating brand loyalty over time.

Brand experience also had a fairly strong influence on emotional attachment which indicates that quality of the brand's products is a significant aspect that will have an influence on purchase intention. For a brand in this category, maintaining quality and thus consumer satisfaction should be a priority. Managerial efforts should be directed towards measuring consumer perceived quality of goods, as shown by prior research, before the brand experience and thus allow managers to create strategies to influence consumer brand experience positively (Clow and Vorhies, 1993).

Therefore, with the growth of the streetwear fashion industry in South Africa, this study aimed to provide South African streetwear brands with specific insight into what variables drive consumers' emotional attachment to their brands. By building on this knowledge base, South African streetwear brands can focus their resources on specific business activities which create the most emotional attachment to their brand, thereafter increasing sales revenue through increased levels of consumer purchase/repurchase intentions. This research indicates that an emotional connection to a brand is one of the primary reasons why consumers prefer one brand over another, which helps in developing a more valuable customer relationship (Blonde, 2019).

The various studies mentioned above do support this study's results and thus manufacturers/retailer managers should target

advertising strategies towards creating emotional relationships between the brand and the consumer, to show how the brand can enrich that individual's life through emotional branding. Managers could focus on activities that create emotional attachment such as social enrichment projects or host events to sell the brand to the consumer through experience that surrounds the product, selling an ideal version of the brand and themselves.

## LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The first limitation was the sample size used in this study although it was supported by previous literature. The sample size of 150 respondents which largely comprised of UCT students due to convenience sampling could be a limitation. Increasing the sample size and the geographic reach of respondents would increase the accuracy and representativeness of the overall results (Malhotra, 2010), specifically as Johannesburg has been established as Africa's 'fashion capital' (Rogerson, 2006).

South African producers have started to focus on producing clothing by developing indigenous South African brands (Rogerson, 2006). Future studies within the South African context could focus more on South African brands such as Redbat and Young and Lazy among others which are prominent in the South African streetwear scene. This leaves space to determine whether the fact that brands are locally made potentially have an influence on emotional attachment as consumers may feel 'Proudly South African' when wearing these brands.

Social media was not shown to have a significant influence on emotional attachment, however, future research should determine the influence of social media on purchase intention directly. Social media is an exceptional marketing tool and future research should hone in on a more comprehensive examination of social media platforms to include.

South Africa is considered an emerging market and future research can be done in other BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) emerging markets, to determine if there is a trend that these countries follow with regard to purchase intention through a rising middle class. For example, the growing number of middle-class consumers in emerging markets are recognisable by their high need for status (Stiehler, 2016) leading to greater demand for high-quality goods. Research could focus on up-and-coming local fashion brands and how to increase their success in their home countries, with the eventual aim of moving the brands into the international arena and adjusting marketing efforts based on the consumers in each new market.

## CONCLUSION

The study proved to have significant results which showed that personality factors and brand experience influence emotional attachment. Consumers place importance on product and consumption quality and experience which affects emotional attachment. The personality factors indicated that consumers felt a sense of social superiority when wearing certain brands and gave them a sense of belonging to a social group. The construct of social media did not have a positive influence on emotional attachment, however this does not mean to say that social media will not have an effect on purchase intention directly. It has been shown that emotional attachment influences purchase intention in the luxury streetwear fashion industry which indicates the importance of building a strong positive emotional relationship between the brand and the consumer. Ultimately, the study provides valuable insights into the luxury streetwear fashion industry within the South African context, using a sample of South African consumers. Given that personality factors play a significant role in emotional attachment towards the aforementioned brands, companies within the streetwear fashion industry should strategise targeting advertising to consumers to indicate the personal benefits they will experience and feel when wearing these

brands. Consumers who felt emotional attachment towards the brands due to brand experience are generally more focused on the features of the product and how it will suit their needs, brand experience consumers need more logic based advertising whereas personality factor consumers are more susceptible to emotional branding.

## LIST OF REFERENCES

- Ahmad, N., Ashiq, R. & Salman, A. 2015. *The impact of social media on fashion industry: Empirical investigation from Karachiites*, viewed 11 March 2019, from [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/275714886\\_The\\_Impact\\_of\\_Social\\_Media\\_on\\_Fashion\\_Industry\\_Empirical\\_Investigation\\_from\\_Karachiites?enrichId=rgreq8b54f7fc9ea673c165aa630d59c6083fXXXandenrichSource=Y292ZXJQYWdIOzI3NTcxNDg4NjtBUzoyMjQ2NzkwMzQ5MjA5NjBAMTQzMjU3OTA2NDg0Mw%3D%3D&and\\_esc=publicationCoverPdf](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/275714886_The_Impact_of_Social_Media_on_Fashion_Industry_Empirical_Investigation_from_Karachiites?enrichId=rgreq8b54f7fc9ea673c165aa630d59c6083fXXXandenrichSource=Y292ZXJQYWdIOzI3NTcxNDg4NjtBUzoyMjQ2NzkwMzQ5MjA5NjBAMTQzMjU3OTA2NDg0Mw%3D%3D&and_esc=publicationCoverPdf)
- Arnould, E.J. & Thompson, C. 2005. Twenty years of consumer culture theory: Retrospect and prospect. *The Journal of Consumer Research*, 32(1), 129–130.
- Bajde, D. 2014. *Consumer culture theory: Ideology, mythology and meaning in technology consumption*, viewed 11 March 2019, from [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/268785668\\_Consumer\\_Culture\\_Theory\\_Ideology\\_Mythology\\_and\\_Meaning\\_in\\_Technology\\_Consumption](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/268785668_Consumer_Culture_Theory_Ideology_Mythology_and_Meaning_in_Technology_Consumption)
- Bills, A. & Tabot, S. 2017. *Luxury brands in the South African emerging market: An empirical study of the relationship between consumer personality traits and purchase intentions towards luxury brands*. Cape Town: Vega School, viewed 10 March 2019, from <http://iiespace.iie.ac.za/bitstream/handle/11622/277/Bills%20Ashleigh-%20Final%20Report%20%20%281%29.pdf?sequence=1&disAllowed=y>
- Bilotti, K. 2011. *Emotional brand attachment: Marketing strategies for successful generation*. Claremont: Claremont McKenna College, viewed 11 March 2019, from <https://>

- core.ac.uk/download/pdf/70968336.pdf
- Blonde, E. 2019. *Why emotional marketing drives ecommerce*, viewed 12 March 2019, from <https://elleblonde.com/blog/2019/01/12/emotional-marketing-sales/>
- Brakus, J., Schmitt, B. & Zarantonello, L. 2009. Brand experience: What is it? How is it measured? Does it affect loyalty? *Journal of Marketing*, 73(3):52-68.
- Choi, C. & Mattila, A. 2016. The effects of other customers' dress style on customers' approach behaviors: The moderating role of sense of power. *Cornell Hospitality Quarterly*, 57 (2): 211-218.
- Clow, K. & Vorhies, D. 1993. Building a competitive advantage for service firms: measurement of consumer expectations of service quality. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 7 (1); 22-32.
- Etikan, I., Musa, S.A. & Alkassim, R.S. 2016. Comparison of convenience sampling and purposive sampling. *American Journal of Theoretical and Applied Statistics*, 5(1): 1-4. DOI:10.11648/j.ajtas.20160501.11
- Fishbein, M. & Ajzen, I. 1975. *Belief, attitude, intention and behavior: An introduction to theory and research*. Reading: Addison Wesley.
- Grisaffe, D. and Nguyen, H. 2011. Antecedents of emotional attachment to brands. Long Beach: *Journal of Business Research*, 64 (10): 1052-1059.
- Ghozali, I. & Latan, H. 2012. *Partial Least Square: Konsep, Teknik dan Aplikasi Smart PLS 2.0 M3*. Semarang: Badan Penerbit Universitas Diponegoro.
- Hair Jr, J.F., Hult, G.T.M., Ringle, C. and Sarstedt, M. (2016). *A primer on partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS SEM)*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE.
- Hutter, K., Hautz, J., Dennhardt, S. & Fuller, J. 2013. The impact of user interactions in social media on brand awareness and purchase intention: the case of MINI on Facebook. *Journal of Product and Brand Management*, 22(5/6): 342-351, from <https://doi.org/10.1108/JPBM-05-2013-0299>
- Jordaan, L. 2019. *Brand me, Gen Z: Marketing from millennials to centennials*, viewed 12 March 2019, from <https://themediainline.co.za/2019/08/brand-me-gen-z-marketing-from-millennials-to-centennials/>
- Lacobucci, D. 2009. Structural equations modeling: Fit indices, sample size, and advanced topics. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 20:88. DOI:10.1016/j.jcps.2009.09.003.
- Karaosmanoglu, P., Bas, A. & Zhang, J. 2011. The role of other customer effect in corporate marketing: Its impact on corporate image and consumer-company identification. *European Journal of Marketing*. 45 (9):10/03/2019. DOI:10.1108/03090561111151835.
- Khan, M., Rasheed, S., Islam, F., Ahmed, H. & Rizwan, M. 2016. Corporate branding, emotional attachment and brand loyalty: The case of luxury fashion branding. *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications*, 6 (5): 151-159.
- Kontu, H. & Vecchi, A. 2014. Why all that noise – assessing the strategic value of social media for fashion brands, *Journal of Global Fashion Marketing*, 5 (3): 235-250, DOI: 10.1080/20932685.2014.912443
- Malar, L., Krohmer, H., Hoyer, W. & Nyffenegger, B. 2011. *Emotional brand attachment and brand personality: The relative importance of the actual and the ideal self*. American Marketing Association, viewed 14 March 2019, from <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.473.1665&rep=rep1&type=pdf>
- Malhotra, N. 2010. *Marketing research: An applied orientation*. 6th ed. Boston: Pearson.
- Mittal, D. 2018. *Millennial fashion on the rise*, viewed 12 March 2019, from <https://psiloveyou.xyz/millennial-fashion-on-the-rise-3ac8677519af>
- Mkhondo, N. 2018. *Streetwear is more than fashion, it's a full-on social movement*, viewed 10 March 2020, from <https://www.timeslive.co.za/sunday-times/lifestyle/fashion-and-beauty/2018-05-19-streetwear-is-more-than-fashion-its-a-full-on-social-movement/>
- Murphy, S.T., & Zajonc, R.B. 1993. Affect, cognition, and awareness: Affective priming with optimal and suboptimal stimulus

- exposures. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 64(5): 723-739.
- O'Cass, A. & McEwen, H. Exploring consumer status and conspicuous consumption. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, 4(1): 25-39.
- Richardson, L. 2018. *What impact has social media had on the fashion industry? - Retail touch points*, viewed 14 March 2019, from <https://www.retailtouchpoints.com/features/executive-viewpoints/what-impact-has-social-media-had-on-the-fashion-industry>
- Rogerson, C. 2006. Developing the fashion industry in Africa: The case of Johannesburg. *Urban Forum*, 17, 215-240. 10.1007/s12132-006-0010-y
- Oxford Dictionaries, n.d. *Definition: Sneakerhead*, viewed 12 March 2019, from <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/sneakerhead>
- Statista. 2017. *Adidas, Nike and Puma revenue comparison 2006-2017*, viewed 11 March 2019, from <https://www.statista.com/statistics/269599/net-sales-of-adidas-and-puma-worldwide/>
- Statista. 2019. *Fashion South Africa*, viewed 15 March 2019, from <https://www.statista.com/outlook/244/112/fashion/south-africa#marketage>
- Stiehler, B. 2016. Co-creating luxury brands in an emerging market. *Qualitative Market Research*, 19 (4): 395-415. <https://doi.org/10.1108/QMR-02-2016-0018>.
- Sulima, J. 2018. *How streetwear is influencing a new era of luxury fashion*, viewed 11 March 2019, from <https://www.adweek.com/brand-marketing/how-streetwear-is-influencing-a-new-era-of-luxury-fashion/>
- Theng So, J., Grant Parsons, A. & Yap, S. 2013. Corporate branding, emotional attachment and brand loyalty: the case of luxury fashion branding, *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management*, Vol. 17 No. 4, pp. 403-423. Viewed 14 March 2020, from <https://doi.org/10.1108/JFMM-03-2013-0032>
- Visser, R. 2015. *The relationship between status - and conspicuous consumption in luxury brands in the South African emerging market*. Pretoria: University of Pretoria, viewed 10 March 2019, from [https://repository.up.ac.za/bitstream/handle/2263/44447/Visser\\_Relationship\\_2014.pdf?sequence=1](https://repository.up.ac.za/bitstream/handle/2263/44447/Visser_Relationship_2014.pdf?sequence=1)
- Vlachos, P., Theotokis, A., Pramataris, K. & Vrechopoulos, A. 2010. Consumer-retailer emotional attachment. *European Journal of Marketing*, 44 (9): 1478-1499.

**APPENDIX A: STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODELLING TABLES****FIT SUMMARY**

	Saturated Model	Estimated Model
SRMR	0,091	0,105
d_ULS	3,335	4,437
d_G	0,908	0,961
Chi-Square	711,021	732,591
NFI	0,646	0,635

**CONSTRUCT RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY**

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Brand Experience	0,715	0,752	0,792	0,295
Emotional Att	0,830	0,831	0,899	0,747
PersFact	0,734	0,737	0,824	0,485
Purchase Int	0,834	0,839	0,889	0,668
Social Media	0,876	0,889	0,906	0,617

**OUTER LOADINGS**

	Brand Experi-	Emotional Att	PersFact	Purchase Int	Social Media
BrandExp_1	0,536				
BrandExp_10	0,618				
BrandExp_2	0,307				
BrandExp_4	0,659				
BrandExp_6	0,676				
BrandExp_7	0,425				
BrandExp_8	0,241				
BrandExp_9	0,588				
EmoAtt_1		0,850			
EmoAtt_2		0,889			
EmoAtt_3		0,854			
PersFact_1			0,686		
PersFact_2			0,620		
PersFact_3			0,754		
PersFact_4			0,697		
PersFact_6			0,717		
Purchase_1				0,834	
Purchase_2				0,867	
Purchase_3				0,779	
Purchase_4				0,786	
Rev_BrandExp_3	0,383				
Rev_BrandExp_5	0,753				
SM_1					0,727
SM_2					0,745
SM_3					0,764
SM_4					0,879
SM_5					0,789
SM_6					0,801

**FORNALL-LARKER CRITERION**

	Brand Experience	Emotional Att	PersFact	Purchase Int	Social Media
Brand Experience	0,543				
Emotional Att	0,500	0,864			
PersFact	0,400	0,398	0,696		
Purchase Int	0,517	0,629	0,499	0,818	
Social Media	0,465	0,368	0,464	0,449	0,786

**HTMT**

	Brand Experience	Emotional Att	PersFact	Purchase Int	Social Media
Brand Experience					
Emotional Att	0,587				
PersFact	0,513	0,502			
Purchase Int	0,617	0,752	0,634		
Social Media	0,558	0,419	0,574	0,532	

**R SQUARED**

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Emotional Att	0,304	0,290
Purchase Int	0,395	0,391

**PATH COEFFICIENTS**

	Brand Experience	Emotional Att	PersFact	Purchase Int	Social Media
Brand Experience		0,372			
Emotional Att				0,629	
PersFact		0,202			
Purchase Int					
Social Media		0,102			

**F SQUARE**

	Brand Experience	Emotional Att	PersFact	Purchase Int	Social Media
Brand Experience		0,147			
Emotional Att				0,654	
PersFact		0,043			
Purchase Int					
Social Media		0,010			

**MEAN, STDEV, T VALUES, P VALUES**

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics ( O )	P Values
Brand Experience -> Emotional Att	0,372	0,393	0,069	5,386	0,000
Emotional Att -> Purchase Int	0,629	0,633	0,058	10,905	0,000
PersFact ->	0,202	0,208	0,085	2,377	0,018
Social Media -> Emotional Att	0,102	0,102	0,083	1,228	0,220



**CROSS LOADINGS**

	<b>Brand Experience</b>	<b>Emotional Att</b>	<b>PersFact</b>	<b>Purchase Int</b>	<b>Social Media</b>
<b>BrandExp_1</b>	0,536	0,346	0,303	0,359	0,338
<b>BrandExp_10</b>	0,618	0,210	0,278	0,249	0,356
<b>BrandExp_2</b>	0,307	0,070	0,053	0,169	0,042
<b>BrandExp_4</b>	0,659	0,252	0,307	0,323	0,433
<b>BrandExp_6</b>	0,676	0,254	0,164	0,096	0,371
<b>BrandExp_7</b>	0,425	0,227	0,106	0,179	0,076
<b>BrandExp_8</b>	0,241	0,121	0,004	0,056	-0,081
<b>BrandExp_9</b>	0,588	0,322	0,228	0,335	0,268
<b>EmoAtt_1</b>	0,403	0,850	0,343	0,582	0,344
<b>EmoAtt_2</b>	0,479	0,889	0,378	0,505	0,278
<b>EmoAtt_3</b>	0,415	0,854	0,309	0,542	0,333
<b>PersFact_1</b>	0,230	0,283	0,686	0,384	0,241
<b>PersFact_2</b>	0,319	0,238	0,620	0,205	0,293
<b>PersFact_3</b>	0,343	0,259	0,754	0,399	0,357
<b>PersFact_4</b>	0,270	0,330	0,697	0,399	0,392
<b>PersFact_6</b>	0,239	0,256	0,717	0,320	0,316
<b>Purchase_1</b>	0,358	0,523	0,357	0,834	0,322
<b>Purchase_2</b>	0,371	0,559	0,409	0,867	0,299
<b>Purchase_3</b>	0,465	0,514	0,348	0,779	0,371
<b>Purchase_4</b>	0,516	0,451	0,537	0,786	0,503
<b>Rev_BrandExp_3</b>	0,383	0,243	0,179	0,340	0,087
<b>Rev_BrandExp_5</b>	0,753	0,415	0,316	0,456	0,328
<b>SM_1</b>	0,271	0,285	0,340	0,371	0,727
<b>SM_2</b>	0,376	0,216	0,336	0,342	0,745
<b>SM_3</b>	0,466	0,290	0,379	0,388	0,764
<b>SM_4</b>	0,367	0,310	0,409	0,368	0,879
<b>SM_5</b>	0,253	0,223	0,390	0,283	0,789
<b>SM_6</b>	0,425	0,363	0,338	0,350	0,801