



In a materialist world how strong is your brand

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Title:

In a materialist world how strong is your brand: the impact of brand type, crisis type, and crisis response on brand equity.

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Abstract

Purpose – This research aims to examine the impact of crisis type, crisis response strategy, and brand type on the dimensions of brand equity and overall brand equity.

Design/methodology/approach – The current study is about the fictitious clothing brand King Paul. Consequently, the scenarios manipulated crisis type (performance vs. values-related crisis), brand positioning (functional vs. symbolic brand), the brand's response (rebuild vs. no response), and how materialism (low vs. materialism) moderates the relationship. Furthermore, source credibility and involvement were used as covariates. One hundred and eighty-eight people responded to a fictional scenario describing a racial discrimination or toxic chemicals in clothing. The observation and analyses between the independent and dependent variables were conducted by MANOVAs, MANCOVAs, and multiple regression analyses.

Findings – Results show that crisis type has a significant negative impact on perceived brand quality. Moreover, materialism moderates the relationship between crisis type, brand loyalty, as well as overall brand equity.

Implications – Both performance-related and values-related crisis have an impact on perceived brand quality. Which in turn has an indirect influence on overall brand equity. Furthermore, materialism is a vital factor in moderating the relationship between crisis type and overall brand equity. Consequently, managers should also take materialism into account when planning their crisis communication plan.

Research limitations – The manipulation check for brand type was unsuccessful, as a result, it was dropped from the study. Additionally, the study suffered from non-sampling errors, more specifically, the results could not be generalized, due to the effect of gender, culture, and education. Furthermore, the research is limited to one brand in the clothing category. Consequently, it cannot be generalized to other product categories.

Conclusion – Researchers and practitioners should continue to explore materialism in relation to brand crisis type.

Keywords: performance-related, values-related, rebuild crisis response, brand equity, overall brand equity, materialism

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1. Introduction

Brands are important properties for market-oriented companies, consequently; companies continually try to improve and protect their brand equity. However, when a brand goes through a crisis, they are heavily covered in the media. For instance, infants experiencing kidney damage after consuming Nestlé milk products, Mars issuing a mass chocolate recall after finding plastic in their chocolate, or customers experiencing E. coli at Taco Bell. Even though these kinds of crisis come in the news very often, due to their nature there are also other types of crisis that garner the same amount of attention. For example, rumors about designer Tommy Hilfiger's racist comments and Tyco executives stealing millions from the company.

Consequently, Pullig, Netemeyer, and Biswas (2006), categorize crisis into values-related and performance-related crisis. A values-related crisis involves social or ethical issues surrounding the brand that affect its ability to convey symbolic benefits (i.e., allowing the reflection of a self-image) (Pullig, Netemeyer, & Biswas, 2006). For example, the revelation of sexual harassment or racial discrimination by members of an organization. In contrast, a performance-related crisis calls into the brand's ability to deliver functional benefits, such as lead in Mattel toys or the failure of an automobile part that prompts a recall of that model (Dawar & Pillutla, 2000; Pullig et al., 2006; Roehm & Brady, 2007).

Although it is essential to examine the consequences of brand crises, it is equally as important to study how to respond to them. As a result, Coombs and Holladay (2002) develop the situational crisis communication theory (SCCT). The SCCT proposes four types of responses that brands can use to reduce the adverse effects of crisis (Coombs, 2007). First, the denial strategy which aims to remove any link between the brand and the crisis. Second, the diminish crisis response strategy that argues that a crisis is not as bad as people think or that the brand lacked control over the crisis. Third, the rebuild strategy which refers to the brand acknowledging and accepting the existence of a problem, as well as the action to be taken, including apologies, compensation, and/or recovery actions. Finally, the bolstering strategy reminds the brand's stakeholders its past good works to counter-balance the current negatives from the crisis. Even though, Coombs (2007) suggests these strategies a brand can also choose not to respond (Lee, 2004; Fitzpatrick & Ruben, 1995; Garrett, Bradford, Meyers, & Becker, 1989). A no response strategy refers to not offering a substantive comment or take no overt action (Smith, 2002).

McLaughlin, Cody, and O'hair (1983) argue that a no response strategy may be useful when a brand feels less responsible, when there is no public blame, or when there is a high potential that inappropriate responses can cause grave offense. Moreover, McDonald, Sparks, and Glendon (2010) found that a no response strategy is useful for mitigating negative reaction and promote positive responses.

Coombs (2007) and Dean (2004) argue that a rebuild crisis response strategy is the most efficient because it mitigates negative emotions which in turn affect brand equity. However, using this strategy can cause more harm than good regarding financial and reputation gain (Patel & Reinsch, 2003; Coombs & Holladay, 1996; Millar & Heath, 2004).

Granting that understanding the type of crisis and response are essential to reduce adverse effects. The kind of need that the brand fulfills could also impact brand equity. According to Park, Jaworski, and McInnis (1986) companies can position their brands regarding the benefits offered; functional and/or symbolic. Symbolic brands satisfy the need for self-expression and prestige (Park, Jaworski, & McInnis., 1998). In Contrast, functional brands satisfy the practical needs (Park et al., 1998). Pham and Muthukrishnan (2002) developed the search-and-alignment model of judgment revision. The model suggests that when brand positioning (functional vs. symbolic) and crisis types (performance-related vs. values-related) are aligned, it can lead to stronger effects than non-alignment. Consequently, how consumers perceive the brand could influence the impact that crisis type and crisis response have on brand equity.

While brand positioning is critical in consumption behavior, it is not limited to functional or symbolic needs. It also extends to consuming brands for social prestige, self-esteem, signaling status, and self-identity (Elliott & Wattanasuwan, 1998; Acikalin, Gul & Develioglu, 2009). Consequently, this suggests a link between consumer and brand. McCracken (1986) explains this connection with the meaning transfer model. The model suggests that a brand is used as a method of expression of an individual's identity to his/herself, consequently creating brand loyalty. These results are similar to the findings of Richins and Dawson (1992) where materialistic individuals seek out the acquisition of brands that convey status and success. Although, materialism is an important topic in consumption behavior the connection between materialism and brand equity during a crisis has not received academic attention.

In general, brand equity has become one of the most important concepts in the marketing literature, yet its effect in a brand crisis context has received limited attention. The impact of this important concept could be beneficial for theory building and development in the crisis and brand management literature. Furthermore, brand equity is easy to understand and to monitor for practitioners. Accordingly, this study focusses on the outcome of crisis type, crisis response, and brand type on the dimensions of brand equity and overall brand equity and if materialism moderates this relationship. As a result, this study addresses the following research question:

RQ: To what extent does the use of a specific crisis response strategy (rebuild vs. no response strategy) for a certain type of crisis (performance-related vs. values-related crisis) affects (a) perceived brand quality, (b) brand awareness/associations, (c) brand loyalty and (d) overall brand equity in relation to the level of materialism of the consumer (high vs. low materialism)?

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Brand equity

Brand equity has received much attention from practitioners and scholars due to its many advantages, including paying premium prices (Keller, 1993), increasing shareholder value (Bick, 2009), and enhancing brand performance (Oliveira-Castro, Foxall, James, Roberta, Pohl, Dias, & Chang, 2008).

The concept of brand equity can be viewed from two perspectives – the financial-based and the consumer-based perspective (Pappu, Quester & Cooksey, 2005; Vazquez, Del Rio & Iglesias., 2002; Wood, 2000; Lasser, Mittal & Sharma, 1995;). The financial-based perspective involves defining brand equity as an accounting entry of the estimated total financial worth of the brand; that is, the brand's valuation (Lasser et al., 1995; Wood, 2000; Kotler, 2003; Pappu et al., 2005) as per the accountants' perspective (Wood, 2000). The consumer-based perspective views brand equity as the consumers' perceptions of the value of the brand (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 2003). Typically, marketing academics and practitioners adopt the consumer-based perspective of brand equity, viewing the added value resulting from brand equity as a consumer benefit, as opposed to something that can be quantified (Wood, 2000; Winters, 1991; Chaudhuri, 1995). Furthermore, Keller (1993) argues the most valuable asset for improving marketing productivity is the knowledge of the consumer's view of the brand. Therefore, this study adopts a customer-based approach to brand equity.

Even though, many authors argue that brand equity is an important asset it is also a fragile, because it is founded in customer's perceptions, and is vulnerable to massive shifts outside of management's control (Aaker 1991, 1996; Keller, 1993). Accordingly, brand equity is a valuable but also a fragile asset, which in turn raises important questions about the impact a threat might have on the perception of customers. Subsequently, a crisis can threaten a brand's perceived ability to deliver expected benefits thereby weakening brand equity (Ahluwalia et al., 2000; Dawar & Pillutla, 2000; Dawar & Lei, 2009; Pullig et al., 2006; Roehm & Tybout, 2006).

Although brand equity has received much attention in the crisis communication literature, it is vaguely described. Various related constructs such as brand commitment, brand familiarity, brand image as well as brand reputation have been used as proxies for brand equity (Dawar & Lei 2009; Siomkos & Kurzbard 1994). However, very few studies address customer-based brand equity construct. Therefore, it is desirable to clarify the construct of brand equity.

Using a customer-based approach, brand equity is defined as “the differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to the marketing of the brand” (Keller, 1993, p. 8). In other words, the influence that a brand has is rooted in the minds of consumers and what they have experienced and learned about the brand over time. Aaker (1991; 1996) and Keller (1993) argue that brand equity consist of four dimensions: perceived brand quality, brand loyalty, brand awareness, and brand associations.

Zeithaml (1988) defines perceived quality as “the consumer's judgment about a product's overall excellence or superiority” (p. 3.). Therefore, it is based on subjective evaluations of the quality of the product.

Aaker (1991, p. 39) defines brand loyalty as “the attachment that a customer has to a brand.”. Yoo and Donthu (2001) define brand loyalty as the inclination to be loyal to a brand. Consequently, it is established when the intention to buy the first choice brand.

Moreover, brand awareness is “the ability for a buyer to recognize or recall that a brand is a member of a certain product category” (Aaker, 1991, p. 61). Thus, brand awareness consists of both brand recognition and recall.

Finally, Aaker (1991, p. 109) defines brand associations as “anything linked in memory to a brand” and brand image as “a set of [brand] associations, usually in some meaningful way.” The associations have a level of strength (Aaker, 1991; Aaker & Keller, 1990; Keller, 1993), and a link to a brand will be stronger when it is based on many experiences or exposures than when it is based on few (Aaker, 1991).

Even though it is important to investigate consumer's perception of a brand after a crisis, it is as equally as important to explore consumer's behavior after a crisis, such as purchase intention (Cornwell & Coote, 2005; Jorgenson, 1996). Purchase intention refers to the probability that a customer purchases a particular brand when buying an item from a class of products (Crosno, Freling & Skinner, 2009). Vassilikopoulou, Lepetsos, Siomkos, and Chatzipanagiotou (2009) argue that a crisis that causes severe injuries and death, time was found to be the most important factor in determining consumer purchase intentions. Thus, a crisis affects future purchases shortly after the crisis. Consequently, this study not only investigates consumer's perception, (i.e., the structure of brand equity), but it also focuses on consumer behavior, i.e. purchase intention. Furthermore, due to the items of overall brand equity from Yoo and Donthu (2000) being closely related to purchase intention, this study uses the overall brand equity as a substitute for purchase intention.

2.2 Brand crisis

Scholars are interested in the damaging effects of crisis and consumer's responses to them (for example, Ahluwalia, Unnava, & Burnkrant, 2001; Griffin, Babin, & Attaway, 1991). For instance, Pullig et al. (2006) suggest that brands going through a crisis have a negative impact on satisfaction, purchase intention, and evaluation of the corporation as well as brand equity. According to Dawar and Lei (2009), brand crises are "instances of well-publicized claims that a key brand proposition is unsubstantiated or false. These crises can cause severe damage to the brand, regardless of the veracity of the brand undermining claims themselves" (p. 509). In other words, a brand going through a crisis can threaten its perceived ability to deliver expected benefits, consequently weakening its brand equity (Ahluwalia et al., 2000; Dawar & Pillutla, 2000; Dawar & Lei, 2009; Pullig et al., 2006; Roehm & Tybout, 2006).

Research on crises makes a distinction between events that arise due to mechanical or product failures and those that are social in nature (Marcus & Goodman, 1991; Shrivastava & Mitroff, 1987). Subsequently, Pullig et al. (2006) suggest splitting brand crisis into two categories: 1) performance-related and 2) values-related.

The performance-related crisis involves adverse brand publicity about the functional benefits of the brand, which are the tangible attributes and benefits which give the product the ability to perform its intended task (Dawar & Pillutla, 2000; Pullig et al., 2006; Roehm & Brady, 2007). For instance, failure of an automobile part that prompts a recall of that model or the detection of lead in toys. In literature, performance-related crises have also been referred as scandals (Roehm & Tybout, 2006) or product-harm crises, which are well-publicized occurrences of defective or dangerous products (Dawar & Pillutla, 2000). Performance-related crisis can create negative functional brand associations (Klein & Dawar, 2004), affecting consumers' perception of the quality of the brand, and ultimately harming brand equity (Dawar & Pillutla, 2000).

On the contrary, a values-related crisis involves events that breach the ethical codes or moral values of society, with products of the company largely unaffected (Pullig et al., 2006). Consequently, a values-related crisis violates the symbolic benefits of a brand which have a strong link to a brand's image, and hence consumers' perception of themselves and other people when using the brand (Dutta & Pullig, 2011). For instance, discrimination in workplace or violation of environmental regulations.

This classification is also consistent with Keller's (1993) conceptualization on brand equity where functional and symbolic benefits are distinguished at the brand level. Similar to this categorization, is Trump's (2014) recent research on brand transgression that also classified brand misdeeds into product versus ethical transgressions. Although Trump's (2014) labels it differently, the meaning of categorization is essentially the same.

Granting that in reality, some crisis may reside in the gray areas involving both product defects and organization's unethical behaviors (e.g., dangerous products combined with unethical cover-ups), this study treats brand crisis as two distinct categories, thus either as performance-related or values-related crisis. It is important to explore the differences between these two types of crises to advance our understanding of brand crisis literature.

Despite that there is a difference between these two types of brand crises, the comparison between the two has not received much academic attention (Pullig et al., 2006; Xie & Peng, 2009). Specifically, performance related crisis has been put under academic spotlight due to its increasing occurrence, whereas values-related crisis has received relatively less academic attention (Ahluwalia et al. 2000; Dawar & Pillutla 2000; Cleeren, Dekimpe, & Helsen, 2008; Chen, Ganesan, & Liu, 2009; Darke, Ashworth, Main, 2010; Ingram & Taylor 2005; Schmalz & Orth, 2012). Consequently, there is a scarcity of studies that have examined both types of crisis. This thesis explores how brand equity and crisis type along with other factors influence customer's response and behavior to the brand.

Research suggest that news coverage can have an impact the amount of information a consumer receives about a particular brand (Liu, 2006; Van den Bulte & Lilien, 2001). In this manner, publicity (whether positive or negative) can influence brand awareness. Consequently, even if people are informed about a brand, they may not remember it exists, and thus, a crisis may also have benefits if it "re-informs" consumers. Also, there is a significant amount of news coverage when a brand goes through a performance-related crisis, due to its increasing occurrence. Whereas, a values-related crisis has received relatively less academic attention (Ahluwalia et al. 2000; Dawar & Pillutla, 2000; Cleeren et al., 2008; Chen et al., 2009; Darke et al. 2010; Ingram & Taylor, 2005; Schmalz & Orth, 2012). Thus, brands going through a performance-related crisis may receive more media coverage, and in turn, making the consumer more aware than a values-related crisis.

According to Keller (1993), brand equity is largely a function of people's confidence in the brand's ability to fulfill expected benefits. Consequently, Dawar and Lei (2009) suggest that the influence of the nature of crisis depends on whether key benefits are affected. Accordingly, different types of crisis can affect different brand associations. For the reason that, risk perceptions differ based on the nature of crisis (Weißgerber, 2007). In consequence, a performance-related crisis mainly affects confidence related to functional benefits, and values-related crisis affect confidence related to symbolic benefits (Pullig et al., 2006; Dawar & Lei, 2009).

Yoo and Donthu (2001) argue that a potential causal order among the dimensions of brand equity may exist. They suggest that the hierarchy of effects model suggests that brand awareness/associations precede perceived quality and that perceived quality precedes brand loyalty (Lavidge & Steiner, 1961). Owing to this,

the perception of high product quality leads to brand loyalty because it is the basis of consumer satisfaction (Oliver, 1997). Thus, brand loyalty is achieved through positive brand associations and quality perceptions (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001, 2002; Keller, 1993, 2003). Based on previous findings on brand associations and perceived brand quality, a performance-related crisis has a more negative impact on brand loyalty than a values-related crisis.

Furthermore, Keller (2005) argues that brand performance is one of the most important elements of brand equity. However, he also suggests that the symbolic benefits are also essential but are more useful for positioning strategies. Moreover, Keller (2005) argues that rarely can a brand overcome performance deficiencies. Additionally, Dutta and Pullig (2011) suggest that a performance-related crisis has a more negative effect on brand equity than a values-related crisis because it likely requires a more thorough response that promises to remove concerns about the brand's ability to deliver functional benefits than it does removing concerns about symbolic benefits.

Furthermore, Carrigan and Attalla (2001) mentioned that personal reasons are more important to purchase a product than societal ones. To illustrate, when products of a particular brand contain toxins, consumers would think of personal reasons of well-being and consequently not purchase the brand. Hence, it might be that a performance-related crisis could be more harmful to purchase intention or overall brand equity than a values-related crisis. After reviewing the research mentioned above findings, the following hypotheses are developed:

H1: a performance-related crisis has a less negative impact on (a) brand awareness/associations and a more negative impact on (b) perceived brand quality, (c) brand loyalty and (d) overall brand equity than a values-related crisis.

2.3 Crisis response strategies

After a brand crisis, how the company responds eventually determines the extent to which the brand can be saved. Consequently, crisis communication plays a great role when it comes to overcoming a crisis (Coombs, 2007). Brands that use crisis response strategies can recover their brand reputation and prevent negative behavioral intentions (Coombs, 2007). Accordingly, response strategies are how a brand response to the complaints made by dissatisfied customers about an ethical or product failure (Coombs, 1999).

Given that, communication researchers have developed theoretical approaches for responding to organizational crises. Subsequently, the following theories were developed: corporate apologia (Hearit, 2006), image repair theory (Benoit, 1995), SCCT (Coombs & Holladay, 2002) and revised by Coombs (2007), and organizational renewal (Ulmer, Sellnow, & Seeger, 2009). Corporate apologia, image repair theory, and SCCT theory identify strategies a brand can use to repair its image and reputation after a crisis. On the other hand, organizational renewal focuses on learning from the crisis, in other words, the theory considers both the risk and opportunities associated with a crisis, and creating a conceivable vision.

To select a suitable crisis communication strategy Coombs (1998) suggests that there are two things crisis managers should be aware of; they need to (a) know which crisis communication strategies are available to them and (b) have a kind of a system to analyze the crisis situations. Coombs (1998) also argues that the appropriate response to the crisis could only be selected by understanding the crisis situation. Based on these implications Coombs (2007) introduced the situational crisis communication theory (SCCT).

SCCT describes three classifications of crisis types based on the attribution of responsibility. First, there is the victim cluster, in which the perceived attribution of crisis responsibility is weak. The brand can be seen as a victim as well, for instance, when a natural disaster occurs, rumors, and workplace violence. The second crisis type is the accidental cluster. This type has minimal attributions of crisis responsibility. The action of the brand leading to the crisis was unintentional such as, a technology error accident or a product-harm. The last crisis type is the intentional or preventable cluster, and it has unyielding attributions of crisis responsibility. In this case, the brand violated a law, took inappropriate actions, and/or placed people at risk on purpose. Crises caused by human errors or organizational misdeed are examples for this cluster.

As stated above, there has to be a degree of responsibility to match a crisis response strategy to the reputational threat. Based on the perceptions of accepting responsibility for a crisis Coombs (2006) subdivides the response strategies into primary and secondary strategies. The primary response strategies of the SCCT are based on the perceptions of a company accepting responsibility for the crisis: (1) denial, (2) diminish, and (3) rebuild. The secondary response strategy is (4) bolstering.

The aim of the denial crisis response strategy is to demonstrate that there is no crisis or that the brand has no responsibility for the crisis (Coombs, 2006). By negating that the crisis exists or denying responsibility, the brand leads to the elimination of the reputational threat presented by the crisis. The diminish crisis response strategy entails that the brand tries to convince consumers that the crisis is not as severe as people think and minimize organizational responsibility. Companies using a rebuild crisis response strategy accept responsibility and offer material and/or symbolic forms of help to aid the victims of the crisis (Coombs, 2006).

The secondary response strategy, bolstering, is widely based on the positive relationship between stakeholders and the brand (Coombs, 2007). This strategy calls to the goodwill of the stakeholder and highlights on the past goodwill of the brand. However, the bolstering strategy should be used to supplement the three primary strategies, not as a replacement (Coombs, 2007; Kim, Avery & Lariscy, 2009). Because the bolstering response strategy has less opportunity to develop reputational assets; it is based on the positive relationship between the organization and the stakeholders (Coombs, 2007). Consequently, crisis managers should select the most appropriate crisis-response strategy according to the crisis type (Coombs, 2006)

Moreover, crisis managers should choose crisis response strategies that match the amount of potential reputational damage that a crisis inflicts (Coombs & Holladay, 2002). As such, the SCCT advises organizations to use deny strategies in the case of a victim crisis, diminish strategies in the event of an accidental crisis, and rebuild strategies in the event of a preventable crisis (Coombs, 2007).

Although Coombs (2007) suggests, these response brands could also choose not to respond. Specifically, brands can attempt to keep away from problems by remaining silent, making meaningless comments, or take no overt action (Lee, 2004; Smith, 2002). No response strategies may be useful when the brand feels less responsible, when there is no overt blame, or when there is the high potential that inappropriate responses cause severe offense (McLaughlin, Cody, & O'hair, 1983). Researchers such as Smith (2002), argue that such strategic silence is most likely to be acceptable only by people who have strongly favorable feelings of the company. Furthermore, McDonald et al. (2010) found that a no response strategy is useful for mitigating anger and negative-word-mouth, and increasing sympathy, loyalty, and positive attitude.

However, Hegner, Beldad, and Kamphuis op Heghuis (2014) argue that when a brand chooses not to respond during a crisis it had an adverse effect on the brand. Because consumers might perceive the brand as lacking for concern. Furthermore, Menon, Jewell, and Unnava (1999) found similar results; they argue that a no comment response has a negative affect on consumer behavior.

In general Coombs (1999) found that people expect a rebuild crisis response strategy from the brand when they strongly perceive that the brand was accountable for the crisis. Furthermore, a rebuild strategy may provide favorable outcome after a crisis, including brand loyalty and the likelihood of enhancing purchase intention, which in turn positively affects overall brand equity (Conlon & Murray, 1996; Lee, 2005; Coombs, 1999, Lee & Song, 2010). Moreover, the rebuild strategy is the most efficient for producing new reputational assets and reduce the adverse effect. Besides, company's using this type of crisis response strategy are considered to be more positive than those that implement other strategies (Dean, 2004). Moreover, by offering material and/or symbolic kinds of help to victims of the crisis, the rebuild response strategy attempts to improve the organizations' brand equity. Additionally, Kim, Avery, and Lariscy (2009) argue that although denial was a frequently employed response strategy, it was the least effective strategy concerning the outcome of the crisis.

Even though a rebuild crisis response strategy has its advantages, it also can have an adverse impact on the financial side (Cohen, 1999; Patel & Reinsch, 2003; Stockmyer, 1996). Research shows that using overly accommodative strategies, such as the rebuild cannot produce greater reputational benefits than those described in the SCCT. For instance, using a full apology in an accidental/preventable crisis provides no greater reputational benefit than an excuse strategy with adjusting information. Consequently, the brand pays more for the response but does not see an increased return in reputation protection (Coombs & Holladay, 1996, 2004). Moreover, using accommodating strategies when unnecessary actually can worsen the situation. Stakeholders begin to think the crisis must be worse than they thought if the organization is responding so aggressively (Siomkos & Kurtzbar, 1994).

Although a rebuild strategy has its disadvantages Coombs (1999) argues that people expect a rebuild crisis response strategy when they strongly perceive that the brand was responsible for the adverse event. This approach can reduce the feeling of aggression (Carnevale & Isen, 1986; Conlon & Murray, 1996), which in turn leads to the favorable evaluation of product or service providers. Further, even partial compensation may be sufficient to restore consumers' positive attitude towards the brand and enhance the likelihood of future purchases (Conlon & Murray, 1996). Thus, based on these findings a no response strategy may risk allowing a brand crisis to stand unchallenged, which in turn may damage the dimensions of brand equity, and overall brand equity compared with a rebuild crisis response strategy. Therefore, based on these findings the study developed the following hypothesis:

H2: a rebuild crisis response strategy has a less negative impact on (a) brand awareness/associations, (b) perceived brand quality, (c) brand loyalty and (d) overall brand equity than a no response strategy

2.4 Brand type

According to Park, Jaworski, and McInnis (1986), companies can position their brands regarding benefits offered; utilitarian and/or hedonic. However, utilitarianism and hedonism are not two ends of a unidimensional scale for benefits (Voss, Spangenberg, & Grohmann, 2003). As a result, brands can have different levels of symbolic and functional benefits (Chitturi, Raghunathan, & Mahajan, 2008). Consistent with previous research in marketing, this study will use functional benefits when referring to utilitarian benefits of brands, and symbolic benefits when referring to hedonic benefits (Batra & Ahtola, 1990; Dhar & Wertenbroch, 2000; Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982).

Consumers choose symbolic brands to satisfy their symbolic needs, such as aesthetic, experiential, and enjoyment related benefits (Batra & Ahtola, 1990; Chitturi, Raghunathan, & Mahajan, 2007). On the other hand, those who choose functional brands are in search for products that can satisfy practical needs (Batra & Ahtola, 1990; Chitturi, Raghunathan, & Mahajan, 2007). Moreover, these benefits provide more opportunities for the differentiation among brands in the consumers' minds (Keller, 2003) and increase the brand associations (Bendixen, Bukasa, & Abratt, 2004). Furthermore, if the functional and symbolic benefits can improve the attitude towards the brand from the customer's perspective, they can affect the client's acts or retentions, therefore enhancing brand equity (Ambler et al., 2002; Cheng & Chieng, 2006; Konecnik & Gartner, 2007).

According to Grimm (2005), the functional advantages of a brand will affect the evaluation of brand performance, and in turn, influence the perceived quality of a brand. Furthermore, consumers consider the fulfillment of functional benefits as a necessity, in other words, they have a must-meet nature (Chitturi, Raghunathan, & Mahajan, 2007). Consequently, if the functional benefits are great, they could have a positive impact on a consumer's attitude, and in turn, increase brand equity (Ambler et al., 2002; Homer, 2008; Konecnik & Gartner, 2007). Furthermore, Cyr, Head, and Ivanov (2006) argue that functional benefits positively influence brand loyalty. Thus, if a brand fails to meet a necessity, it may have an adverse impact on brand equity.

On the other hand, Tsang, Ho, and Liang (2004) found that when brands advertise the symbolic advantages of the brand that it has a positive influence on the customer's attitude towards the brand. Hackley and Tiwsakul (2006) pointed out that when brands are subsumed within symbolic benefits, the brand that is featured provide a powerfully rich discursive resource for identity formation. Hence, this identity could link the brand with the customer's mind and improve the product's brand awareness, thereby enhancing the formation of brand associations (Ambler et al., 2002, Biedenbach & Marell, 2010; Keller, 2003).

Also, the symbolic benefits that a brand may offer are one of the criteria for choosing and designing brand elements and building brand equity (Keller, 2003). For instance, the symbolic benefits that Apple brands

offer generated abundant profits for Apple (Mitchell, 1999). Furthermore, Cyr et al. (2006) suggest that symbolic benefits can improve brand loyalty, and in turn, this would affect consumer behavior and purchase intentions, thus creating brand equity (Konecnik & Gartner, 2007).

Holbrook (2006) argues that functional and symbolic benefits fulfill a customers' need- and want-satisfying experiences, respectively. In addition, functional needs represent Maslow's (1970) lower level "needs" (Sack, Singh, & DiPaolo, 2009) and symbolic "wants" represent higher level needs of the user in the Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Vlašić, Janković, & Kramo-Ćaluk, 2011). Moreover, Maslow (1970) suggests that the lower level needs must be achieved before a person is motivated to pursue higher level needs. Thus, if the lower level functional needs are not achieved the consumer remains focused on its functional needs before desiring to move up the needs hierarchy. Thus, consumers give higher priority to functional "needs" over symbolic "wants" (Chitturi, Raghunathan, & Mahajan, 2007; Higgins, 1997; Higgins, 2001). Based on these theoretical findings the study developed the following hypothesis:

H3: functional benefits significantly affect (a) brand awareness/associations, (b) perceived brand quality, (c) brand loyalty, and (d) overall brand equity more than symbolic benefits

2.5 Interaction effects between crisis type, crisis response strategy, and brand type

When a performance-related crisis occurs, the goal of the crisis response strategy is to convince its stakeholders that the brand will deliver functional benefits. According to Keller (2005), if there is a lack of assurance of the functional performance of a brand it would harm the brand's equity. Consequently, Dean (2004) suggests that a rebuild crisis response strategy is the best answer to a performance-related crisis. Furthermore, Dutta and Pullig (2011) indicate that a rebuild crisis response strategy is more effective than a no response strategy. However, consumers seem to seek less information about a values-related crisis than they do about a performance-related crisis (Dholakia, 2001). Thus, making them less informed, and in turn, not having the same impact as a performance-related impact. Consequently, to explore these findings this study developed the following hypotheses:

H4: a performance-related brand crisis implementing a rebuild crisis response strategy will lead to a greater positive impact on a) brand awareness/associations, (b) perceived brand quality, (c) brand loyalty, and (d) overall brand equity than a performance-related brand crisis implementing a no response strategy.

H5: a values-related brand crisis implementing a rebuild crisis response strategy will lead to the same impact on (a) brand awareness/associations, (b) perceived brand quality, (c) brand loyalty, and (d) overall brand equity than a values-related brand crisis implementing a no response strategy.

Furthermore, in their study Pham and Muthukrishnan (2002) introduce the search-and-alignment model of judgment revision. In their study, participants were introduced to an experiment involving brand crisis types and brand positioning. Their results indicate that when the brand positioning (e.g. symbolic) matches the crisis type (e.g. values-related crisis), it will lead to a more negative impact on brand equity than when there is a mismatch (e.g. functional and values-related crisis or symbolic and performance-related crisis, respectively) Therefore, this study hypothesizes the following:

H6: a symbolic brand matched with a values-related crisis leads to a less negative impact on (a) brand awareness/associations, and a more negative impact on (b) perceived brand quality, (c) brand loyalty, and (d) overall brand equity than a symbolic brand going through a performance-related crisis.

H7: a functional brand matched with a performance-related crisis lead to a more negative impact on (a) brand awareness/associations, (b) perceived brand quality, (c) brand loyalty, and (d) overall brand equity than a functional brand going through a values-related crisis.

2.6 Moderator variable: materialism

In consumer behavior, consumption is not only limited to gaining symbolic and/or functional benefits but extends to attaining social prestige, self-esteem, signaling status and self-identity (Elliott & Wattanasuwan, 1998; Acikalin, Gul & Develioglu, 2009). A person's interactions with others within a society results in certain social norms developing that serve to guide social behavior patterns. Thus, consumption behavior and concern for social status have a significant influence on the brand image (Acikalin et al., 2009). He, Li, and Harris (2012) found that the social image of a brand is engrained in the notion of social identity and relates to consumers' use of brands as a method of self-expression, self-enhancement, and self-esteem. The social image of a brand refers to ways in which the brand meets consumers' psychological and/or social needs (Keller, 2009). He, Li, and Harris (2012) argue that a brand's social image influences brand loyalty, which in turn has a strong impact on brand equity (Aaker, 1991; Tong & Hawley, 2009).

The process of which a connection between a consumer and brand exist can be explained by McCracken's (1986) meaning transfer model. McCracken (1986) suggest that advertising, along with other factors, can be used to express cultural meaning from the culturally established world to the consumer goods, and in turn, from the consumer goods to the consumer. In this sense, the brand is used as a method of expression of an individual's identity to his/herself and the rest of society, consequently, creating brand loyalty. For example, materialistic individuals seek out the acquisition of brands that convey a particular type of cultural meaning, i.e., those that symbolize status and success (Richins & Dawson, 1992). Moreover, Aaker (1999) finds that brand benefits have an impact on a consumer's brand choice if those benefits are important to that consumer's sense of personality or self.

For decades' scholars have studied materialism (Belk 1985; Burroughs & Rindfleisch, 2002; Richins & Dawson, 1992) and its causes and consequences (Larsen, Sirgy, & Wright, 1999; Rindfleisch, Burroughs, & Denton, 1997; Sirgy, 1998). However, there is a lack of research exploring the relationship between materialism and brand equity or crisis type. Therefore, this study focuses on materialism as a factor that moderates the relationship between the independent variables, brand equity dimensions, and overall brand equity.

Researchers have offered various perspectives of what materialism incorporates. For example, Belk (1984), defines materialism as "the importance a consumer attaches to worldly possessions" (p. 291). Specifically, Belk (1984) tries to measure three personality traits: possessiveness, non-generosity, and envy. Ger and Belk (1993) added a fourth trait of preservation, which was added in subsequent cross-cultural studies of the materialism scale. Initial examinations of this definition have revealed that materialism and happiness in life are negatively associated. However, Belk (1984) has voiced concern over causality and suggested further inquiry. In contrast, others see materialism as a distinctive set of values. For example, Richins and Dawson (1992), who defined materialism as "a set of centrally held beliefs about the importance of possessions in

one's life" (p. 308). Richins and Dawson (1992) construct materialism as a consumer value that can be explained under three sub-dimensions: acquisition centrality, acquisition as the pursuit of happiness, and possession-defined success. Under acquisition of centrality, materialists are expected to place possessions and acquisitions at the center of their lives. For the materialist, consumption at high level serves as a lifestyle and serves as a set of plans. The second dimension, acquisition as the pursuit of happiness, suggests that the difference between high materialists and low materialists is the difference between priority given to acquisitions over personal relationships, experiences, or achievements. The third dimension, possession-defined success suggests that people high in materialism define material well-being as evidence of success and social status.

According to Richins (1994a), brands have private and public meanings. Private meanings are "the sum of the subjective meanings that object holds for a particular individual" (p. 506). On the other hand, public meanings are defined as "the subjective meaning of an object that are shared by society at large" (p. 505). Thus, through the meanings of objects, consumers have the ability to communicate with others in the society and to express themselves. In particular, a materialist is cautious about whether the public meaning of possession is consistent with his/her self-image and social status (Richins, 1994a; Sirgy, 1982). Furthermore,

However, material things do not hold the same importance to consumers with different levels of materialism (Richins 1994b). High in materialism consumers are more likely to value brands based on their public meanings of success, prestige, or social status. Materialistic consumers tend to use socially sanctioned objects to either announce their status or arouse audience reaction (Fournier & Richins, 1991). In contrast, less materialistic consumers pay less attention to a brands' public meanings of status or prestige and more on the private meaning of possessions (Wallendorf & Arnould, 1988; Wang & Wallendorf, 2006; Richins, 1994b). Thus, functional benefits of a brand are more important to low in materialism consumers, and symbolic brands are important to high in materialism consumer.

In conclusion, when a brand goes through a values-related crisis, those high in materialism are likely to distance themselves from the brand as they do not convey the public meaning that they would want. However, those low in materialism may not be as affected as they pay less attention to public meanings of brands. Moreover, when a brand goes through a crisis, the functional benefits are even more important than the symbolic ones. Consumers care more about not losing what provides them efficacy to act than what fulfill their symbolic needs (Keller, 2003; Maslow, 1970; Chitturi, Raghunathan, & Mahajan, 2007). Consequently, the absence of a functional aspect of a brand is important to the consumer regardless their level of materialism.

In summary, this study predicts that high in materialism consumers will be more affected by values related than low in materialism consumers. Because symbolic benefits are more important for high in materialism consumers than they are for low in materialism consumers. On the other hand, when a crisis tarnishes the functional benefits signaled by a brand it will affect high and low materialism consumers. Because, for high- and low-materialism consumer the loss of basic functional benefits might be a concern for them due that consumers care more about losing what provides them the ability to act (Keller, 2003). Based on these findings this study developed the following hypothesis:

H8: materialism moderates the relationship between crisis type, crisis response, brand type (a) brand awareness/associations, (b) perceived brand quality, (c) brand loyalty, and (d) overall brand equity

2.7 Control variables: source credibility and involvement

Factors which influence the effects of crises on brands are manifold and cannot always be measured and/or controlled for in scientific research. Nevertheless, this study controlled involvement and source credibility to rule out alternative explanations.

The first covariate under investigation is consumers' crisis involvement. Involvement refers to an individual's overall perceived personal relevance and has motivational qualities that direct consumer cognition and overt behavior (Celsi & Olson, 1988; Peter & Olson, 1990). Accordingly, the degree to which consumers perceive an issue to be personally relevant to them will determine their level of involvement with the issue. Consequently, there are several studies in crisis communication that stress the importance of involvement during crises (Arpan & Roskos-Ewoldsen, 2005; Choi & Lin, 2009; Coombs & Holladay, 2005). Choi and Lin (2009) argue that consumers who are highly involved with a crisis process crisis situations more in-depth than those who are low in involvement. This finding is in line with other consumer research studies that suggest that an individuals' involvement with products/issues influences the depth in which they process information (Petty, Cacioppo, & Schumann, 1983; Petty & Cacioppo, 1988). Furthermore, Claeys and Cauberghe (2014) argue that crisis involvement has a moderating impact on crisis response strategy. Consequently, making it an important factor in this study.

Credibility is defined as the extent to which a piece of information is perceived as genuine and valid (Tseng & Fogg, 1999). Previous studies found that source credibility had a significant impact on the recipients of the message. The role of source credibility in communication is effective in influencing and persuading consumers (Eisend, 2004). Clow, James, and Stanley (2008) found that source credibility has an impact on consumer attitudes toward the advertised brand. In contrast, Flanagin and Metzger (2000) argue that respondents may judge credibility by content rather than medium. Consequently, source credibility in crisis communication literature has raised conflicting findings.

In conclusion, this study will control for source credibility and involvement to eliminate the variance in the results explained by these variables. Consequently, error variance will be reduced, and the relationships of the main factors can be better understood.

Based on these theoretical findings and hypotheses this study develops the following research design

■ **Figure 2.** Research Design

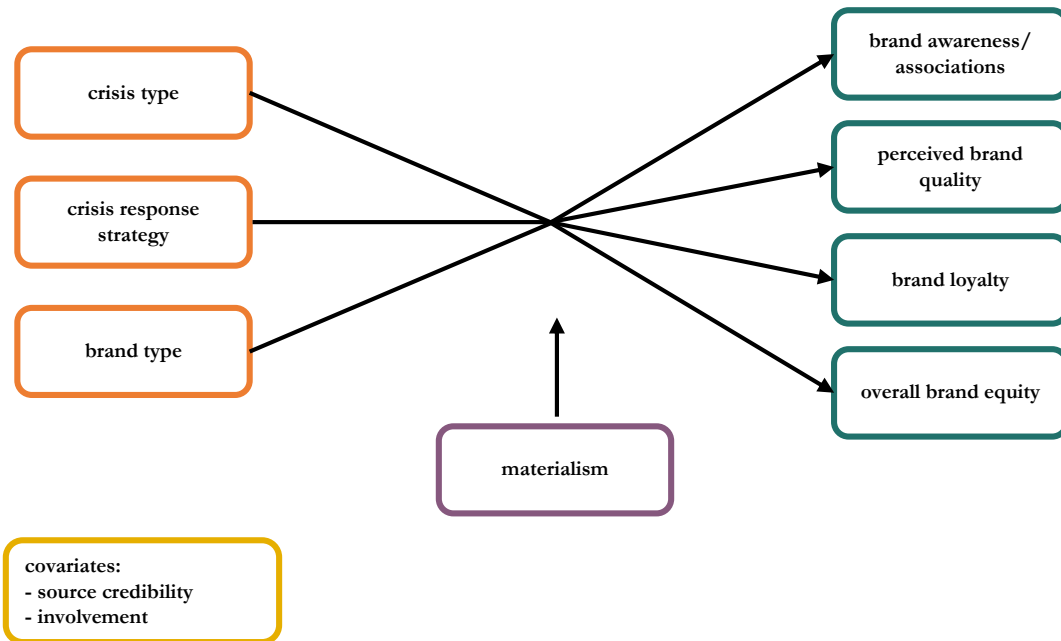


Figure 2. Research design for measuring the effect of crisis type, crisis response and brand type on brand equity dimension and overall brand equity.

3. Method

3.1 Design

To test the hypotheses of this study a 2 (functional vs. symbolic brand positioning) x 2 (performance vs. values-related crisis) x 2 (rebuild vs. no response crisis response strategy) between-subjects design experiment was implemented. The dependent variables included the dimensions of brand equity and overall brand equity. Furthermore, the variable materialism (low and high) was also included to see if it moderates the impact that the independent variables have on the dependent variables. Furthermore, this study introduced the following covariates: source credibility and involvement.

3.2 Procedure

With the help of Qualtrics, a large sample data was collected to measure various views and opinions of the respondent. Participants were approached via social networking sites (Facebook and LinkedIn). At first, they had to read an introduction to the research. Then they were presented with questions regarding materialism. Afterward, the participants were randomly assigned to either the symbolic or functional brand positioning condition. Subsequently, they were presented one of the four scenarios (crisis type and crisis response strategy), which they were also randomly assigned. After they had read the online news article, they were asked to answer questions regarding source credibility, involvement, brand equity, and overall brand equity. Then, they responded to questions related to their demographics.

3.3 Stimulus material

This study manipulated the independent variables into eight scenarios (Appendix A). First, this study created a fictitious online review article to manipulate brand positioning. Furthermore, brand crisis type and crisis response strategy were also manipulated through a fictitious online newspaper article from thetelegraph.co.uk.

The brand positioning manipulation provided two scenarios. First, a symbolic brand position, whereby the online review article focuses how the new King Paul classic fit polo derives sensation from using the product. Second, a functional brand positioning whereby the online review article describes the functional capabilities of the new King Paul classic fit polo.

Furthermore, the brand crisis type was manipulated in performance- and values-related crisis. In the performance-related, The Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemical substances (REACH) discovered toxic chemicals in the King Paul classic fit polo shirts. In the values-related crisis, an upper manager of the brand is accused of racially insensitive comments.

The crisis response strategy consisted of a rebuild and no response crisis response strategy. In the rebuild response strategy condition, a spokesperson for the brand took full responsibility for the incident and asked for forgiveness. In the no response strategy condition, the brand did not give any response to the incident.

3.4 Pre-study

Before the final questionnaire was designed and distributed, it was pre-tested to see if the scenarios successfully manipulated the independent variables. Twelve people participated in the study and were exposed to the eight conditions mentioned above, 10 (83.3%) were female, and 2 (16.7%) were male. The mean age of the participants was 34 (SD=13.45) with a minimum age of 20 and a maximum age of 61. Furthermore, the majority of the respondent (58.38%) have completed a bachelor's degree. Moreover, 25% come from The Netherlands and 25% from Aruba. Table 3.1 shows the demographic information of the participants.

Table 3.1.

Demographics of the respondents

	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	2	(16.7%)
Female	10	(83.3%)
Age	M = 34	(SD = 13.45)
Country of origin		
Aruba	3	(25%)
England	1	(8.33%)
The Netherlands	3	(25%)
Poland	1	(8.33%)
Russia	1	(8.33%)
Turkey	1	(8.33%)
United Kingdom	2	(16.66)
Education		
VWO	1	(8.3%)
MBOHAVO	1	(8.3%)
Bachelor's degree	7	(58.3%)
Master's degree	3	(25%)
Total	12	(100%)

Participants were asked to read eight conditions to check all manipulated factors in the news and review article. First, participants were asked to identify if the brand was considered a functional or symbolic brand. After that, the participants were presented with the crisis type condition. In order, to see if the participants understood the condition, they were asked a control question “What was the article about.” Then the participants were asked whether they related the incident to the quality or ethical values of the brand. Next, the participants were asked if they considered the news article to be credible, and how much were they involved with the crisis. After that, they answered questions related to their demographics.

To assess if the manipulations were successful, several scales were introduced. The factor loading in this study was .40. Furthermore, participants indicated their agreement on five-point Likert Scale. First, the semantic differential scale from Spangenberg, Voss, and Crowley (1997) was adopted to measure the functional and symbolic positioning of a brand. “effective/ineffective” (reverse), “functional/not functional” (reverse), “practical/impractical” (reverse), “low quality/high quality,” “necessary/unnecessary”.

Based on factor analysis the following items remained for the utilitarian dimensions: “functional/not functional” (reverse), “practical/impractical” (reverse), and “low quality/high quality.”. Furthermore, the factor analysis revealed the following items for the hedonic scale: “not fun/fun,” “dull/exciting,” and “enjoyable/unenjoyable” (reverse). Next, a reliability analysis was conducted, in the pre-study, the Cronbach’s Alpha for utilitarian $\alpha=.76$ and hedonic $\alpha=.87$

Secondly, the credibility scale from Flanagin and Metzger (2000) was adopted. Please indicate to what degree you find the information of the online news article “believable,” “accurate,” “trustworthy,” “biased”, and “complete.” Based on factor analysis three items remained: “believable,” “accurate,” and “trustworthy” The Cronbach’s Alpha was $\alpha=.87$

Last, the involvement scale from Kopalle and Lehmann (2001) was adopted. Based on factor analysis all of the items from the scale stayed: “this event matters a great deal to me”, “this event is very relevant to me”, and “this event is very important to me.” Consequently, a reliability analysis was conducted revealing a Cronbach’s Alpha $\alpha=.95$

To verify that the manipulation of the brand type worked as intended manipulation checks were conducted. An independent-samples t-test was run to determine if the participants saw the online review article as related to the functional or symbolic dimensions of a brand. The assumption of homogeneity of variances was violated, as assessed by Levene's test for equality of variances ($p=.03$). For the functional brand type condition, the participants perceived the online review article more as a symbolic brand ($M=2.64$, $SD=.67$) than a functional brand ($M=1.94$, $SD=.45$), a statistically significant difference of $-.69$ (95% CI, -1.18 to $-.21$), $t(19.08) = -2.98$, $p < .05$.

For the symbolic brand positioning there was homogeneity of variances, as assessed by Levene's test for equality of variances ($p=.36$). Consequently, for the symbolic brand type condition, the participants perceived the online review article more as a symbolic brand ($M=3.22$, $SD=1$) than a functional brand ($M=2.83$, $SD=.73$), however, the results were not statistically significant difference of $-.69$ (95% CI, -1.13 to $.35$), $t(22) = -1.1$, $p > .1$.

Based on these results, the symbolic brand positioning condition was changed to focus more on the symbolic of the brand, consequently, using words such as fun and enjoyment.

To verify that the manipulation of the crisis type worked as intended manipulation checks were conducted. An independent-samples t-test was run to determine if the incident is seen as a crisis that relates to the values or quality dimensions of the brand. The assumption of homogeneity of variances was met, as assessed by Levene's test for equality of variances ($p=0.06$). The performance-related crisis condition ($M=3.83$, $SD=1.09$) was perceived as significantly affecting the quality of the brand more than values-related crisis condition ($M= 2.58$, $SD=1.35$), a statistically significant difference of 1.25 (95% CI, $.54$ to 1.96), $t(46) = 3.53$, $p < .05$.

For the values-related crisis, the assumption of homogeneity of variances was met, as assessed by Levene's test for equality of variances ($p=0.77$). For the performance-related crisis condition, ($M=3.96$, $SD=1.04$) was perceived as affecting the ethical values of the brand more than values-related crisis condition ($M=3.92$, $SD=1.18$), however, it was not statistically significant $p > .1$.

Consequently, the manipulation check was partially successful. Therefore, the following question was changed from “the incident is related to the ethical values of the brand” to “the incident is about the ethics and morals of the brand.”

Furthermore, a third manipulation check was conducted to see if the response strategy was successfully manipulated. The assumption of homogeneity of variances was met, as assessed by Levene's test for equality of variances ($p=0.63$). The condition rebuild crisis response strategy ($M=4.08$, $SD=0.93$) was perceived as

King Paul taking responsibility more than the no response crisis response strategy ($M=1.83$, $SD = .92$), a statistically significant difference of 2.25 (95% CI, 1.71 to 2.79), $t(46) = 8.45$, $p < .05$. Consequently, the crisis response strategy manipulation was successful.

In summary, several scale items were removed or changed based on the results of the factor analysis. Furthermore, the wording of the stimulus material and manipulation check question were also changed.

3.5 Participants in the main study

The researcher gathered participants posting messages on her personal networking sites (Facebook and LinkedIn). A total of 275 surveys were started (Appendix B). However, 194 were eligible and complete. Qualtrics randomly assigned participants to one of the eight conditions table 3.2.

Table 3.2.

Distribution of scenarios among respondents

			Response Strategy		
			Rebuild	No Response	Total
Functional	Crisis Type	Performance-related	27	23	50
		Values-related	21	20	41
	Total		48	43	91
Symbolic	Crisis Type	Performance-related	29	25	54
		Values-related	27	22	49
	Total		56	47	103
Total	Crisis Type	Performance-related	56	48	104
		Values-related	49	42	90
	Total		104	90	194

In this study, of the 194 participants, 122 (62.9%) were female, and 72 (37.1%) were male. The mean age of the participants was 25.44 (SD = 6.16) with a minimum age of 18 and a maximum age of 69. Nevertheless, a majority of the respondents (70.6%) belonged to the age group 18 to 26. Furthermore, the majority of the respondent (43.8%) had completed a bachelor's degree. Moreover, of the 194 participants, 109 (56.2%) came from The Netherlands. Table 3.3 shows the demographic information of the participants.

Table 3.3.

Demographics of the respondents

	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	72	37.1%
Female	122	62.9%
Age	M = 25.44	(SD = 6.16)
Education		
Primary school	1	0.5%
High school	34	17.5%
Bachelor's degree	85	43.8%
Master's degree	65	33.5%
PhD	1	0.5%
Other	8	4.1%
Country of origin		
Netherlands	109	56.2%
Germany	12	6.2%
India	6	3.1%
United Kingdom	6	3.1%
Other	61	31.4%

3.6 Measures

This research used the measures from several studies: materialism, brand positioning, brand equity, overall brand equity, and the covariates source credibility and crisis involvement. Table 3.4 shows the results of the factor and reliability analyses. The dependent variables and covariates were tested by factor analysis, using varimax rotation; the factor loadings were 0.4. Subsequently, the factor analysis has shown appropriate loadings for all the dependent and covariate variables. However, the items for brand loyalty loaded on the same factor as overall brand equity. Yoo and Donthu (2001) define brand loyalty as “the tendency to be loyal to a focal brand, which is demonstrated by the intention to buy the brand” (p. 3). Based on this definition, one can argue that brand loyalty has a significant impact on purchase intention. Consequently, this influence cannot be seen as the same, but as an antecedent for purchase intention (Souiden & Pons, 2009). Therefore, for this research, these two constructs will be analyzed as two separate scales.

In this study, participant’s **materialism** level was measured by three correlated aspects of materialism. Subsequently, creating three subscales: success, centrality, and happiness each consisting of three items. Furthermore, the three sub-scales together create an overall materialism scale. These scales were adopted from Richins (2004). Participants indicated their agreement on five-point Likert scales ranging from “strongly disagree” (1) to “strongly agree” (5):

Success. 1) “I admire people who own expensive homes, cars, and clothes”, 2) “The things I own say a lot about how well I’m doing in life”, 3) “I like to own things that impress people.” In this study, the Cronbach’s Alpha for success $\alpha=.73$.

Centrality. 4) “I try to keep my life simple, as far as possessions are concerned” (reverse), 5) “Buying things gives me a lot of pleasure”, 6) “I like a lot of luxury in my life”. In this study, the Cronbach’s Alpha centrality $\alpha=.57$., consequently, falling below the .7 margin. Even if an item were to be deleted, it would still fall below the .7 mark. Therefore, the scale centrality was removed.

Happiness. 7) “My life would be better if I owned certain things I don’t have”, 8) “I’d be happier if I could afford to buy more things”, and 9) “It sometimes bothers me quite a bit that I can’t afford to buy all the things I’d like”. In this study, the Cronbach’s Alpha, happiness $\alpha=.74$,

For the overall scale for materialism, all three subscales were included therefore resulting in a Cronbach’s Alpha for materialism $\alpha=.82$

Brand positioning was measured with five items from a semantic differential scale from Spangenberg, Voss, & Crowley (1997). Participants indicated their agreement on five-point Likert Scale. The scale measuring the functional dimensions of a brand had three items: functional/not functional” (reverse), “practical/impractical” (reverse), and “low quality/high quality”. Consequently, the Cronbach’s Alpha was $\alpha=.69$, consequently falling below the .7., as a result, the item “low quality/high quality” was removed resulting in a Cronbach’s Alpha $\alpha=.83$. Furthermore, the hedonic scale contained three items: “not fun/fun”, “dull/exciting”, “enjoyable/unenjoyable” resultin in a a Cronbach’s Alpha $\alpha=.75$.

The **multidimensional consumer-based brand equity scale (MBE)** was measured with seven items from Yoo and Donthu (2001). Participants indicated their agreement on a five-point Likert scales ranging from “strongly disagree” (1) to “strongly agree” (5).

Brand equity – perceived quality was measured with two items “The likely quality of King Paul is extremely high” and “The likelihood that King Paul would be functional is very high.” In this study, the Cronbach’s Alpha was $\alpha=.76$

Brand awareness/associations was measured with five items: “I can recognize King Paul among other competing brands”, “I am aware of King Paul”, “Some characteristics of King Paul come to my mind quickly”, “I can quickly recall the symbol or logo of King Paul”, “I have difficulty in imagining King Paul in my mind (reverse).” In this study the Cronbach’s was $\alpha=.83$

Brand loyalty was measured with three items “King Paul would be my first choice”, “I consider myself to be loyal to King Paul”, “I will not buy other brands if King Paul is available at the store.” In this study, the Cronbach’s Alpha was $\alpha=.74$

Overall brand equity scale (OBE) was measured with four items from Yoo and Donthu (2001). Participants indicated their agreement on a five-point Likert scales ranging from “strongly disagree” (1) to “strongly agree” (5): “It makes sense to buy King Paul instead of any other brand, even if they are the same”, “Even if another brand has the same features as King Paul, I would prefer to buy King Paul”, “If there is another brand as good as King Paul, I prefer to buy King Paul”, and “If another brand is not different from King Paul in any way, it seems smarter to purchase King Paul.” In this study the Cronbach’s Alpha was $\alpha=.9$

In addition to the above variables, two control variables were added to see if the crisis affected the participants personally and if the fictitious article was considered credible.

Credibility was adopted from Flanagin and Metzger (2000). Participants indicated their agreement on five-point Likert Scale: Please indicate to what degree you find the information of the online news article “believable”, “accurate”, and “trustworthy”. In this study the Cronbach’s Alpha was $\alpha=.8$

Involvement was measured with three items from Kopalle & Lehmann (2001). Participants indicated their agreement on five-point Likert Scale: “this event matters a great deal to me”, “this event is very relevant to me”, and “this event is very important to me.” In this study the Cronbach’s Alpha was $\alpha=.9$

Table 3.4.

Factor Loadings for Exploratory Factor Analysis with Varimax Rotation

	Rotated Component Matrix Component				
	1	2	3	4	5
Overall brand equity					
Even if another brand has the same features as King Paul, I would prefer to buy King Paul	.882				
If there is another brand as good as King Paul, I prefer to buy King Paul	.854				
If another brand is not different from King Paul in any way, it seems smarter to purchase King Paul	.833				
It makes sense to buy King Paul instead of any other brand, even if they are the same	.820				
Brand loyalty					
King Paul would be my first choice	.721				
I consider myself to be loyal to King Paul	.634				
I will not buy other brands if King Paul is available at the store	.461				
Brand awareness/associations					
Some characteristics of King Paul come to my mind quickly		.779			
I am aware of King Paul		.771			
I can quickly recall the symbol or logo of King Paul		.764			
I can recognize King Paul among other competing brands		.713			
I have difficulty in imagining King Paul in my mind (RECODED)		.673			
Involvement					
this event is very important to me			.913		
this event matters a great deal to me			.897		

this event is very relevant to me	.873
Credibility	
Please indicate to what degree you find the information of the online news article-trustworthy	.866
Please indicate to what degree you find the information of the online news article-accurate	.830
Please indicate to what degree you find the information of the online news article-believable	.807
Perceived brand quality	
The likelihood that King Paul would be functional is very high	.865
The likely quality of King Paul is extremely high	.846

Note. Factor loadings >.40

3.7 Control question and manipulation checks

To see if the respondents understood the article the questionnaire included a control question “What was the article about.” Consequently, six participants were removed from further examination due to them answering this item incorrectly. Therefore, the study will continue with 188 participants.

Brand type

To verify that the manipulation of the brand type worked as intended manipulation checks were conducted. An independent-samples t-test was run to determine if the participants saw the online review article as related to the functional or symbolic dimensions of a brand. The assumption of homogeneity of variances was met, as assessed by Levene's test for equality of variances ($p=.34$). For the functional brand type condition, the participants perceived the online review article more as a functional brand ($M=3.91$, $SD=.82$) than as a symbolic brand ($M=3.54$, $SD=.81$), a statistically significant difference of .38 (95% CI, 0.15 to 0.61), $t(186) = 3.19$, $p < .05$.

Furthermore, for the symbolic brand manipulation, the assumption of homogeneity of variances was violated, as assessed by Levene's test for equality of variances ($p=.001$). For the symbolic condition the participants perceived the online review article as the brand being more functional ($M=3.12$, $SD=.6$) than symbolic ($M=3.06$, $SD=.93$). However, the manipulation was not statistically significant $p > .05$. Therefore, the independent variable brand type is dropped from this study. For that reason, hypotheses H3, H6, and H7 are not supported.

Crisis type

To verify that the manipulation of the stimulus material worked as intended manipulation checks were conducted. An independent-samples t-test was run to determine if the incident is seen as relating to the values or quality dimensions of the brand. The assumption of homogeneity of variances was violated, as assessed by Levene's test for equality of variances ($p = 0.001$). For the performance-related crisis condition, ($M = 3.46$, $SD = 1.12$) was perceived as significantly affecting the quality of the brand more than the values-related crisis condition ($M = 1.91$, $SD = 0.92$), a statistically significant difference of 1.55 (95% CI, 1.26 to 1.85), $t(185.02) = 10.41$, $p < .05$.

Furthermore, the assumption of homogeneity of variances was violated for the values-related crisis condition, as assessed by Levene's test for equality of variances ($p = 0.02$). The values-related crisis condition ($M = 4.01$, $SD = 1.06$) was perceived as significantly affecting the values of the brand more than the performance-related crisis condition ($M = 3.56$, $SD = 1.14$), a statistically significant difference of -.45 (95% CI, -.77 to -.14), $t(185.5) = -2.82$, $p < .05$. Consequently, crisis type manipulation was successful.

Crisis response strategy

In order to see if the respondent understood the crisis response strategy, the questionnaire included the following item: “*Did King Paul take responsibility for the incident.*” Subsequently, an independent-samples t-test was run to determine this. The assumption of homogeneity of variances was met, as assessed by Levene's test for equality of variances ($p = 1.26$). The condition rebuild crisis response strategy ($M = 3.58, SD = 0.94$) was perceived as King Paul taking responsibility more than the no response crisis response strategy ($M = 2.39, SD = 1.06$), a statistically significant difference of 1.18 (95% CI, .9 to 1.47), $t(186) = 8.11, p < .05$. Consequently, the crisis response manipulation was also successful.

4. Results

There are two independent variables in this study; brand crisis type and crisis response strategy. The dependent variables are brand awareness/associations, perceived brand quality, brand loyalty, and overall brand equity. Furthermore, the study added a moderator variable; materialism and its subscales success and happiness. Additionally, two covariates were included involvement and credibility.

To test the various hypotheses MANOVAs and MANCOVAs were conducted using SPSS GLM. With these analyses, two groups could be compared in their outcome on multiple dependent variables. In this section, the results will be discussed. First, the main effects will be discussed. Secondly, the interaction effects will be discussed. Effects will both be measured with and without the inclusion of the covariates.

4.1 Main effects brand crisis type

A one-way multivariate analysis of variance was run to determine the effect of brand crisis type on the dependent variables. Brand crisis type consisted of the performance-related crisis and values-related crisis. The differences between the brand crisis types on the combined dependent variables were statistically significant, $F(4, 183) = 2.6, p .04$; Wilks' $\Lambda = .95$; partial $\eta^2 = .05$.

Participants in the performance-related crisis condition had a more negative effect on **perceived brand quality** ($M=2.64, SD=.89$) than those in the values-related crisis condition ($M=3.01, SD=.9$). Follow-up univariate ANOVAs showed that **perceived brand quality** $F(1,186) = 7.8, p < .01$; partial $\eta^2 = .04$ was statistically significant between brand crisis types.

Furthermore, when controlling for the effects of source credibility and involvement the differences between the brand crisis types on the combined dependent variables was statistically significant $F(4, 181) = 2.5, p < .05$; Wilks' $\Lambda = .95$; partial $\eta^2 = .05$. Participants in the performance-related crisis condition had a more negative effect on **perceived brand quality** ($M=2.64, SD=.89$) than those in the values-related crisis condition ($M=3.01, SD=.9$). Follow-up univariate ANOVAs showed that **perceived brand quality** $F(1,184) = 7.2, p < .01$; partial $\eta^2 = .04$ was statistically significant between brand crisis types.

Consequently, hierarchical multiple regression analyses were run to predict the dimensions of brand equity and overall brand equity from crisis type. Accordingly, the regression analyses revealed that there was a significant influence on **perceived brand quality** ($\beta=.20, p<.05$).

When controlling the effect of source credibility and involvement, it showed that source credibility had a significant influence on **brand awareness/associations** ($\beta=.21, p<.1$). Furthermore, when controlling for involvement, a significant influence was found on **brand awareness/associations** ($\beta=.20, p<.01$), **perceived brand quality** ($\beta=.12, p<.1$), and **brand loyalty** ($\beta=.22, p<.01$).

Table 4.1.1.

Summary of Multivariate Analysis of Variance

	Performance-related crisis		Values-related crisis		F(<i>p-value</i>)	β	Hypotheses	
	M	SD	M	SD				
Brand awareness/associations	2.23	.87	2.26	.98	.04 (.84)	.02	H1a	Not supported
Perceived brand quality	2.64	.89	3	.9	7.8(.01)*	.2*	H1b	Supported
Brand loyalty	1.65	.66	1.64	.71	.01(.92)	-	H1c	Not supported
Overall brand equity	1.77	.79	1.87	.77	.76(.39)	.06	H1d	Not supported

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .1$, *** $p < .01$

Table 4.1.2.

Summary of Multivariate Analysis of Covariance

	Performance-related crisis		Values-related crisis		F(<i>p-value</i>)	β		Hypotheses	
	M	SD	M	SD		cred.	inv.		
Brand awareness/associations	2.23	.87	2.26	.98	.01 (.93)	.15*	.2*	H1a	Not supported
Perceived brand quality	2.64	.89	3	.9	7.21(.01)*	-.02	.12	H1b	supported
Brand loyalty	1.65	.66	1.64	.71	.01(.92)	.03	.22*	H1c	Not supported
Overall brand equity	1.77	.79	1.87	.77	.76(.39)	.00	.09	H1d	Not supported

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .1$, *** $p < .01$; covariates: source credibility and involvement.

Table 4.1.3.

Summary of Multiple Regression Analyses

Variables	B	SE _B	β
Brand awareness/associations	.03	.14	.02
Perceived brand quality	.34	.13	.2*
Brand loyalty	-.01	.1	-.01
Overall brand equity	.1	.11	.06

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .1$, *** $p < .01$

Table 4.1.4.

Summary of Multiple Regression Analyses

Variables	Source credibility			Involvement		
	B	SE _B	β	B	SE _B	β
Brand awareness/associations	.21	.1	.15*	.19	.07	.20***
Perceived brand quality	-.02	.1	-.02	.12	.07	.12**
Brand loyalty	.03	.08	.03	.15	.05	.22*
Overall brand equity	.01	.09	.004	.07	.06	.09

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .1$, *** $p < .01$

4.2 Main effects crisis response strategy

A one-way multivariate analysis of variance was run to determine the effect of crisis response strategy on brand equity dimensions and overall brand equity. Crisis response strategy consisted from: rebuild crisis response strategy and no response. The differences between the crisis response strategies on the dependent variables were not statistically significant, $F(4, 183) = .82, p = .43$; Wilks' $\Lambda = .98$; partial $\eta^2 = .02$.

Furthermore, when controlling for the effects of source credibility and involvement and, no significant main effect was found on the dependent variables $F(4, 181) = .97, p = .43$; Wilks' $\Lambda = .98$; partial $\eta^2 = .02$. Consequently, these results mean that hypothesis 2 is not supported.

The results of the MANOVA and MANCOVA revealed that no significant effect was found on the dependent variables

Furthermore, a hierarchical multiple regression analyses were run to predict the dimensions of brand equity and overall brand equity from the interaction of crisis type and crisis response. Accordingly, the regression analyses revealed that there was a no significant influence on the dependent variables

Table 4.2.1.

Summary of Multivariate Analysis of Variance

	Rebuild crisis response strategy		No response crisis strategy		F(<i>p-value</i>)	Hypotheses	
	M	SD	M	SD			
Brand awareness/associations	2.32	.95	2.17	.88	1.15 (.29)	H2a	Not supported
Perceived brand quality	2.9	.89	2.71	.93	2.18 (.14)	H2b	Not supported
Brand loyalty	1.69	.74	1.59	.61	1.05 (.31)	H2c	Not supported
Overall brand equity	1.87	.81	1.75	.73	1.14 (.29)	H2d	Not supported

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Table 4.2.2.

Summary of Multivariate Analysis of Covariance

	Rebuild crisis response strategy		No response crisis strategy				
	M	SD	M	SD	F(<i>p-value</i>)	Hypotheses	
Brand awareness/associations	2.32	.95	2.17	.88	1.01(.32)	H2a	Not supported
Perceived brand quality	2.9	.89	2.71	.93	2.74(.1)	H2b	Not supported
Brand loyalty	1.69	.74	1.59	.61	1.4(.24)	H2c	Not supported
Overall brand equity	1.87	.81	1.75	.73	1.33(.25)	H2d	Not supported

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .1$, *** $p < .01$; covariates: source credibility and involvement.

Table 4.2.3.

Summary of Multiple Regression Analyses

Variables	B	SE _B	β
Brand awareness/associations	-.08	.14	-.08
Perceived brand quality	-.2	.13	-.11
Brand loyalty	-.10	.10	-.08
Overall brand equity	-.12	.11	-.08

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .1$, *** $p < .01$.

4.3 Interaction effects brand crisis type and crisis response strategy

A one-way multivariate analysis of variance was run to determine the interaction effects of brand crisis type and crisis response strategy on the dependent variables. The interaction between the independent variables on the dependent variables was not statistically significant, $F(4, 181) = 1.41, p = .23$; Wilks' $\Lambda = .97$; partial $\eta^2 = .03$.

Furthermore, when controlling for the effects of source credibility and involvement, no significant main effect was found on the dependent variables $F(4, 179) = 1.27, p = .28$; Wilks' $\Lambda = .97$; partial $\eta^2 = .03$. Consequently, hypotheses H4 and H5 are not supported.

Furthermore, a hierarchical multiple regression analyses were run to predict the dimensions of brand equity and overall brand equity from the interaction of crisis type and crisis response. Accordingly, the regression analyses revealed that there was a no significant influence on the dependent variables

Table 4.3.1.

Summary of Multivariate Analysis of Variance

	Performance-related crisis				Values-related crisis						
	Rebuild crisis response strategy		No response crisis strategy		Rebuild crisis response strategy		No response crisis strategy		F(<i>p-value</i>)		
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD		Hypotheses	
Brand awareness/associations	2.26	.88	2.21	.86	2.38	1.03	2.12	.91	.58(.45)	H4a not supported	H5a not supported
Perceived brand quality	2.81	.87	2.45	.87	3.01	.90	3	.92	1.84 (.18)	H4b not supported	H5b not supported
Brand loyalty	1.72	.69	1.56	.61	1.66	.8	1.62	.61	.33(.56)	H4c not supported	H5c not supported
Overall brand equity	1.9	.84	1.62	.7	1.84	.78	1.9	.76	2.33 (.13)	H4d not supported	H5d not supported

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Table 4.3.2.

Summary of Multivariate Analysis of Covariance

	Performance-related crisis				Values-related crisis						
	Rebuild crisis response strategy		No response crisis strategy		Rebuild crisis response strategy		No response crisis strategy		F(<i>p-value</i>)	Hypotheses	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD			
Brand awareness/associations	2.26	.88	2.21	.86	2.38	1.03	2.12	.91	.5 (.48)	H4a not supported	H5a not supported
Perceived brand quality	2.81	.87	2.45	.87	3.01	.90	3	.92	1.56 (.21)	H4b not supported	H5b not supported
Brand loyalty	1.72	.69	1.56	.61	1.66	.8	1.62	.61	.25 (.62)	H4c not supported	H5c not supported
Overall brand equity	1.9	.84	1.62	.7	1.84	.78	1.9	.76	2.16 (.14)	H4d not supported	H5d not supported

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .1$, *** $p < .01$; covariates: source credibility and involvement.

Table 4.3.3.

Summary of Multiple Regression Analyses

Variables	B	SE _B	β
Brand awareness/associations	-.05	.06	-.06
Perceived brand quality	.07	.06	.09
Brand loyalty	-.03	.05	-.05
Overall brand equity	.02	.05	.02

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .1$, *** $p < .01$.

4.4 Interaction effect brand crisis type and materialism

As mentioned before, the scale materialism consists of three sub-scales: success, centrality and happiness. Through reliability analysis the sub-scale centrality had a Cronbach's Alpha = .57, therefore, declaring it. However, for the overall scale of materialism all three sub-scales were used.

A moderator analysis was run to determine whether the relationship between crisis type and the dependent variables depends on (is moderated by) the value of materialism. Consequently, a hierarchical multiple regression was run to assess the statistical significance of the interaction term between crisis type and materialism. Consequently, there was a statistically significant moderator effect of materialism on **perceived brand quality** $R^2=.05$, $F(3,184) = 3.02$, $p<.05$, adjusted $R^2 = .03$ and overall brand equity $R^2=.04$, $F(3,184) = 2.63$, $p<.1$, adjusted $R^2 = 0.3$. However, there was not a statistically significant moderator effect of materialism on **brand awareness/associations** $R^2=.01$, $F(3,184) = .51$, $p>.1$, adjusted $R^2 = -.01$, and brand loyalty $R^2=.01$, $F(3,184) = .89$, $p>.1$, adjusted $R^2 = -.00$.

Since there is a potentially significant moderation effect, this study ran the regression on the centered terms to examine the effect. This was done by the add-on PROCESS made by Andrew F. Hayes. Consequently, the interaction term between crisis type and materialism was added to the regression model, consequently, there was no statistical significance in the proportion of the variance in **perceived brand quality**, $\Delta R^2 = .03$, $\Delta F(1,184) = 1.01$, $p>.01$, $\beta = .19$, $t(184) = .92$, $p > .1$. Furthermore, there was a statistical significance in the proportion of the variance in overall brand equity, $\Delta R^2 = .04$, $\Delta F(1,184) = 6.59$, $p< .05$, $\beta = -.42$, $t(184) = -2.56$, $p < .05$.

After conducting the moderation analyses, the interaction effects between brand crisis type and materialism on the dependent variables will be measured through a MANOVA and MANCOVA. In order to measure the interaction effect between brand crisis type and materialism, the results of materialism, success, and happiness were split in two, using the median. For this study the median of materialism, success, and happiness were 2.89, 2.67, and 3 respectively. Consequently, all the scores falling under and including 2.89, 2.67, and 3 were called "low" and above 2.89, 2.67, and 3 were called "high". Table 4.11 shows the median and group distribution.

Table 4.4.1.

Median and Group Distribution for Materialism and Its Subscales

	Median	Low group	High group
Materialism	2.89	≤ 2.89	> 2.89
Success	2.67	≤ 2.67	> 2.67
Happiness	3	≤ 3	> 3

The interaction between brand crisis type and materialism on the dependent variables was marginally statistically significant, $F(4,181) = 2.13$, $p = .08$; Wilks' $\Lambda = .96$; partial $\eta^2 = .05$. Follow-up univariate

ANOVAs showed that **overall brand equity** ($F(1,184) = 4.17, p < .05$; partial $\eta^2 = .02$) was significantly significant. More specifically, a performance-related crisis has a more negative effect when the consumer is low in materialism ($M=1.62, SD=.82$) compared when the consumer is high in materialism ($M= 1.93, SD=.72$). While a values-related crisis has a more negative effect when the consumer is high in materialism ($M= 1.79, SD=.63$) compared when the consumer is lowly materialistic ($M= 1.95, SD=.89$).

Furthermore, when controlling for the effects of source credibility and involvement, there was a marginally statistically significant difference on the dependent variable between brand crisis type and materialism $F(4,179) = 2.13, p < .1$; Wilks' $\Lambda = .96$; partial $\eta^2 = .05$). Follow-up univariate ANOVAs showed that **overall brand equity** ($F(1,182) = 4.35, p < .05$; partial $\eta^2 = .02$) was statistically significant. Consequently, only H8d is supported.

In addition, a hierarchical multiple regression analyses were run to predict the dimensions of brand equity and overall brand equity from the interaction of crisis type and crisis response. Accordingly, the regression analyses revealed that there was a significant influence on **perceived brand quality** ($\beta=.20, p < .01$). the dependent variables

Table 4.4.2.

Summary of Multivariate Analysis of Variance

Performance-related crisis					Values-related crisis					Hypotheses	
Low in materialism		High in materialism		Low in materialism		High in materialism					
M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	F(<i>p-value</i>)			
Brand awareness/ associations	2.15	.91	2.33	.82	2.11	.89	2.4	1.05	.18 (.67)	H8a	Not supported
Perceived brand quality	2.7	.97	2.57	.79	2.9	.96	3.1	.85	1.45 (.23)	H8b	Not supported
Brand loyalty	1.57	.68	1.74	.62	1.59	.82	1.68	.60	.16 (.69)	H8c	Not supported
Overall brand equity	1.62	.82	1.93	.72	1.95	.89	1.79	.63	4.17 (.04)*	H8d	supported

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .1$, *** $p < .01$

Table 4.4.3.

Summary of Multivariate Analysis of Covariance

	Performance-related crisis				Values-related crisis				F(<i>p-value</i>)	Hypotheses	
	Low in materialism		High in materialism		Low in materialism		High in materialism				
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD			
Brand awareness/associations	2.15	.91	2.33	.82	2.11	.89	2.4	1.05	.18(.68)	H8a	Not supported
Perceived brand quality	2.7	.97	2.57	.79	2.9	.96	3.1	.85	1.31(.25)	H8b	Not supported
Brand loyalty	1.57	.68	1.74	.62	1.59	.82	1.68	.60	.25(.62)	H8c	Not supported
Overall brand equity	1.62	.82	1.93	.72	1.95	.89	1.79	.63	4.35(.04)*	H8d	supported

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .1$, *** $p < .01$; covariates: source credibility and involvement.

Table 4.4.4.

Summary of Multiple Regression Analyses

Variables	B	SE _B	β
Brand awareness/associations	.03	.04	.06
Perceived brand quality	.09	.03	.20***
Brand loyalty	.01	.03	.02
Overall brand equity	.02	.03	.05

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .1$, *** $p < .01$.

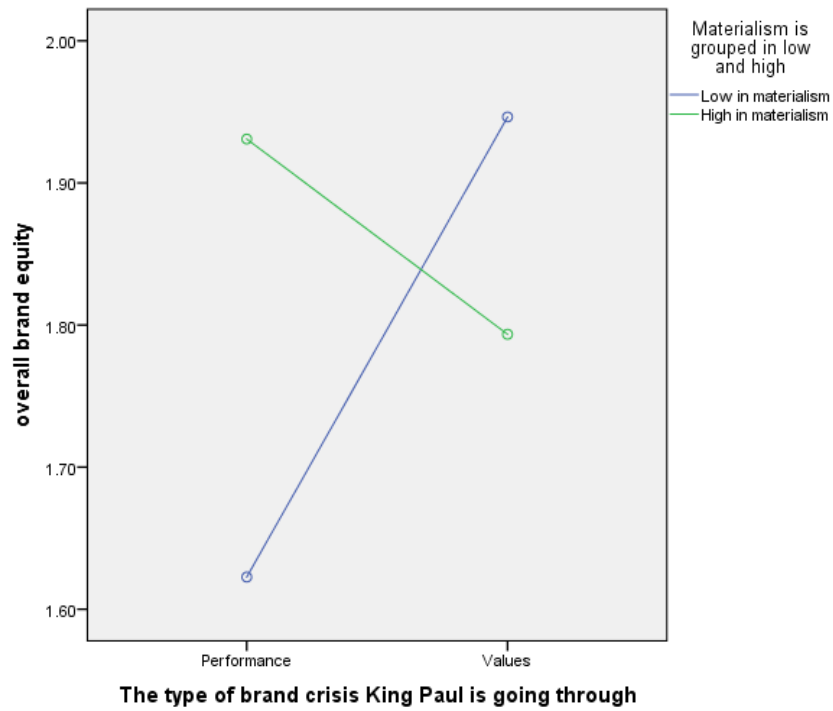


Figure 4.4. Interaction effects of crisis type and materialism on overall brand equity

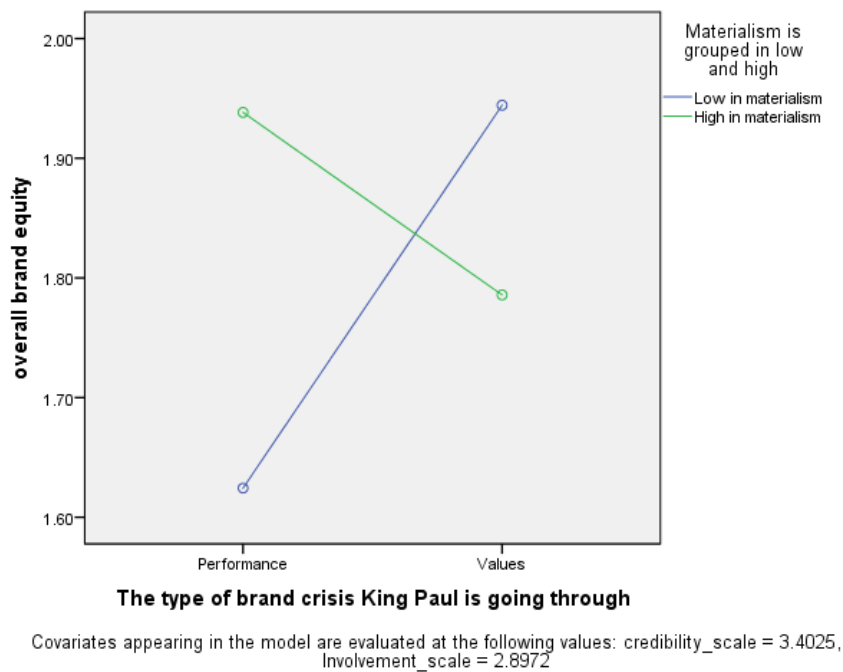


Figure 4.5. Interaction effects of crisis type and materialism on overall brand equity controlling for the effects of source credibility and involvement

4.4.1. Interaction effect brand crisis and materialism-success

Interaction effects between the independent variables and moderator variables on the dependent variables will be measured through a MANOVA and MANCOVA. There was a marginally statistically significant difference between brand crisis type and materialism-success on the dependent variables $F(4,181) = 2.34$, $p < .1$; Wilks' $\Lambda = .95$; partial $\eta^2 = .05$).

Follow-up univariate ANOVAs showed that there was a statistically significant in **overall brand equity** between brand crisis type and success $F(1,184) = 7.48$, $p < .001$; partial $\eta^2 = .04$). Where a performance-related crisis has a more negative effect when the consumer is low in success ($M=1.56$, $SD=.74$) compared when the consumer is high in success ($M= 2.05$, $SD=.78$). While a values-related crisis has a more negative effect when the consumer is high on success ($M= 1.80$, $SD=.59$) compared when the consumer is low in success ($M= 1.92$, $SD =.88$)

Furthermore, when controlling for the effects of source credibility and involvement, there was a were a marginally statistically significant, $F(4,179) = 2.34$, $p < .1$; Wilks' $\Lambda = .95$; partial $\eta^2 = .05$. Follow-up univariate ANOVAs showed that there was marginally statistically significant on **brand loyalty** $F(1,182) = 3.23$, $p < .1$; partial $\eta^2 = .02$). Specifically, a performance-related crisis has a more negative effect when the consumer is low in success ($M=1.47$, $SD=.62$) compared when the consumer is high in success ($M=1.88$, $SD =.63$). While a values-related crisis has a more negative effect when the consumer is low on success ($M=1.6$, $SD=.79$) compared when the consumer is high in success ($M=1.69$, $SD=.6$).

Furthermore, follow-up univariate ANOVAs showed that there was marginally statistically significant on **overall brand equity** $F(1,182) = 7.86$, $p < .01$; partial $\eta^2 = .04$). Specifically, a performance-related crisis has a more negative effect when the consumer is low on success ($M=1.56$, $SD=.74$) compared when the consumer is high on success ($M= 2.05$, $SD=.78$). While a values-related crisis has a more negative effect when the consumer is high on success ($M = 1.80$, $SD=.59$) compared when the consumer is low on success ($M= 1.92$, $SD=.88$). Consequently, H8c and d were partially supported.

In addition, a hierarchical multiple regression analyses were run to predict the dimensions of brand equity and overall brand equity from crisis type. Accordingly, the regression analyses revealed that there was a significant influence on **perceived brand quality** ($\beta=.20$, $p<.01$).

Table 4.4.1.1.

Summary of Multivariate Analysis of Variance

	Performance-related crisis				Values-related crisis						
	Low in success		High in success		Low in success		High in success			Hypotheses	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	F(<i>p-value</i>)		
Brand awareness/ associations	2.16	.92	2.33	.8	2.24	.98	2.29	.99	.16(.69)	H8a	Not supported
Perceived brand quality	2.53	.88	2.78	.88	2.83	.95	3.24	.80	.39 (.53)	H8b	Not supported
Brand loyalty	1.47	.62	1.88	.63	1.6	.79	1.69	.6	2.58 (.11)	H8c	Not supported
Overall brand equity	1.56	.74	2.05	.78	1.92	.88	1.80	.59	7.48 (.01)***	H8d	supported

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .1$, *** $p < .01$.

Table 4.4.1.2.

Summary of Multivariate Analysis of Covariance

	Performance-related crisis				Values-related crisis						
	Low in success		High in success		Low in success		High in success			Hypotheses	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	F(<i>p-value</i>)		
Brand awareness/associations	2.16	.92	2.33	.8	2.24	.98	2.29	.99	.27(.6)	H8a	Not supported
Perceived brand quality	2.53	.88	2.78	.88	2.83	.95	3.24	.80	.28 (.6)	H8b	Not supported
Brand loyalty	1.47	.62	1.88	.63	1.6	.79	1.69	.6	3.23 (.07)**	H8c	supported
Overall brand equity	1.56	.74	2.05	.78	1.92	.88	1.80	.59	7.86 (.01)***	H8d	supported

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .1$, *** $p < .01$; covariates: source credibility and involvement.

Table 4.4.1.3.

Summary of Multiple Regression Analyses

Variables	B	SE _B	β
Brand awareness/associations	.02	.04	.03
Perceived brand quality	.10	.03	.20***
Brand loyalty	.02	.03	.04
Overall brand equity	.03	.03	.07

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .1$, *** $p < .01$.

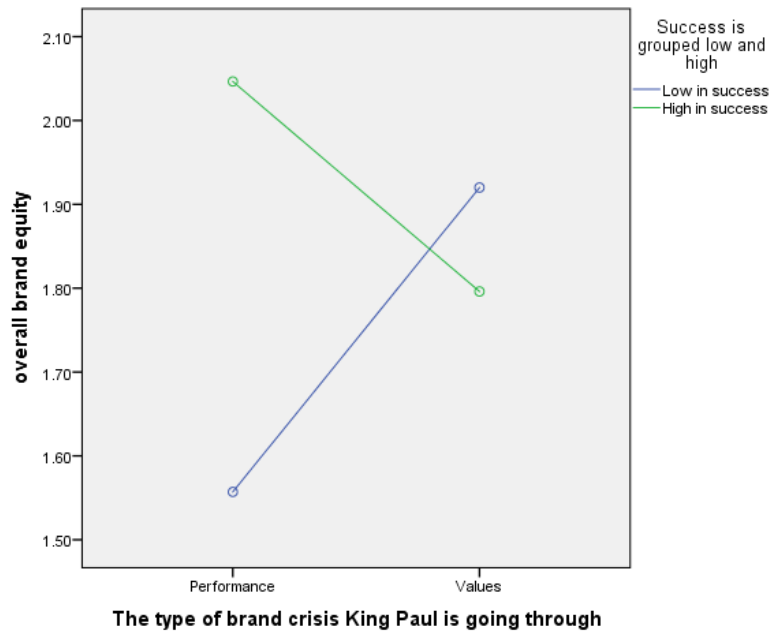


Figure 4.4.1.a. Interaction effects of crisis type and materialism-success on overall brand equity

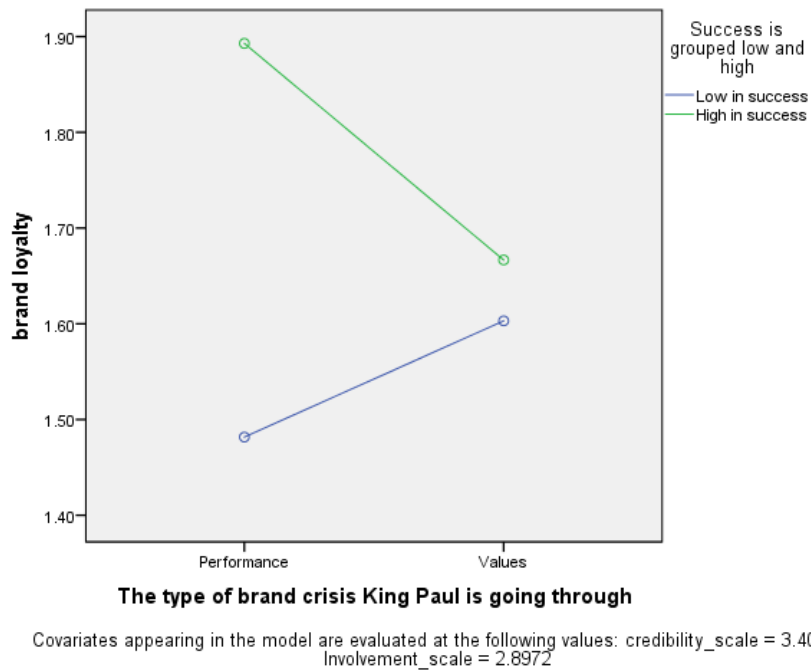


Figure 4.4.1.b. Interaction effects of crisis type and materialism-success on brand loyalty. The effects of source credibility and involvement were controlled.

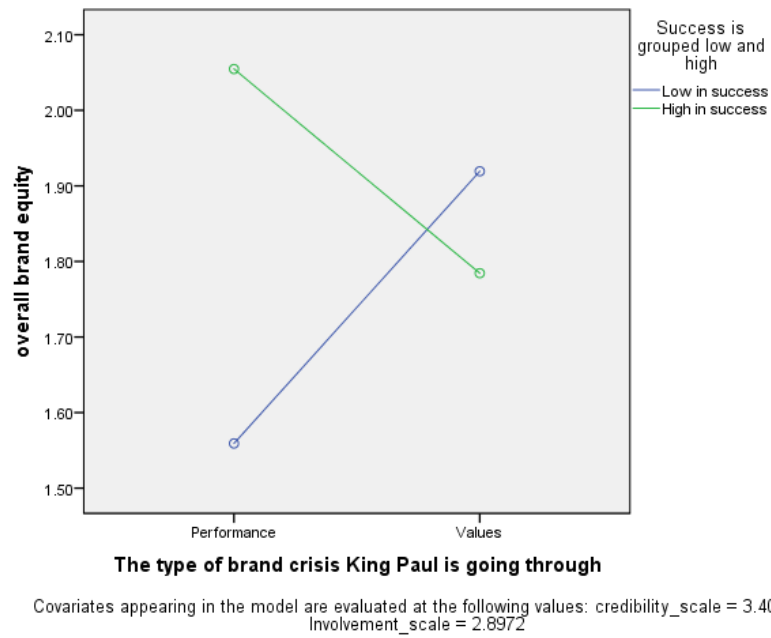


Figure 4.4.1.c. Interaction effects of crisis type and materialism-success on overall brand equity. The effects of source credibility and involvement were controlled.

4.4.2. Interaction effect brand crisis and materialism-happiness

Interaction effects between the independent variables and moderator variables on the dependent variables will be measured through an MANOVA and MANCOVA. The differences between brand crisis type and materialism-happiness on the dependent variables were not statistically significant $F(4,181) = 1.22, p > .31$; Wilks' $\Lambda = .97$; partial $\eta^2 = .03$.

Furthermore, when controlling for the effects of source credibility and involvement, the results were not statistically significant $F(4,179) = 1.21, p > .31$; Wilks' $\Lambda = .97$; partial $\eta^2 = .03$. Consequently, H8 is partially not supported.

In addition, a hierarchical multiple regression analyses were run to predict the dimensions of brand equity and overall brand equity from crisis type. Accordingly, the regression analyses revealed that there was a significant influence on **perceived brand quality** ($\beta = .16, p < .05$).

Table 4.4.2.1.

Summary of Multivariate Analysis of Variance

	Performance-related crisis				Values-related crisis				F(<i>p-value</i>)	Hypotheses	
	Low in happiness		High in happiness		Low in happiness		High in happiness				
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD			
Brand awareness/ associations	2.17	.88	2.36	.84	2.14	.92	2.42	1.05	.11(.74)	H8a	Not supported
Perceived brand quality	2.69	.94	2.53	.77	2.92	.92	3.12	.89	1.73(.19)	H8b	Not supported
Brand loyalty	1.61	.71	1.74	.51	.167	.82	1.59	.54	1.01(.32)	H8c	Not supported
Overall brand equity	1.77	.81	1.76	.74	1.92	.86	1.80	.63	.17(.68)	H8d	Not supported

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .1$, *** $p < .01$.

Table 4.4.2.2.

Summary of Multivariate Analysis of Covariance

	Performance-related crisis				Values-related crisis						
	Low in happiness		High in happiness		Low in happiness		High in happiness			Hypotheses	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	F(<i>p-value</i>)		
Brand awareness/ associations	2.17	.88	2.36	.84	2.14	.92	2.42	1.05	.06(.824)	H8a	Not supported
Perceived brand quality	2.69	.94	2.53	.77	2.92	.92	3.12	.89	1.60(.21)	H8b	Not supported
Brand loyalty	1.61	.71	1.74	.51	.167	.82	1.59	.54	1.27(.26)	H8c	Not supported
Overall brand equity	1.77	.81	1.76	.74	1.92	.86	1.80	.63	.21(.65)	H8d	Not supported

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .1$, *** $p < .01$; covariates: source credibility and involvement.

Table 4.4.2.3.

Summary of Multiple Regression Analyses

Variables	B	SE _B	β
Brand awareness/associations	.03	.03	.08
Perceived brand quality	.06	.03	.16*
Brand loyalty	.01	.02	.03
Overall brand equity	.02	.03	.04

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .1$, *** $p < .01$.

4.5 Multiple regression analyses between MBE and OBE

Three multiple regression analyses were conducted with brand awareness/associations, perceived brand quality, brand loyalty, and overall brand equity. Yoo and Donthu (2001) noted that there is a hierarchy of effects among brand equity dimensions. They posited that brand awareness/associations preceded perceived brand quality, and in turn, influenced brand loyalty. Furthermore, perceived brand quality is found to be the main antecedent of brand loyalty (Biedenbach & Marell, 2010). Moreover, Souiden and Pons (2009) argue that brand loyalty has a significant impact on purchase intention, i.e. overall brand equity. Regression statistics pertinent to these analyses are in Table 4.18. Furthermore, figure 4.5 shows that the regression path model of the dependent variables.

The regression revealed that at stage one, brand awareness/associations (BAA) did not contribute significantly to the regression model, $R^2=.01$, $F(1,186) = 1.38$, $p=.82$, adjusted $R^2 = -.01$, and accounted for 1 % of the variation in perceived brand quality.

Introducing BAA and perceived brand quality (PBQ) variable at stage two explained 22 % of the variation in brand loyalty, and this change in R^2 was significant $R^2=.22$, $F(2,185) = 26.15$, $p<.001$, adjusted $R^2 = .21$. Consequently, BAA had a significant influence on brand loyalty (BL) ($\beta=.32$, $p=.00$), as well as PBQ ($\beta=.32$, $p=.00$).

Introducing BAA, PBQ and BL at stage three explained 37% of the variation in overall brand equity and this change in R^2 was significant $R^2=.37$, $F(3,184) = 36.42$, $p<.001$, adjusted $R^2 = .36$. However, only BAA ($\beta=.17$, $p=.01$) and BL ($\beta=.53$, $p=.00$) were significant predictors of overall brand equity (OBE) at stage three.

Table 4.5.

Summary of Multiple Regression Analyses

	unstandardized coefficients		standardized coefficients					
	B	Std. Error	β	t	p	R	R ²	R ² _{adjusted}
Stage one						.09	.01	.00
BAA → PBQ	.09	.07	.09	1.17	.24			
Stage two						.47	.22	.21
BAA → BL	.24	.05	.32	4.88	.00***			
PBQ → BL	.24	.05	.32	4.91	.00***			
Stage three						.61	.37	.36
BAA → OBE	.14	.05	.17	2.68	.01*			
PBQ → OBE	.02	.05	.02	.28	.78			
BL → OBE	.6	.08	.53	7.96	.00***			

Note. N=188. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$; covariates: source credibility and involvement.

■ **Figure 4.5** Path Model

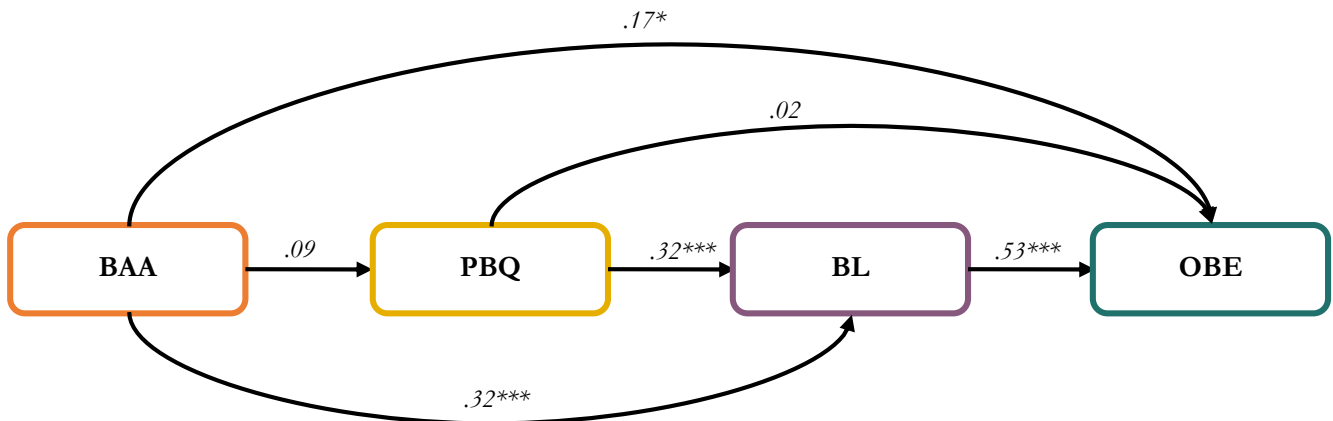


Figure 4.5. Results of the regression analysis (Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .1$, *** $p < .01$)

5. Discussion

The purpose of this study is to measure the direct and interaction effects of brand type, crisis type, and crisis response strategies on the dimensions of brand equity and overall brand equity. By conducting a 2 x 2 x 2 scenario-based experiment, this study investigated the effects on brand awareness/associations, perceived brand quality, brand loyalty, and overall brand equity. First, the results of the study will be discussed with regard to previous studies. Second, managerial implications will be discussed, followed by the limitations and future research. Finally, the researcher will discuss her conclusion about the study.

5.1 Discussion of results

Concerning the crisis type, Coombs (2006) identifies three categories of crisis type: (1) victim cluster, (2) accidental cluster, and (3) preventable cluster. Although the classification of crisis type distinguishes the amount of attribution, it does not consider the amount of harm on consumer perception and behavior. Consequently, Pullig et al. (2006) make the distinction between crisis related to product failure and those of an ethical nature; performance-related and values-related.

This study hypothesized that a performance-related crisis has a more adverse effect on the dimensions of brand equity and overall brand equity, except for brand awareness/associations. Specifically, this study finds that brands going through a performance-related crisis have a more negative impact on the perceived brand quality than a brand going through a values-related crisis. Dawar and Lei (2009) explain that a performance-related crisis largely affects the functional benefits of a brand, which give the product the ability to perform its intended task, consequently, damaging the brand's perceived quality. While a values-related mostly affects the symbolic benefits that a brand might offer. Therefore, the findings in this study are in line with those of Dawar and Lei (2009).

Although crisis type had a significant main effect on perceived brand quality, it did not have an effect on the other dependent variables. A possible explanation is that the brand used in this study is unknown to the participants (i.e., a fictitious brand was used). Consequently, participants were unable to build brand knowledge, which is an important factor for the dimensions of brand equity and purchase intention (Campbell & Keller, 2003). In other words, participants were unable to retrieve the knowledge regarding the brand that they have stored in memory, because they were never exposed to it before. Furthermore, Boulstridge and Carrigan (2000) argue that a brand going through a values-related crisis affect consumers who are personally attached and have an interest in the product or company. Then consumers would take action or boycott the product. However, in the case of the values-related crisis, participants were not personally attacked and could not have much interest in the brand because it was not real.

Coombs and Holladay (2002) states that the SCCT advises communication managers to select crisis response strategies that match the specific crisis type. However, this study was unable to prove a significant main

effect of crisis response strategies on the dependent variables. Moreover, Hegner et al. (2014) argue that “When one looks at the overall brand equity it is evident, that the values for the diminishing, rebuilding, and bolstering strategies do not significantly differ from the brand equity values of the control group that was not exposed to the crisis scenario” (p. 439). Even though this study failed to support the hypotheses, there are other studies that argue that a non-response crisis response strategy does have an adverse impact on consumer outcomes (Hegner et al., 2014).

Consequently, the use of a fictitious brand may have caused a lack of brand knowledge which in turn affected the dimensions of brand equity and purchase intention.

In addition to crisis type and crisis response, this study also included the brand type and crisis response strategy, however, in this study, they were not significant. The analyses showed that participants of the functional brand positioning did perceive King Paul as a functional brand. However, those in the symbolic condition did not see the brand as offering symbolic benefits. It seems that those participants were not aware of the symbolic features of the brand, even though, the manipulation included keywords from the HED/UT scale. Perhaps the reduction of items may have played a role in this. Furthermore, another possible explanation might be that the participant did not process the online review article in depth, consequently, making them less informed when answering the questions (Celsi & Olson, 1988; Peter & Olson, 1990).

Furthermore, an interaction effect between crisis type and materialism was found, subsequently, adding to the crisis communication literature. Currently, there are not many studies that involve materialism in crisis management. This study found that when a brand is going through a performance-related crisis and when its consumer is low in materialism it had an adverse impact on overall brand equity compared when the consumer is high in materialism. Furthermore, when the brand goes through a values-related crisis and its consumers are high in materialism it had an adverse impact on overall brand equity. These results are in line with Richins (1991) findings of public and private meaning. That functional benefits of a brand are more important to low in materialism consumers and symbolic brands are important to high in materialism consumer. Moreover, when these benefits are tarnished consumers tend to shy away from them.

Furthermore, we explored the sub-dimensions of materialism: success and happiness. However, in this study, materialism-success was the only one that is statistically significant. Richins and Dawson (1992) argue that possession-defined success is when people use brands as evidence of success and social status. In this study, when a brand goes through a performance-related crisis, consumers with a low materialism success had a larger negative impact on overall brand equity than a high materialism success consumer. Moreover, during a values-related crisis, a high in materialism success consumer has a greater negative impact compared with a low in materialism success consumer. Thus, these results are in line with what Richins (1991) found

that those on the bottom side of materialism spectrum are indeed more affected when the brand negatively influence the private meaning of brands, and those on the top are more affected if the public meaning is tarnished.

Moreover, when the covariates source credibility and involvement are introduced a marginally statistical significant effect is found between crisis type and materialism success on brand loyalty and overall brand equity. Thus, when these variables are controlled, one can see that crisis type and materialism success due have an impact on brand loyalty and overall brand equity. Specifically, when a brand goes through either a performance-related or values-related crisis, low on success consumers will have a more negative impact on brand loyalty than high on success consumers. Furthermore, when investigating a performance-related crisis low on success consumers will have a more negative impact on overall brand equity than high on success consumers. Moreover, when a brand goes through a values-related crisis high on success consumers will have a more negative impact on overall brand equity than low on success consumers. Consequently, these results partially counter the results of Richins (1992).

In summary, the results of this study partially extend Pullig et al. (2006) research of negative brand publicity by including materialism.

In addition to the MANOVA and MANCOVA, regression analyses were conducted to explore the influence that dependent variables have on each other. Yoo and Donthu (2001) argue that perceived brand quality precedes brand loyalty, and in turn, preceded by brand awareness/associations. However, this study found contrast results. The findings indicated that brand awareness/associations and perceived brand equity influence brand loyalty, and not brand awareness/associations influencing perceived brand quality. A possible explanation might be that consumers do not have any knowledge of the fictitious brand. If respondents had known and experienced the brand, the results might have been different. Moreover, brand loyalty has a direct influence on overall brand equity researchers confirm these findings (Souiden & Pons, 2009). In addition, brand awareness/associations also had an influence on overall brand equity.

5.2 Managerial implications

In addition to these theoretical implications, crises impact are an important practical issue for brand managers. Whereas prior research has examined performance-related in isolation (Ahluwalia et al. 2001; Dawar & Pillutla 2000), this study considers the effects of both performance- and values-related brand crisis on customer-based brand equity and purchase intention. In this study, both of these crises have a negative impact on perceived brand quality.

More specifically, performance-related crisis has a more negative impact on perceived brand quality than a values-related crisis, which is an important factor in brand equity. Although a performance-related crisis has a more negative impact and is heavily covered in the news and academic literature than a values-related crisis an ethical crisis can also have a similar impact, even though with its lack of coverage. Consequently, managers deciding on which crisis response strategy to implement should take into consideration consumer's judgment about the brand and its overall excellence or superiority.

Furthermore, crisis managers should also consider what are the reasons a consumer purchases a brand, could it be to fulfill a functional, symbolic, or to signal their success. Crisis communication professionals should focus their efforts on researching on how materialism influences brand loyalty and purchase intention when a crisis occurs. Specifically, how materialistic consumers react when the brands that fulfill their needs are tarnished. Their reaction has a significant impact on brand loyalty and purchase intention, and in turn, the future financial stability of a company.

Furthermore, materialism has significant implications for society as a driver of personal consumption, and thus the economy. Managers could persuade materialistic consumers by using promotional tools that focus on brand image, consequently, appealing to the consumers' need for visible markers of their status. Moreover, practitioners can promote an ideology of "the good life" as a material paradise via marketing efforts (Belk & Pollay, 1985).

5.3 Limitations and suggestions for future research

Despite the conclusions made about the effect of the crisis type and materialism on brand equity, the limitations of this study should be taken into account.

First, the study failed to manipulate brand type. Perhaps, the study should have added a more comprehensive list of items to measure brand positioning or use another method to measure it. In their study Pullig et al. (2006) manipulated the brand types with booklets, including a company profile and ads that emphasized product features versus non-attribute features. Perhaps future research in this field could use this approach.

Furthermore, there is a lack of generalizability in this study, as the participants in the survey were mostly female, highly educated, and one-third is from countries other than The Netherlands. Researcher caused this non-sampling error. Specifically, the link for the survey was posted on an International Facebook Group, which has members who are students from around the world. Consequently, 60% of the participants are women and the country of origin from almost 50% of participants is not from The Netherlands. Samaraweera, Li, and Qing (2014) argue that multinational companies will have to react quicker and more decisively as gender and culture have a negative impact. Specifically, female consumers perceive that a crisis causes more damage than males, due to biological and socialization factors (Harris & Miller, 2000). Furthermore, Laufer and Gillespie (2004) argue that women feel more vulnerable than men after reading about a crisis.

Moreover, how consumers perceive a crisis varies based on culture (Kotler, 2005; Hofstede, 1997). According to Taylor (2000), that although you can group Belgian, Denmark, Norway, and Sweden consumers they still have a different perception of crisis and therefore responding differently. Consequently, even if similarities of countries are based on their geographic location, they could still have a different perception. Furthermore, Kamineni and O'cass (2003) argue that there are differences in the materialistic tendencies of males and female. Consequently, participants of various countries may illustrate different materialistic tendencies, crisis perception, and response.

In addition to gender, culture, and materialism, a majority of the participants is highly educated. Therefore, the results cannot be generalized to all education levels. As an individual's cognitive ability and skills are reflected by educational level (Wiersema & Bantel, 1992), differences in educational attainment might influence information processing. Subsequently, individuals with a high education have the capacity to process information more in depth and can distinguish different stimuli (Schroder, Driver, & Streufert, 1967; Wiersema & Bantel, 1992). Consequently, in this study the participants might perceive the various manipulations correctly, whereas people with lower levels of education might not. Accordingly, the effect of culture, gender, and education in crisis communication should be further examined. Furthermore, this study focused on the different effect of crisis types, however, in reality, crises are more complex and can

involve both product defects and organization's unethical behaviors (e.g., dangerous products combined with unethical cover-ups). Consequently, it would be interesting to know the results of a more realistic situation.

Furthermore, this study only focuses on one brand, but in reality, firms usually begin with a single brand and extend product lines (Laforet & Saunders, 1994). Consequently, different branding strategies are developed based on how close how closely linked the brand is to the organization. In the context of crisis communication, Berens, van Riel, and van Bruggen (2005) found that the negative image of a brand may influence market evaluations of the parent company and vice versa.

5.4 Conclusion

Crisis communication is important to any brand going through a crisis. Therefore, companies should do whatever it is necessary to protect their brand equity from the adverse effects of crises.

This study investigated the relationship between of crisis type, crisis response strategy, and brand type on the dimensions of brand equity and purchase intention. In addition, materialism was introduced to see if it moderates the relationship. Most of the results of this study did not confirm with the research hypotheses. However, these results did indicate that crisis has a negative impact on perceived brand equity which in turn has an indirect influence on purchase intention. Therefore, bringing the financial stability of a brand in danger. Moreover, when taking consumer's materialism level into account, it moderates the relationship between crisis type, brand loyalty, and purchase intention.

Consequently, practitioners should take materialism into account when creating a crisis communication plan. Furthermore, by continuing to explore issues related to possessions and their position in a consumers' lives we can better understand the effective utilization of consumer attachment to possessions during a crisis occurs.

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Appendices

Appendix A Functional brand type

the review

FASHION TECHNOLOGY TRAVEL FILMS FEATURES

Ben Hardy On For X-Men: Apocalypse

Explore the hidden treasures of Coron Island

6 FAIR 7.8 USER AVG

Shadow of Mordor Infographic Highlights 5+ Billion Unlikable Kills and More

Everything We Know So Far About Gwyneth Paltrow's 2015 Show

LG G Flex 2 upgrades the curved phone

REVIEW OF THE NEW KING PAUL'S CLASSIC FIT POLO

A King Paul's classic fit polo

By John Doe

King Paul's classic fit polo for men and women are made from high-quality cotton. This model has a classic fit that will suit a variety of physiques by skimming over the body to smooth out any lumps or bumps. You can wear this polo practically anywhere, from a picnic to the office to a nightclub.

High-standard cotton is used to make King Paul's polos so this shirt will survive years of frequent washing before you have to buy a new one. It's been treated for color fastness so it should resist fading, and a treatment for stability to reduce the chances of shrinkage, thus ensuring that it will remain true to its original look.

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Everything We Know So Far About Gooch's Fall 2015 Show

REVIEW OF THE NEW KING PAUL'S CLASSIC FIT POLO

A King Paul's classic fit polo

By John Doe

King Paul's classic fit polo for men and women, comes in a wide range of hues, so the good news is that if you like the look of this piece, there's bound to be one with a color that really suits you.

Of course, like all of King Paul's polos, this shirt is embossed with that cool, fun logo that's synonymous with the brand and its image of understated elegance. Thus, providing you with years of enjoyment.

You can wear this polo practically anywhere and look good at all times. The King Paul's classic fit polo signifies fun and enjoyment, you won't look like you're wearing a generic polo shirt.

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By John Doe

A King Paul Classic Fit

Another fashion company is being sued for racial discrimination. This time around it's King Paul that has been slapped with a lawsuit alleging racism filed by a sales associate at the brand's headquarters in the Netherlands.

The sales associate who wishes to remain anonymous is suing King Paul for racial discrimination and harassment after an upper-manager made several racially insensitive comments. The sales associate contends that the behavior created a "hostile and intimidating" working environment.

The lawsuit, details various incidents including an exchange that the associate had with the manager in December of last year. According to the sales worker that during a discussion, the manager stated that "immigrants are the problem in this country and should go back where they came from."

A spokesperson for the fashion brand told The Telegraph "King Paul takes full responsibility and asks for forgiveness for the offensive comments made by one of our upper management employees. This is a violation of our code of ethics, consequently, we are currently taking the necessary practicable steps to prevent racial discrimination in all of our departments."

Values-related crisis and no response stimulus material

http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/racial-discrimination-at-king-paul

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By John Doe

A King Paul Classic Fit

Another fashion company is being sued for racial discrimination. This time around it's King Paul that has been slapped with a lawsuit alleging racism filed by a sales associate at the brand's headquarters in the Netherlands.

The sales associate who wishes to remain anonymous is suing King Paul for racial discrimination and harassment after an upper-manager made several racially insensitive comments. The sales associate contends that the behavior created a "hostile and intimidating" working environment.

The lawsuit, details various incidents including an exchange that the associate had with the manager in December of last year. According to the sales worker that during a discussion, the manager stated that "immigrants are the problem in this country and should go back where they came from."

A spokesperson for the fashion brand refused to give a statement.

Performance-related crisis and rebuild crisis response stimulus material

The screenshot shows the front page of The Telegraph website. The main headline is "Cancer causing toxins in King Paul shirts" by John Doe. The article discusses a recall of King Paul classic fit polo shirts due to the presence of cancer-causing amines. The website layout includes a navigation bar, a search bar, and various sidebars with related content, videos, and a footer with site information and links.

http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/cancer-causing-toxins-in-king-paul-shirts

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The article text is partially obscured by a large image of a black polo shirt. The visible text includes the byline 'By John Doe', the sub-headline 'A King Paul Classic Fit', and the main body text: 'The Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemical substances (REACH) issued a recall on King Paul classic fit polo shirts. The reason for this recall is because the shirts may contain toxic chemicals. People who wear these polo shirts may experience skin irritations, breathing difficulties, and long-term health problems, such as cancer. The recall was initiated after the World Health Organization (WHO) received several complaints about the health conditions of people living near the factory. Subsequent investigation indicated that clothes made in the factory contained hazardous chemicals, including some classified as "toxic" or "very toxic" to humans. One of the most shocking discoveries is that the King Paul classic fit polo shirts; one of the brand's best-selling shirts, contains cancer-causing amines. A spokesperson for the fashion brand refused to give a comment.'

Appendix B

Dear participants,

My name is Zuleika Boekhoudt, I am a student at the University of Twente majoring in MSc communication Studies. I am currently conducting a research about crisis communication.

I am, therefore, requesting you to kindly complete the following questionnaire for this project. Completing this questionnaire will take about 15 minutes of your time.

Information that you will provide will be of utmost importance since it will help me gain valuable data to complete the study.

At the end of the questionnaire, please fill in your email address in order to participate in a raffle to win a € 50 or € 25 gift certificate from V&D. The winners will receive an email.

You will be assured of complete confidentiality. You are free to withdraw from this study at any time without obligation.

Should you have any questions or comments regarding the questionnaire, you are welcome to contact me by email at

By clicking the next button, you agree to participate in this questionnaire.

Yours sincerely,

Zuleika Boekhoudt

You will be presented with an online news article. After a few seconds the next button will appear (either the performance-related or values-related crisis is show with either the rebuild crisis response strategy or no response strategy)

The questions below are about the online news article that you have just read

What was the article about

- ☐ racial discrimination
- ☐ child labor
- ☐ the use of inferior materials
- ☐ toxic chemicals in clothing
- ☐ animal cruelty

Please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statement					
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Did King Paul take responsibility for the incident	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The incident is about the quality of the brand	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The incident is about the ethics and morals of the brand	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please indicate to what degree you find the information of the online news article					
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
believable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
accurate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
trustworthy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statement					
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
this event matters a great deal to me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
this event is very relevant to me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
this event is very important to me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I consider myself to be loyal to King Paul	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
King Paul would be my first choice	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I will not buy other brands if King Paul is available at the store	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The likely quality of King Paul is extremely high	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The likelihood that King Paul would be functional is very high	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can recognize King Paul among other competing brands	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am aware of King Paul	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Some characteristics of King Paul come to my mind quickly	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can quickly recall the symbol or logo of King Paul	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have difficulty in imagining King Paul in my mind	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It makes sense to buy King Paul instead of any other brand, even if they are the same	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Even if another brand has the same features as King Paul, I would prefer to buy King Paul	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If there is another brand as good as King Paul, I prefer to buy King Paul	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If another brand is not different from King Paul in any way, it seems smarter to purchase King Paul	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The article that you have just read is fictitious. The materials used were for research purposes only.

What is your sex?

Male ☐

Female ☐

How old are you?

Highest completed level of education

☐ primary school

☐ high school

☐ bachelor's degree

☐ master's degree

☐ PhD

☐ other

please insert your email address to participate in the raffle
