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Assessing the Effect of Personality Characteristics of Minnesota Golfers on the Brand Equity of Golf Drivers

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Assessing the Effect of Personality Characteristics of Minnesota Golfers on the Brand Equity of
Golf Drivers

By

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Abstract

Although many researchers have focused on the attributes of a product that affect brand equity, this study focuses on the attributes of the consumer that affect brand equity. More specifically, the current study examines how a variety of golfer personality characteristics affect the equity they assign to various brands of golf equipment. The results of the survey showed that as golfers are more skilled, they are willing to pay a higher premium for their preferred driver. This may be because golfers who are more skilled tend to take the sport more seriously and will probably have no problem spending more money on their favorite brands. Results also showed that as golfers get older, they will show more brand equity. Older people often have more money. It is also possible that more experience will result in an individual sticking with their brand of choice because they know it works and have used that brand for a long time. An obvious limitation to the study was the use of archival data for the majority of the personality characteristics data. While most of the characteristics that were chosen for the study are relatively stable traits, some can fluctuate over time. It is argued that self-esteem is a malleable characteristic that changes over time (Heatherton & Polivy 1991).

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Brand equity reflects the value of a product attributable to the product's brand name or logo. In other words, brand equity is the additional amount a company can charge for a product simply because the brand name is associated with the product. Brand equity is, for instance, how much more Nike can charge for a golf ball because Nike's swoosh logo is printed on the ball. Equity is affected by four components: the extent to which people are aware of the brand, the positive or negative associations consumers make regarding the brand, perceptions of product quality, and brand loyalty (Washburn, Till, & Priluck, 2004).

Brand awareness reflects the degree to which an individual recognizes the brand. Brand associations are positive or negative images that are brought to mind when a consumer sees or thinks about the product. According to Washburn, Till & Priluck (2004) brand association is "a cue for customers and represents images that have been formed based on their experience with a brand" (p. 488).

The next component that affects brand equity is perceived product quality. Product quality is a consumer's judgment about the product's overall excellence or superiority (Zeithaml 1988). It is different from objective quality because perceived quality is a subjective response that differs among consumers. Finally, brand loyalty is essentially an individual's predisposition to choose one brand over another.

Although many researchers have focused on the attributes of a product that affect brand equity, this study focuses on the attributes of the consumer that affect brand equity. More specifically, the current study examines how a variety of golfer personality characteristics affect the equity they assign to various brands of golf equipment.

I test the extent to which self-esteem, contingent self-worth (Crocker & Wolfe, 2001), golfer identity (Sachau, 2015), golfer goal orientation (Sachau, Simmering, Ryan & Adler 2013), obsessive passion, and harmonious passion (Vallerand, Mageau, Elliot, Dumais, Demers, & Rousseau, 2008) affect the perceptions of brand equity of golf drivers. In addition to personality characteristics, I test how performance (handicap index and typical score), gender, age, and years playing golf affect brand equity.

Golf equipment was used in this study because the diversity of golf equipment is extensive. Players must purchase balls, drivers, irons, putters, bags, shoes, and clothing. For each of these products, there are many high profile brands from which to choose. Further, most professional golfers are sponsored by major golf equipment brands. Golf may provide the most opportunities for equipment customization of any sport.

Self-esteem

Self-esteem is the evaluation of one's self-worth (Peirce, Gardner, Cummings, & Dunham 1989). Self-esteem has been examined thoroughly by sports psychologists. For instance, self-handicapping is a technique whereby an individual purposefully creates obstacles for his or her own performance. This technique can be used as both self-preservation, to save one's self-esteem in case of failure, or as self-enhancement to manage impressions. Prapavessis and Grove (1998) found that self-esteem was positively related to self-handicapping. This makes sense because people with low self-esteem are more likely to run into social situations in which they are uncertain they will achieve a desirable outcome. Therefore, they resort to self-enhancement and self-preservation techniques.

For many people, using and valuing a well-known brand could be a method of self-enhancement. Golfers may believe that if they use brands that everyone knows, they will be seen

by others as competent. Therefore, golfers who are loyal to a well-known brand could have higher self-esteem. It was predicted that self-esteem would be negatively correlated with brand equity. This is because people with low self-esteem are more likely to engage in self-presentation techniques and highly value brands that are widely respected. In other words, people with high self-esteem may not feel a strong desire to improve their image by buying a well-known or respected brand.

Contingent Self-Worth

Self-esteem has a dual nature. Researchers have shown that self-esteem is derived from stable dispositions and from fluctuations in self-concept over time (Wells 1988). Most researchers only consider the stable part of self-esteem rather than the malleable aspect. In contrast, Crocker & Wolfe, (2001) have examined how people can assess their self-esteem or self-worth based on a variety of situational cues or triggers. For example, one person may base his or her self-worth on how well he or she performs an activity, while another may base his or her self-worth on external appearance. Crocker and Wolfe (2001) provide a typology for contingences of self-worth and these include: family support, competition, appearance, God's love, academic competence, virtue, and/or approval from others.

For golfers, self-worth can be derived in multiple ways. Does the golfer take pride in not cheating? (Virtue). Is the golfer better than others at the game? (Competition). How does the golfer look compared to other golfers? Does the golfer have better equipment than others? (Appearance). Does the golfer require appreciation from others? (Approval). All of these aspects are potential sources for a golfer to assess his or her self-worth. In this study, I tested the extent to which each potential source of self-worth was correlated with perceptions of brand equity. It was predicted that brand equity would be positively correlated with the Virtue, Competition,

Appearance, and Approval subscales of CSW because of their relevance to the sport. This is because using a well-respected brand could affect the golfer's perception of themselves in regards to each of these aspects of CSW.

Golfer Identity

Identity theory has been widely studied in the field of social psychology and is highly relevant to the field of sport psychology (Curry & Weaner 1987). A central tenet of this theory is the concept of role identities. Role identity is defined as one's "imaginative view of himself as he likes to think of himself being and acting as an occupant of that position" (Snyder 1985, p. 212). Having a role identity gives an individual context and meaning for his or her behavior.

The degree to which someone identifies themselves in a role depends on their level of commitment to the role. Self-identification also depends on the amount of time, energy or other resources (money) one puts towards a role (Snyder 1985). Whether or not an individual identifies with a role also depends on his/her socialization into that role by other people in his/her life (peers, family members, and friends). Being socialized into a specific role may elicit positive responses from others (friendship, social attachments). Another factor that contributes to role identification is the intrinsic motivation of performing the activity. Based on Csikszentmihalyi's flow research, golf provides an opportunity for people to be competent at a challenging activity and therefore many golfers derive a sense of intrinsic enjoyment from completing the activity (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997).

Lastly, there are extrinsic rewards to being identified as a golfer such as the opportunity to compete and obtain trophies or recognition. These extrinsic rewards are also related to contingent self-worth as people have a chance to compare themselves to others and possibly increase their self-concept.

Sachau and Harris (2015) proposed a golfer identity scale based on 7 facets: 1) sport as a component of the self. 2) Perceived importance of the sport compared to all other sports the person plays. 3) Social-labeling as a participant of the sport, 4) social connections with other sport participants. 5) Pride in sport-related ability/knowledge. 6) Personalization of criticism of the sport, or in other words, when someone criticizes the sport does the insult feels like a personal insult. 7) Extended-self /place attachment to the setting in which the sport occurs. This is the idea when an individual feels that the sport setting is a part of their identity. Sachau and Harris found that Golfer identity was positively related to golf skill, self-presentation as a golfer, and golf citizenship behavior. Because of the intrinsic rewards associated with golfer identity, it was predicted that golfer identity would be positively correlated with brand equity.

Goal Orientation

Sachau, Simmering, Ryan & Adler (2013) examined golfers' goal orientation (task vs ego). The authors thus compared golfers who are motivated by the glamor of winning (ego orientation) to golfers who are motivated by mastering the game (task orientation). To understand how goal orientation relates to brand equity, it is more important to look at motivational factors behind goal orientation. According to the research, task and ego orientation are highly related to intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, respectively (Hulleman, Durik, Schweigert, & Harackiewicz 2008).

Hulleman, Schrage, Bodman, & Harackiewicz (2010) did a meta-analysis of goal orientation and gathered multiple definitions for both ego and task orientation. The definitions change depending on the author's label of the goal (e.g. interest, curiosity, improvement, challenge etc.). However, the core idea behind the definitions remains the same. Some examples of task orientation definitions are: "The goal of gaining insight and knowledge or improving

one's skill." "Focus is on learning and understanding." They define ego orientation as: "Demonstrating competence/ability in relation to others." People who are extrinsically motivated to play golf care more about rewards, social status and comparing their performance to others than people who are intrinsically motivated. It was thus predicted that task orientation would be negatively correlation with brand equity while ego orientation would be positively correlated.

Obsessive and Harmonious Passion

The following criteria must be met in order for an activity to be considered passionate: 1.) the person highly values the activity, 2) the activity occupies a large amount of the person's time and energy, 3) the activity is important to the person, and 4) the activity is central to the person's identity (Harris et al., 2013). There are two types of passion: harmonious and obsessive passion (Vallerand et al., 2008). People are harmoniously passionate when that activity is a part of their identity. People do the activity because they choose to and not because they feel forced. Harmonious passion has been shown to be positively related to positive affect and the experience of flow (Vallerand & Houliort, 2003). People who have obsessive passion feel internally obligated to participate in the activity. Vallerand has determined that obsessive passion is linked to rigid persistence and negative affect. Similar to goal orientation, these two constructs are related but separate and are measured on a bi-dimensional scale.

Both types of passion are internalized through aspects of the self-concept. People who are harmoniously passionate about an activity experience the authentic integrating self (Vallerand et. al. 2003). This allows them to perform the activity with an open mind that allows for more positive experiences and even flow. It also allows the individual to control the activity rather than have the activity control them, which happens with obsessive passion. Obsessive passion results from the pressure of having external social contingencies attached to the activity

(e.g. self-worth, social status) (Vallerand & Houliort, 2003). For example, golfers may feel the need to play golf because of social pressures from others.

Because of the social pressures that cause people to experience obsessive passion, obsessive passion was predicted to be positively correlated with brand equity. Although harmoniously passionate people do not have the social pressures associated with obsessive passion, I expect the relationship to play out the same. This is because people who are more passionate about playing golf will be inherently more passionate about brands associated with golf.

The Present Study

The present study examines the extent to which state self-esteem can predict whether or not a golfer will pay a higher premium for a well-known brand. According to the research on self-esteem and self-enhancement (Prapavessis & Grovein 1998) the following hypothesis was proposed:

Hypothesis 1: Self-esteem will be negatively correlated with brand equity.

Furthermore, the current study examines whether or not conditional self-worth can predict whether a golfer is more likely to pay a premium for a well-known brand. The research has shown that golfing presents many opportunities for one to raise their self-worth, especially if they are loyal to a well-respected brand. Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed:

Hypothesis 2a: The Virtue subscale of CSW will be positively correlated with brand equity.

Hypothesis 2b: The Competition subscale of CSW will be positively correlated with brand equity.

Hypothesis 2c: The Appearance subscale of CSW will be positively correlated with brand equity.

Hypothesis 2d: The Approval subscale of CSW will be positively correlated with brand equity.

The current study will examine if a *golfer* will pay a high premium for a well-known brand. Based on the reasons why an individual may identify themselves as a golfer, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 3: Golfer identity will be positively related with brand equity.

Because the research has shown that task and ego orientation are related to intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, the following hypotheses are proposed:

Hypothesis 4a: Ego orientation will be positively correlated with brand equity.

Hypothesis 4b: Task orientation will be negatively correlated with brand equity.

The following hypotheses are proposed that link the concepts of harmonious passion, obsessive passion, and brand equity:

Hypothesis 5a: Obsessive passion will be positively correlated with brand equity.

Hypothesis 5b: Harmonious passion will be positively correlated with brand equity.

Table 1 summarizes all the hypotheses:

Table 1

Summary of Hypotheses

	Low Equity	High Equity
Self-Esteem	High SE	Low SE
CSW – Appearance, Approval, Competition, and Virtue	Low CSW	High CSW
Golfer Identity	Low Golfer Identity	High Golfer Identity
Task Orientation	High Task Orientation	Low Task Orientation
Ego Orientation	Low Ego Orientation	High Ego Orientation
Harmonious Passion	Low Harmonious	High Harmonious
Obsessive Passion	Low Obsessive	High Obsessive

Chapter 2: Method**Participants**

A total of 5,699 individuals participated in the study. The participants were sampled from the Minnesota Golf Association (MGA). The ages ranged from 18 to 87 years ($M = 46.93$, $SD = 13.02$, $n = 3872$). Out of 5,699 participants, 3431 were male and 439 were female (1963 participants did not indicate their gender). The mean handicap index was 12.38 ($SD = 7.30$, $n = 3752$). However, the data was filtered multiple times to control for interaction effects. As a result, the number of participants used for the data analysis was reduced. This is explained in detail in the results section.

Procedure

The list of participants was obtained through MGA. Members were e-mailed an invitation to complete a survey using Qualtrics Survey Software©. Reminder e-mails were sent

periodically to encourage individuals to take part in the study. A total of 36,000 e-mails were sent, and 5,699 were returned with responses, yielding a response rate of 15.8%.

Measures

The participants completed an on-line survey that contained items on demographic data as well as items about their golf experience/ability, brand choices and brand equity. The following golf brands were used in the study: Cobra, Mizuno, Ping, Orlimar, Powerbilt, TaylorMade, Titleist, Wilson, Callaway, Nike, Cleveland, and Adams.

Brand Equity. The survey included three methods of collecting data on brand equity. The first was a series of items that asked the participant to choose their favorite brand of driver from a list of the most popular drivers on the market. They were then given the following scenario with their chosen brand piped in as “Brand X”: “Imagine that you are on the market for a new driver. If Brand X released a new high performance driver, and the Brand X designers could guarantee that you would hit the ball at least 5 yards further with their driver than any other driver on the market (without compromising control), what is the most you be willing to pay for the driver?” Next, the participants were given a similar scenario but told a subsidiary company of their favorite brand is releasing what is effectively the same driver but under a generic (USA Golf, made up for this study) brand name that no one has heard of. The participants were then asked to record how much they would pay for that driver. I was thus able to calculate the specific dollar value of brand equity by calculating the difference of the two values.

The second method of measuring brand equity involved asking a direct equity question. The question read: “In other words, how much more are you willing to pay to have the Brand X logo on your driver rather than a generic name like USA Golf on your driver?”

Lastly, a measure of brand loyalty was included using a slightly altered Customer-Based Brand-Equity Scale (Yoo & Donthu 1997). Some repetitious items from the scale were cut and other items were reworded slightly to better fit the topic of golf drivers. The scale incorporated perceived quality, brand loyalty, brand awareness, and brand associations. The Chronbach's alpha for this scale in the present study was .85 (please see the appendix for a summary table for all the Chronbach's alphas for all scales).

The data for the following measures were obtained by using archival data collected from various studies over the previous five years.

Self-esteem. In order to measure self-esteem, I used Rosenberg's Self-Esteem scale (Rosenberg, 1965). Example items include "I feel I do not have much to be proud of" and "I feel that I have a number of good qualities." The responses ranged from 1 "Strongly Disagree" to 4 "Strongly Agree." The Cronbach's alpha for this scale in the present study was .86.

Conditional Self-Worth. The Contingencies of Self-Worth scale (Crocker et al., 2008) is a 7-point scale that contains 35 items and 7 subscales. Responses ranged from 1 "Strongly Disagree" to 7 "Strongly Agree." The scale was altered in a few ways to make it contextual for this study. The subscale of "God's Love" was removed. In addition, items within the "Academic Competency" subscale were altered to reflect golf competency. Examples of items include, "My opinion about myself isn't tied down to how well I do on the golf course" and "My self-esteem is influenced by my golf performance." Therefore, the following subscales were included in the present study: 1) Family Support, 2) Competition, 3) Appearance, 4) Golf Competence, 5) Virtue, and 6) Approval from Others.

Golfer Identity. The golfer Identity scale created by Sachau and Harris (1959) measures 7 themes of sport identity 1) sport as a component of the self, 2) perceived importance of the

sport, 3) social-labeling as a participant of the sport, 4) social connections with other sport participants, 5) pride in sport-related ability/knowledge, 6) personalization of criticism of the sport, and 7) extended-self /place attachment to the setting in which the sport occurs. Responses ranged from 1 “Strongly Disagree to 5 “Strongly Agree.” Example items include, “I feel a connection or kinship with other golfers” and “When someone criticizes golf, it feels like a personal insult.” The Cronbach’s alpha for this scale in the present study was .97.

Task and Ego Orientation. The Golf Task and Ego Orientation Scale (Sachau, Simmering, Ryan & Adler 2013) is a 5-point, 12 item scale. There are 6 ego oriented items and 6 task oriented items. Responses range from 1 “Strongly Disagree to 5 “Strongly Agree.” The scale contains the root phrase: “In order to enjoy a round of golf among friends, I need to _____.” Example items include: “1) learn something new. 2) play better than the golfers in my group.” The Cronbach’s alpha for the ego subscale in the present study was .86 while the Cronbach’s alpha for the task subscale was .80.

Harmonious and Obsessive Passion. The Passion Scale (Vallerand et al., 2003) is a 7-point, 17 item scale that measures both harmonious and obsessive passion. Responses ranged from 1 “Not Agree at All” to 7 “Very Strongly Agree.” To make the scale more relevant to the study, instances of “the activity” and “this activity” were changed to “golf.” Some example items include: “Golf is the only thing that really turns me on” and “I have difficulties controlling my urge to play golf.” The Cronbach’s alpha for the harmonious subscale in the present study was .93 while the alpha for the obsessive scale was .87. See appendix for survey items.

Addition Brand Equity Variables. I used a “number of golf items owned” statistic that is a summation of the number of extra golf items they own with their chosen brand logo on it such as golf hats, golf balls, golf bags, jackets, etc.

Chapter 3: Results

Demographic Statistics

The following is a correlation table between the four demographic variables and the two methods of measuring brand equity (calculating the monetary difference and the brand equity scale).

Table 2

Correlations between Demographic Variables and Brand Equity

	Calculated Difference	Brand Equity Question	Brand Loyalty Scale
Age	** .15, $n = 2137$	** .14, $n = 2865$	** .09, $n = 2810$
Years Played	** -.07, $n = 2153$	** -.07, $n = 2886$	-.03, $n = 2828$
Handicap	** -.10, $n = 2081$	** -.15, $n = 2784$	** -.07, $n = 2731$
Typical Score	** -.08, $n = 2131$	** -.13, $n = 2857$	** -.08, $n = 2799$

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .001$

All methods of measurement indicate a negative but minimal relationship between typical score and brand equity. The same relationship exists between handicap index and brand equity. This makes sense as typical score and handicap are both an indication of golf skill. Therefore, individuals who are better at golf (low handicap) are willing to pay a slightly higher premium for name brand drivers than individuals who are less skilled at golf. All methods also show a significant but modest positive relationship between age and brand equity. This suggests that as golfers get older they will tend to pay a somewhat higher premium for brand name drivers than will the younger golfers. Finally, the study found a small negative relationship between brand equity and years of golf played.

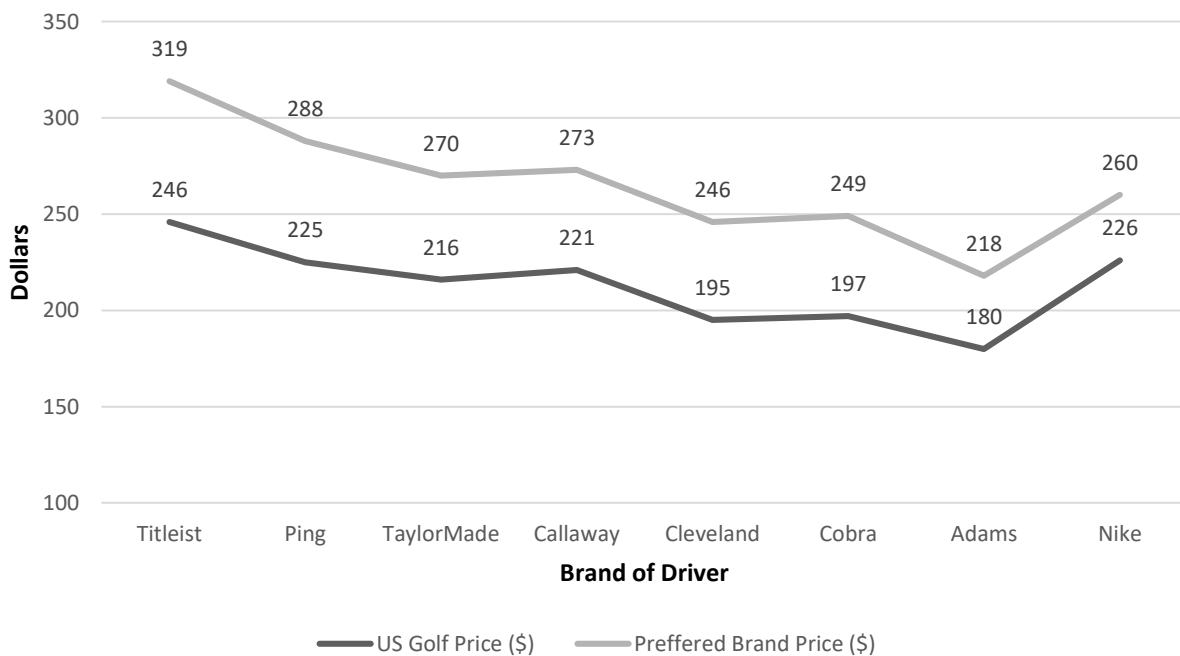
Personality Characteristics

The primary research purpose of this study was to determine whether a variety of personality characteristics affect an individual’s affinity for a golf brand. However, due to unforeseen effects, the data needed to be filtered. I noticed that for many participants, there was a large difference between their calculated difference equity and the equity they displayed for the follow-up brand equity question. The two methods are essentially measuring the same thing so this was startling. Therefore, I filtered the data so that only participants who produced a similar amount of equity for both the calculated difference and brand equity question variables were included (within a range of \$50).

In addition to this, I encountered an interaction effect that needed to be controlled. I noticed that individuals pay higher premiums on certain brands than others. Figure 1 shows the effect.

Figure 1

Brand Equity of Golf Drivers



Because of this, the data needed to be filtered further. I chose to only include the results of participants who chose TaylorMade and their preferred driver as it was the most popular brand by a large margin (26% of participants chose TaylorMade). Table 3 shows correlation values for the seven different personality characteristics within the study.

Table 3

Correlations between Personality Characteristics and Brand Equity

	Calculated Equity	Brand Equity Question	Brand Loyalty Scale
Golfer Identity	.06, $n = 763$	.06, $n = 1006$	*.11, $n = 989$
Harmonious Passion	.09, $n = 335$	** .15, $n = 446$	** .16, $n = 438$
Obsessive Passion	.06, $n = 335$	.09, $n = 446$	** .25, $n = 438$
Self-Esteem	.00, $n = 355$	.05, $n = 481$	.07, $n = 472$
CSW - Appearance	** .16, $n = 321$	*.12, $n = 423$	.05, $n = 415$
CSW – Competition	.10, $n = 322$	.09, $n = 425$	.12, $n = 418$
CSW – Virtue	-.02, $n = 323$	-.01, $n = 424$	-.01, $n = 417$
CSW – Approval	.07, $n = 321$	.07, $n = 424$	-.01, $n = 416$
CSW – Family	.05, $n = 321$	.08, $n = 423$	.06, $n = 415$
CSW – Performance	.09, $n = 320$	.06, $n = 421$	** .14, $n = 413$
Ego Orientation	** .14, $n = 595$	** .11, $n = 776$	** .21, $n = 764$
Task Orientation	-.03, $n = 590$	-.05, $n = 774$	** .15, $n = 761$

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

The calculated difference method only showed two significant relationships: a positive relationship between CSW – Appearance and Brand Equity and a positive relationship between Ego Orientation and Brand Equity. The Appearance subscale relationship is further supported by the brand equity question while the ego orientation relationship is supported by the rest of the methods. Additionally, I found a positive relationship between Harmonious Passion and Brand Equity using the Brand Equity Question method which is enforced by the Brand Loyalty scale.

Further, the Brand Loyalty scale found positive relationships between brand equity and Golfer Identity, Obsessive Passion, CSW – Performance, and Task Orientation.

Additional Brand Equity Analysis

In addition to the personality characteristics, there was some exploratory analysis done regarding just the brand equity data. Mizuno, Orlimar, TopFlite, and Powerbilt were cut from this analysis because not enough participants chose those brands. Table 4 shows a more detailed breakdown of the differences between brand names.

Table 4

Mean Breakdown of Eight Main Brands

Golf Brand	Titleist	Ping	Taylor Made	Callaway	Nike	Cobra	Cleveland	Adams
N	485	600	1498	514	64	158	64	65
USA Golf Price (\$)	246	225	216	221	226	197	195	180
Preferred Brand Price (\$)	319	288	270	273	260	249	246	218
Equity Amount (\$)	73	63	53	51	34	52	51	39
Equity Percentage	22.8%	21.8%	19.5%	18.7%	18.3%	18.1%	16.3%	17.9%
Loyalty Score	3.4	3.3	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.2
Age (Years)	53	46	47	46	53	43	44	40
Years Played	34	36	36	34	30	34	39	35
Handicap	7.9	12	13	14	13	15	14	17
Typical Score	81	85	86	88	85	89	87	91
Number of Drivers								
Purchased in the Last 5 Years	2.3	2.3	2.2	2.3	2.3	2.4	2.1	2.1
Number of Golf Items Owned	3.2	2.5	2.1	2.8	3.2	1.5	1.6	1.6

A few interesting equity characteristics of each brand can be obtained from this data. The Titleist brand has the highest equity value of \$73 while the Nike brand is worth the least with an equity amount of \$34. Additionally, golfers who picked Titleist as their preferred brand are willing to pay more for their driver than any other group of people. Interestingly, this also means Titleist golfers are willing to pay the most for the USA Golf driver as well. On the opposite end, Adams golfers are willing to pay the least for their driver and the USA Golf driver. Another statistic taken was equity percentage, which is the equity amount divided by the preferred brand price. TaylorMade is by far the most popular brand of driver with 1,498 participants picking it.

The most skilled players appear to be using Titleist drivers with a mean handicap of 7.9 and typical score of 81. The oldest golfers tend to use Titleist and Nike drivers with a mean age of 53 for both brands. The most experienced golfers in terms of years played tend to use Cleveland drivers with a mean of 39 years. Golfers who own Titleist and Nike tend to own more extra golf paraphernalia with Titleist and Nike logos on it with an average of 3.2 items.

Another statistic that is important to know is whether or not equity is related to the initial price one would pay for a brand. I correlated the price one is willing to pay for their chosen brand with the actual calculated equity between that brand and the USA golf brand. Table 5 shows this relationship broken down for each of the major brands.

Table 5

Correlations between Equity and Price Willing to Pay for Chosen Brand

Brand	Correlation
Titleist	** .38
Ping	** .30
TaylorMade	** .35
Callaway	** .33
Cleveland	** .40
Cobra	** .30
Adams	* .32
Nike	** .45

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

From the data, we can see that the price one would pay for their chosen brand is positively related to the equity. In other words, the more people are willing to pay for their chosen brand of driver, the larger the equity between their chosen brand price and their USA Golf price is. For example, according to this relationship, a golfer who is willing to pay \$500 dollars for their Titleist driver is more likely to have a bigger difference between that price and their USA Golf driver price than a golfer who is willing to pay \$300 dollars for their Titleist driver.

Chapter 4: Discussion

The findings of the study indicate that there are personality factors that can affect brand equity. However, the relationships are not as strong as I had predicted. There were also differences in the results of the ways we measured brand equity and those will be discussed as well. The subscales of Contingent Self-Worth that did show a significant relationship were positive which does support my hypothesis. Golfers who score high on the appearance and

performance subscales of CSW are willing to pay a higher premium for their chosen brand. This makes sense as these two aspects of CSW are very prevalent within golf.

My hypothesis for golfer identity was also supported. Individuals who identify themselves as a golfer tend to pay a higher premium for their chosen brand than those who do not. There are many incentives, both intrinsic and extrinsic, to be identified as a golfer. Golf is a challenging activity that can provide intrinsic enjoyment (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997) while also providing opportunities for comparison with others in terms of competition and appearance. Owning and playing with golf brands that are high-status helps individuals identify as a golfer. Therefore, it makes sense for individuals who self-identify as a golfer to pay a higher premium.

As expected, individuals who scored high on the ego orientation scale are willing to pay a higher premium than individuals who scored low. This relationship exists because people who are ego oriented are motivated to play by extrinsic reasons (rewards, appearance). Therefore, they are more likely to stick with brands they know for performance and appearance reasons. However, the results for task orientation were the opposite of our hypothesis. This may have happened due to the Brand Loyalty scale measuring slightly different constructs than the explicit brand equity measures.

Both Harmonious and Obsessive Passion was positively correlated with brand equity which supports my hypothesis. This is because people who are passionate about golf, whether obsessively or harmoniously, will be more passionate about golf brands. As a result, golfers who score high on the Harmonious Passion scale and Obsessive Passion scale are willing to pay a higher premium for their chosen golf brand than golfers who score low.

The results of the survey showed that as golfers are more skilled, they are willing to pay a higher premium for their preferred driver. This may be because golfers who are more skilled tend to take the sport more seriously and will probably have no problem spending more money on their favorite brands. Results also showed that as golfers get older, they will show more brand equity. Older people often have more money. It is also possible that more experience will result in an individual sticking with their brand of choice because they know it works and have used that brand for a long time.

Limitations

An obvious limitation to the study was the use of archival data for the majority of the personality characteristics data. While most of the characteristics that were chosen for the study are relatively stable traits, some can fluctuate over time. It is argued that self-esteem is a malleable characteristic that changes over time (Heatherton & Polivy 1991). Another example is golfer identity. This characteristic is strengthened over time as individuals are socialized into the role (Snyder 1985). It is likely that this character trait will be more malleable in younger individuals than older. This could affect the accuracy of the results as some of the personality data was taken years before the brand equity data was collected. The personality characteristics of the participants could have changed in that amount of time.

A second limitation of the study was participant bias. The study took responses from members of the Minnesota Golf Association which, by the nature of the organization, will have high performance golfers. As the study showed, golf performance is positively correlated with brand equity. Therefore, we can assume that the individuals of this study are more likely to show brand equity on average than the rest of the golfing population. It would have been better to have access to a subject pool that also includes more casual golfers.

Future Research

As mentioned, this study could be redone but with a wider audience of golfers that includes golfers of all skill levels. Another option to add in a future study would be to add other examples of golf equipment. While drivers are one of the best pieces of equipment for an individual to show off their go-to brands, there is plenty of other equipment to experiment with such as irons, golf balls, and putters.

There are obviously more personality characteristics and individual factors that could be compared with brand equity. As mentioned, self-enhancement and self-preservation techniques could be looked at such as sandbagging and self-handicapping. Other characteristics that could be related include: flow or any of the Big Five personality traits. It also seemed like many of the traits measured in this study had intrinsic vs. extrinsic motivational factors underlying them. I think it would benefit to have a scale dedicated to just the constructs of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation as related to golf. This is because most of the personality characteristics affected by intrinsic motivation resulted in positive correlations with brand equity. I think an intrinsic motivation scale would show similar results.

In addition to measuring brand equity, it would be interesting to see how these personality factors affect organizational trust of an individual's preferred golf brand. It would make sense that if a person trusts an organization they are more likely to show more brand equity by paying more for their products. This could apply to the golf setting presented in this study and help future researchers understand how much of golfer brand equity is explained by organizational trust.

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Appendix - Measures

Table 6

Cronbach's Alpha and n for Each Scale

Scale	Cronbach's Alpha	<i>n</i>
Golfer Identity	.97	1842
Harmonious Passion	.93	856
Obsessive Passion	.86	856
Self-Esteem	.92	856
CSW - Total	.96	856
CSW – Appearance	.82	856
CSW – Competition	.95	856
CSW - Virtue	.97	856
CSW – Approval	.78	856
CSW - Family	.91	856
CSW – Golf Performance	.88	856
Ego	.92	1517
Task	.93	1517
Brand Equity	.85	3432

Table 7

The Brand Loyalty Scale

The Brand Loyalty Scale (XXX changes depending on which brand they chose)

1. XXX makes high quality products.
2. XXX makes highest quality equipment
3. XXX always function well.
4. XXX are highly durable.
5. I consider myself to be loyal to XXX
6. XXX is my first choice among golf manufacturers.
7. I will not buy other brands as long as XXX is available.
8. When someone criticizes XXX it feels like a personal insult.
9. I feel a connection or kinship with golfers who also use XXX clubs.
10. Even if another brand has the same features as XXX, I would still buy XXX.

Table 8

The Golfer Identity Scale

The Golfer Identity Scale

1. Playing golf is a big part of who I am.
 2. Most of the people who know me think of me as a golfer.
 3. When someone criticizes golf, it feels like a personal insult.
 4. I am proud of my golf knowledge and/or skills.
 5. I am "in my element" when I am playing golf.
 6. I feel like I "fit in" when I am among golfers.
 7. Among all my hobbies, golf is the most important to me.
-

Table 9

The Passion Scale

The Passion Scale

1. Golf is in harmony with the other activities in my life.
 2. I have difficulties controlling my urge to play golf.
 3. The new things that I discover with golf allow me to appreciate it even more.
 4. I have almost an obsessive feeling for golf.
 5. Golf reflects the qualities I like about myself.
 6. Golf allows me to live a variety of experiences.
 7. Golf is the only thing that really turns me on.
 8. Golf is well integrated in my life.
 9. If I could, I would only play golf.
 10. Golf is in harmony with other things that are part of me.
 11. Golf is so exciting that I sometimes lose control over it.
 12. I have the impression that golf controls me.
 13. I spend a lot of time playing golf.
 14. I like golf.
 15. Golf is a passion for me.
 16. Golf is part of who I am.
 17. Golf is important for me.
-

Table 10

The Self-Esteem Scale

The Self-Esteem Scale

I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.
 I feel that I have a number of good qualities.
 All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.
 I am able to do things as well as most other people.
 I feel I do not have much to be proud of.
 I take a positive attitude toward myself.
 On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.
 I wish I could have more respect for myself.
 I certainly feel useless at times.
 At times I think I am no good at all.

Table 11

The Task and Ego Orientation Scale

The Task and Ego Orientation Scale (In order to enjoy a round of golf among friends, I need to:)

1. play my best
 2. learn something new
 3. have the lowest net score in my group
 4. have others see me make good shots
 5. see improvement in my game
 6. play better than the golfers in my group
 7. lower my handicap (or score lower than I usually do)
 8. win (have the lowest score or win the most skins, holes or money in my group)
 9. enjoy the people I am playing with
 10. bet - have a wager riding on the game
 11. have others in my group make mistakes but I don't
 12. outplay my companions
 13. try my best
 14. make a change to my game that really seems to help
 15. work hard at my game
 16. impress others with my play
 17. learn from my opponents
 18. have some form of competition going
-

Table 12

*The Contingencies of Self-Worth Scale*The Contingencies of Self-Worth Scale

1. When I think I look attractive, I feel good about myself.
2. I feel worthwhile when I perform better than others on a task or skill.
3. My self-esteem is unrelated to how I feel about the way my body looks.
4. Doing something I know is wrong makes me lose my self-respect.
5. I don't care if other people have a negative opinion about me.
6. Knowing that my family members love me makes me feel good about myself.
7. I can't respect myself if others don't respect me.
8. My self-worth is not influenced by the quality of my relationships with my family members.
9. Whenever I follow my moral principles, my sense of self-respect gets a boost.
10. Knowing that I am better than others on a task raises my self-esteem.
11. My opinion about myself isn't tied to how well I do on the golf course.
12. I couldn't respect myself if didn't live up to a moral code.
13. I don't care what other people think of me.
14. When my family members are proud of me, my sense of self-worth increases.
15. My self-esteem is influenced by how attractive I think my face or facial features are.
16. Doing well in golf gives me a sense of self-respect.
17. Doing better than others gives me a sense of self-respect.
18. My sense of self-worth suffers whenever I think I don't look good.
19. I feel better about myself when I know I'm playing golf well.
20. What others think of me has no effect on what I think about myself.
21. When I don't feel loved by my family, my self-esteem goes down.
22. My self-worth is affected by how well I do when I am competing with others.
23. My self-esteem is influenced by my golf performance.
24. My self-esteem would suffer if I did something unethical.
25. It is important to my self-respect that I have a family that cares about me.
26. My self-esteem does not depend on whether or not I feel attractive.
27. My self-worth is influenced by how well I do on competitive tasks.
28. I feel bad about myself whenever my golf performance is lacking.
29. My self-esteem depends on whether or not I follow my moral/ethical principles
30. My self-esteem depends on the opinions others hold of me.