

# Leisure time and alcohol beverage preferences of young people in South Africa: A structural model analysis

S. Mkosi<sup>1</sup>; <sup>2</sup>N. Chiliya and <sup>3</sup>C.T. Chikandiwa

<sup>1&2</sup> University of the Witwatersrand School of Economics and Business Sciences,  
Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, South Africa.  
Email: <sup>2</sup>Norman.Chiliya@wits.ac.za

<sup>3</sup>University of KwaZulu-Natal, Graduate School of Leadership,  
Westville Campus, Private Bag 54001, Durban, 4000, South Africa.  
Email: <sup>3</sup>chikandiwa@ukzn.ac.za

## Abstract

It is in the best interest of all industry stakeholders to better understand the factors that influence consumer preference, brand and purchase behaviour of alcohol beverage in the South African market. A theoretical model was proposed based on the literature and tested using a cross-sectional quantitative analysis. Data were analysed using the structural equation modelling. The results of the analysis showed that the strongest factor influencing perception of product quality was price, with the second strongest being product category involvement. The results confirm that consumers take alcohol beverages during their leisure time. Also, consumers are particularly sensitive to the pricing of alcohol beverages and would buy more beer during special promotions and discounts. The consumers are also loyal to a specific brand as well. It was therefore recommended that the alcohol beverage industry and health institutions could work together to alleviate alcohol-related problems and to reduce the negative stereotypes about the beverage. Further, research could be done to assess these dimensions for different products consumed during leisure time, in order to inform both the public and the marketers.

**Key words:** Consumer preference, product category involvement and structural equation.

## Introduction

Recreation and leisure time are indispensable in the contemporary South African society and abroad. Indeed, participation in leisure is essential for the development of individuals' mental, physical and moral faculties (Hashemi, Ershadi & Hamidi, 2013). The integration and balance of physical, mental, emotional, intellectual, social and spiritual aspects is a requirement for optimal lifestyle (Edginton, Jordan, DeGraaf & Edginton, 1995). Undertaking free or unobligated time where work, life-sustaining functions and other obligatory activities are not performed can be referred to as leisure time (Stambuk, Silvia & Sucic, 2013 and Russell, 1996). Although coming up with a strict definition of leisure without separating it from other domains of life is difficult, the concept is related to the concept of life balance (Fawcett, 2007). The life balance concept assumes the elements of both engagement and disengagement, activity and relaxation, social and solitary activity (Fawcett, 2007). Also, the amount and quality of leisure time used in certain activities is important for people's well-being, because of the direct satisfaction it brings (OECD, 2009). Additionally, leisure can be achieved through different combinations and types of activities, while at the same time it may vary from person to person and from region to region (Fawcett, 2007 and Edginton et al, 1995). Furthermore, leisure activities: refreshment, recreation and sport, play a significant role in the socialisation of communities (Hashemi et al, 2013). Nonetheless, socialisation activities are more often than not, toasted with temperate alcohol consumption, especially in reunion of friends and celebrating individuals' success.

Although, each individual certainly experiences differences in ways of spending leisure during different stages of life, it should be acknowledged that alcoholic beverages have been a part of social life for ages (WHO, 2005). Social drinking is recognised as a 'traditional and a 'cultural' pursuit in many societies, including South Africa, Ireland and Germany (Cunningham, 2013). However, it needs to be stated that beer is 'no ordinary commodity' due to the intoxicating effect that the alcohol has on the human brain, causing impaired physical and mental judgement (Babor et al, 2010). Owing to the harmful effects of excessive alcohol consumption, limited attention has been given to research focusing on the factors that affect the volume/size of alcoholic beverage from numerous suppliers (Beukes, Prinsloo & Pelsler, 2014). From a holistic point of view, social research understandably, focuses on the 'problematic' aspects of alcohol beverage misuse, while 'moderate' or 'social' drinking practices are largely overlooked. Indeed, literature is prevalent with the negative effects of alcohol on tertiary students who are (transitioning to adulthood) prone to harmful levels of alcohol consumption (Reavley, Jorm, McCann & Lubman, 2011). However, the focus on the harmful effects or on the anti-social alcohol related behaviour actually obscures the social processes and practices surrounding temperate alcohol consumption (Cunningham, 2013). An approach that calls for social process that goes beyond the negative elements of alcohol and instead, encompasses the broader concept of social drinking is required (Cunningham, 2013). The subject deserves careful and detailed attention for several reasons. On one side, a better understanding of the alcohol beverage drinking is essential for treatment and prevention of alcohol-related problems (Cunningham, 2013). On the other side, it may help to reduce the negative effects of alcohol beverage stereotypes and hence, marketing as set of principles and practices could be applied aptly in the process of attracting and retaining customers in the liquor beverage industry (Beukes, Prinsloo & Pelsler, 2014 and Fadahunsi & Pelsler, 2013). Therefore, this study investigates the experiences of the 'social' or 'moderate' drinker in the South African context, from a leisure perspective that reveals how social and relaxation processes are negotiated and experienced at different stages of life.

On the one hand, previous studies indicate that most popular leisure activities in student life are watching television, reading and using computers (Leitner & Leitner, 1996), while sports, gym and fitness knowledge and involvement are also on the increase among tertiary students (Mckenzie, Chilya & Chikandiwa, 2016). On the other hand, even though a habit of spending every single free moment in a quality way is essential for an optimal lifestyle, participation in leisure activities among the students could be constrained and complicated by a variety of factors which include economic and financial challenges, time constraints, being responsible for studies, adapting to university life and real-world challenges, as well as the lack of necessary social amenities such as churches (Dhurup, 2012). Although alcoholic beverage is one of the product consumed during leisure time and some social gatherings, it seems little is known about alcohol brand preferences of consumers undertaking leisure time in the local context. Nonetheless, a casual glance at the alcohol beverage market reflects a rise in the availability of new alcoholic beverage products branded and imported from several countries of origin (Cunningham, 2013). Therefore, the purpose of this article is to better understand alcohol consumption and brand preferences during leisure time among men and women. As such, a survey was conducted among university students.

The following section provides the theoretical framework and the hypotheses. Next, the research method, data analysis and conclusions are outlined. A discussion of the managerial and policy implications, limitations and future research guidelines concludes the article.

### **Theoretical framework**

The theoretical framework provided in Figure 1 was used as the basis to analyse the brand quality and preference for alcohol beverage. The research model consists of eight basic dimensions: brand quality/preference, emotional, environmental, price, social, product category involvement, health and susceptibility to personal influences. The model was used to explore the factors that influence brand preferences for alcohol beverage during leisure time.

### **Brand preference**

Benefits are personal values that consumers associate with a product or service. It is what the consumer believes the product or service can do for them (Park, Jaworski, & MacInnis, 1986). Logos and designs are examples of brand benefits that attribute to the enhancement of the product, in addition to the basic functional value. Brand benefits focus on the needs that the product fulfills for the consumer (Orth, McDaniel, Shellhammer & Lopetcharat, 2004). Some researchers believe that consumers make purchases based on the product benefits and not the attributes offered. However, consumers evaluate purchase decisions based on product attributes with the promise of benefits received from product attributes (Aaker, Batra, & Myers, 1992). Research has shown that consumers do not always seek both attributes and benefits in products. Instead, they tend to seek benefits when involved with basic products: low involvement (i.e. food products). Consumers also seek attributes when dealing with a more technical product: high involvement such as television and cars. Figure 1 provide the conceptual framework of the brand benefits and preference model

### **Quality performance**

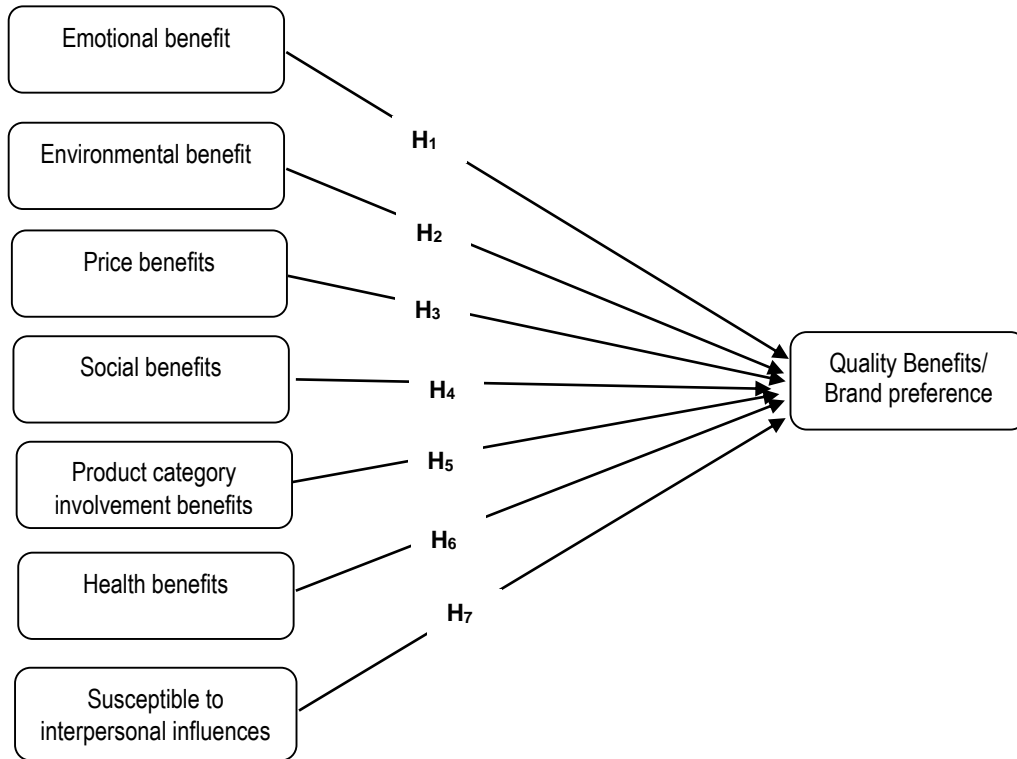
Perceived quality is defined as “the customer’s perception of the overall quality or superiority of a product or service with respect to its intended purpose, relative to alternatives”. Companies are becoming more customer-orientated and in so doing, have become very profitable, as compared to other companies that are not following suit. There is an intimate connection between product and service quality, customer satisfaction and company profitability (Kotler & Keller, 2006).

Ritter (2008) pointed out that in terms of customer satisfaction, quality is the telling factor for success of a brand. Nowadays, companies have to listen to the consumer’s requirements and pick up on trends, as they are becoming increasingly knowledgeable, with unprecedented access to comparative information on products/services through the internet and other mediums.

The quality of a product is determined by distinguishing between the perceived and actual performance. Should the product exceed the expectations, the product will be a success and should the product fall short of expectations, then it is sure to be a failure. The perceived product quality has a direct relationship to the price premium a company can justifiably add to the selling price. Performance specifications, along with drivers of quality, namely: marketing strategies, cost leadership, differentiation and focus; ultimately determine how consumers perceive and evaluate a product offering. A company does not have to bear excessive costs in order to improve product quality. This can be achieved through enhancing the focus on attention

to quality in production, thus differentiating the product offering superior quality from those of competitors (Calantone and Knight, 2000).

Figure 1: A conceptual framework of brand benefits and preference model.



Source: Adapted and modified from Orth, (2005) and Ajzen & Fishbein (1980)

### **Emotional benefits**

Previous research has shown that consumer's emotions towards products, particularly brands, can develop and strongly influence their brand choice. The development of this personal attachment by the consumer is made possible through interaction with the product item (Ritter, 2008).

Brand loyalty is largely influenced by the consumer's emotional attachment to a brand when it comes to purchase intention. This willingness to pay arises from the extent to which a consumer can identify with the brand, through evoking feelings of affection, passion and other emotions which a brand looks to be associated with, in order to yield sales (Thomson, MacInnis, & Park, 2005). These emotions can lead to brand loyalty, paying premiums and influencing others to purchase the brand. Therefore, a consumer's emotional attachment to a brand may be able to predict their commitment and willingness to make sacrifices to obtain it. Some basic ideals that are associated with this emotional involvement for brands are a positive brand attitude, high involvement in the product category, brand loyalty (willingness to pay a premium), affection, passion, connection and the overall satisfaction associated with the brand (Thomson et al. 2005). Therefore, it can be hypothesised that:

*H<sub>1</sub>: There is an association between beer quality benefit and emotional benefit*

### ***Environmental benefits***

There has been an increased pressure on companies to “go-green” and addressing environmental health and safety concerns, both internally and externally. Marketers have looked at appealing to consumers through highlighting their efforts, made possible by the companies’ “green” strategy for the brand. Product stewardship involves the environmental concerns involving health and safety in all phases of the brand’s life cycle (Braglia & Petroni, 2000). Environmental management has become a major issue in today’s business world. New “green” strategies are making companies rethink the production and waste practices involved with company operations (Braglia and Petroni, 2000). An example of stewardship involving the product category of beer would be if the can or bottle is recyclable or was recycled itself before consumption. Therefore, it can be hypothesised that:

*H<sub>2</sub>: There is an association between beer quality benefit and environmental benefit*

### ***Price benefits***

Product price and perceived quality have a direct relationship, that is to say, a higher-priced retail product would often be perceived by consumers as having a higher quality and more benefits than those costing less (Ritter, 2008). Since it has been shown that students are price sensitive and respond to promotions and the readily availability of alcohol around campuses, strategies to prevent alcohol abuse and the resulting negative consequences need to be considered. The regulation of marketing practices such as sale prices, promotions and advertisements may be important strategies to reduce binge drinking and its accompanying problems for students (Kuo et al, 2003; Babor et al, 2010). Therefore, it can be hypothesised that:

*H<sub>3</sub>: There is an association between beer quality benefit and price benefit*

### ***Social benefits***

Family and friends have been found to have a major bearing on the beer preference of college students. Peers and friends also influence what beers a student consume in the form of peer-pressure or group-thinking mentality. The desire for acceptance into certain social cliques may lead a consumer to purchase a particular brand product that they are unfamiliar with (Ritter, 2008). Therefore, it can be hypothesised that:

*H<sub>4</sub>: There is an association between beer quality benefit and social benefit*

### ***Product category involvement***

Product category involvement has a major effect on consumer decision making. If a consumer feels strongly positive about the product category, then they are more prone to seek increased value, pay more attention and try to find the most product benefits among the product category (Quester & Smart, 1998). Product category involvement has been shown to demonstrate considerable influence over consumer decision processing. Therefore, it can be hypothesised that:

*H<sub>5</sub>: There is an association between beer quality benefit and product category involvement*

### ***Health Benefits***

Consumers are becoming increasingly health conscious these days and as a result, beer marketers have intensified their marketing efforts. Light beers with reduced alcohol content have increased in popularity over the traditional lager beers (Walker, 2004). However, Castle Lite, while not classified as a light beer, has managed to gain popularity through its deceiving name. Today, consumers are more health conscious than they have been in previous generations. This trend has made marketers conform to these health concerns by catering products and

brands to meet consumer criteria. Low carbohydrate diets are becoming more and more popular, informing consumers to cut on carbohydrates from their diet. Beer marketers have recognized this need and have begun to follow suit by marketing light beers aggressively (Walker, 2004).

Studies have shown that drinking alcohol in moderate amounts has consumer benefits with cardiovascular health, through blood thinning properties in alcohol. In addition, some studies actually determined that it showed protection against dementia (Rhodes, 2005). In addition, past studies have shown that alcohol consumption can lower the risk of developing diabetes by improving insulin sensitivity. The main medical health benefit of alcohol is a lowered risk of coronary heart disease (Klatsky, 2006). The health benefits arising from the consumption of beer products are questionable. To derive these benefits, it would require an individual to consume large quantities which contribute to their own health risks and dangers e.g. liver disease, high blood pressure, increased risk to cancer and pancreatic damage. Some studies show that drinking in moderation does provide the consumer with health benefits, as beer, like wine, contains antioxidants (Ritter, 2008). Therefore, it can be hypothesised that:

*H<sub>6</sub>: There is an association between beer quality benefit and health benefit*

### **Susceptibility to interpersonal influence**

Social influence can play a role in individual decision making process. However, depending on the degree of the interpersonal influence, the individual consumer could be influenced to change their brand choice and their purchasing behaviour by the social environment (Batra, Homer & Kahle, 2001; McGuire, 1968). It is essential for the marketing organisation to understand the impact of social influence on consumer's brand preferences and the purchasing decisions. Thus, it can be hypothesised that:

*H<sub>7</sub>: There is an association between beer quality benefit and susceptibility to interpersonal influence*

## **Methodology**

### **Sample and data collection**

The target population for the study was students between the ages of 18 to 30 years, who have visited a tourist resort centre during leisure time in the past six months. The study area was selected for several reasons which include: interest in undertaking leisure time after hardworking at the university, knowledgeable about temperate alcohol consumption/ social drinking and the negative effects of alcohol abuse. In addition, the target group (this age group) was composed of people who were knowledgeable about resort centres around the country, who were knowledgeable about alcohol beverages and were more likely to provide accurate responses to the survey.

A sample of 300 participants was targeted to complete the questionnaire, of which 40 of them indicated that they did not consume any alcohol beverage during the last vacation. Thus, 260 questionnaires were analysed further using the structural model. The students were randomly recruited from the university campus in Johannesburg City, during August and September 2014. Only those who had taken a vacation in a tourism resort centre outside Johannesburg City and outside their permanent place of residence were included in the sample. Both male and female respondents were recruited. The questionnaire took approximately 15 minutes to be filled in. Participation was voluntary and confidentiality was guaranteed as the questionnaires were anonymously answered.

### Measurement instrument

The questionnaire was designed based on the proposed model for this research. The scales and variables were adopted from the brand benefits and preference model (Orth et al. 2005). Amendments to the scales were done, where necessary, to suit the context of the study. The

fundamental design of the questionnaire consisted of several sections: biographical details, and leisure time questions, performance/quality, price, emotion, health, social, product category involvement, interpersonal influence and environmental sections. The filter questions were used to screen respondents at several stages. Two questions relating to brand choice were then asked, followed by 3-11 questions pertaining to each of the 5 dimensions of brand equity adopted from Ritter (2008) and modified to fit the present context. A seven point Likert-scale was used, with 7 response alternatives: strongly agree, agree, slightly agree, neutral, slightly disagree, disagree and strongly disagree.

### Respondents' profile

The following section provide information on leisure time and then followed by the demographics of the respondents. The demographic information of the respondents who indicated that they consumed alcohol during last time is provided in Table 1 and Table 2. The information include gender, age, current academic level, faculty and current living situation. As expected, the majority of respondents were males (65.8%). The median age of all respondents was 19 years (30%). Most of the respondents were currently at the undergraduate level of study (90.4%). The Commerce, Law and Management Faculty had the most respondents (66.5%). Lastly, most respondents indicated that they still lived with their parents (52.3%).

**Table 1. Demographics of respondents**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Male	171	65.8
Female	89	34.2
Total	260	100
<b>Age</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
18-21	191	73.5
22-25	63	24.2
26-30	6	2.3
Total	260	100
<b>Academic Level</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Undergrad	235	90.4
Honours	18	6.9
Masters	2	.8
PHD	5	1.9
Total	260	100
<b>Faculty</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Health Sciences	6	2.3
Humanities	37	14.2
Science	18	6.9
Engineering & Built Environment	26	10

Commerce, Law & Management	173	66.5
Total	260	100

**Table 2: Accommodation status**

Living Situation	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Live with Parent(s)	136	52.3
Live alone (Apt/Home) on campus	13	5
Live with roommate(s) (Apt/Home) on campus	29	11.2
Live with roommate(s) (Apt/Home) off campus	48	18.5
Live in a Dorm alone	16	6.2
Live in a Dorm with roommate(s)	18	6.9
Total	260	100

The overall results of tertiary students' role balancing, given the challenges of studying, are presented in Figure 2. The respondents were asked to rate themselves in terms of being able to be attentive to all of one's various roles or responsibilities such as (studies, family, church or community, extra-curriculum activities and even leisure). The majority of respondents (74%) indicated high satisfaction (a score of 7 to 10) with their balancing role, while 8% of the respondents indicated a low satisfaction level a score of (1 to 4). The remainder of the respondents scored themselves between 5 and 6 out of a total score of 10.

Figure 3 presents the results of the satisfaction level of the leisure time taken in the past six months. Figure 4 shows that about 87% of the respondents indicated that they consumed alcohol beverage during the holiday excursion (leisure time) that was taken out in the past six month and out of place of residents. Also, Figure 3 shows that 94% of the overall respondents indicated that they were very satisfied (a score between 8 and 10) with the last time out. Furthermore, the respondents categorised their drinking behaviour as social/moderate or temperate drinking.

**Figure 2: Level of satisfaction with balancing your roles**

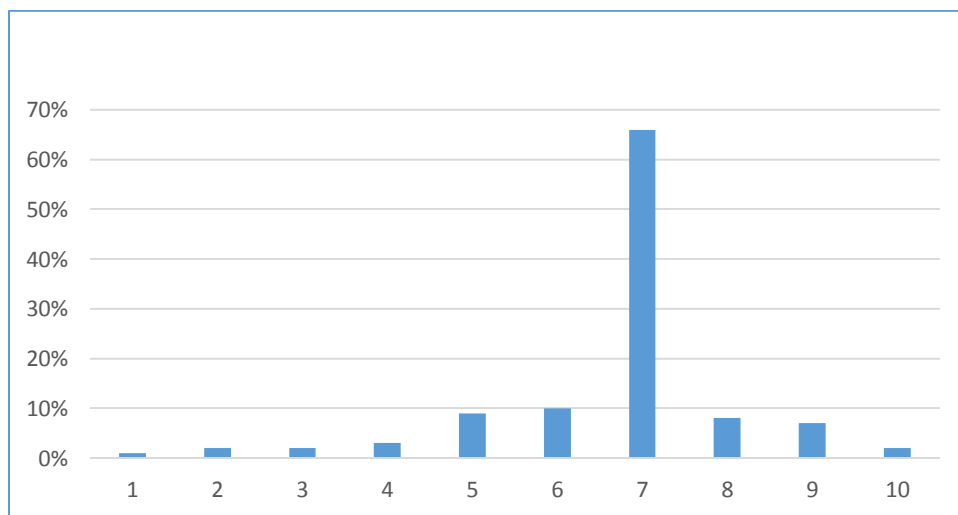




Figure 3: Satisfaction level with leisure time taken out of the place of residents

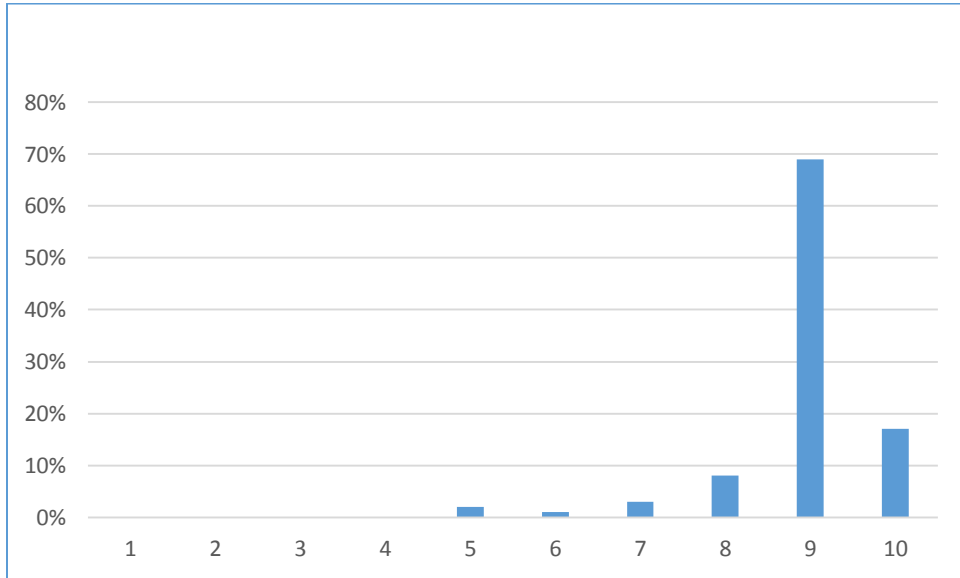


Figure 4: Alcohol beverages consumption during your last excursion

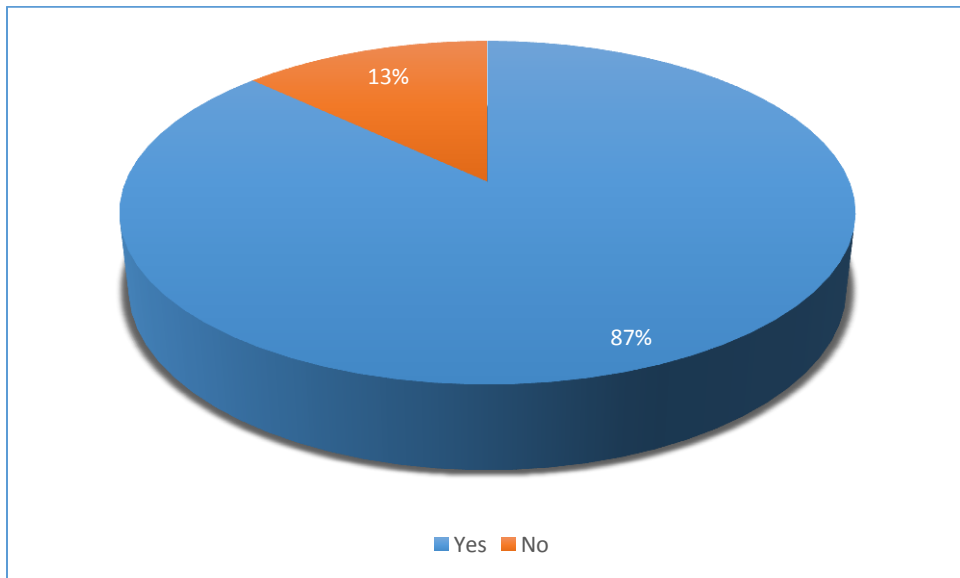
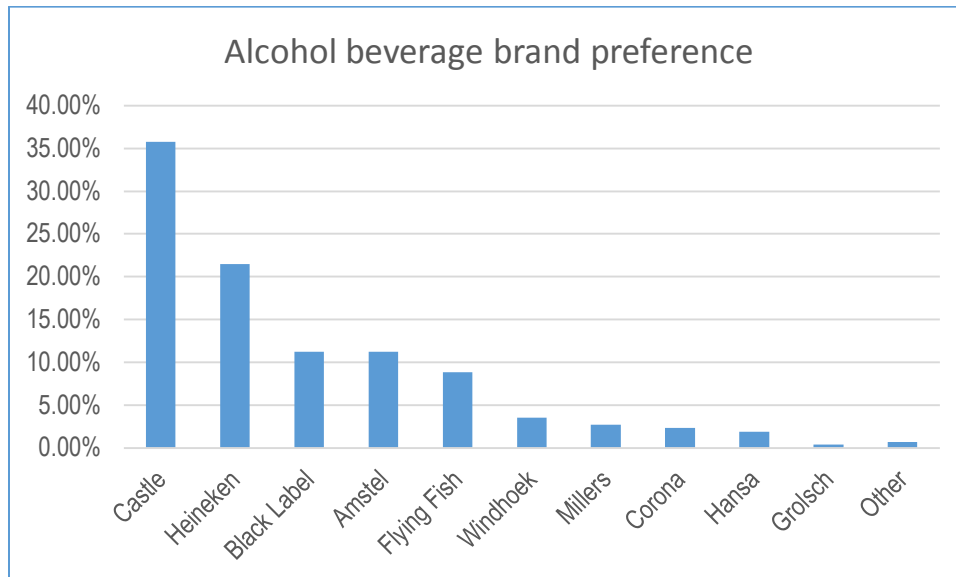


Figure 5 shows the results of the overall consumer preferred brands. Castle (including Castle larger and Castle Lite) was the most popular brand, with Heineken being the second most

popular. Only one respondent indicated that Grolsch is the preferred beer. Females clearly showed that they prefer light beer as compared to lager, while the choice for males is evenly split. It is important to note that there was not much difference in terms of the price between the most commonly available beers. Also, even though Castle Lite is marketed as a light beer, it is only one percent lower in terms of alcohol content, than Castle Lager while, Windhoek Light beer contains 2.4% alcohol.

Figure 5: Alcohol beverage brand preference



### Measure validation

To validate the research model fitness, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted using AMOS version 22 statistical software program. The following sections presents the results of convergent validity and discriminant validity respectively that were performed. The Chi-square degrees of freedom ratio (CMIN/DF) is a goodness of fit test, as well as a test for independence (Ingram et. al, 2000).The Chi-square value for CFA is acceptable as it has a value of <3, at 2.562. For the post path modelling results, the model fit increased to 3.717. Even though the Chi-square figure falls outside the desired range, it is still marginally acceptable (Chin, 1998).

The Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) shows to what extent the variance-covariance matrix is considered by the model. The GFI result is less than ideal as it is <0.9 at 0.767 and is marginally worse for path modelling results at 0.676. The Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI) differs from the GFI in that the value of the index is adjusted for the number of parameters in the model. The AGFI also returns a value indicating a less than ideal figure of 0.724 and this figure drops to 0.633 in the post path modelling results.

Incremental Fit Index (IFI) and Comparative Fit Index (CFI) are both  $\leq 0.90$ , at 0.854 and 0.853 respectively. The Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) does not indicate a good fit, but is marginally below the ideal of  $\leq 0.90$  with a value of 0.836. For the final model assessment, the IFI=0.735, TLI=0.714, CFI=0.733 figures are now  $\leq 0.90$ , which are lower than the CFA results.

The RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation) value of 0.078 indicates an adequate fit compared to the saturated model as it's less than 0.08; a RMSEA of <0.5 would have pointed to a good fit. RMSEA post path modelling increased to 0.102, indicative of poor fit.

### Reliability analysis for dimensions and items

A measurement model of the conceptual model with eight variables was estimated and the results are presented in Table 3. Construct reliability was assessed using the Composite Reliabilities (CR) values and Cronbach Alpha values. A commonly used threshold for composite reliability and Cronbach alpha value is 0.7 (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1998). With values ranging from 0.810 to 0.914 for Cronbach's Alphas and CR values ranging from 0.8163 to 0.9148, this study can conclude that all the scales measured are reliable.

**Table 3: Accuracy Analysis Statistics**

Research Construct		Mean Value		Cronbach's Test		C.R Value	AVE Value	Factor Loading
				Item-total	(α) Value			
Emotional Benefit (EmoB)	EmoB 1	0.867	1.6846	0.435	0.900	0.9074	0.5076	0.515
	EmoB 2		0.7731	0.661				0.697
	EmoB 3		1.3538	0.743				0.846
	EmoB 4		1.2615	0.797				0.893
	EmoB 5		1.2154	0.796				0.879
	EmoB 6		0.8038	0.794				0.823
	EmoB 7		0.8269	0.730				0.759
	EmoB 8		0.3423	0.584				0.530
	EmoB 9		0.1269	0.560				0.502
	EmoB 11		0.2808	0.512				0.503
Environmental Benefit (EnvB)	EnvB 1	0.2560	0.4615	0.603	0.810	0.8163	0.6001	0.683
	EnvB 2		0.1577	0.732				0.890
	EnvB 3		0.1500	0.648				0.737
Price Benefit (PB)	PB 1	1.541	1.3731	0.644	0.816	0.8471	0.5879	0.729
	PB 2		1.5115	0.747				0.847
	PB 3		1.7423	0.746				0.892
	PB 4		1.5385	0.500				0.554
Social Benefit (SB)	SB 1	-0.6190	-0.4923	0.699	0.898	0.8998	0.6929	0.742
	SB 2		-0.6654	0.833				0.874
	SB 3		-0.6654	0.802				0.884
	SB 4		-0.6538	0.760				0.822
Product Category Involvement (PCI)	PCI 1	-0.1370	-0.0500	0.759	0.839	0.8773	0.7116	0.837
	PCI 2		0.0000	0.770				0.845
	PCI 3		-0.3615	0.759				0.836
Health	HB 1	-0.8440	-1.0731	0.723	0.839	0.8416	0.7271	0.897

Benefits (HB)	HB 2		-0.6154	0.723				0.806
Susceptibility To Interpersonal Influence (SII)	SII 2	-1.021	-1.4077	0.671	0.871	0.8727	0.4960	0.731
	SII 3		-1.1308	0.702				0.772
	SII 4		-0.9615	0.566				0.613
	SII 5		-1.2962	0.608				0.653
	SII 6		-0.9000	0.666				0.701
	SII 8		-0.9077	0.658				0.719
	SII 9		-0.5423	0.676				0.729
Quality Benefits (QB)	QB 1	1.897	1.8500	0.838	0.914	0.9148	0.7817	0.904
	QB 2		1.9038	0.822				0.883
	QB 3		1.9385	0.826				0.865

CR.: Composite Reliability; AVE: Average Variance Reliability

\*Scores: -3 – Strongly Disagree; 0 – Neutral; 3 – Strongly Agree

\*significance level: \*\*\* p<0.01 for all the factor loadings

From Table 4, it was deduced that all the variables were not correlated in any form or fashion. Since the values were less than 0.9, it displays that the variables were distinct and unique from one another. This indicates discriminant validity within the study. The square-root of the lowest AVE is 0.7817 and is greater than the highest inter-construct correlation value (0.467). Therefore, these results confirm the existence of discriminant validity of the measurement used in this study.

**Table 4. Inter-construct correlations**

Research Constructs	QB	PB	SB	EmoB	EnvB	HB	SII	PCI
Quality Benefits (QB)	1							
Price Benefits (PB)	.467**	1						
Social Benefit (SB)	.012	.217**	1					
Emotional Benefits (EmoB)	.216**	.371**	.405**	1				
Environmental Benefits (EnvB)	.024	.117	.278**	.278**	1			
Health Benefits (HB)	.089	.202**	.222**	.286**	.193**	1		
Susceptibility To Interpersonal Influence (SII)	-.144*	-.052	.436**	.178**	.162**	.146*	1	
Product Category Involvement (PCI)	-.026	.004	.336**	.272**	.215**	.173**	.266**	1

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

EmoB=Emotional Benefits; EnvB=Environmental Benefits; PB=Price Benefit; SB=Social Benefits; PCI=Product Category Involvement; HB=Health Benefits; SII=Susceptibility to Interpersonal Influence QB=Quality Benefits

## Data analysis and Results

### Path model

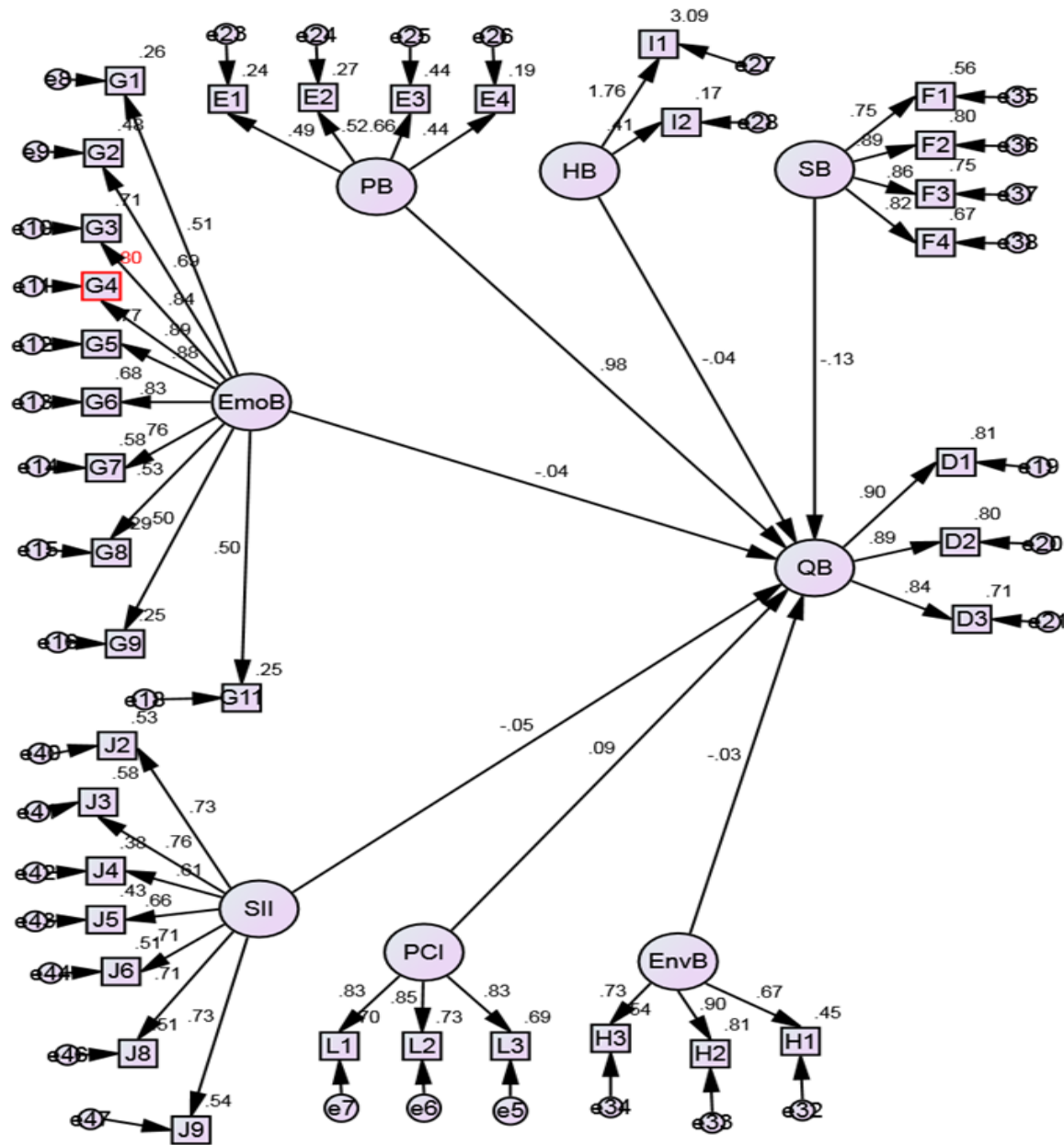
The structural model was tested using the loadings and significance of the path coefficients which indicated the relationship between the dependent variable and independent variables. Evidence to support the hypotheses of the study is examined whether the path coefficient is positive or negative. From the results of the SEM, it was determined that price benefits and product category involvement showed to be significant (independent variables) in determining quality benefits (dependent variable). The results in Table 5 provide support for the two proposed hypotheses. Both Figure 6 and Table 5 provide the path coefficient for H3 and H5 (i.e. 0.983 and 0.090, respectively).

**Table 5: Results of Structural Equation Model Analysis**

Variable relationships	Hypothesis	Path Coefficients	Rejected / Supported
Emotional Benefits (EmoB) → Quality (Performance) Benefits (QB)	H <sub>1</sub>	Insignificant	Reject
Environmental Benefits (EnvB) → Quality (Performance) Benefits (QB)	H <sub>2</sub>	Insignificant	Reject
Price Benefits → Quality (Performance) Benefits (QB)	H <sub>3</sub>	Significant (.983)	Support
Social Benefits (SB) → Quality (Performance) Benefits (QB)	H <sub>4</sub>	Insignificant	Reject
Product Category Involvement (PCI) → Quality (Performance) Benefits (QB)	H <sub>5</sub>	Significant (.090)	Support
Health Benefits (HB) → Quality (Performance) Benefits (QB)	H <sub>6</sub>	Insignificant	Reject
Susceptibility To Interpersonal Influence (SII) → Quality (Performance) Benefits (QB)	H <sub>7</sub>	Insignificant	Reject

Note: EmoB=Emotional Benefits; EnvB=Environmental Benefits; PB=Price Benefit; SB=Social Benefits; PCI=Product Category Involvement; HB=Health Benefits; SII=Susceptibility to Interpersonal Influence QB=Quality Benefits

Figure 6: Measurement and structural model results



Notes\* EmoB=Emotional Benefits; EnvB=Environmental Benefits; PB=Price Benefit; SB=Social Benefits; PCI=Product Category Involvement; HB=Health Benefits; SII=Susceptibility to Interpersonal Influence QB=Quality Benefits

Table 5 indicates that all three (i.e. H3 and H5) of the posited relationships are statistically significant (i.e. t-statistics value is greater than 2). Emotional benefits (-0.4), Environmental benefits (-0.03), Social benefits (-0.13), Health benefits (-0.04) and Susceptibility to interpersonal influence (-0.05) all returned figures that were negative and could be deemed to be neutral.

As proposed in hypothesis 3 (H<sub>3</sub>), there is positive relationship between price benefit and alcohol beverage quality benefit during leisure time. The results of H<sub>3</sub> show that price performance is associated with quality performance/ benefits (QB) of a product. Consistent with previous studies, the price of product appeared to be one of the important factors that endorse quality performance of product (Ritter, 2008) during leisure time. In agreement with the fifth hypothesis (H<sub>5</sub>), the findings pointed out that there is a positive relationship between product category involvement and alcohol beverage quality benefit.

## **Discussion and conclusions**

The research revealed that the respondents were satisfied with their studies and life balancing roles. It is important to note that the majority (87%) of the respondents indicated that they took part in social drinking during the time out. Also, the level of satisfaction with the holiday taken out was highly scored. This might be an indication that there was nothing to regret about the leisure time taken out. However, it should be noted that leisure experience is subjective and different for every individual.

Another interesting trend is that the female respondents chose light beers, whilst for males, the split between light and lager was almost equal. The distinction between light and lager beers is somewhat small, since the alcohol content of the most popular light beer (Castle Lite) is in fact 4% and some lagers are 4% to 5.5% alcohol. Among the light beers named by participants, the only one with low alcohol content is Windhoek light (2.4% alcohol). It was not possible to compare the calorie content (energy) of light and lager beer since there is only kilojoule information on the two light beers and not on the lager beers. Furthermore, the structural model was adopted to test the following relationships:

### ***Emotional benefit and alcohol beverage quality benefit***

Although the literature emphasises the role of emotional attachment towards brands, thus influencing product choice, this study did not find a strong relationship between emotional elements and brand quality (-0.04). This is possibly because there are other overriding influences such as price and the fact that one brand dominates the market anyway. Brand loyalty may be more of an issue for older adults (Ritter, 2008).

### ***Environmental benefit and alcohol beverage quality benefit***

Environmental management has become a major issue in today's business world. New "green" strategies are making companies rethink the production and waste practices involved with company operations (Braglia & Petroni, 2000). While companies may employ green strategies to address government regulations and policies, these are not necessarily recognised by the consumers. Since the student study population were consistently neutral in their responses to the importance of environmental sensitivity in relation to their beer choice, environmental concerns are not part of the consciousness of students currently.

### ***Price benefit and alcohol beverage quality benefit***

Much has been published about the targeting of students by marketers using promotions such as happy hours, which tends to fuel binge drinking (Kuo et al, 2003). Price was found to be the most significant factor influencing purchasing behaviour amongst the Wits students (0.98). This implies that students may switch brands temporarily in order to purchase the cheapest beer on

offer at the time. Marketing promotions in outlets around the university are therefore likely to increase sales by doing promotions.

### ***Social benefit and alcohol beverage quality benefit***

Social benefit revolves around the need for acceptance in the social context and the choice of beer brand is therefore deemed to be influenced by peer pressure (Ritter, 2008). This study did not find a significant relationship between social influences and their beer choice (-0.13). Again this may be due to the dominance of Castle in this market.

### ***Product category involvement and alcohol beverage quality benefit***

The results of the study showed a slightly positive relationship between product category involvement and beer quality benefit (0.09), indicating that the students may make some efforts in obtaining their preferred beer choice. The results indicate that consumers are also loyal to a specific brand. The findings support the assertion that consumers make decisions based on a complex set of processes, one of which is product category involvement i.e. the extent to which they would engage and put effort in obtaining their desired brand (Arnould & Thompson, 2005).

### ***Health benefit and alcohol beverage quality benefit***

Consumers are becoming increasingly health conscious these days and as a result, beer marketers have intensified their marketing efforts. Light beers have reduced carbohydrates and have increased in popularity over the traditional lager beers (Walker, 2004). It was found in this study that students were not particularly health conscious in their choice of beers (-0.4). However, the fact that the majority of females and half of the males drink what they perceive to be a light beer (Castle Lite mostly) indicates that they may be interested in the lower calorie content and/or the lower alcohol content.

### ***Susceptibility to interpersonal influence and alcohol beverage quality benefit***

Susceptibility to interpersonal influence is pertinent in young adults, as one would expect a high level of consciousness, of being accepted and making choices based on family or friends' influence. However, in this study, this was not found to be the case (-0.05).

All in all, the results implied that respondents were particularly sensitive to the pricing of beer and would buy more beer during special promotions and discounts. They were also loyal to a specific brand as demonstrated in the significant result for product category involvement. The benefit factors found not to be of significance included emotional benefits, social benefits, environmental factors and susceptibility to interpersonal influences.

### **Implications**

The present paper confirmed that consumers take alcohol beverages during their leisure time hence, the findings of this research provide valuable insights to both practitioners and researchers. On the one hand, the beverage market is full of an array of branded alcohol types and marketers continue to use product promotions to increase sales, especially amongst the price sensitive consumers.



On the other hand, the Department of Health is concerned about the negative consequences of alcohol consumption. It has become incumbent for marketers to promote a 'social drinking' message to at least be seen to be concerned about reducing the negative consequences of risky drinking. The liquor industry and healthy institutions could work together to devise strategies to alleviate alcohol-related problems and to reduce the negative stereotypes of the beverage.

### Limitations and areas of future studies

The present article concerned itself with factors that affect the alcohol beverage preferences during leisure time. Further research could be done using different age groups and gender in order to inform managers and marketers in the Tourism and Leisure sector. In addition, other brand and types of beverage products could be investigated. Overall, the paper provided insights into the social world of the drinker, irrespective of moderate or excessive drinking categorisation during the leisure time.

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