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**A commentary on “conceptualising and measuring consumer-based brand–retailer–
channel equity”:
A review and response**

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We thank the anonymous commentators for their interest in our work, and for their considered commentary of our manuscript (Londoño, Elms and Davies, 2016), particularly in the spirit of progressing the literature on brand equity for others researching similar or cogent areas.

We are certainly in agreement with the commentators that research on the topic of retailer equity, or a retailer's brand equity, is limited. Indeed, given the paucity and fragmented nature of research in this particular area, it would be misleading to the readers of our manuscript to make concrete claims on the specific directionality of this corpus of literature, or to heavily rely on the contributions of a small and select number of studies. Our article, therefore, intentionally offers a balanced and considered overview of the extant literature to date, whilst also providing a robust theoretical base for our empirical study. We believe this is one of the key strengths of our paper.

Without question we also agree with the commentators that the article by Pappu and Quester (2006), which we can only assume is one of the commentators' own manuscripts, identifies some limitations of the concept of retailer equity and its measurement. Although our paper, arguably, shares some of these inherent limitations, we have not however ignored them, unintentionally or otherwise, but rather have implicitly critiqued the validity of these limitations and their subsequent implications. These include: the research not adhering to an experimental design; the use of a small number of retail brands as part of the study; and, store personality is omitted in the measurement of retailer equity.

An experimental design is only one approach amongst many that researchers can use; each methodological approach has its own relative advantages and disadvantages. For the sake of

avoiding repetition, we believe there is no need to describe and discuss these in this rejoinder as they are covered extensively elsewhere. Moreover, methodological pluralism is acknowledged, if not championed, in the broader brand equity literature, whereas the topic is approached from a variety of ways and perspectives in order to advance knowledge about it (Keller, 2003). To note, in our study we utilised a survey-based study specifically to enable us to capture data that is not subjected to the artificial confines of a laboratory setting.

We also agree that using store personality as a separate construct could be possible. However, the thorough and comprehensive review of the extant literature we conducted did not indicate it was a relevant construct. As such, store personality was not used as a separate construct, thus adhering to the deductive approach underpinning the study's design. Moreover, as the authors of the commentary concur, brand awareness, brand associations/image, perceived quality, and brand loyalty are the most salient dimensions discussed in the extant brand equity literature. Therefore, why should we include a construct or dimension that is not supported by the majority of the literature, including the commentators' own research?

The use of a small number of retail brands is arguably a constraint that our study shares with many other retail studies, not just in the context of retail equity. This is because asking consumers questions about a range of different retailers will have strong impact on the quality of the responses they provide, primarily as this would demand the administration of a very long questionnaire, therefore causing, amongst other things, fatigue and boredom.

We do, however, disagree with the commentators that we have chosen to ignore the recommendations suggested by Pappu and Quester (2006). As per their suggestions, our research studied a different population compared to the study they reported, as well as

focussing on different kinds of stores, used a sample from another country, and avoided the pitfalls of student samples.

With regards to the commentators' concerns relating to treating awareness and associations as a combined dimension: our study, conversely, underscores that awareness and associations should in fact be treated as separate dimensions. Specifically, we state 'This study also evidenced the difficulties in unifying awareness and associations in the same construct. The problem occurs because it is possible that the levels of awareness of the brand and the retailer are dissimilar' (Londoño, Elms and Davies, 2016, p. 75). Moreover, it should be emphasised that although this study measures the brand awareness/associations construct, the awareness/associations construct is more directed towards the measurement of the ability that the consumer has to recognise and recall the brand-retailer-channel (awareness), rather than an evaluation of whether the brand-retailer-channel is good or bad (associations). The brand associations dimension therefore could be much broader. A more careful and considered look at the scale items used to measure brand awareness/associations would show that they are focussed on primarily measuring awareness.

We would also like to offer the commentators two additional points of clarity. First, although our article supports the view of retailer equity from a customer-based perspective, it does not state anywhere in the manuscript that one of the aims or outcomes of the research was to construct a retailer index. Secondly, when we indicated that the construction of consumer-based brand-retailer-channel equity was formative, we were indeed indicating that we followed a "Reflective First-Order, Formative Second-Order model" using the terminology of Jarvis, Mackenzie and Podsak (2003), which is used extensively in the retail and broader management literature.

In conclusion, we thank the commentators for the comments on our manuscript, and hope they are useful to others researching in the area. Nevertheless, their ‘constructive directions for improvement’ were based on misinterpretations and not omissions in our study. As such, the original conclusions drawn still stand. More broadly, we hope that our response reinforces the need for researchers to embrace multidimensionality and methodological pluralism, particularly when the focus of their study is under-researched and fragmented, as a means to advance knowledge as well as to provide managers with a better understanding of how to tackle contemporary retail challenges.

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