

Examining How Brand Awareness Drives Performance in Tanzanian Telecommunication Companies: The Mediating Role of Brand Reputation and the Moderating Effect of Brand Attitude

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Abstract

This study examines the influence of brand awareness on brand performance in Tanzanian telecommunication companies by analysing its direct effect and indirect effect through brand reputation, as well as the moderating role of brand attitude. Using stratified and systematic sampling, data were collected from 314 employees across four major telecommunication companies in Dar es Salaam. Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) was employed to test the hypothesised relationships. The results reveal that brand awareness has a positive and significant effect on brand performance both directly and indirectly through brand reputation, confirming the mediating role of reputation. Brand reputation also significantly enhances brand performance, highlighting its importance as a key relational mechanism. Furthermore, brand attitude negatively moderates the relationship between brand awareness and brand performance. However, brand attitude does not significantly moderate the relationship between brand reputation and performance. This study concludes that brand awareness is a precursor of brand performance, directly or through brand reputation, depending on customer attitudes. Study contributes to theory by extending the Resource-Based View (RBV) through the integration of mediating and moderating mechanisms that capture consumer-driven brand dynamics. Practically, it highlights the need for managers to combine awareness-building with strong reputation management while considering variations in customer attitudes.

Keywords: *Telecommunication companies, Brand performance, Brand reputation.*

INTRODUCTION

Over the past two decades, the telecommunication industry in Tanzania has undergone a profound transformation, evolving from basic voice services into a highly competitive, technology-driven sector characterised by mobile data, digital financial services, and integrated communication solutions (TCRA, 2024). As the market has matured, it is now marked by intensified

competition, growing service convergence, and increasingly sophisticated customer expectations driven by digitalisation and continuous innovation (Mmasi and Mwaifyusi, 2021). In this evolving industry, telecommunication firms are no longer competing solely on price or network coverage, but are increasingly differentiating themselves through intangible brand-related factors that shape customer perceptions and influence choice (Gonzalez-Rodriguez *et al.*, 2021). Consequently, brand performance has become a critical determinant of business growth, customer retention, and long-term competitiveness (Firdaus *et al.*, 2025).

In such dynamic conditions, firms must leverage strategic intangible assets to sustain superior performance (Cahyani and Sutedjo, 2022). Among these, brand awareness plays a pivotal role by enhancing visibility, reducing consumer uncertainty, and increasing the likelihood of brand choice. However, in a mature and highly competitive market like telecommunications, awareness alone may no longer be sufficient to secure superior performance outcomes (Foroudi, 2019; Liu *et al.*, 2020). Customers are increasingly influenced not only by how well they recognise a brand, but also by how they evaluate it and the reputation it holds in the market. This shift highlights the need to move beyond direct relationships and examine the underlying mechanisms and conditions through which brand awareness translates into performance (Gonzalez-Rodriguez *et al.*, 2021).

The Resource-Based View (RBV) provides a useful theoretical foundation for explaining how such intangible resources contribute to firm performance (Barney, 1991; Rahman *et al.*, 2019). RBV posits that firms achieve competitive advantage when they possess valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable resources. Within this perspective, brand awareness is conceptualised as a strategic intangible asset that drives market performance (Liu *et al.*, 2025). However, RBV has been criticised for its limited attention to consumer perceptions and demand-side dynamics (Shi *et al.*, 2022; Alwan and Alshurideh, 2022). Moreover, to strengthen theoretical alignment, the study is grounded not only in RBV but also in internal branding and employee-based brand equity viewpoints. These viewpoints highlight the role of employees as brand ambassadors and knowledgeable informants whose perceptions are critical in evaluating brand-related outcomes (Burmann *et al.*, 2009; King & Grace, 2010). In addition, this study extends the RBV by incorporating brand reputation as a mediating mechanism and brand attitude as a moderating condition.

The inclusion of brand reputation as a mediator is grounded in the argument that awareness alone does not automatically translate into improved

performance; rather, it must first shape favourable perceptions of credibility, trust, and reliability (Hultman *et al.*, 2021). In this sense, brand reputation acts as the mechanism through which awareness is converted into tangible outcomes such as customer loyalty and market success (Qalati *et al.*, 2019; Rahmah, 2020). At the same time, the effect of both brand awareness and brand reputation on performance is unlikely to be uniform across all consumers (Hultman *et al.*, 2021). In this regard, brand attitude is incorporated as a moderating variable, as variations in consumers' evaluative dispositions toward a brand can influence the extent to which awareness and reputation are translated into performance outcomes. Specifically, more favourable brand attitudes are likely to strengthen the effectiveness of awareness and reputation in driving customer responses, whereas less favourable attitudes may weaken these effects (Safitri, 2024).

Although prior studies have examined the direct effects of brand awareness and reputation on performance, empirical findings remain inconsistent (Firdaus *et al.*, 2025; Widodo and Rakhmawati, 2021; Razak *et al.*, 2020), and limited attention has been given to their combined roles within a single framework, particularly in service-intensive sectors in developing economies. This gap is especially evident in Sub-Saharan Africa, where telecommunication markets exhibit unique characteristics, including rapid technological adoption, diverse customer segments, and evolving competitive strategies.

Against this backdrop, this study aims to examine how brand awareness influences brand performance both directly and indirectly through brand reputation, while also assessing the moderating role of brand attitude in Tanzania's telecommunication industry. By doing so, the study contributes to RBV theory by integrating it with internal branding and employee-based brand equity perspectives and incorporating both mediating and moderating mechanisms, and to practice by providing insights into how telecommunication firms can effectively leverage brand-related resources to enhance performance in a highly competitive and dynamic market.

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows. Section 2 reviews the relevant literature and develops the hypotheses. Section 3 presents the research methodology, including sampling, measurement, and data analysis techniques. Section 4 presents the findings and Section 5 discusses the empirical findings, while Section 6 provides implications of the study, and the last section covers the limitations and recommendations for future research.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Theoretical Review

This study adopts the Resource-Based View (RBV) as the guiding theoretical lens to explain how intangible brand-related resources create and sustain competitive advantage in the telecommunication industry. In line with the proposed model, brand awareness is conceptualised as the primary strategic resource that influences brand performance both directly and indirectly through brand reputation, while brand attitude conditions the strength of these relationships. By incorporating brand reputation as a mediating mechanism and brand attitude as a moderating factor, the RBV framework is extended to better capture consumer-driven dynamics, thereby enhancing its explanatory and predictive power (Liu *et al.*, 2025).

The RBV, as advanced by Barney (1991), posits that a firm achieves superior performance when it possesses resources that are valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable. Within the context of branding, brand awareness represents such an intangible resource (Liu *et al.*, 2025). It reflects the extent to which consumers are able to recognise and recall a brand, reducing uncertainty in decision-making and increasing the likelihood of brand choice. In highly competitive markets such as telecommunications, awareness functions as a strategic resource that enhances visibility, supports customer acquisition, and sustains brand differentiation (Rahman *et al.*, 2019). Accordingly, RBV provides a strong theoretical foundation for the direct relationship between brand awareness and brand performance, as well as its influence on brand reputation.

However, RBV has been criticised for paying limited attention to demand-side factors and consumer perceptions (Uzir *et al.*, 2021). In order to strengthen the theoretical orientation, this study also integrates the internal branding and employee-based brand equity perspectives. These standpoints emphasise the role of employees as brand ambassadors and knowledgeable informants whose perceptions are critical in evaluating brand-related outcomes (Burmam *et al.*, 2009; King & Grace, 2010). Furthermore, the present study incorporates brand reputation as a mediating resource that explains how brand awareness is translated into improved performance outcomes. A strong brand reputation enhances trust, credibility, and customer loyalty, thereby serving as a key mechanism through which awareness drives performance. In addition, brand attitude is introduced as a moderating variable that influences the strength of the relationships between brand awareness, brand reputation, and brand performance. Positive brand attitudes are expected to amplify these relationships, while less favourable attitudes may weaken them (Mmasi and Mwaifyusi, 2021).

The theoretical contribution of this study lies in extending RBV beyond its traditional resource-centred perspective by integrating it with internal branding and employee-based brand equity perspectives and including both mediating and moderating mechanisms. While RBV explains how brand awareness acts as a strategic intangible asset (Liu *et al.*, 2025), the integration of brand reputation and brand attitude provides a more comprehensive framework that captures how internal consumer perceptions shape and condition the translation of resources into superior brand performance in dynamic and competitive markets.

Development of Hypotheses

Brand Awareness

Brand awareness refers to the extent to which consumers are able to recognise and recall a brand within a given product category (Firdaus *et al.*, 2025). Empirical evidence across diverse industries and geographical contexts consistently demonstrates that brand awareness plays a critical role in shaping brand reputation and performance (Cahyani and Sutedjo, 2022). Studies in sectors such as fast-moving consumer goods, technology, digital services, hospitality, and small and medium enterprises indicate that higher levels of brand awareness are associated with improved brand reputation and performance (Firdaus *et al.*, 2025; Widodo and Rakhmawati, 2021; Razak *et al.*, 2020; Anees-ur-Rehman *et al.*, 2017). From the Resource-Based View (RBV), brand awareness represents a valuable intangible resource that enhances visibility, differentiation, and competitive advantage, which are essential for sustaining market performance (Liu *et al.*, 2025). However, some studies suggest that awareness alone may not be sufficient to guarantee superior performance, particularly in highly competitive markets (Hultman *et al.*, 2021). This implies that the effect of brand awareness on performance may operate through other mechanisms, highlighting the need for mediating variables, as well as moderating factors that may influence the strength of this relationship. Therefore, guided by both theoretical and empirical evidence, this study hypothesises that:

H_{1a}: *Brand awareness is positively related to brand performance of the telecommunication companies.*

H_{1b}: *Brand awareness is positively related to brand reputation of the telecommunication companies.*

Brand Reputation

Brand reputation refers to the overall evaluation of a brand based on stakeholders' perceptions of its credibility, reliability, and trustworthiness over time (Anugrah, 2025; Foroudi, 2019). Prior studies examining the link between brand reputation and brand performance have produced mixed but

insightful findings across different contexts. While some studies, particularly in the USA, report negative or insignificant effects of brand reputation on performance (Paul and Bhakar, 2018), a substantial body of evidence from countries such as Poland, China, and Botswana demonstrate that a strong and favourable reputation significantly enhances customer trust, loyalty, and overall brand outcomes (Kucharska, 2019; Gonzalez-Rodriguez *et al.*, 2021; Ledikwe and Roberts-Lombard, 2019). These inconsistencies suggest that the impact of brand reputation on performance may not be uniform but could depend on other influencing factors, indicating the potential need for moderating variables in this relationship. Hence, this study hypothesised that:
H₂: Brand reputation has positive effect on brand performance of the telecommunication companies.

Mediating Effect of Brand Reputation

Although numerous studies have confirmed the direct effect of brand awareness on brand performance across different industries and contexts (Firdaus *et al.*, 2025; Widodo and Rakhmawati, 2021; Razak *et al.*, 2020; Anees-ur-Rehman *et al.*, 2017), limited attention has been devoted to the mechanisms through which this relationship unfolds. Limited attention has been given to the underlying mechanisms through which this relationship operates. In particular, the mediating role of brand reputation remains underexplored, creating a gap in understanding how brand awareness is translated into enhanced performance outcomes. Existing evidence suggests that while awareness increases recognition and visibility, it may not be sufficient on its own to drive superior performance unless it is supported by a strong and favourable brand reputation. Studies conducted in contexts such as Pakistan and Indonesia demonstrate that brand reputation serves as a crucial mechanism through which awareness influences customer perceptions, trust, and ultimately performance (Qalati *et al.*, 2019; Rahmah, 2020). Brand reputation is expected to act as mediator that channels the effect of brand awareness into improved brand performance. Therefore, the study proposes the following hypothesis:

H₃: Brand reputation mediates the relationship between brand awareness and brand performance of the telecommunication companies.

Moderating Role of Brand Attitude

Brand attitude refers to consumers' overall evaluative judgement of a brand, reflecting their favourable or unfavourable feelings based on prior experiences and perceptions (Anugrah, 2025; Foroudi, 2019). While a considerable body of literature has examined the direct effects of brand attitude on outcomes such as purchase intention, loyalty, and brand performance, relatively limited studies have explored its role as a moderating

variable within brand-related relationships. Existing research suggests that consumers with more favourable attitudes towards a brand are more likely to respond positively to brand-related stimuli, thereby strengthening the effect of marketing constructs on performance outcomes (Liu *et al.*, 2020; Hameed *et al.*, 2023). In this context, brand attitude is expected to influence how effectively brand awareness translates into improved brand performance. When consumers hold strong positive attitudes, the impact of awareness on performance is likely to be amplified, whereas weaker attitudes may diminish this effect. Similarly, the relationship between brand reputation and brand performance may also vary depending on the level of brand attitude, as favourable attitudes can reinforce trust and enhance the effectiveness of a strong reputation (Qalati *et al.*, 2019; Safitri, 2024). Hence, this study hypothesised that:

H4a: Brand attitude moderates the relationship between brand awareness and brand performance of the telecommunication companies.

H4b: Brand attitude moderates the relationship between brand reputation and brand performance of the telecommunication companies.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework positions brand awareness as the primary independent variable influencing brand performance both directly and indirectly. It is hypothesised that brand awareness positively affects brand reputation, which in turn enhances brand performance, indicating a mediating role of brand reputation in this relationship. In addition, brand awareness is expected to exert a direct effect on brand performance, suggesting that increased recognition can independently improve outcomes. Importantly, brand attitude is proposed as a moderating variable that influences the strength of the relationship between brand awareness and brand performance, such that the effect varies depending on the level of consumers' attitudes toward the brand. These relationships are illustrated in Figure 1.

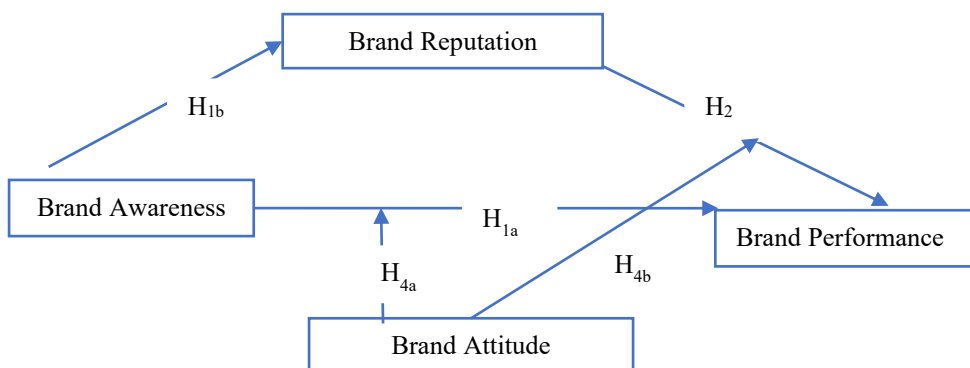


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

METHODOLOGY

Sample and Data Collection

This study employed a probability sampling approach that aligns with the principles of the positivist research paradigm. The target population consisted of 1,832 employees working in the four major telecommunication companies in Dar es Salaam, namely Vodacom Tanzania Limited, Airtel, Yas, and Viettel Tanzania Limited (Halotel). This study employed a probability sampling approach that aligns with the principles of the positivist research paradigm. The target population consisted of 1,832 employees working in the four major telecommunication companies in Dar es Salaam, namely Vodacom Tanzania Limited, Airtel, Yas, and Viettel Tanzania Limited (Halotel). This study used employees as respondents based on their role as knowledgeable informants within the organization. Employees have a comprehensive understanding of the company's branding strategies, internal communication processes, and performance outcomes. They also regularly observe customer behaviours including complaints and preferences as they interact with customers on daily basis. From an internal branding viewpoint, employees are considered internal customers and brand ambassadors who play a vital role in delivering brand value to external stakeholders (Burmam *et al.*, 2009; Punjaisri & Wilson, 2011). Previous scholars on employee-based brand equity also support the use of employees as appropriate research participants in brand-related research, as they offer informed and organization-wide assessments of brand constructs (King & Grace, 2010). Moreover, internal brand management literature emphasizes that employees' perceptions of brand awareness and brand attitude are critical for understanding overall brand performance (Baumgarth & Schmidt, 2010).

The four telecommunication companies were selected because they account for approximately 97% of the national market share and represent high performing brands in Tanzania (TCRA, 2024). They also have extensive branding and marketing strategies, which aim to strengthen customer loyalty and performance in an increasingly dynamic market (Amani, 2022).

A stratified random sampling technique was employed to ensure proportional representation of employees across the four companies. Each company constituted a stratum, from which participants were drawn systematically to maintain balance relative to the population size of each firm. In line with methodological guidance, a sample size of 300 was deemed optimal for Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), given that SEM generally requires samples ranging from 200 to 400 to achieve adequate statistical power while avoiding model over-sensitivity (Hair *et al.*, 2021). To safeguard against potential non-responses, the final sample was inflated to 375 respondents,

reflecting an expected response rate of approximately 80%, which is consistent with prior survey-based studies in brand management (Hultman *et al.*, 2021; Razak *et al.*, 2020).

Data collection was conducted between August 2023 and February 2024 using a drop-and-collect method, which is particularly efficient for large-scale surveys (Kumar, 2018). A total of 375 questionnaires were distributed, of which 351 were returned, yielding a response rate of 91.9%. After screening for incomplete or inconsistent responses, 314 valid questionnaires were retained for analysis, corresponding to an effective response rate of 82.2%. This final sample size met the recommended threshold for Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) and provided sufficient statistical power for hypothesis testing.

Measures

The study measured brand awareness, attitude, reputation, and performance, which form the basis of the hypothesised relationships. All constructs were operationalised using multi-item scales adapted from prior validated studies, and responses were captured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). This approach is widely adopted for assessing perceptions, attitudes, and behavioural outcomes in marketing and management research (Foroudi, 2019; Mmasi and Mwaifyusi, 2021).

Brand awareness was assessed through six items adapted from Razak *et al.*, (2020); Mmasi and Mwaifyusi (2021). These items measured recall, recognition, familiarity, and informational knowledge about the company's brand. Moreover, brand attitude was measured using six items drawn from Liu *et al.*, (2020); Foroudi (2019). The items reflected consumer confidence in the brand, emotional attachment, trust, and positive feelings associated with using the company's products and services. Brand reputation was captured with five items adapted from Foroudi (2019); Mmasi and Mwaifyusi (2021). These items focused on credibility, dependability, fulfilment of customer needs, and responsiveness to consumer concerns. On the other hand, brand performance was operationalised through four perceptual measures items adapted from Mmasi and Mwaifyusi (2021) and Foroudi (2019). The measures captured key outcomes such as sales growth, customer acquisition, repeat purchases, and positive word-of-mouth, as illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1:
Measurement of the Variables

Constructs	Code	Items
Brand awareness	AW1	Our customers can clearly recall some characteristics of this brand
	AW2	The company's brand is memorable to our customers
	AW3	The company's brand is recognizable to our customers
	AW4	Our services and products are well known among customers
	AW5	Our services and products are familiar to the customers
	AW6	Our customers have enough information about company's products and services
Brand attitude	ATT1	Our customers feel confidence in our service
	ATT2	We are honest and sincere in addressing customers' concerns
	ATT3	We do not disappoint our customers
	ATT4	We make our customers happy
	ATT5	Our customers like the company's products and services
	ATT6	Our customers feel good to use our services and products
Brand reputation	REP1	Our customer depends on this brand
	REP2	We are trusted by our customers
	REP3	Our customers are delighted with this company
	REP4	We fulfill the needs of our customers
	REP5	We respond constructively to our customers
Brand performance	PER1	Our sales volume increases over the past three years
	PER2	The number of new customers increase over the past three years
	PER3	Our customers say positive things about this brand
	PER4	Our customers repeatedly purchase this brand

Common Method Variance

In line with the recommendations of Podsakoff *et al.*, (2024), the issue of Common Method Variance (CMV) was addressed using both procedural and statistical techniques. On the procedural side, anonymity and voluntary participation were emphasised to participants, thereby minimising the risk of evaluation apprehension and response bias. Statistically, Harman's single-factor test was employed. The analysis revealed that the five largest factors together accounted for 27.9% of the total variance, which is substantially lower than the 50% cut-off point suggested by Podsakoff *et al.*, (2023). These results suggest that CMV did not pose a significant threat to the validity of the findings of the study.

Data Analysis Techniques

To evaluate the proposed hypotheses and test the conceptual framework, this study employed Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM). This technique is particularly suitable for analysing complex models involving multiple constructs, as well as both mediating and moderating relationships (Hair *et al.*, 2019). Given that the present study examines the

direct effect of brand awareness on brand performance, the mediating role of brand reputation, and the moderating role of brand attitude, PLS-SEM provides a robust and flexible approach for simultaneously estimating these relationships. Furthermore, its suitability for prediction-oriented research and theory development makes it appropriate for examining consumer-driven brand dynamics in the telecommunication sector.

The analysis was conducted using SmartPLS version 4, following the two-stage approach recommended by Hair *et al.*, (2021). In the first stage, the measurement model was assessed to ensure the reliability and validity of the constructs. This involved evaluating internal consistency reliability using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability, convergent validity using average variance extracted (AVE), and discriminant validity using the Fornell–Larcker criterion and heterotrait–monotrait (HTMT) ratio.

In the second stage, the structural model was evaluated to test the hypothesised relationships. This included examining the direct effects of brand awareness on brand performance (H_{1a}) and brand reputation (H_{1b}), as well as the effect of brand reputation on brand performance (H_2). The mediating effect of brand reputation in the relationship between brand awareness and brand performance (H_3) was assessed using bootstrapping procedures to determine the significance of indirect effects. In addition, the moderating role of brand attitude (H_{4a} and H_{4b}) was tested by incorporating interaction terms into the model to examine whether variations in brand attitude influence the strength of the relationships between brand awareness, brand reputation, and brand performance. Bootstrapping with a large number of resamples was employed to assess the significance of path coefficients, indirect effects, and interaction effects.

RESULTS OF ANALYSIS

Measurement Model Assessment

Following the guidelines of Fornell and Larcker (1981), the reliability and convergent validity of the constructs were assessed. As shown in Table 2, all standardised item loadings exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70, confirming satisfactory indicator reliability. Internal consistency was established, with Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (ρ_A) and (ρ_C) values ranging between 0.753 and 0.955, which surpass the minimum criterion of 0.70 (Hair *et al.*, 2019). Moreover, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values ranged from 0.574 to 0.781, exceeding the threshold of 0.50, thereby confirming convergent validity. These results indicate that the measurement model demonstrates adequate reliability and convergent validity, and is therefore suitable for further structural analysis.

Table 2:
Assessment of Reliability and Convergent Validity

Item	Loadings	Cronbach's alpha	rho_A	rho_C	AVE
Brand awareness		0.932	0.933	0.946	0.746
AW1	0.854				
AW2	0.871				
AW3	0.899				
AW4	0.833				
AW5	0.870				
AW6	0.854				
Brand attitude		0.944	0.946	0.955	0.781
ATT1	0.899				
ATT2	0.889				
ATT3	0.892				
ATT4	0.833				
ATT5	0.887				
ATT6	0.901				
Brand reputation		0.909	0.910	0.933	0.736
REP1	0.768				
REP2	0.908				
REP3	0.861				
REP4	0.876				
REP5	0.871				
Brand performance		0.753	0.754	0.844	0.574
PER1	0.747				
PER2	0.757				
PER3	0.748				
PER4	0.779				

AVE: Average Variance Extracted

Discriminant validity was assessed using the Fornell–Larcker criterion and the Heterotrait–Monotrait (HTMT) ratio. As reported in Table 3, the square roots of the AVEs (diagonal values) are greater than the inter-construct correlations, thereby satisfying the Fornell–Larcker criterion (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). Furthermore, all HTMT ratios are below the conservative threshold of 0.85 (Henseler *et al.*, 2015), indicating that discriminant validity is well established among the constructs. These results confirm that the measurement model adequately distinguishes between brand awareness, brand attitude, brand reputation, and brand performance, thus supporting the construct validity of the study.

Table 3:
Discriminant Validity

Variables	ATT	AW	PER	REP
ATT	0.884 ^a			
AW	0.663 (0.707) ^b	0.864 ^a		
PER	0.546 (0.643) ^b	0.580 (0.690) ^b	0.758 ^a	
REP	0.455 (0.489) ^b	0.471 (0.512) ^b	0.510 (0.615)	0.858 ^a

aFornell-Larcker(\sqrt{AVE}).

bHTMT ratio.

AVE: Average Variance Extracted; HTMT: Heterotrait-Monotrait.

Results of Hypotheses Testing

The results of the hypotheses testing are presented in Table 4 and illustrated in Figure 2. The assessment focused on the significance of path coefficients (β), t-values, p-values, effect sizes (f^2), multicollinearity using Variance Inflation Factors (VIF), and the explanatory power of the model through coefficients of determination (R^2) (Hair *et al.*, 2019). All VIF values were below the threshold of 5, indicating that multicollinearity was not a concern (Hair *et al.*, 2021). The R^2 values indicate that brand awareness explains 22.2% of the variance in brand reputation, while brand performance is explained at 49.3% by the combined effects of brand awareness, brand reputation, and the interaction terms, suggesting moderate explanatory power.

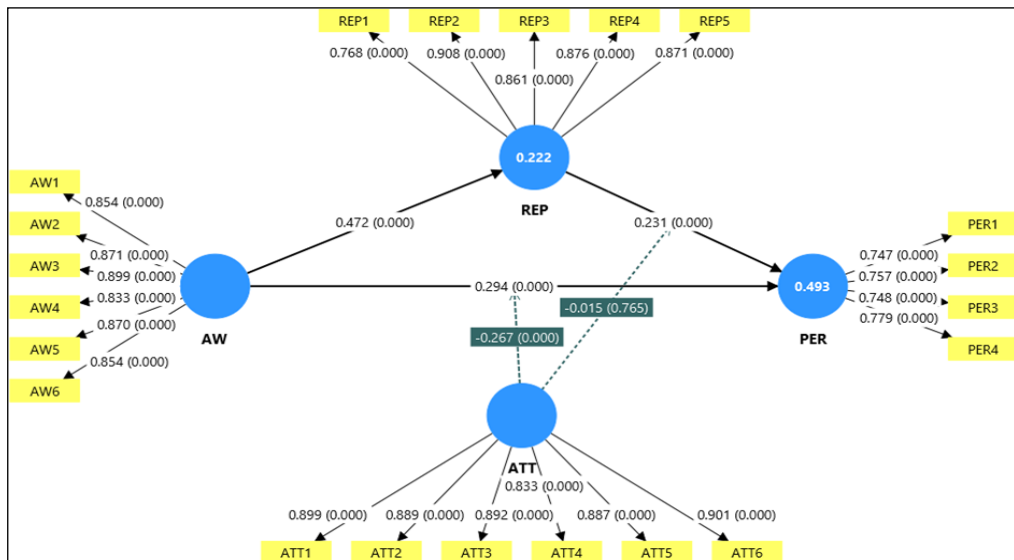


Figure 2: Structural Model

As shown in Table 4 and Figure 2, brand awareness has a positive and significant effect on brand performance ($\beta = 0.294$, $t = 8.258$, $p < 0.001$, $f^2 =$

0.088), supporting H_{1a}. The effect size indicates a small to moderate practical effect, suggesting that while brand awareness is an important driver of performance, it is not the sole determinant. In addition, brand awareness significantly influences brand reputation ($\beta = 0.472, t = 4.602, p < 0.001, f^2 = 0.286$), supporting H_{1b}. The relatively large effect size implies that brand awareness plays a substantial role in shaping brand reputation. Furthermore, brand reputation exerts a positive and significant effect on brand performance ($\beta = 0.231, t = 4.658, p < 0.001, f^2 = 0.091$), thereby supporting H₂, with a small to moderate effect size, indicating that reputation meaningfully contributes to performance outcomes.

Regarding mediation, the indirect effect of brand awareness on brand performance through brand reputation is positive and significant ($\beta = 0.110, t = 3.720, p < 0.001, f^2 = 0.089$), confirming the mediating role of brand reputation and supporting H₃. The effect size suggests a small but meaningful mediating effect, indicating that brand awareness enhances performance not only directly but also indirectly by strengthening brand reputation.

Table 4:
Results from Hypothesis Test

Hypothesis	Path	β	t-value	p values	Effect size (f^2)	VIF
H _{1a}	AW -> PER	0.294	8.258	0.000	0.088	1.912
H _{1b}	AW -> REP	0.472	4.602	0.000	0.286	1.000
H ₂	REP -> PER	0.231	4.658	0.000	0.091	1.349
H ₃	AW -> REP -> PER	0.110	3.720	0.000	0.089	1.000
H _{4a}	ATT x AW -> PER	-0.266	4.683	0.000	0.087	1.334
H _{4b}	ATT x REP -> PER	-0.013	0.299	0.765	0.000	1.331

R² for PER = 0.493

R² for REP = 0.222

Note:

AW: Brand awareness; ATT: Brand attitude; REP: Brand reputation; PER: Brand performance.

With respect to moderation, the interaction effect between brand attitude and brand awareness on brand performance is negative and significant ($\beta = -0.266, t = 4.683, p < 0.001, f^2 = 0.087$), supporting H_{4a}. The small to moderate effect size indicates that brand attitude meaningfully conditions the awareness–performance relationship, such that the strength of this relationship varies depending on the level of brand attitude. In contrast, the interaction effect between brand attitude and brand reputation on brand

performance is negative but not statistically significant ($\beta = -0.013$, $t = 0.299$, $p = 0.765$, $f^2 = 0.000$), leading to the rejection of H_{4b}. The negligible effect size ($f^2 = 0.000$) confirms that brand attitude does not exert any meaningful moderating influence on the relationship between brand reputation and brand performance.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of this study provide important insights into the role of brand awareness, brand reputation, and brand attitude in shaping brand performance within the Tanzanian telecommunication industry. Consistent with RBV, the results confirm that brand awareness constitutes a valuable intangible asset that contributes both directly and indirectly to performance. Specifically, brand awareness was found to have a positive and significant effect on brand performance, supporting H_{1a}. This finding aligns with prior studies (Firdaus *et al.*, 2025; Widodo and Rakhmawati, 2021; Razak *et al.*, 2020; Anees-ur-Rehman *et al.*, 2017), which emphasise that increased brand visibility enhances customer recognition, recall, and ultimately market outcomes. In the Tanzanian telecommunication context, where competition is intense and services are increasingly similar, brand awareness serves as a critical mechanism for differentiation and customer attraction.

In addition, the study establishes that brand awareness significantly influences brand reputation, supporting H_{1b}. This result highlights the foundational role of awareness in shaping how consumers perceive a brand's credibility, trustworthiness, and reliability. Increased familiarity with a brand reduces uncertainty and fosters positive evaluations, which in turn strengthen its reputation. This finding is consistent with prior research (Qalati *et al.*, 2019; Safitri, 2024), which suggests that awareness is a key antecedent of relational constructs such as reputation. The relatively strong effect observed in this study further underscores that in emerging markets like Tanzania, awareness is not merely a communication outcome but a strategic resource that shapes broader consumer perceptions.

Furthermore, brand reputation was found to have a positive and significant effect on brand performance, supporting H₂. This finding reinforces the argument that a favourable reputation enhances customer trust, loyalty, and positive word-of-mouth, all of which are essential drivers of performance. The result is consistent with studies by of Kucharska (2019) and Gonzalez-Rodriguez *et al.*, (2021), which demonstrate that firms with strong reputational capital tend to achieve superior market outcomes. In the Tanzanian telecommunication industry, where customer trust and service

reliability are critical, reputation emerges as a key determinant of sustained competitive advantage.

Importantly, the study confirms the mediating role of brand reputation in the relationship between brand awareness and brand performance, supporting H₃. This indicates that brand awareness enhances performance not only directly but also indirectly through its impact on reputation. In other words, awareness alone is insufficient to generate optimal outcomes unless it translates into favourable perceptions of credibility and trust. This finding extends the RBV by demonstrating that intangible resources such as awareness require relational mechanisms to fully realise their value. It also supports the growing body of literature that emphasises the importance of mediation processes in understanding how marketing resources influence performance outcomes.

With respect to moderation, the results reveal that brand attitude significantly moderates the relationship between brand awareness and brand performance, supporting H_{4a}. Interestingly, the interaction effect is negative, suggesting that the positive impact of brand awareness on performance weakens as brand attitude becomes stronger. This counterintuitive finding implies that when consumers already hold strong positive attitudes toward a brand, additional increases in awareness may yield diminishing returns in terms of performance. Conversely, when brand attitudes are less favourable, awareness plays a more critical role in influencing performance. This finding provides a nuanced understanding of consumer behaviour and suggests that the effectiveness of awareness-building strategies depends on the existing evaluative disposition of consumers.

In contrast, the moderating effect of brand attitude on the relationship between brand reputation and brand performance was found to be non-significant, leading to the rejection of H_{4b}. This suggests that once a strong brand reputation is established, its impact on performance remains relatively stable regardless of variations in consumer attitudes. This finding highlights the robustness of brand reputation as a strategic asset and implies that reputation-driven performance is less contingent on short-term fluctuations in consumer evaluations.

IMPLICATION OF THE STUDY

Theoretical Implications

This study advances theory by integrating RBV with internal branding and employee-based brand equity perspectives and through the integration of brand reputation as a mediating mechanism and brand attitude as a

moderating condition, thereby addressing its traditional neglect of consumer-driven dynamics. The findings confirm that brand awareness enhances brand performance both directly and indirectly through brand reputation, while the strength of this relationship is contingent upon brand attitude, supporting a moderated mediation framework. Importantly, the significant moderation of brand attitude on the awareness and performance link, alongside its non-significant effect on the reputation and performance relationship, provides a more nuanced understanding of how consumer evaluations shape the effectiveness of strategic resources. Furthermore, by offering empirical evidence from Tanzania's telecommunication sector, the study enriches the limited literature in Sub-Saharan Africa and demonstrates that RBV's explanatory power is strengthened when combined with demand-side behavioural insights in emerging market contexts.

Managerial Implications

From a managerial perspective, the findings suggest that telecommunication companies in Tanzania should prioritise building brand awareness through targeted advertising, digital engagement, and sponsorships, while recognising that awareness alone is insufficient without a strong brand reputation. Investing in consistent service quality, transparency, and responsiveness is essential to strengthen reputation, which mediates the effect of awareness on performance and drives outcomes like customer loyalty and market success. Additionally, fostering positive consumer attitudes through enhanced customer experience, emotional connection, and trust can amplify the impact of awareness on performance, though once reputation is established, its effect remains stable regardless of attitude variations, highlighting reputation as a durable strategic asset.

LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations that point to directions for future research. The cross-sectional design restricts causal inference, suggesting that longitudinal or experimental studies could better capture the dynamics of brand-related relationships. The focus on telecommunication companies in Dar es Salaam may limit generalisability, so future research could explore other industries or regions, including rural markets. Moreover, while brand reputation and brand attitude were examined, other mediators (brand trust, customer loyalty) and moderators (service quality, customer involvement) could be investigated to provide a more comprehensive view of brand performance. Furthermore, the non-significant moderating effect of brand attitude on the reputation and performance link warrants further exploration of alternative contextual factors that may influence this relationship.

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