

## Research Article

# Crafting Robust Brands for Premium Pricing: Understanding the Synergy of Brand Strength, Loyalty, and Attachment

Sofiane Laradi <sup>1</sup>, Tawfiq Seraa <sup>2</sup>, Mahmaod Alrawad <sup>3,4</sup>, Abdalwali Lutfi <sup>5,6</sup>, and Mohammed Amin Almaiah <sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Business Sciences, University of Blida 2 Lounici Ali, Blida, Algeria

<sup>2</sup>Department of Management Sciences, University of Blida 2 Lounici Ali, Blida, Algeria

<sup>3</sup>Department of Accounting, Finance and Banking, College of Business Administration and Economics, Al-Hussein Bin Talal University, Ma'an 71111, Jordan

<sup>4</sup>Quantitative Method Department, College of Business, King Faisal University, Al-Ahsa 31982, Saudi Arabia

<sup>5</sup>Jadara University Research Center, Jadara University, Irbid 21110, Jordan

<sup>6</sup>Applied Science Research Center, Applied Science Private University, Amman 11937, Jordan

<sup>7</sup>Department of Computer Science, King Abdullah the II IT School, The University of Jordan, Amman 11942, Jordan

Correspondence should be addressed to Mahmaod Alrawad; malrawad@kfu.edu.sa; m-rawad@ahu.edu.jo

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Consumers' willingness to pay a price premium is pivotal for assessing brand value and competitive advantage. Yet, limited and scattered research has focused on how combining brand emotion, strength, and brand loyalty can influence consumers' willingness to accept a price premium. The present study examines the role of brand attachment, brand strength, and brand loyalty in determining consumers' willingness to pay a price premium and explores their interplay using a serial mediation model within a unified framework, specifically focusing on home appliance brands. Data from 323 valid questionnaires collected from Algerian households were analyzed using PLS-SEM. Results demonstrate that consumers' willingness to pay a price premium is significantly and positively influenced by brand strength, brand attachment, and brand loyalty. Furthermore, the relationship between brand strength and consumers' willingness to pay a price premium is mediated positively by brand attachment and brand loyalty. Grounded on various theories and addressing gaps captured in previous studies, this research is considered pioneering in this field. This study significantly advances our understanding of how brand emotional bonds, brand relationships, and brand strength interplay to influence consumers' willingness to pay a premium. The findings highlight the importance for brand managers to sustain robust brands to stimulate consumers' opening to pay extra, thereby achieving and maintaining long-term success in a competitive market.

**Keywords:** brand attachment; brand loyalty; brand managers; brand strength; premium price

## 1. Introduction

The notion of brand performance and the associated concept of brand management have recently drawn the focus of academics and practitioners, primarily due to the pieces of evidence indicating that components of brand value influence significantly the performance of companies across various industries [1–4]. Several scholarly publications emphasized that effective brand management extends its valuable implica-

tions not only to brand communication strategies but also to a company's retailing and pricing strategies [5]. The willingness to pay a price premium is a behavioral outcome and serves as an effective metric in marketing for assessing brand performance [6]. It is a crucial indicator of both brand value and a company's competitive advantage [7–9]. The consumers' willingness to pay a price premium represents the relative price a customer is willing to pay for a particular brand compared to other brands offering comparable features and benefits [10].

From a behavioral standpoint, it has been observed in prior investigations that frequent factors can sway consumers' willingness to pay a price premium. The brand experience [8, 11], brand love [12, 13], brand attachment [14, 15], and brand loyalty [11, 16, 17] are the foremost catalysts propelling the embrace of premium pricing. However, academic research consistently underscores the importance of comprehending the linkages of emotional aspects of brand and consumer loyalty to willingness to pay a price premium across diverse settings [11, 12]. The emerging literature on brand love and attachment is attracting increasing attention from academia and industry [18], since the conventional marketing paradigm of satisfaction and attitude are not enough to generate consumer sacrifice on money and time for a brand [19]. Drawing from attachment theory, fostering emotional relationships with consumers leads to loyalty behavior [20, 21]. Managers should cultivate affectionate bonds with customers in the brand development process, with bond strength serving as a concise measure of the effectiveness of the consumer-brand relationship [22, 23]. Hence, for the cultivation of enduring customer relationships and the development of effective pricing strategies, it is substantial to gain a more profound comprehension of the role of brand attachment in shaping consumer commitment and lessening price tolerance.

On the other hand, quite a few theoretical studies have contended that brand strength is a pivotal driver of success that can elevate market presence over the long term [7, 24]. In addition, it has long been argued that the brand's strength in the marketplace is reflected closely in its ability to command a higher price from consumers [25]. However, the direct association of brand strength with consumers' willingness to pay a price premium remains understudied. In contrast, several studies have conclusively demonstrated that brands with significant strength in their respective industry attain superior financial gains by being able to charge premium prices relative to rivals. While they use experimental design [26], analysis of necessary conditions [27], discrete choice modeling [28], econometric analysis [29], conjoint analysis [30], and those employed linear models with consumer surveys are scarce [31].

Moreover, brand strength exhibits associations with several concepts yet lacks a suitable scale for practical measurement [32]. According to Wymer and Casidy [33], the literature commonly treated brand strength as a binary moderator (weak vs. strong, based on market share or similar metrics), rather than a continuous variable assessing how the consumer perceives the brand. To advance our understanding of this phenomenon, using and analyzing data from consumers through a structural analysis approach should be undertaken in the future [29]. Furthermore, while consumers' willingness to pay a price premium finds tailored application in specific domains such as luxury products [34, 35], superior emotional products [36, 37], tourism and hospitality [38–40], and green and sustainable products [41, 42], countless industries and product-categories remain untapped [7–9], commanding premium prices driven by their outstanding points of brand differentiations. For example, Zhu, Gruca, and Rego [43] examined how consumers' willingness to pay a price premium is influenced by various antecedents across a broader range of consumer-packaged

goods brands. Their findings propose that future research can provide insights when examining price tolerance in diverse product categories (like durable goods) and across varied geographic settings. In this line, a limited study investigated the home appliance brands (HABs) in Algeria in terms of brand cognition, affective, and behavior [44–46].

To sum up, notable research gaps exist in understanding how the consolidation of brand attachment, brand strength, and brand loyalty within a unified framework can compel consumers to accept a price premium. First, there is a need for an additional comprehensive understanding of how emotional brand and loyalty influence consumers' willingness to pay a price premium across different contexts. Second, there is a limited exploration of the direct effect between brand strength and consumers' willingness to pay a price premium. Third, the linear analysis is underutilized to assess the influential role of brand strength on brand loyalty and consumers' willingness to pay a price premium. Fourth, while certain domains have been explored lengthily, many industries remain unexplored regarding their ability to command premium prices driven by constructs arising from brand strength and brand-consumer relationships.

Aligned with evidence stressing the importance of price premium acceptance for effective brand management and business strategy, this study is aimed at investigating the substantial and predictive influence of brand strength, brand attachment, and brand loyalty on consumers' willingness to pay a price premium for a relatively untouched and competitive industry. Furthermore, the study seeks to uncover the mediated relationships between brand strength and the consumers' willingness to pay a price premium, as well as between brand attachment and the consumers' willingness to pay a price premium [47, 48]. The HABs in Algeria present a fitting setting for this investigation, given the substantial global growth of the home appliance market and the presence of a wide range of both domestic and international brands in the Algeria market. Subsequently, the study examined quantitatively the conceptual model, encompassing factors crafting brands for price premium.

Grounded in attachment theory and signaling theory, the present study provides an in-depth understanding of the importance of building brand strength, attachment, and loyalty for consumers' willingness to pay a price premium. This is crucial for brand managers aiming to gain and retain engaging consumers with enduring price-profitable brand strategies in competitive markets. The findings underscore the fundamental role that brands play in forging profound emotional attachments with consumers. The greater the degree of emotional attachment to a brand, the more challenging it becomes for consumers to disengage, thereby increasing their propensity to incur financial costs to maintain the relationship. Additionally, they climax the positive influence of brand strength in attracting a broad consumer base and enabling brands to command a price premium in a competitive landscape. As the quality and attractiveness of a brand increase, the brand's ability to retain customers and justify a price premium above the market average also improves. Consequently, this strategic brand advantage facilitates not only sustained profitability but also growth and long-term viability.

This study has several theoretical contributions as it expands upon existing theories and frameworks in the fields of brand management and consumer behavior. First and foremost, unlike previous research in brand equity, which posited theoretically that strong brands could command prices above the market average [28, 49, 50], this study is the pioneer in unlocking empirically the power of brand strength from a consumer-based assessment in influencing consumers' willingness to pay a price premium. Second, the study bridges the gap between multiple concepts including brand strength, brand attachment, and brand loyalty, which have often been studied in isolation. Examining their synergy and mediations enriches theoretical discussions on the composite nature of brand perception, emotions, and responses (i.e., consumers' willingness to pay a price premium) [11, 19]. Third, the study is unique in terms of the context, providing evidence of the dynamic interplay among several brand constructs for crafting the price advantage of HAB. For instance, recent research underscores the necessity of exploring how brand perception and emotion influence consumers' acceptance of price premiums within the household electronics sector [51]. Finally, the study offers further evidence of assessing brand strength through a psychometric scale rather than through economic, accounting, or market analysis to predict consumer behavior.

The structure of the present paper is outlined as follows. The upcoming sections will delve into the intricacies of the theoretical background and research model. Following this, a detailed methodology section will be presented, elucidating procedures and techniques employed in this study. In the ensuing section, the depiction of the research findings will be presented. Finally, the paper will culminate in a discussion section, addressing the implications and limitations.

## 2. Theoretical Background and Research Model

The foundation of our research model arises from addressing the limitations and suggestions of previous research in this study's era. Therefore, in this section, we conceptually analyze the research constructs and their linkages as they are grounded in the theoretical frameworks supporting them.

**2.1. Underpinning Theories.** The attachment theory and signaling theory serve as the foundational elements of our research model.

**2.1.1. Attachment Theory.** Developed by Bowlby [52], the attachment theory describes the instinctive behavior of young children to seek proximity, comfort, and security from familiar caregivers (principally the mother) during times of fear or vulnerability [52]. Initial marketing research introduced the concept of brand attachment, drawing foundational insights from attachment theory [18, 53] which defined brand attachment as the strong connection between a brand and an individual's self-concept, characterized by a rich mental network of thoughts and feelings, and highlighted by brand-self-connection and brand prominence [54]. This theory suggests that consumers form emotional bonds with brands through significant symbolic associations, making detachment

difficult [55]. Consequently, consumers are willing to allocate resources (i.e., money, time, and energy) to maintain their connection with the brand [15, 53]. Aligned with numerous marketing studies utilizing attachment theory [21, 56], this research suggests that as brand attachment intensifies, consumer loyalty increases, and consumers are increasingly willing to pay a premium to retain their association with the brand.

**2.1.2. Signaling Theory.** This study explores the relationship between brand strength and price premium through the lens of signaling theory. This theory originates from the field of economics and information asymmetry [57]. It posits that in situations where buyers lack complete information about the quality of a product, sellers can convey quality through various signals [58]. In the marketing domain, advertising and communication efforts signal product quality primarily through the clarity and quality of the information they convey [59]. In a brand management context, a strong brand reflects a company's past and current marketing efforts, symbolizing these strategies [60]. In the context of asymmetric and imperfect information, brands can act as credible market signals [61]. Brand signals are not limited to advertisement activities but also include other information containers such as brand name and positioning, brand credibility [59], and product quality and value [62]. These signals help reduce uncertainty and build confidence, eventually shaping buyer behavior. Particularly, research on price premiums reveals that consumers are inclined to spend more on brands perceived as high quality or those with favorable images [9, 59]. In our study, we propose that brand strength, encompassing dimensions such as familiarity, positioning, leadership, and quality, serves as signals to consumers, suggesting that the brand is worth repurchasing and justifies a higher price. For instance, brand leadership as an indicator of brand strength can indicate superior quality and advanced performance, as leading brands frequently drive industry innovation and establish trends. Consequently, consumers often link leading brands with the latest product features and highest quality. This association makes them more willing to pay a premium for products from these market leaders, believing that such products provide greater value and performance compared to competitors. Hence, this study is the pioneer in using signaling theory as a solid framework for comprehending how brand strength affects consumer loyalty and the willingness to pay a premium in a competitive market. Brand strength acts as an influential signal that fosters consumer commitment and ultimately justifies higher prices to the target market.

**2.1.3. Consumers' Willingness to Pay a Price Premium.** The consumers' willingness to pay a price premium is considered one of the most effective measures of brand strength [7, 28, 63]. It defines "the amount a customer will pay for the brand in comparison with another brand (or set of comparison brands) offering similar benefits" [7]. The consumers' willingness to pay a price premium represents the monetary cost [64] that gauges how much consumers are willing to spend extra to acquire a specific brand [54]. This signifies the consumers' readiness to allocate a portion of their financial resources to acquire the desired brand [15]. Consumers' willingness to pay a premium is an indicator employed to

measure the degree to which consumers are open to paying a premium for a particular brand or service. Although the emphasis of this behavioral outcome is extensively discussed within sustainable products [65, 66] and consumer service experiences [67–69], marketers have employed this metric to assess consumer price sensitivity across a range of products and brands [10, 16]. In consumer behavior, it is recognized that customers often consent to paying a premium for a specific brand due to their perception that it offers irreplaceable values not available from other brands. Consequently, understanding consumer's responses to the brand's monetary cost has valuable strategic implications on pricing strategy, market segmentation, consumer retention, and product development [70]. For instance, consumers' willingness to pay a price premium is integral to the implementation of pricing strategies such as nonlinear pricing, personalized pricing, and targeted promotions. Thus, this study is aimed at investigating the extent to which customers are willing to pay for a brand in relation to brand emotional bonds, brand strength, and brand loyalty.

### 3. Conceptual Framework and Hypothesis Development

**3.1. Brand Attachment and Consumers' Willingness to Pay a Price Premium.** Brand attachment is a significant concept in the realm of brand relationships since it specifies the strong connection between consumers and brands [71]. This study draws the French perspective on brand attachment, which defines the concept as "a psychological construct that reflects a lasting and unalterable affective relationship (separation is painful) towards the brand and that expresses a relationship of psychological closeness with it" [55]. Subsequently, the concept of brand attachment gained widespread development through the efforts of Thomson, MacInnis, and Whan Park [15]; Park, MacInnis, and Priester [53]; and Park et al. [54]. Currently, it is the focus of several scholarly publications in varied contexts [18, 21]. The formation of emotional bonds with the brand is the result of the consumer–brand relationship that generates passion, affection, and cognitions [72, 73]. Therefore, the literature on consumer–brand relationships has identified several key dimensions that capture the dynamics of brand attachment and behavioral consequences. Thomson, MacInnis, and Whan Park [15] highlighted three fundamental aspects: passion, love, and connection, emphasizing the emotional and personal facets of brand attachment. In a similar vein, Park et al. [54] emphasized that brand–self connection and brand prominence are the central components of this relationship, highlighting the significance of individuals seeing themselves reflected in the brands they choose. Furthermore, Japutra, Ekinci, and Simkin [74] introduced emotions, self-connection, and importance as key dimensions that delve into the emotional and psychological bonds that consumers establish with brands, underlining the multifaceted nature of consumer–brand relationships in contemporary marketing research. The deep sense of sentiments [75], invested relationships towards the brand, and symbolic values [76] are the main features of brand attachment. The development of brand attachment in the marketing field is leveraged by

many theories, mainly attachment theory, social identity theory, self-congruence, and brand relationship theory [18].

Within the realm of marketing, the connections are established between consumers and brands. It suggests that consumers can develop significant relationships with brands, akin to the interpersonal bonds between individuals, built upon elements such as trust, commitment, engagement, and self-identification [73]. These strong brand–consumer relationships yield positive responses, including brand loyalty, advocacy, a willingness to pay a price premium, and brand extension success [15, 55, 75, 76]. Within the scope of social psychology, a substantial body of research has primarily examined the impact of varying levels of individual attachment to a specific object on their price sensitivity for that object [77]. This connection holds particular relevance in the marketing domain. Marketing scholars have posited that brand attachment can serve as a valuable predictor for various outcomes of keen interest to marketers, encompassing the consumers' willingness to pay a price premium, brand forgiveness, and positive word of mouth (WOM) [47, 54, 76]. Empirically, brand attachment exerts a positive influence on price premium acceptance [15, 38, 78]. The results of a study conducted by Santos and Schlesinger [11] revealed that brand love (i.e., affection and passion) has a significant direct impact on willingness to pay a price premium for streaming TV services. To enhance profitability, managers should focus on the share of wallet, which is profoundly influenced by brand attachment [78]. Furthermore, positive emotions contribute to brand prominence and self-brand connection, subsequently impacting consumers' willingness to pay a price premium [14]. In sum, these research findings collectively underscore the pivotal role of brand attachment in predicting consumers' willingness to pay a price premium.

H1: Brand attachment has a positive effect on consumers' willingness to pay a price premium.

**3.2. Brand Strength and Consumers' Willingness to Pay a Price Premium.** The company's profitability, competitiveness, marketing effectiveness, and resilience to challenges are the advantages of the brand's strength [79]. In the retailing literature, brand strength is the primary driving factor behind cobranding partner selection. The value of brand strength becomes evident in how consumers perceive and interact with the brand [80], and it is the product of how marketers deploy their marketing resources [24, 60]. The construct of brand strength is a relevant element of the brand value evaluation process and can be measured in many ways [28, 81, 82]. Brand strength is a cognitive and evaluative facet of a brand that influences consumer responses and entails many operationalized dimensions such as brand familiarity, brand attitudes, brand likeability [33, 83], positioning, innovation, delivering brand promise, including brand quality, and consumer experience [84], brand image dimensions [85], trust [68], reputation [86], judgment, and confidence [32]. Amid these complex dimensions, this research will gauge brand strength using criteria recommended by the Interbrand approach, which instruments brand strength as determined by leadership, stability, internationality, support, protection, market, and trend [31].

It has been a long time considering that brand strength is a key element of brand value [28] and consequently allows the brand to command a higher price and reduces consumer price sensitivity [50]. From an empirical perspective, accountable studies demonstrated that brand strength constructs could have an impact on consumers' willingness to pay a price premium. For instance, consumer evaluations of brand credibility, determined by its overall attractiveness and usefulness, have the potential to temper the impact of a consumer's price sensitivity [59]. Recent studies found that strong brand experience as responses evoked by brand-related stimuli that are part of a brand can command higher prices [11]. As brand associations [49], reputation, trust, and commitment [86] are the heart of brand strength, an empirical study using a Bayesian method indicated that dependable and exciting brand associations have a substantial value for a consumer as estimated by consumers' willingness to pay a price premium [87]. Furthermore, many studies in different industries found that consumers' willingness to pay a price premium could be explained by brand trust perceived quality and perceived uniqueness. Given the insufficient investigations into the brand strength-willingness to pay a price premium, we proposed the following hypothesis:

H2: Brand strength has a positive effect on consumers' willingness to pay a price premium.

**3.3. Brand Loyalty and Consumers' Willingness to Pay a Price Premium.** Brand loyalty, an age-old concept within the realm of marketing, has been extensively defined in the literature. It serves as a fundamental element contributing to the overall value of a brand [7, 88]. In order to sustain demand and profitability in the long term without incurring the expenses of acquiring new customers, companies aim to cultivate a base of loyal consumers [89]. Strong brand loyalty includes consistently choosing a preferred product or service for future purchases [90], even in the face of external factors and marketing strategies that might otherwise encourage switching behavior [91]. This concept encompasses both the behavioral actions and attitudes of consumers towards a brand [92]. Brand loyalty involves a willingness to repeatedly purchase a specific brand, a readiness to pay a premium for it, resistance to the allure of switching to alternative brands, and active advocacy for the brand, among others [93].

Brand managers recognize that retaining a large loyal customer base can lead to notable performance outcomes, including sales, net profits, and potentially a greater market share [94]. Dandis and Al Haj Eid [95] suggested that willingness to pay more is a component of true brand loyalty side-by-side with brand recommendation and repetitive purchase intention. Empirical studies showed that brand loyalty may have a positive influence on consumers' willingness to pay a price premium. For example, Malarvizhi et al. [16] highlighted in the specific context of portable tech gadgets that strong brand loyalty can lead consumers to accept price premium. Similarly, Pourazad, Stocchi, and Pare [96] supported the positive association between brand loyalty and consumers' willingness to pay a price premium for sports apparel. Hence, we postulate the following hypothesis:

H3: Brand loyalty has a positive effect on consumers' willingness to pay a price premium.

**3.4. Brand Attachment and Brand Loyalty.** The construct of brand attachment refers to an emotion-laden bond between a person and a brand, characterized by deep feelings of connection, affection, and passion; these feelings are strongly connected to positive consumer responses to the brand [15]. Several recent studies have shown that brand attachment increases individuals' willingness to make repeated purchases [22, 92, 97, 98]. Brand attachment, as it is related to immaterial aspects of the brand, has a positive impact on brand loyalty [99] and WOM activity [44]. Testing many routes, a study found that brand attachment and brand identification have a positive effect on affective and normative loyalty in retailing services [100]. The result of a study revealed that brand love, which is a passionate emotional attachment to a particular brand, has a significant direct impact on brand loyalty [11]. Therefore, we can conclude the following:

H4: Brand attachment has a positive effect on brand loyalty.

**3.5. Brand Strength and Brand Attachment.** The conceptual and operational framework of Park et al. [54] found that brand attachment grows stronger with more and stronger brand prominence. However, brand trust in providing consistent resources and promises is crucial; without them, brand associations will not foster attachment [53]. Hence, it could be argued that brand strength in the market should be seen as its capacity to evoke emotional responses in customers, which can help mitigate the impact of competitors. Since there have been no empirical studies examining the link between brand strength and brand attachment, we can instead look at the interconnected elements of brand strength to elucidate how a strong brand, as perceived by consumers in the market, might reinforce brand emotions. For instance, brand attractiveness, credibility, expertise, brand trust, brand familiarity, reputation [72], dimensions of perceived value [101], and the dimensions of brand experience [102] are the drivers of brand attachment. In light of this, the hypothesis assumes the following:

H5: Brand strength has a positive effect on brand attachment.

**3.6. Brand Strength and Brand Loyalty.** When a brand successfully promotes strong and positive cognition and relationships, it is probable that this will generate a significant degree of long-term brand loyalty [46, 103, 104]. According to recent studies, the factors of brand strength were found to be a good predictor of brand loyalty, which in turn affects competitive advantage in the context of Asian IT companies [84]. Additionally, brand strength, including brand attitude, brand familiarity, and brand remarkability, exerts a favorable impact on WOM as a favorable brand loyalty endeavor [33]. A recent study on city performance proposed that brand strength is a nonmonetary metric that measures the overall appeal of a brand to consumers in comparison to its competitors, thereby ensuring future revenue through consistent consumer choice [105]. In a service setting, research indicates that customers who have a substantial level of brand experience are more likely to exhibit loyalty to that brand. This tendency is further enhanced when the brand is

perceived as reliable and possesses unique attributes [106]. Thus, we suggest the following hypothesis:

H6: Brand strength has a positive effect on brand loyalty.

**3.7. Brand Strength, Brand Loyalty, and Consumers' Willingness to Pay a Price Premium.** Depending on the research findings provided by Ray and Sharma [84, 94], it can be inferred that brand loyalty acts as a mediator between brand strength and consumers' willingness to pay a price premium. Because brand strength leads to brand loyalty, which in turn affects sustainable branding. According to Franky and Yanuar Rahmat Syah [107], customer experience and brand satisfaction result in brand loyalty and brand power, ultimately leading to a greater willingness to pay a higher price. Chaudhuri [108] found that brand loyalty mediated the influence of brand likeability and pleasantness on brand equity outcomes including price and market share. From a brand equity perspective, Malarvizhi et al. [16] found that brand loyalty mediates positively the effect of brand awareness and brand image on consumers' willingness to pay a price premium. Therefore, it is possible that brand loyalty mediates the positive relationship between brand strength and consumers' willingness to pay a price premium, but previous research did not provide a conclusive answer to this question. For that reason, the current study postulates the following assumption:

H7: Brand loyalty mediates the relationship between brand strength and consumers' willingness to pay a price premium.

**3.8. Brand Strength, Brand Attachment, and Consumers' Willingness to Pay a Price Premium.** As it found that satisfaction, quality, trust, and image are the main drivers of customer attachment [109] and attachment is a good predictor of consumers' willingness to pay a price premium [15], it is possible that brand attachment may mediate the positive relationship between brand strength and consumers' willingness to pay a price premium. In a slightly similar pattern, previous research has highlighted that brand love can act as a mediator of the positive association between strong brand experience and consumers' willingness to pay a price premium [11]. In another context, the influence of health and social advantages accrued during the tourism experience on willingness to pay is a phenomenon intertwined with the mediating factor of place attachment [110]. Nevertheless, further research is needed to understand this relationship fully.

H8: Brand attachment mediates the relationship between brand strength and consumers' willingness to pay a price premium.

**3.9. Brand Attachment, Brand Loyalty, and Consumers' Willingness to Pay a Price Premium.** Brand loyalty may perform as a mediator between brand attachment and consumers' willingness to pay a price premium. This is because a strong brand attachment can foster brand loyalty [74], subsequently increasing the likelihood of consumers being willing to pay a premium for the brand's products [16]. In the context of this conceptual research, we employed the terms brand love and brand attachment interchangeably [74]. In their recent investigation, Santos and Schlesinger [11] underscored a favorable association between brand love

and brand loyalty, as well as the association between brand loyalty and consumers' willingness to pay a price premium. Nevertheless, the study did not delve into the intermediary mechanisms underlying these associations. It is conceivable, however, that brand loyalty serves as a mediator in the relationship between brand attachment and consumers' willingness to pay a price premium.

H9: Brand loyalty mediates the relationship between brand attachment and consumers' willingness to pay a price premium.

**3.10. Brand Strength, Brand Attachment, and Brand Loyalty.** According to López-Mosquera and Sánchez [110], the advantages of visiting associated with the act of visiting specific places have a significant impact on loyalty through the mediation of place-affective attachment. Moreover, Özer M., Özer A., and Koçak [111] identified that trust, image, value congruence, and perceived quality collectively contribute to the establishment of emotional attachment through the process of identification. This, in turn, fosters positive WOM efforts. Furthermore, it can be posited that brand attachment plays a significant role in elucidating the associations between various dimensions of brand image and the distinct types of brand loyalty [100]. Previous research has demonstrated that brand attachment has a positive impact on brand loyalty, at the same time, brand reliability and strong subjective experience of the product indirectly drive brand loyalty through the mediating effects of brand attachment [99]. Therefore, it is possible that brand attachment may mediate the positive relationship between brand strength and brand loyalty. However, further research or evidence would be needed to draw more definitive conclusions about this association:

H10: Brand attachment mediates the relationship between brand strength and brand loyalty.

## 4. Methodology

In this section, we outline the grounded methodology employed to achieve our research objectives by meticulously describing the research context, approach and instrument, sampling, and data analysis strategy. The different stages involved in the methodological choices of this study are illustrated in Figure 1.

**4.1. Research Context.** Belonging to the technology and communication industry, household appliance products encompass major, small, and minor household devices. This constitutes a multibillion-dollar industry. Their global revenue surpassed \$680 billion US dollars in 2022. Forecasting indicates continued growth, with the overall market expected to exceed \$900 billion US dollars by 2028 [112]. For the Algerian market, it is expected to experience a yearly growth rate of 2.4% (2024-2028) [113]. This industry has seen competitive activity among brands [114], with over 15 brands being manufactured and commercialized, comprising both domestic and foreign brands. To understand the dynamics of this competitive industry, it is suitable to examine consumer behavior and brand relationships within the HABs. In addition, from

the individual level, using HABs as the subject of a study to test a theoretical model based on brand strength, attachment, and loyalty can be a valuable approach for several reasons. For instance, household devices are integral to daily life, making them pertinent and relatable to a broad audience, and maybe fostering personal attachment to the brands they use. Therefore, the longer-term relationship between consumers and their appliances can offer a unique perspective on brand management over time. Additionally, like many countries, the home appliance market in Algeria is subject to changing trends and technological advancements, making it an interesting field for studying how brands maintain customer responses in a dynamic environment [115]. In this study, an examination was carried out spotlighting four prominent brands: ENIE, LG, Condor, and Samsung. We interviewed four scholars, asking “In your opinion, what are the most important companies specializing in home appliances?” These brands were the most frequently mentioned.

**4.2. Research Approach.** Given the study’s focus on consumer perceptions, emotions, and behaviors towards brands, a survey-based methodology was used to investigate path associations within the conceptual model. The questionnaire-based survey has long been an appropriate method to gather data from consumer self-reports to assess brand attachment, loyalty [116], and consumers’ willingness to pay a price premium. However, most studies do not consider continuous data when assessing brand strength [29]. Similar to a recent study [94], this study also used a self-reporting method to assess brand strength. Before distributing the questionnaire widely, a thorough process was conducted to develop, assess, and validate its reliability. The questionnaire is structured into three sections, each serving a crucial purpose. In the initial section, adhering to the main ethical considerations [117], we provide explicit information regarding the study’s objectives, providing all organizations involved in the research project, with the voluntary nature of participation, and the confidential handling of data. The second section is dedicated to evaluating the foundational constructs of the research model. Lastly, the third section focuses on capturing the participants’ profiles, adding depth and richness to the study.

Building upon previous studies, this questionnaire adopted seven items to assess brand strength, another five items to assess brand attachment [55], and an additional three items to assess brand loyalty. To evaluate consumers’ willingness to pay a price premium, four items were employed [10]. All items were measured on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from (1) *strongly disagree* to (7) *strongly agree* (see Appendix A). The items were translated into Arabic and French to suit the local culture. The accuracy of the translation was verified by two independent assistants from the university.

**4.3. Sampling and Procedures.** Distinct questionnaires tailored to each brand were generated, ensuring participants were able to select one brand for feedback. The target population consisted of householders who were interested in HABs. In the absence of a sampling frame for this large pop-

ulation research, we employed the convenience approach, which is a nonrandom method. While this approach may be prone to data bias, it offers a swift and practical means for easy data collection. Nonetheless, to ensure the suitability of participants, an initial screening question was incorporated at the outset of the questionnaire: Do you incorporate home appliances (such as smart TVs) into your daily routine? This can be achieved by the researchers as the administration is conducted through the traditional mode of gathering data, the paper-and-pen technique.

Based on the proposed inverse square root method, a sample size of 155 is considered the minimum necessary for partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) tests to achieve at least 80 percent power level, depending on the path coefficient’s effect size falling between 0.11 and 0.2, at a significance level of  $p \leq 0.05$  [118]. Throughout data collection at the beginning of 2023, a total of 323 questionnaires proved to be valid, following the exclusion of some questionnaires from the analysis due to more than a few missing values. Therefore, we gathered beyond that amount, which is significantly adequate to yield dependable results.

**4.4. Data Analysis.** To estimate the model and test the hypotheses, we employed the PLS-SEM approach [119]. Consequently, we utilized path coefficients to assess the size and valence of the influence, while  $t$ -values and  $p$  values were employed via bootstrapping to evaluate the statistical significance [120].

## 5. Results

In the results section, the study provides a grounded description of the sample, assesses the quality of the model, and presents the outcomes of hypothesis testing that clarify both the direct and indirect relationships among the variables under investigation.

**5.1. Profile of Participants.** The profile of the participants in this study is quite illustrative. In terms of gender, the majority of participants are male (61.6%). Age distribution reveals a fairly even spread, with the largest group falling in the 30–49 years old category at 73.4%. A smaller portion of participants belong to the younger age group (16.4%) and the older demographic (10.2%).

When it comes to education, the majority completed their higher education (67.5%), while 32.5% are nongraduates. In terms of marital status, a significant portion of participants are married (71.8%) compared to singles (28.2%). The income distribution varies as well, with 35.0% of participants earning less than €250, 36.2% falling into the middle-income bracket, and 28.8% earning more than €500.

Interestingly, the vast majority of participants (96.3%) reported participating in purchases of home appliance products in the past 3 years, while only a small fraction (3.7%) did not partake in any purchases during that period. Overall, this profile reveals an engaged group of participants with some variations, making it an interesting cohort for further analysis.

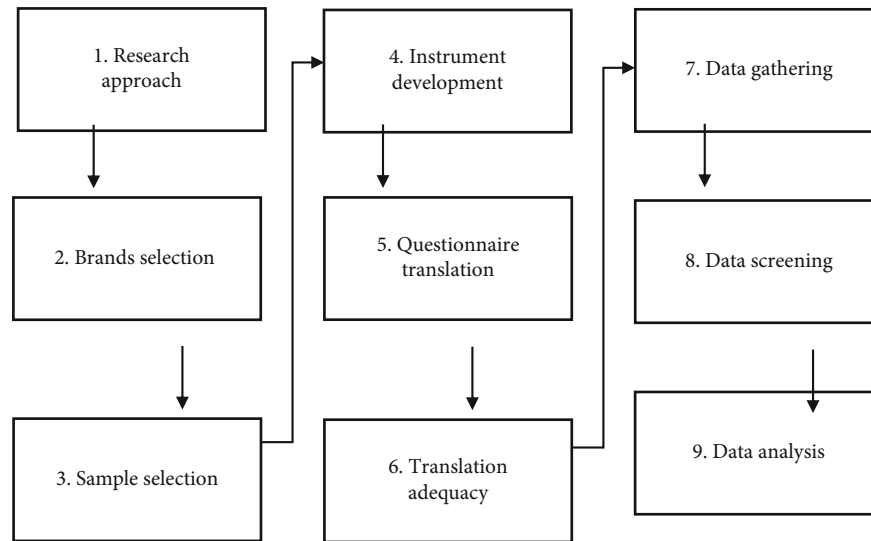


FIGURE 1: Methodology steps.

In the dataset, four different brands are represented, and their frequencies can be summarized as follows: ENIE had 105 participants (32.5%). Condor followed closely with 93 participants (28.8%). Samsung was also well-represented with 90 participants (27.9%). In contrast, LG had a smaller participation share (10.8%), with 35 participants.

**5.2. Common Method Bias (CMB).** Measuring associated variables using the same sources to provide information can introduce errors, misrepresenting the accurate relationships among them [120]. To ensure the accuracy of the study outcomes, we conducted CMB. Checking the variance inflation factors (VIFs) delivered by the Smart PLS4 report, the VIF values of all associations as conceptualized in the research model are below 3.3. Accordingly, we can conclude that the model is not affected by CMB (see Table 1).

**5.3. Measurement Model.** The constructs and their relative items' reliability are summarized in Table 2. Since Cronbach's alpha ranges from 0.89 to 0.95, the values showed high internal consistency of items within each construct [120]. The composite reliability (CR) is an additional measure of internal consistency. The high CR values range from 0.92 to 0.96 since they are above 0.70 demonstrating that the constructs' items are highly consistent and reliable [121]. Additionally, since the average variance extracted (AVE) values are higher than the rule of thumb of 0.50, the constructs display a substantial amount of variance in the observed variables. Furthermore, the results indicate that the factor loadings for all items are high since they are higher than the rule of thumb of 0.7 [121], demonstrating that they interpreted strongly the relative weight of each item to their constructs. It is pertinent to note that three items failed to meet the recommended threshold of 0.708 and were consequently excluded (see Appendix A). For instance, the statement "I prefer brand X which is accepted internationally" lacked conceptual validity as the brands under scrutiny included two local brands (ENIE, Condor) that, despite

exporting to African countries, did not have a broad international presence. In adhering to rigorous standards for item selection, we upheld the criteria for suitability within the research context [121]. In conclusion, the present outcomes sustain the validity and reliability of the constructs and items, bolstering researchers' confidence in their utility for assessing the model's predictive capacity within the given context.

The matrix in Table 3 shows the Fornell-Larcker criterion of the construct's discriminate validity and correlations among them. According to the outcomes, the square root of the AVE for each construct is greater than the correlation with other constructs in the model, specifying that the measures opted for are sufficiently distinct. The measured constructs show robust bilateral correlations, with correlations ranging from 0.79 to 0.87. Brand attachment-brand loyalty has the strongest correlation, closely followed by brand strength-brand attachment ( $r = 0.82$ ). These positive correlations support exploring causal relationships affecting consumers' willingness to pay a price premium.

**5.4. Structural Model.** The recap PLS-SEM outcomes are shown in Table 1. While Path coefficients represent the strength and direction of the relationships, both  $p$  values and  $t$  values indicate their statistical significance. In this case, all six direct associations were supported.

The  $R$ -squared ( $R^2$ ) is a statistical measure that estimates the proportion of the variance for a dependent variable that is explained by variables in a regression model [121]. The assessment of  $R^2$  values in Figure 2 revealed that 72% of the variation in consumers' willingness to pay a price premium is explained by brand strength, brand attachment, brand loyalty, and the mediations that exist between them. Moreover, the structural model indicates that approximately 79% of the variation in brand loyalty is explained by brand strength and brand attachment. Furthermore, a proportion of 67% of the variation in brand attachment is explained by brand strength.

TABLE 1: PLS-SEM results for the proposed model.

|                                     | $\beta$ | <i>t</i> -value | <i>p</i> value | $f^2$ | VIF   | $R^2$ | $Q^2$ |
|-------------------------------------|---------|-----------------|----------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| H1. Brand attachment→WTP            | 0.351   | 4.478           | $p \leq 0.01$  | 0.088 | 2.311 |       |       |
| H2. Brand strength→WTP              | 0.329   | 4.475           | $p \leq 0.01$  | 0.111 | 1.408 | 0.723 | 0.632 |
| H3. Brand loyalty→WTP               | 0.219   | 2.868           | $p \leq 0.05$  | 0.035 | 1.153 |       |       |
| H4. Brand attachment→brand loyalty  | 0.631   | 11.938          | $p \leq 0.01$  | 0.636 | 2.446 | 0.797 | 0.666 |
| H5. Brand strength→brand loyalty    | 0.299   | 5.187           | $p \leq 0.01$  | 0.143 | 1.821 |       |       |
| H6. Brand strength→brand attachment | 0.822   | 40.780          | $p \leq 0.01$  | 2.082 | 2.983 | 0.676 | 0.673 |

Note: Source: primary data analysis output.

TABLE 2: Factor loading and constructs' reliability.

|   | Items | Factor loading | Cronbach's alpha | CR    | AVE   |
|---|-------|----------------|------------------|-------|-------|
| Brand attachment                              | BATT1 | 0.926          |                  |       |       |
|   | BATT2 | 0.950          |                  |       |       |
|   | BATT3 | 0.927          | 0.959            | 0.968 | 0.859 |
|   | BATT4 | 0.931          |                  |       |       |
|   | BATT5 | 0.901          |                  |       |       |
| Brand loyalty                                 | BL1   | 0.937          |                  |       |       |
|   | BL2   | 0.960          | 0.931            | 0.956 | 0.880 |
|   | BL3   | 0.916          |                  |       |       |
| Brand strength                                | BST1  | 0.838          |                  |       |       |
|   | BST2  | 0.930          |                  |       |       |
|   | BST3  | 0.853          | 0.892            | 0.925 | 0.756 |
|   | BST4  | 0.854          |                  |       |       |
| Consumers' willingness to pay a price premium | WTP1  | 0.924          |                  |       |       |
|   | WTP2  | 0.927          |                  |       |       |
|   | WTP3  | 0.918          | 0.924            | 0.946 | 0.815 |
|   | WTP4  | 0.840          |                  |       |       |

Note: Source: primary data analysis output.

TABLE 3: Correlation matrix and Fornell–Larcker criterion.

|           | 1     | 2     | 3     | 4     |
|-----------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. BA     | 0.927 |       |       |       |
| 2. BL     | 0.876 | 0.938 |       |       |
| 3. BS     | 0.822 | 0.817 | 0.87  |       |
| 4. C' WTP | 0.814 | 0.796 | 0.797 | 0.903 |

Abbreviation: SD: standard deviation.

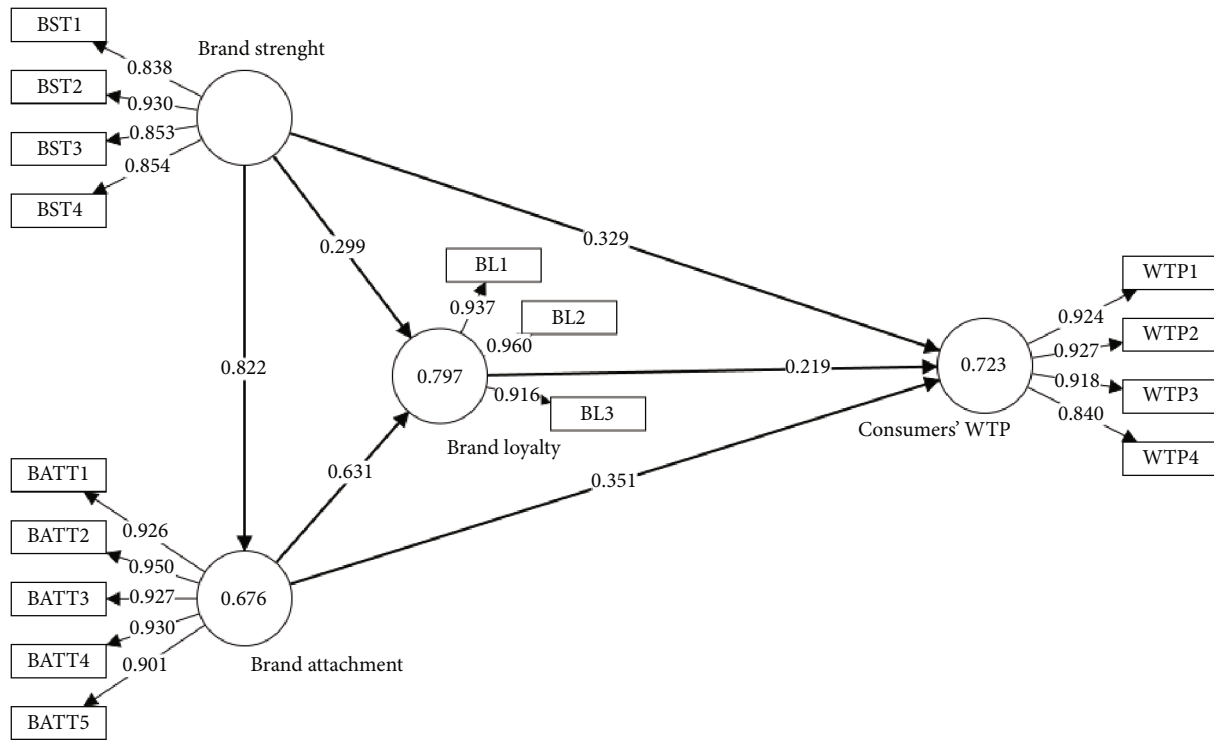
As shown in Table 1, the path coefficients of the antecedents of consumers' willingness to pay a price premium are positive and statistically significant, this indicates that when the brand strength, brand attachment, and brand loyalty are stronger, there is a tendency for consumers to accept premium pricing. The outcomes specified that there is satisfactory evidence to sustain hypotheses H1, H2, and H3.

Likewise, the causal relationship between brand attachment and brand loyalty was found to be positive and statistically significant ( $\beta = 0.63$ ,  $t = 11.93$ ,  $p \leq 0.05$ ), suggesting

that stronger brand attachment is linked to higher levels of brand loyalty. Additionally, the path coefficient between brand strength and brand loyalty was also positive and statistically significant ( $\beta = 0.29$ ,  $t = 5.18$ ,  $p \leq 0.05$ ); this indicates that when the brand strength is stronger, there is a tendency for consumers to be loyal to the brand. These outcomes demonstrate a piece of evidence to back both Hypotheses H4 and H5.

Lastly, the outcomes showed that the association between brand strength and brand attachment was strong, positive, and statistically significant ( $\beta = 0.82$ ,  $t = 40.78$ ,  $p \leq 0.05$ ). Hence, the outcomes sustain Hypothesis H6 assumes that brand strength effects positively the level of brand attachment.

According to the additional indicator of statistical power analysis of Cohen's  $f^2$  suggestion [122], the size effect of H4 and H6 are considered large ( $\geq 0.35$ ), and the size effect of H5 is considered medium ( $\leq 0.35$ ). The size effect for H1, H2, and H3 are considered small ( $\geq 0.35$ ). Hence, these outcomes point out that brand attachment-brand loyalty and brand strength-brand attachment have strong positive associations.



Source: Primary data analysis output.

FIGURE 2: Hypothesis testing results. Source: Primary data analysis output.

**5.5. Mediation Analysis.** The results of the mediation analysis testing the H7 to H10 hypotheses are shown in Table 4. The primary objective here is to advance our understanding of the mechanism that led consumers to accept premium pricing. The mediation analysis exhibited that brand strength has a positive indirect effect on consumers' willingness to pay a price premium through the mediator of brand loyalty ( $\beta = 0.06$ ,  $t = 2.30$ ,  $p \leq 0.050$ ) and a positive indirect effect through brand attachment ( $\beta = 0.28$ ,  $t = 4.46$ ,  $p \leq 0.050$ ). Given that the mediations are statistically significant at the 0.05 level, the results back the hypothesis H7 and H8.

Furthermore, the mediation results also indicate that brand attachment has a positive and significant indirect effect on consumers' willingness to pay a price premium through the mediator of brand loyalty ( $\beta = 0.19$ ,  $t = 2.91$ ,  $p \leq 0.050$ ) and a positive and significant indirect effect of brand strength on brand loyalty through brand attachment ( $\beta = 0.51$ ,  $t = 11.57$ ,  $p \leq 0.050$ ). Likewise, Since the mediations demonstrate statistical significance at the 0.05 level, the findings support both H9 and H10 hypotheses. Following Zhao et al.'s [123] tree decision and the positive and significant of all associations among the variables in the bulk of these mediation analyses, all mediations are typified as complementary mediation. Overall, brand attachment and brand loyalty have an additional role in explaining the associations as conceptualized in the current research model.

## 6. Discussion

**6.1. Key Findings.** The study delves into the complex relationship between brand strength, loyalty, and attachment,

shedding light on how they collectively empower brands to command premium prices. The field study was conducted using the quantitative approach based on a survey of four distinct brands in the home appliance industry in the realm of Algeria. The findings of the current study reveal several significant results that substantiate all the hypotheses within the model, extending foundational theoretical frameworks in the field of brand management.

The study highlights that brand attachment plays a significant role in predicting consumers' willingness to pay a price premium. This outcome concords with studies that have shown the positive influence of brand attachment on consumers' willingness to pay a price premium [77, 124–126]. These suggest that fostering emotional connections and deepening brand attachment can help companies command higher prices for their products or services leading to increased brand profitability. Brand attachment is strong when it elevates the brand's prominence in consumers' minds and instills a strong sense of emotions, this renders the financial aspect of price less significant in maintaining the cognitive and emotional bond with the brand. This attachment develops over time with multiple positive points of interactions that assist the consumer's positive experience and serve their goals. This can be a good elevator of the brand that managers should take care of in their marketing mix and positioning strategy. This attachment to the brand evolves gradually through favorable interactions that enhance consumer experience and fulfill their needs. Hence, brand attachment is a powerful instrument for the brand, which brand managers should line up their positioning efforts and marketing strategies. This study draws upon

TABLE 4: Mediation analysis.

| Mediation  | $\beta$ | <i>t</i> value | Sig           |
|--|---------|----------------|---------------|
| H7. Brand strength→brand attachment →WTP           | 0.288   | 4.469          | $p \leq 0.01$ |
| H8. Brand strength→brand loyalty→WTP               | 0.066   | 2.303          | $p \leq 0.05$ |
| H9. Brand attachment→brand loyalty→WTP             | 0.138   | 2.915          | $p \leq 0.05$ |
| H10. Brand strength→brand attachment→brand loyalty | 0.518   | 11.578         | $p \leq 0.01$ |

Note: Source: primary data analysis output.

attachment theory to understand the charges of emotional bond between consumers and brands. This theory underpins emotional bonds to brands leading to positive individual responses [54, 58] even in difficult situations [91, 127]. Since a consumer's willingness to pay a price premium represents a monetary sacrifice for a particular brand, this study aligns with attachment theory, which suggests that emotional bonds with an object drive individuals to invest resources to maintain it.

Similarly, the study emphasizes the importance of brand strength in consumers' willingness to pay a price premium, since brand strength, including aspects such as leadership, quality, and marketing efforts, effects significantly consumers' price value. This outcome supports previous studies that found a positive relationship between dimensions of brand strength and consumers' willingness to pay a price premium [8, 50, 86]. The relevance of brand strength in brand management is understood by what it can achieve in terms of perceived position and value by consumers in the market, especially when contrasted with competitors. Brand strength results from marketing investment to deliver promising brand value [94]. From a theoretical perspective, these results are consistent with the signaling theory, which posits that in situations of asymmetric information, brands act as credible signals through various elements like brand name and credibility, which help reduce uncertainty, influence buyer behavior, and justify price premiums [59]. By applying this approach, this study reveals those strong brands—through indicators such as prominent brand leadership and superior brand quality—serve as market signals that substantiate the justification for charging premium prices. This also aligns with the price-quality schema [128], which proposes that price functions as the main indicator of brand value and quality. Similarly, the study aligns with several Brand Valuation Models [28, 94], which emphasize the importance of brand strength in driving consumer choice and then creating brand firm value.

The research indicates that strong brand loyalty is associated with low price tolerance and sensitivity, supporting previous studies that assumed that cultivating brand loyalty can contribute to premium pricing strategies [94]. That means building a large base of loyal customers may lead to improved sales, profits, and market share for the brand. Consumers' willingness to pay a moderately higher price for a specific brand is the function, in part, of the intention to sustain their relationship with the brand, which is determined by the value that is consistently delivered by the brand and perceived by the consumer. While the concept

of loyalty and its associated strategies have a long history in marketing performance literature [89], is still evolving [129]. For instance, this study extends the importance of strong brand loyalty beyond mere preference and repurchase intention, encompassing a willingness to make financial sacrifices (i.e., consumers' willingness to pay a price premium) [51]. Furthermore, this outcome folds into the relationship marketing assumptions that argue the importance of building strong customer loyalty to long-term profitability and sustainable competitive advantage [130, 131].

The study did not ignore the mediation analysis of brand strength, brand loyalty, and brand attachment in influencing consumers' willingness to pay a price premium. To some extent, the findings align with previous research suggesting that brand loyalty plays a supportive role in linking brand strength to the consumers' acceptance a price premium [84, 107, 108]. Likewise, brand attachment also complements the effect of brand strength on consumers' willingness to pay a price premium. The result aligns with [11] in some degree. Furthermore, the positive relationships between brand attachment, brand loyalty, and consumers' willingness to pay a price premium are also partially mediated. The complex relationships are supported slightly by previous research [11, 100, 111]. The results of the mediation analysis collectively indicate that stronger brand perception, emotions, and relationships in terms of brand strength, brand attachment, and loyalty can enable brands to charge extra amounts to customers. The mediation effects also suggest these relationships mutually reinforce each other to affect consumers' acceptance of premium prices. To sum up, a strong brand with positive associations and emotional bonds can generate long-term brand loyalty, which, in turn, contributes to commanding premium prices and to the ability to sustain a competitive advantage.

**6.2. Theoretical Contribution.** The study makes important theoretical contributions to brand management and marketing by deepening the deciphering the antecedent of consumers' willingness to pay a price premium.

First, this study substantiates the foundational assumptions of previous research on brand equity, which posited that a strong brand can command premium pricing [50], although existing research has yet to furnish definitive validation for this claim. Therefore, this research pioneers an empirical investigation into how consumer-based brand strength directly influences consumers' willingness to pay a price premium, revealing that brand strength serves as a robust predictor of brand attachment, loyalty, and willingness to pay.

Second, this study delves into the associations between multiple vital concepts in brand management, including brand strength, brand loyalty, and brand attachment, which have often been studied in isolation when considering their effects on consumers' willingness to pay a price premium. Previous research has called for a more holistic examination of these interrelationships to better understand their combined impact on consumer behavior [11, 23]. For example, Japutra et al. [132] propose that future investigations should explore additional factors that can moderate the connections between brand attachment and their outcomes. To the best of our knowledge, no prior research has conceptualized and analyzed in-depth the direct and mediating relationships within the proposed model. By integrating these critical concepts, this study offers a comprehensive analysis, providing a clearer understanding of factors influencing consumers' willingness to pay a price premium.

Third, there is a need for an additional comprehensive understanding of how emotional brand and loyalty influence consumers' willingness to pay a price premium across different contexts. This study bridges the gap captured in previous knowledge in the field of brand management by demonstrating the legitimacy of consumers' willingness to pay a price premium [51] and brand attachment [20] in understudied settings (i.e., HABs). For instance, earlier research on brand attachment and consumers' acceptance a price premium has overlooked durable goods [9, 19, 133], concentrating mainly on fashion [35], sustainable [134], and hospitality brands [42]. Beyond the commonly studied areas, this research provides valuable insights into consumer behavior by exploring how brand attachment and consumers' willingness to pay a price premium relate to HABs.

Finally, this study advances measurement techniques by demonstrating the viability of assessing brand strength through individual-level self-assessment [31, 84], emphasizing the nonfinancial nature of this concept in evaluating a brand's market position and attractiveness [28, 83]. Additionally, the study employs the Francophone scale to measure brand attachment—a scale that, despite being the first developed in this domain, is seldom used [18, 135]. Therefore, we contribute methodologically by extending Lacoeuilhe's brand attachment measurement scale and applying self-assessment techniques to evaluate brand strength.

**6.3. Practical Implications.** The study findings have important practical implications for businesses seeking to establish engaging consumers and profitable brands in competitive markets by offering valuable insights into shaping pricing strategies effectively. If the company's growth depends on the price level, brand managers should fix their price with the valence of consumer cognitions, affections, and relations to the brand in question [30]. First, brand managers must understand how brand strength can strategically position their brands as premium choices in a competitive market. This involves effectively conveying the value proposition of leadership, uniqueness, and consistently high-quality attributes. Second, marketers should prioritize driving brand innovation and improving product attributes to communicate these signals effectively. By meeting or surpassing con-

sumer expectations, brands can enhance their credibility and solidify their market position. As a result, consumers may be willing to pay a premium over alternatives, thereby giving the brand a competitive edge and sustaining long-term market success. Third, employing innovative marketing communications for effective messaging is a powerful tool. By crafting marketing claims that resonate with target audiences and climax key brand points of differentiations, the brand can shape perceptions, generate emotions, enhance engagement, and drive desired behaviors. This approach is beneficial as it strengthens brand leadership and optimizes the overall impact of brand marketing strategies. Fourth, managers should leverage emotional bonds with customers by prioritizing affective experiences, eliciting positive emotions, using vividness, and fostering a brand self-image and community to enhance brand attachment. Fifth, nurturing brand loyalty through customer relationship management and loyalty strategies strengthens a company's market position and justifies a higher consumer willingness to pay a price premium. Brand managers must consider all consumer groups since they are an attractive market by acknowledging the diverse needs and preferences of all consumer groups. For instance, it is beneficial to engage closely with consumers and make it easier for them to interact with brand channels, such as social media platforms. This approach helps maintain ongoing communication, improves brand knowledge, encourages the cocreation of positive experiences, and strengthens emotional connections with the brand.

In summary, this study provides evidence for businesses on how robust brands can develop effective pricing strategies. Therefore, by working on brand attachment, enhancing brand strength, and cultivating brand loyalty, brands can position themselves for long-term success in highly competitive markets.

**6.4. Limitations.** Even though the study contributes to enriching the understanding of consumer-brand relationships phenomenon for robust and competitive brands, many limits arise. Initially, the study's cross-sectional investigation used data from Algerian households, potentially limiting its applicability due to the narrow focus. Subsequent research should explore global contexts and diverse product categories as well, as conduct a longitudinal study to capture how consumers' willingness to pay a price premium may vary over time due to market trends, economic conditions, or changes in consumer preferences. Furthermore, the study has a restricted scope of variables. For instance, brand attachment, loyalty, and brand strength comprise many dimensions that could apply to each one. Future research should identify which dimensions significantly influence the desired outcome to obtain a more thorough insight.

Followingly, the study focuses on examining the relationships between underlying factors and consumers' willingness to pay a price premium. However, there may be other common causes of the effects such as the country of origin, community influence, and competitive market forces. Future research should consider exploring other potential variables simultaneously. Next, the study gives priority to

consumer perspectives, focusing on strong brands for commanding price premium but disregarding critical stakeholders like retailers. Incorporating various viewpoints enriches brand strategy understanding. Additionally, further research should explore the long-term effects of brand strength, loyalty, and brand attachment and their sustained effect on brand performance and profitability over time. Penultimately, the absence of comparative analysis across brands hindered the assessment of brands' relative strengths and weaknesses in consumers' willingness to pay a price premium, because brands may differ in positioning tactics like innovation, sustainability, quality, and service, and this can yield insights into how they impact consumer attachment, loyalty, and consumers' willingness to pay a price premium, helping marketing and brand management. Lastly, the study lacks an in-depth conceptual and discussion of mediating relationships, crucial for a solid theoretical framework; future research should replicate these links. Researchers should be mindful of these limitations and strive to overcome them through comprehensive frameworks and more rigorous study designs.

7. Conclusion

This study investigated the relationship between brand strength, brand attachment, brand loyalty, and consumers' willingness to pay a price premium for HABs in Algeria. Through a quantitative survey encompassing four distinct brands, our research has unveiled captivating evidence supporting the hypotheses put forth. Mainly, we found that brand strength and attachment have a significant positive effect on brand loyalty and consumers' willingness to pay a price premium. This implies that when brands allow consumers to attribute significant importance to the cognitive, evaluative, and emotional aspects linked with them, is more likely that the brand will experience heightened loyalty levels. Consequently, this could result in a greater chance of success in implementing premium pricing strategies. Furthermore, our mediation analysis shed light on the complex interconnectedness of brand strength, loyalty, attachment, and consumers' willingness to pay a price premium, suggesting that these factors collectively reinforce each other to shape consumers' acceptance of a price premium. While previous study addresses these associations in isolation, our study bridges gaps by providing a holistic framework for understanding the antecedents of consumers' willingness to pay a price premium in the context of brand value.

The study's outcomes contribute to the growing body of literature on brand strength, brand attachment, and consumers' willingness to pay a price premium within the realm of brand management. This also offers practical implications for brand managers seeking to drive sales and enhance competitiveness through the emotional and psychological dimensions of consumer-brand relationships. As a concluding remark, we can climax the absence of consistent depiction in the literature regarding the concept of "brand strength". The "brand strength" approaches range from accounting to marketing to behavioral analysis, and when considering brand strength from a consumer-based perspec-

tive, it becomes evident that it encompasses multiple measurement dimensions, which are not entirely novel as they were previously discussed in the literature. From this line, it is appreciated to climax the need for advancing towards the development of models that clarify the expectations and components of brand strength within the market.

Appendix A

TABLE A1: Study measures.

|  |      |  |
|--|------|--|
| <b>Brand strength</b>  |      |  |
| 1. "I prefer brand X which shows leadership"   | [33] |  |
| 2. "I prefer brand X with quality of stability"  |      |  |
| 3. "I prefer brand X which is accepted internationally (removed)"                            |      |  |
| 4. "I prefer brand X which is actively promoted and supported by the company"                |      |  |
| 5. "I prefer brand X which is adequately protected by a trademark"                           |      |  |
| 6. "I prefer brand X which operates in a stable market (removed)"                            |      |  |
| 7. "I prefer brand X which shows the futuristic trend (removed)"                             |      |  |
| <b>Brand attachment</b>  |      |  |
| 8. "Brand X gives me joy and pleasure"   | [66] |  |
| 9. "I find a certain comfort in buying or possessing brand X"                                |      |  |
| 10. "I am very attached to this brand"   |      |  |
| 11. "I am very attracted to this brand"  |      |  |
| 12. "I am very loyal to brand X"   | [77] |  |
| <b>Brand loyalty</b>   |      |  |
| 13. "I consider myself to be loyal to brand X"   |      |  |
| 14. "Brand X would be my first choice"   | [10] |  |
| 15. "I will not buy other brands if brand X is available"                                    |      |  |
| <b>Consumers' willingness to pay a price premium</b>   |      |  |
| 16. "The price of brand X would have to go up quite a bit before I would switch to another." | [10] |  |
| 17. "I am willing to pay a higher price for brand X than for other brands"                   |      |  |
| 18. "I am willing to pay 20% more for brand X brand over other brands"                       |      |  |
| 19. "I am willing to pay a lot more for brand X than other brands"                           |      |  |

Data Availability Statement

The data supporting this study's findings are available on request from the corresponding author.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

Author Contributions

Sofiane Laradi: writing-review and editing, writing-original draft, software, methodology, investigation, conceptualization. Tawfiq Seraan: resources, funding acquisition, formal

analysis. Mahmaod Alrawad: review and editing supervision, resources, project administration. Abdalwali Lutfi: methodology. Mohammed Amin Almaiah: review and editing.

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