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Impact of Brand Equity Drivers on Purchase Intention (A Quantitative Study of Smart Phone Market)

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Abstract:

Smartphone market in Pakistan is a dynamic market that is rapidly moving toward the advancement. Five factors are used in the survey to seek out the D G Khan smart phone market potential. Reason of conducting research in D G Khan to realizing smart phone marketers that they can capture a big market in D G Khan because this city connect all four provinces of Pakistan and regional hub of lot of business. The purpose of this study is to investigate the factors affecting the purchase intention of mobile phone devices in D G Khan business hub. In order to accomplish the objectives of the study, consumers were taken by using simple random sampling technique. Primary data was collected moreover, four important factors i.e. Brand perception, Brand preference, Brand loyalty, and Brand image were selected and analyzed through the correlation and multiple regressions analysis with respect to the purchase intention. These variables were never analyzed together in previous studies. From the analysis, it was clear that above mention Brand equity drivers play vital role in the mobile phone market of D G Khan and it also acted as a motivational force that influences them to go for a mobile phone purchase decision. The study suggested that the mobile phone sellers should consider the above mentioned factors to equate the opportunity.

Key words: Brand perception (BP), Brand preference (PR), Brand image (BIM), Brand loyalty (BL),

1. Introduction

Branding is used in the world for centuries for making difference of goods of one manufacturer from another. In fact the word brand is resulting from the Old Norse word brand, which means “to burn”, as brands were and still are the means by which owners of animals mark their animal to recognize those (Keller et al., 2008). History of brand originates back to brick makers in Egypt who put symbols on their bricks to detect them. In United States, cattle farmers marked their livestock to more easily recognize them. As time goes, manufacturer began to tingle their identities onto the barrels that carry their products using a branding iron.

Brand is spot and mark that makes difference among products. Till time main focus on brand for making difference, now moving toward representation rather than differentiation (Berthon et al., 2011). As consumers have various alternatives in the market as a substitute of products and brands that satisfy their needs that’s lead to the extensively making brand choices which are significant for brand management (Simon, 2011). Brand is the bundle of perceptions in the consumers mind and has no physical existence. (Kotler, 2003) stated that powerful brand equity effects in customer purchase intention for one product over another. For many companies one and biggest asset is the Brand. This is how consumer purchases intention is influenced by brand equity. The Pakistani Smartphone market is the concern of study because of rapid development in recent years and fast and dynamic situation of Pakistani smart phone market. Well-developed brands enjoy market leading positions for many years such as for example Nokia, suffered greatly when Apple introduced the iphone in 2007 share captured by iphone because of reliability and functional usage as defense in the functionality might there steps are taken but they were direction less. To see Pakistani context we have to find out that what are the effective drivers of Brand equity within the Pakistani market for smart phones? To answer this, we need to explore the following questions;

- What are the drivers of brand Equity within the D.G khan market for smart phones?
- How do these brand Equity drivers influence purchase intentions?

Smart phone is the mobile phone with built-in applications and internet access. Because of lot of applications run at same time it is also known as the handheld computer. Now a day differentiation on mobile phone brands is made by software also known as the

operating system platform. It is not only the texting device its use is more than the personalized manners to compare to the old mobiles. On international level, figures tells us that millions of (HTC , Apple, Samsung, Sony Ericson, LG, Nokia, Motorola) units were sold in the Pakistani market. Operating system (OS) is the brain of the phone. OS is very vital for Android, and Windows Mobile OS. In a current rapid and dynamic situation of Market OS is supposed to be a chief feature in the appeal of a phone. Android is an open source code, which allows software developers to openly develop apps according to their wishes and for mobile phone manufacturers to develop its own interface. The Windows OS platform is incorporated in various models in brands such as Samsung, HTC and Nokia. (www.microsoft.com)

2. Theoretical Background and Hypotheses

Many researchers have written on purchase intentions. Researchers provided framework for collecting, analyzing, and interpreting purchase intentions data. The framework highlighted differences between stated intention, and purchase probability in the automobile industry. One conjecture from this study was that purchase intentions for low cost, low involvement items are less stable than for high involvement products. (Cobb-Walgren et al. 1995) conclude that high brand equity generates greater brand preference and that it translates into higher purchase intentions. Moreover, (Wells et al. 2011) state that there is both theoretical and empirical support that documents the influence of perceived product quality on purchase intentions. Purchase intention is widely used to analyze consumer purchasing behavior in related studies (Sadeghi, 2011). Purchase intention refers to the possibility that a consumer will plan to purchase a product of a brand in the future (Wu et al, 2008). Based on the most well-known attitude theory, the theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), (Budiman, 2012) stated that the intention to do something was influenced by these factors: attitude towards behavior and subjective norms. Attitude is a result from the beliefs towards behavior. It can be stated that the more positive of an individual belief caused by an object attitude, the more positive of individual attitude towards the object. Brand building is the process of building the brand before emitting the results. With this background, researchers worked on capture the long-term assistances of building a solid brand, meanwhile motivate and establish new investors for invest in term of finance in the business. The task was to improve sensitivity and credibility for brand strength that could balance the financial ones, the end result is brand equity for achievements (Aaker, 1996).

Brand equity is defined in different ways, yet for the purpose of this research, the most important perspective is the consumer based brand equity i.e. customers perception/consumer behaviour about a product or service (Hong-bumm et al., 2003; Capon, 2008).

Consumer Perceptions: covering brand awareness, brand association, and perceived quality

Consumer Behaviour: including brand loyalty and willingness to pay a premium price.

Although brand equity has been investigated for periods (Aaker, 1991; Aaker, 1992, Shocker et al., 1994; Pappu et al., 2006), Many trials have been presented (e.g. Farquhar & Yuri, 1991; Kamakura, & Russell, 1993; Simon & Sullivan, 1993; Mahajan et al., 1991; Swait et al. 1993). However, using product at high price is main indicator for strong brand equity. Researchers stated that during brand experience that's adding value to various factors; at last it is the user who first identifies brand equity (Cobb-Walgren et al., 1995).

According to the research requirement Brand equity is divided into four factors and these are: brand perception, brand preference, brand loyalty, brand Image. In this research, emphasis is on the relationship of Purchase Intention with respect to all the above mentioned drivers of brand equity. Now we will discuss them one by one with the help of literature review and see either the results are positive or negative. Consumer perception about the sensitive and efficient features of a brand is effected by publicity and other influencing sources. Perception is the value of the product that customer is collected from the use of the brands i.e., brand equity (Cobb-Walgren et al., 1995). Perception is very vital for the marketers because consumer purchase intention is highly influenced by perception. How he/she observes the product value. Perception is affected by the attributes of the manufacturer invest in product through marketing and packing of product that shows that product perception is not only influenced by the quality of the product (Batler, 1979). Consumer products or services are always opposing each other in the market place. This will create choice for the consumers, which product should be used as an alternative brand (Adetayo, 2008). Due to the features of the products, social enterprise consumers are predicted to have dynamic behaviors or characteristics to social enterprise products or services. The philanthropic feelings and emotions attached to product or service may generate social self-concept in the consumer mind and resulting for the sale of product. Lastly, the functional value is defined as satisfaction level for the price and the quality of the product (Sweeney and Soutar, (2001), (Eun Jung Choi and Soo Hyun Kim 2013)). (Tsotsou, 2006) studied the perceived product quality and overall satisfaction on purchase intention. Its study comprises of the survey questionnaire and collected data by simple random sampling from 197 university students in 2004 and after doing lot of tests and analysis the researcher confirmed that there is a positive relationship between product quality and the consumer purchase intention. The study of (Eze, Tan, Yeo, (n.d)) on product quality to find out its influence on the consumer purchase intention involving 215 respondents who are Chinese students having age between 20-23 years also found positive relationship between product quality and consumers' purchase intention. (Irfan Tariq et al. 2013) also demonstrate the positive effect on the purchase intention. This helped us in developing our hypothesis.

Several brands may have the reflectivity and reliability to be considered, but why the one brand is favored to the other brand. Compete the competitor at least with one dimension so the customer prefer your brand in the fast dynamic market like in the mobile market different factors software , model , menu and other factors play vital role in getting advantage in the competition and only one dimension is much better in comparison with the competitor in the market. Customer brand preference is necessary for understanding the consumer choices in the market, work on brand preference is always top priority of the marketers (Horsky et al. 2006).

According to (Louviere, 2000) brand preference can influence the brand choice and customer choice is based on the set of substitute from they make decisions.

D'Souza and Rao,1995	The customer mind toward the brand that depend on consumer belief and thinking that's activated at some time frame	Differentiation BP is based on how consumer differentiate and compare product between available alternatives of Brand
Wu. 2001	the chosen brand is the preferred brand between alternatives	
Hellier etal., 2003	the level which consumer favor the brand on alternative	Biasness the visual evaluation of other brands in market resulting fluctuation in specific brand
Anselmsson et al., 2008	uniqueness is measured by the brand strength and experienced by consumer	
Chang and liu, 2009	consumer willingness toward specific brand	Holistic predisposition is resulted by affective cognitive and behavioral responses.

Table 1

**Reham Shawky brahim, April 2013, "Study of Brand Preference: An Experiential View"*

(Arslan and Altuna, 2010) defined brand image as the positive and negative feeling about the brand when it comes to the mind of the consumers abruptly or when they recall their memories. Brand image is explained by three traits that develop whole image of the brand which are; favorability, strength, and distinctiveness. (Meenaghan, 1995) explains brand image in terms of the attitudes of the consumers about the particular brand which helps to point out thinking of the buyers in the significant way to make the product different from others. (Lee and Wu, 2011) explained the brand image as the overall mind reflection and beliefs about the particular brand by keeping in mind its unique qualities which make it different from the others. (Wu et al, 2008) studied every dimension of the brand image and found the considerable effect on the consumer purchase intention. They collected respondents aging 18 to 40 years in three countries like Taiwan, Japan and Europe. They analyzed the data and confirmed that each dimension of brand image has a positive effect on the level of purchase intention. (Chi et. al, 2008) studied the influence of brand image on consumer purchase intention. They developed 53 questions in six parts to verify that the brand image is significantly and positively related with the purchase intention. (Lin et. al, 2011) studied the relationship between brand image and purchase intention and proved that the brand image has a significant positive relationship with the consumers' purchase intention. (Eze, Tan, Yeo (n.d) researched brand image to find out its influence on the consumer purchase intention. They collected data from Chinese students having age between 20-23 years. They also found and proved that there is positive relationship between brand image and consumer purchase intention.

Consumer loves to buy a specific brand due to its benefits (Keller, 2008). If customer is focused on the price, features and availability of the brand has little equity. If the brand has high prices but customer is sticky to the purchase of the brand for its features, then the brand has high equity. If the brand is not fulfilling the satisfaction level of the consumer, they will not be loyal to the brand and look for another brand (Hong-bumm et al., 2003). A satisfied customer always send message to others about the successful satisfaction regarding brand (Aaker, 1991). "A name, term, sign, symbol or design, or a collaboration of these, that helps to identify the goods and services of one manufacturer or group of business and make it different from competitors" (Bennett, 1995). Brand loyalty shows that consumers continue to buy the brand if brand offer superior features, prices and convenience than its competitors (Aaker, 1991). (Severi and Ling, 2013) explained Brand loyalty as a positive mind set toward brand that moves toward the continuous purchasing of the brand time to time.

Brand is a method of making difference in products of company's good, or services, from their rivals in the market (Kotler, 2009). Brand play vital role for differencing goods and services from those of the competitors (Murphy, 1998). The appearance of brand equity underlies the importance of brand in marketing activities and hence provides useful insights for Management and further research, (Keller, 2003). (Chen and Wang, 2011) explained brand loyalty as indirect promise to re-purchase the stock. It is shown in the results that the motivation of consumers is increased towards purchase intention and it is mentioned that brand loyalty can be enhanced by making durable customer relationship and consumer loyalty programs. Brand loyalty indicates that toward a specific brand there is a positive purchase intention over other competing brands. Brand loyalty is a consequence from highly satisfactory attitudes toward a specific brand (O'Guinn, et al., 2012; Pride, et al., 2012). (Jalilvand, Samiei and Mahdavanja, 2011) Researched purchase intention influenced by brand loyalty Based on 242 observations from multiple respondents they confirmed that brand loyalty has a positive effect on purchase intention. (Chi, Yeh and Yang, 2008) observed 267 respondents through close ended questions to seek the outcomes of brand loyalty on purchase intention. They demonstrated that there is a constructive relationship between brand loyalty and purchase intention. For testing these statements qualitative research is conducted and the hypotheses are generated. Current research studies the factors that affect the purchase intention while purchasing smart phone in the D G Khan market. Four variables brand perception, brand preference; brand loyalty and brand image are selected as a independent variable in the D G Khan smart phone market and see what will be the impact positive or negative on the purchase intention dependent variable of the D G Khan smart phone market.

3. Conceptual Framework of the Study

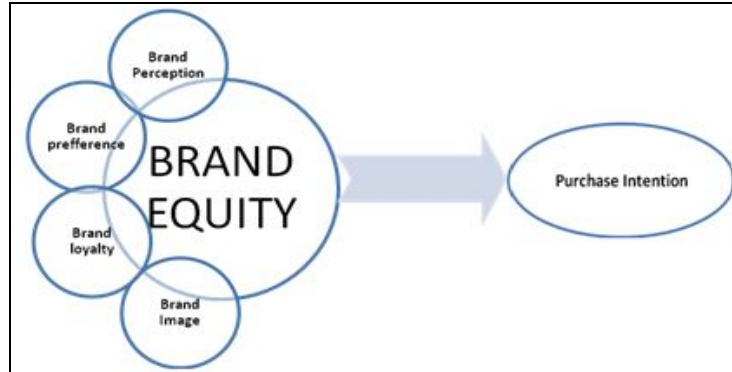


Figure 1

The mostly used equation for the representation of the models is given as,

$$Y_i = \alpha + \beta x_i + \epsilon_i$$

Here is, Y_i represents the dependent variable, α denotes the constant, β is regression coefficient of independent variables, x_i represents the independent variables also called as explanatory variables and ϵ_i denotes the random error. So equation representing our conceptual frame work is given as,

$$PI = \beta_0 + \beta_1(BP) + \beta_2(PR) + \beta_3(BIM) + \beta_4(BL) + \epsilon_i$$

Here is, PI represents the dependent variable Purchase intention, $\beta_1(BP)$ is independent variable and represents the brand preference. $\beta_2(PR)$ is independent variable and represents the brand perception. $\beta_3(BIM)$ represents the independent variable brand image; $\beta_4(BL)$ represents the brand loyalty that is independent variable.

4. Hypothesis

- **H₁:** There is a significant and positive relationship between brands Perception of smart phone on purchase intention at D G Khan Market.
- **H₂:** There is a significant and positive relationship between brand preferences of smart phone on purchase intention at D G Khan Market.
- **H₃:** There is a significant and positive relationship between brands Image of smart phone on purchase intention at D G Khan Market.
- **H₄:** There is a significant and positive relationship between brands Loyalty of smart phone on purchase intention at D G Khan Market.

5. Methodology

Questionnaire were developed for the survey because Chi, Yeh and Yang, (2008) and Jalilvand, Samiei and Mahdavanja (2011) used close ended questions during survey to seek out the results on purchase intention with brand equity so during the survey, 50 questionnaires were distributed to purposively selected mobile phones shops (centers) in D.G Khan. Unfortunately 26 questionnaires were not responded appropriately than again 50 questionnaires were distributed in Bahauddin Zakariya University, Sub campus D.G Khan, Pakistan and University of Agriculture Faisalabad, Sub campus D G Khan, Pakistan and INDUS international University D.G Khan, Pakistan. 22 questionnaires were not considered because of incomplete information. So the analysis was made based on 52 respondents. To find out the relationship of all variables Questionnaires were based on five factors purchase intention, brand perception, brand preference, brand image and brand loyalty. Regression and correlation methods are used to find out the results of all independent variable results on dependent variable.

6. Results and Discussion

6.1. Pearson Correlation Result of the Variables

Results show the correlation between five factors i.e. Brand perception, brand preference, brand image, brand loyalty with the decision to buy a mobile phone device. Accordingly, all factors have a positive and significant relationship with the purchase intention of a mobile phone. However, the degree of correlation among the factors is different with the highest correlation value of Brand Image (0.754) followed by brand loyalty (0.367) brand preference (0.097) and brand perception (0.027) of the mobile phone. The highly correlated factor that influences the decision to acquire a mobile phone is the selling Image of the cellular device. Accordingly, the image of a product is an important factor that cannot be overlooked in a study of purchase intention. Majority of the respondents indicated Image as main consideration when they decide to buy their mobile phone. The variation in mobile price will influence the behavior of individuals to purchase the device based on loyalty. The results of this research study match with the results of other studies conducted in the consumer purchase intention. (Eze, Tan, Yeo (n.d)) worked on brand image to find out its influence on the

consumer purchase intention. Moreover (Lin et. al, 2011) studied the relationship between brand image and purchase intention and proved that the brand image has a significant positive relationship with the consumers purchase intention.

Model	Adjusted R Square	R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.658	.685	.31890

Table 1: Model summary

Correlation		PI	BP	PR	BIM
BP	Pearson Correlation	.097			
PR	Pearson Correlation	.027	.275*		
BIM	Pearson Correlation	.754**	.289*	.084	
BL	Pearson Correlation	.367**	.115	.033	.112

Table 2: Correlation

6.2. Multiple Regressions Analysis

In this study, there are four independent variables namely Brand perception, brand preference, brand image, brand loyalty considered to influence the Purchase intention of mobile phone devices. To test the effects of these variables on the intention to buy a mobile phone device, the study used the multiple regression analysis. The table below shows the multiple regression result between four independent variables and the purchase intention to a mobile phone device in D G Khan. It indicates that all the four independent variables (brand perception, brand preference, brand image, brand loyalty) combined significantly influence the consumers Purchase intention of mobile phone devices. The leading factor is Brand image.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.898	.268		3.354	.002
	BP	.377	.169	.387	2.228	.031
	PR	.349	.157	.386	2.217	.032
	BIM	.447	.050	.754	9.018	.000
	BL	.274	.080	.282	3.422	.001

a. Dependent Variable: PI

Table 3: Coefficients

7. Conclusion & Recommendations

The objective of this research was to investigate the underlying factors that determine the purchase intention of mobile phone devices. According to the study, majority of the consumers own Samsung mobile phones. Moreover, most of Nokia mobile phone users have a plan to shift to other brands such as Samsung, Q mobile and HTC. According to Pearson correlation results, brand image is the dominant factor affecting the intention of customer to buy mobile phone. Secondly, the brand loyalty incorporated in a mobile hand set is the most important factor which is considered by the consumers while purchasing the mobile phone. However, all other influencing factors of mobile phone are not equally important. The other factors equally correlated and have moderate relationships with the decision to buy. This study used multiple regression analysis to test the effects of four independent variables (perception, preference, image, loyalty) on the purchase intention of mobile phone device. All the four independent variables combined significantly influence the purchase intention of mobile phone devices.

Natives involved towards latest technology and like to move from one mobile phone to another if it uses superior technology. To keep in touch with new technologies of mobile, mobile companies should conduct periodic survey. This will help to find out the best combination of features according to the demand of the customers. In turn, product design is also very significant in the

accomplishment of the brand. It is recommended that companies give attention to increasing excellence and affordable mobile phones and spend more time on demanded features to offer it at lower prices.

In current competitive market, android operating software is very familiar in the smart phone users. Marketers should focus on this operating software specially recommended for Nokia. Samsung and Q mobile sales are not bad in D G Khan region. Peoples are brand conscious but little bit price conscious too. They are willing to pay higher and higher to get into the fashion that is based on great differentiation of brand like Samsung, htc and Apple. Peoples love to buy Apple but it's too costly to afford so they move toward Samsung and Q Mobile. Our research shows the factors and their impact on purchase intention so that the big marketers of smart phone could realize the importance of smart phone market in D G Khan region.

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