

The Relationship between Brand Awareness and Repeat Purchases: The Mediating Role of Brand Equity

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Abstract: Background and Aim: This study investigates the impact of brand awareness on repeat purchases, considering the mediating role of brand equity.

Methods: The research method of this article was descriptive-survey based on structural equations. The statistical population of the research included all the customers of Majid sports brand agencies in Tehran, with at least one year experience of using this brand, who were selected as available sampling; Considering the unlimitedness of the statistical population and according to Morgan's table, 384 people were considered as a statistical sample; during which the research questionnaire was distributed and collected in person and online (via social network) in the form of an online questionnaire. Researcher-made questionnaires were used for measuring research variables. Pearson correlation method and structural equation modeling were used for data analysis.

Results: the coefficient of determination (R^2) for brand awareness (0.422) and brand equity (0.640) is significant as per Cohen (1988). Results revealed that brand awareness significantly affected repeat purchases. Moreover, brand awareness significantly affected brand equity. Finally, brand equity has significantly mediated the relationship between brand awareness and repeat purchases.

Conclusion: The factors that cause consumers to gain experiences from the name, visual symbols, logo, character, packaging or brand slogan, including advertising activities and product promotions, public relations, supporting events and social and cultural activities, can achieve familiarity and awareness of the brand elements and their recall and increase the intention to buy that brand, and the more the company can strengthen its brand elements, the better.

Keywords: Brand Awareness, Purchase Repeat, Brand Equity, Mediation, Customer

Introduction

In the current business landscape, organizations excelling across various sectors are increasingly focused on customer retention and loyalty (Atulkar, 2020; Lei, & Chu, 2015). This shift is largely due to the maturity of most markets, heightened competition, and significantly rising costs associated with acquiring new customers (Cooil et al., 2007; Zhang, 2015). Securing customer loyalty is deemed essential for sustaining business operations. Consequently, companies must explore diverse management strategies aimed at enhancing customer loyalty. To prevent customers from gravitating towards competitors, it is imperative for company leaders to gain

a deeper understanding of customer demands and needs, enabling them to effectively address these requirements and foster enduring relationships (Chaudhuri, & Holbrook, 2001; Hegner, & Jevons, 2016; Smith, & Zook, 2011). Research has indicated that an enhancement in perceived quality serves as a precursor to customer satisfaction. Furthermore, contemporary organizations recognize that long-term profitability can only be achieved through repeat purchases from customers. As a result, they consistently strive to streamline the repurchase process for their clientele. Repurchase intention refers to a customer's likelihood of buying from a specific brand again after having previously engaged with it (Huang et al., 2019; Lin et al., 2017).

Brands vary significantly in their market power and perceived value. Some brands remain largely unknown to the majority of consumers, while others enjoy a higher level of recognition among buyers (Alexandris, Zahariadis et al., 2004; Auh et al., 2003). Aaker characterized brand awareness as "the potential buyer's ability to recognize and remember that a brand is a member of a particular product class" (Aaker, 2010; Atulkar, & Kesari, 2017; Chan, & Mansori, 2016). Customer-based brand equity arises when consumers possess substantial awareness and familiarity with a brand, recalling its unique, strong, and appealing attributes and associations. Brand awareness encompasses the capacity to identify and remind potential buyers of a brand's association with a specific product category (Hair et al., 2018; Kapferer, 2008; Mattison et al., 2014; Nazir et al., 2016). Consequently, in the competitive landscape, marketers should prioritize brand management, awareness, and effective communication strategies to engage consumers. When consumers are accustomed to certain product attributes, brands can serve as indicators that assure the validity of the product's claims (Belén et al., 2001; Chien-Hsiung, 2011; González-Mansilla et al., 2019; Ilyas et al., 2020). For effective brand recognition, consumers must differentiate between various brands and the information they have encountered. Brand recall pertains to consumers' ability to retrieve a brand based on product categories and their specific needs or the fundamental information available for this purpose (Keller, 2003, 2008; Komunda, & Osarenkhoe, 2012; Leninkumar, 2017).

In recent years, the global focus on marketing and brand equity has intensified, prompting marketing professionals to address the escalating costs associated with marketing efforts. As a response, they have investigated methods for assessing marketing performance and the return on investment in brand management (Mourad, Ennew, & Kortam, 2010; Vasudevan, & Peter Kumar, 2019; Xie, & Sun, 2021). Furthermore, nations are striving to enhance their development indicators to secure a competitive position in the international arena, thereby bolstering their economies and asserting their influence on the global stage (Affairs, 2019; Berry, 2000; Chen, 2009; Coelho et al., 2018). A customer is defined as an individual who identifies their needs, consumes goods and services, and is prepared to pay a fair price for them. This willingness to incur costs is contingent upon the perceived value of the goods or services received (Erkmen, & Hancer, 2019; Hamid Hawass, 2013; He et al., 2012; Kataria, & Saini, 2019; Kotler et al., 2009). Positive, customer-centric brand equity can subsequently result in increased revenue, reduced costs, and enhanced profits, directly influencing an organization's capacity to make informed decisions regarding product pricing, the effectiveness of marketing communications, and overall business development success (Han et al., 2019; Huaman-Ramirez, & Merunka, 2019; Lehmann, & Srinivasan, 2013; Mckinney, & Benson, 2013). Consequently, the intrinsic value of a brand contributes to its profitability, generating cash flow for the organization and potentially affecting the pricing or demand for comparable goods and services. This study investigates the impact of brand awareness on repeat purchases, considering the mediating role of brand equity.

Methods

The research method of this article was descriptive-survey based on structural equations. It is practical in terms of time and according to the purpose; which is done in the field. The statistical population of the research included all the customers of Majid sports brand agencies in Tehran, with at least one year experience of using this brand, who were selected as available sampling to distribute the questionnaire; Considering the unlimitedness of the statistical population and according to Morgan's table, 384 people were considered as a statistical sample; during which the research questionnaire was distributed and collected in person and online (via social network) in the form of an online questionnaire. A total of 423 questionnaires were answered, and the researcher used 384 as the basis for analysis. Data collection took place in 2021. In total, the research questionnaire consisted of two parts. The first part included the demographic information of the participants and the second part included the brand value and brand awareness questionnaires. It should be noted that repeat purchase was investigated with a question that included "Do you have a desire to repeat purchase from this store?" The research employed a questionnaire consisting of 13 items, which included 7 questions focused on brand awareness (Gómez et al., 2004), 5 questions addressing brand equity (Kataria, & Saini, 2020), and one question related to repeat purchase. A five-point Likert scale was implemented for responses.

We utilized SPSS-26 and Smart PLS software to analyze the data. Pearson correlation test was conducted to assess the relationships between the variables. The structural equation method was applied to investigate the

impact of brand awareness on repeat purchases, considering the mediating role of brand equity. The significance level was set at $P < 0.05$.

Results

Partial Least Squares - Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was employed to conduct the data analysis. Reliability and validity serve as the two key criteria for evaluating the outer model (Delgado-Ballester, & Luis Munuera-Alemán, 2001). The findings related to convergent validity are presented in Table 1, while the results concerning discriminant validity are displayed in Table 2. In summary, both convergent and discriminant validity were successfully established (Hassali et al., 2015).

Table 1. Convergent Validity

Construct	Items	Loading	AVE	Alpha	CR
Brand Awareness	BA1	0.758	0.593	0.894	0.992
	BA2	0.802			
	BA3	0.935			
	BA4	0.847			
	BA5	0.775			
	BA6	0.859			
	BA7	0.721			
Repeat Purchase	RP1	0.719	0.691	0.857	0.925
Brand Equity	BE1	0.768	0.695	0.858	0.920
	BE2	0.885			
	BE3	0.936			
	BE4	0.779			
	BE5	0.728			

Table 2. Discriminant Validity

	1	2	3
1. Brand Awareness	0.758		
2. Repeat Purchase	0.625	0.827	
3. Brand Equity	0.660	0.793	0.810

The subsequent phase following the evaluation of reliability and validity involves the assessment of the inner model. The analysis results indicated that the coefficient of determination (R^2) for brand awareness (0.422) and brand equity (0.640) is significant as per Cohen (1988). The findings related to bootstrapping and the path coefficients of the proposed relationships are presented in Table 3 and Table 4. The findings presented in Tables 3 and 4 indicate that brand equity has significantly mediated the relationship between brand awareness and repeat purchase.

Table 3. Path Coefficient

Path	Std. Beta	SE	t-Value	P-value
Brand awareness => Repeat purchase	0.221	0.056	3.48	<0.001
Brand awareness => Brand equity	0.669	0.041	16.27	<0.001
Brand equity => Repeat purchase	0.638	0.051	12.69	<0.001

Table 4. Path Coefficient of Mediation

Relationship	Brand Awareness => Brand Equity => Repeat Purchase
Path α	0.668
Path β	0.658
Indirect Effect	0.429
Stander Error	0.054
T-Value	7.896***
P-Value	<0.001

Discussion

This study investigates the impact of brand awareness on repeat purchases, considering the mediating role of brand equity. Results revealed that brand awareness significantly affected repeat purchases. Moreover, brand awareness significantly affected brand equity. Finally, brand equity has significantly mediated the relationship between brand awareness and repeat purchases.

Brand awareness leads to brand recall; On the other hand, considering the fierce competition that exists between different brands today, brand awareness is considered an important issue that can be strengthened through awareness of advertisements (Khawaja et al., 2021; Ledikwe, 2020; Li et al., 2012). Awareness of brand advertising adds to the company's value in two ways. First, it attracts new customers by developing and focusing awareness and knowledge, but then it reminds current customers to think about the company and do this in a good way. In the second case, the concept of promoting the relationship with the brand becomes meaningful (Omoregie et al., 2019; van der Westhuizen, 2018). The brand can be described as a mechanism to commit the buyer and seller in a long-term relationship and define an essential role for it in creating this relationship. In fact, if a brand has no meaning (value) for consumers, it will also be meaningless for investors, manufacturers or retailers. Hence, brand awareness can be used as a defensive marketing tool to retain existing customers as well as act as an aggressive marketing tool to acquire new customers (Alhaddad, 2015; Brakus et al., 2009; Chiou et al., 2002). In fact, it can be said that by increasing customer awareness of the brand and strengthening the brand image in the customer's mind, the value of these brands also increases, and this value creation leads to purchase. A strong brand brings many benefits for manufacturing companies, among which there are things such as increased customer loyalty, increased profit margin, more positive reaction of customers to price changes, the use of the name and logo and the opportunities for brand development were pointed out (del Bosque, & Martín, 2008). When there is awareness of advertising, this brand unconsciously becomes valuable for the customer; And sometimes the customer even loves this brand because the customer knows the brand well and has comprehensive and complete information about the brand and also this brand reminds the person of good memories (Chinomona, 2016; Dimitriadis, 2006). Due to its high reputation in the world markets, the brand will gain more fans than the present if it is properly introduced in Iran through continuous advertising. In fact, it can be said that by increasing the awareness of the customers about the brand and strengthening the image of the brand in the mind of the customer, the value of these brands also increases for the customer; And this value creation leads to buying the brand. Allocating costs for advertising and a good image of the store that supplies the product can affect the value creation for the brand. Advertisements create brand interest and perception among customers, and also improve strategic management and profitability for product sponsors (Chiou, & Pan, 2009; Holt, 2002). This shows that advertising and spending money for it can have a double advantage for manufacturers, because it both improves the organization's strategic management and attracts customers through self-introduction and creating needs. It is very important to pay attention and emphasize on the issue of brand and its management in products, which are supplied by many companies around the world today. A powerful brand brings many benefits for manufacturing companies; Among them, we can mention things like more customer loyalty, increasing the organization's power in critical situations, more profit margin, more positive reaction of customers to price changes, sales benefits, use of name and logo, and brand development opportunities (Darsono, & Junaedi, 2006; Macdonald, & Sharp, 2000). It can be said that these image creations in the brand of products for each producing country as a standard product cause customers to prefer and buy brand over other well-known brands and other lesser-known brands; This result can be a very important point for the producers of products of any country. Brand awareness is considered as a risk reduction strategy for buyers, and reducing the risk in the performance of a product should be one of the main challenges of retailers in retail brand management (Armstrong et al., 2020; Khodadad Hosseini, & Behboudi, 2017). Therefore, shopping centers should reduce the perceived functional risk of the store brand by improving the image and attitude of consumers. Companies should do this not only by providing store branding throughout the mall, but also by investing in advertising and informal control of the shopping experience. Also, providing high quality and reliable products and giving warranty for customers and using packaging that can be reused in another way after consumption will reduce the functional risk of the consumer. In order to compete well with manufacturing brands, retail brands must seek to acquire a high level of identity. A high level of identity is very important for retailers because brand identity is necessary for true brand loyalty (Boenigk, & Helmig, 2013; Kumar Mishra et al., 2016). When consumers feel valued towards retail brands, they identify with them. Therefore, in order to increase the perceived value, retailers should reduce the functional risk of store brands by investing more in consumer awareness, and the more efforts are made in this field, the more identity and satisfaction consumers will receive with retail brands. The effect of brand awareness on store brand identity brings this important point that companies, especially food companies whose competition in their industry is very intense, should pay more attention to the concept of brand identity and attach more importance to it. Brand identity is formed by the company that owns the brand and grows by its customers. Companies should not use the brand only to create awareness, but investments in the field of brand should pay special attention to the development of brand identity in the eyes of customers (Grisaffe, & Nguyen, 2011; Nam et al., 2011; Rubio et al., 2017).

Limitations

Researchers always face limitations in their research. One of the main elements of research is access to statistics and information and the inherent limitation of the questionnaire, which cannot deeply enter the attitudes and thoughts of the respondents. In this context, there are problems that have made research services such as access to books, magazines, statistics, databases, etc. not easily possible in the country. Part of this problem is caused by the lack or lack of any of the above research services, and on the other hand, wrong culture has caused these cases to be considered private, and as a result, individuals and institutions refuse to communicate their findings to others. On the other hand, unwanted variables that may be the result of special designs and methods used in research often jeopardize the internal and external validity of the research in different ways. It should be known that in behavioral science research, it is impossible to control or completely eliminate these types of factors, but in any case, researchers try to predict, identify, and take all necessary precautions to reduce these factors as much as possible. They use Also, this research may obtain other results in other influential service companies. Therefore, it is recommended to carry out this research in other companies so that valuable results can be obtained by analyzing the results of this research.

Conclusion

Finally, it can be concluded that the factors that cause consumers to gain experiences from the name, visual symbols, logo, character, packaging or brand slogan, including advertising activities and product promotions, public relations, supporting events and social and cultural activities, can achieve familiarity and awareness of the brand elements and their recall and increase the intention to buy that brand, and the more the company can strengthen its brand elements, the better. Therefore, benefiting from this capacity increases the company's competitive power, and the results of this research confirm that brand awareness has the ability to influence, create opportunities and ideas, and ultimately business success. In the end, according to the results of the research, company managers and marketers should attach more importance to brand awareness, and use its visual appeal to evoke and recall their brand in order to retain existing customers while benefiting from its financial benefits. Get new customers.

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