

# Analyzing the mediating role of Brand association for Brand awareness and loyalty

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## Abstract

Brands are of top priority and interest for many companies and marketing Professionals. Marketing managers are continuously realizing the power of the brands. In today's competitive environment measuring the exact association of brands is most desirable goal for the organizations. The aim of research is to test empirically the mediating role of brand association for brand awareness and brand loyalty of customers and non-customers. In order to investigate the mediating role of the brand association for customers and non-customers, primary data were collected through a survey from both customers and non-customers of a mobile phone. Findings of the study confirm the mediating role of the brand association for awareness and loyalty for both customers and non-customers. Statistical Results show that Brand associations mediating role does not differ for customers and non-customers, across the product categories whereas the level of the association influences the level of the loyalty for a product.

## INTRODUCTION

Brand association is a one element from category of a brand elements; it includes having loop in the memory for a brand. It is also an informational nod linked to brand nod, which has specific meaning of the brand for a customer. The brand association is important for both, the customer and the company. Companies use brands for different reasons i.e. product differentiation, positioning, positive attitude and sharing the benefits of using of a particular brand. For Customers brand association is useful in making purchase decision and enjoying the various benefits of the brand (Aaker, 1991 and Keller, 1998). A better understanding of brand association as mediating variable between the brand awareness and association is needed for further theoretical and practical implementations; and measurements. Many companies are in efforts to make strong brands because they realize the approach customer perceive brands is an important for the business successful life; and business and customer relationship (Alden et al., 1999; Kirmani et al., 1999; Erdem, 1998, (Fournier, 1998, (Morris, 1996 ). Brand association is anything that is related to the memory of the brand. There are three constructs that are related to brand association these are image, perception and attitude. These are selected as possible indicators of brand association. These are most commonly cited, reliable and discussed frequently in previous research. Brand image is an emotional perception; attitude is an evaluation of the brand, whereas, perceived quality is consumer's judgment.

## LITERATURE

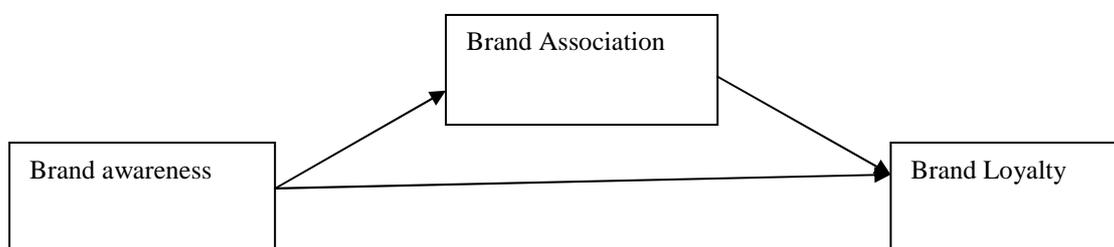
A number of researches have analyzed to some extent a few aspects of consumer brand association, these researches have not compared the association of elements for customers and non-customers of brand association with brand awareness and loyalty. Hence their results are not comparable and generalize able with various sectors. Studies also do not discuss how to develop a general concept of the brand association, but have explained in detail general approaches and theoretical aspects which are either enhancing or diminishing a few constructs of brand association. Hence proposed by this study multidimensional conceptualization of brand association has not been tested theoretically and empirically in this sector.

Although, there is importance of brands and consumer's perception about a brand; yet there is no any specific technique to assess the consumer's perception about a brand. To address this, researcher scholars have done conceptual treatment of the brands and related issues to brands. Consumer's perception about a brand is consumer's knowledge about a brand that is based on brand awareness (i.e. recognition and recall) and brand image. Brand awareness become a common perception for a brand and is presented by brand association. For a consumer memory there is always some perception about a brand. Consumer memory develops association about

a brand and association develops perception about a brand quality. Consumer's perception about the quality of a brand develops attitude about a brand; consumer positive attitude about a brand becomes loyalty for a brand. Brand association actually develops link in memory of a customer and this link in memory is further stronger by positive attitude about a brand (Keller (1993; 1998; Aaker 1991, 1996). Consumer perceptions about a brand are multidimensional but many dimensions are similar. Consumers have also psychological perceptions about a brand, this concept still do not have empirical support. It is also difficult to determine that there are various dimensions (multi-dimensional) of brand or there is simple indicator (one-dimensional) of brand.

There is importance of brands for many organizations. Organizations are trying to measure perceptions of brands, such as brand association because to know the association of brands is one of the prime aims of most firms. Firms want to know not only a single factor for measuring brand association which may be related to various brands in various products with multiple markets as the lack of straight forward approach for measuring brands in habits abilities of differentiating, positioning and extending brands. It is inconvenient, to use one scale like personality for all brands in products categories (Aaker, 1996, Dyson et al., 1996)

### HYPOTHESIS AND CONCEPTUAL MODEL



**H1:** Brand awareness has effect on brand loyalty for customers and non-customers.

**H2:** Brand association mediates the relationship between brand awareness and association for customers and non-customers.

### OBJECTIVES

The objective of this study is to provide theoretical and empirical measurement related to variables brand association, awareness and loyalty, based on proposed conceptual model. Study Explores the direct relationship between brand Awareness and loyalty; and mediating role of brand association between brand awareness and loyalty for customers and non-customers.

### METHODOLOGY

In order to test the mediating role of brand association for brand awareness and association, primary data were collected through closed ended questionnaire, adopted from various studies. Collected data were analyzed using spss. The samples setting for the study were customers and non-customers of a product. In order to achieve maximum response questionnaires were self-administered among customers and non-customers. Results of analysis are discussed in data analysis section.

### DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

	Customers		Non-customers	
	Brand association	Brand loyalty	Brand association	Brand loyalty
DG1	-.231	-.143	.081	-.006
DG2	.022	.016	.039	.001
DG3	.096	-.003	.091	-.028
DG4	-.020	.001	-.082	-.016
Brand Awareness	.263***	.802***	.179**	.668***
R-square	.090	.650	.049	.461

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level.

The results of the table show that there is strong correlation between brand awareness, association and loyalty. This correlation is significant in case of customers and non-customers.

Customers						
Antecedents	Brand association			Brand loyalty		
	Beta	Error	P-value	Beta	Error	P-value
Brand awareness*	.166	.039	.000	.742	.037	.000
Brand association	--	--	--	.225	.059	.002
	R <sup>2</sup> =.089 F(7, 245)=3.44, P<.0015			R <sup>2</sup> =.669 F(8, 244)=61.78, P<.000		
Non-customers						
Antecedents	Brand association			Brand loyalty		
	Beta	Error	P-value	Beta	Error	P-value
Brand awareness*	.119	.0427	.005	.6319	.0470	.000
Brand association	--	--	--	.3417	.0695	.000
	R <sup>2</sup> =.049 F(7, 243)=1.79, P<.05			R <sup>2</sup> =.509 F(8, 242)=31.43, P<.000		

\*Brand association partially mediates the relation between social brand awareness and Brand Loyalty for customers.

\*Brand association partially mediates the relation between brand awareness and Brand Loyalty for non-customers

The results of table show that brand association partially mediates the relationship between awareness and association for customers. Further brand awareness also mediates the relationship between awareness and association for non-customers.

## CONCLUSION

Brands have importance for many organizations. Organizations are facing frustration in measuring brand perceptions like awareness, association and loyalty. Results of this empirical study offer valuable suggestions and practices for marketers and managers. Although more comprehensive measure of brand would be by consumer on consumer, using in depth interviews yet study shows that brand association partially mediates the relationship between brand awareness and association for both customers and non-customers. Brand awareness has direct and indirect effect on brand loyalty for both customers and non-customers. This type of effect is in both case of customers and non-customers. Results show that there is correlation between awareness, association and loyalty for customers and non-customers. The most interesting result of the study brands association for many products is similar for consumers and non-customers of a product especially for mobile phones.

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