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Determinants of Brand Equity (Consumer Base Brand Equity): A Verification Approach on Mobile Sector

Zia-ur-Rehman	Lecturer, Department of Business Administration, Ghazi University, Dera Ghazi Khan, Punjab, Pakistan.
Shahid Rasool	Principal, Punjab Group of Colleges, Taunsa Sharif, Punjab, Pakistan.
Sharmeen Ramzan	M.Phil. Scholar, Department of Sociology, Ghazi University, Dera Ghazi Khan, Punjab, Pakistan.
Sara Iftikhar	Ph.D. Scholar, Department of Business Administration, Ghazi University, Dera Ghazi Khan, Punjab, Pakistan.
Muhammad Aqtab Ahmad	Ph.D. Scholar, Department of Business Administration, Ghazi University, Dera Ghazi Khan, Punjab, Pakistan.

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Corresponding Author:

Zia-ur-Rehman
Email: zrehman@gudgk.edu.pk

Abstract: *Brand equity is an essential concept in marketing, representing the intangible value of an organization's brand. This study focuses on the mobile industry in Punjab, Pakistan, analyzing four determinants of brand equity: brand awareness, brand association, perceived quality, and brand loyalty. Conveniently sampling 350 respondents from major cities in Punjab, with a response rate of 94%, the research establishes four hypotheses. Data analysis, based on 34 items and utilizing Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .854, reveals that brand awareness and brand association have a positive and significant impact on brand equity. However, perceived quality has a negative and significant impact, while brand loyalty has a negative and insignificant impact. Notably, brand awareness emerges as the most influential determinant of brand equity in the mobile sector.*

Introduction

Businesses prioritize creating long-lasting and lucrative connections with clients above everything else in today's dynamic and demanding climate. Conventional marketing has traditionally focused on growing the client base and boosting revenue, but today's viewpoint has evolved, and new opportunities have become available for commercial strategists. All firms have experienced this shift in mindset and posture, and insurance service brands are no exception (Altaf et al., 2017; Kumar & Khan, 2023). Customers now pay extra to purchase goods from recognized brands and want these businesses to provide services. The more customers value the brand, the more the business may profit from it. One of the resources that will maintain the company's value is brand equity, which gives it a competitive edge over rivals and draws in and retains consumers Usaki & Baloglu, 2011; Riaz et al., 2023).

Determining the elements that may impact a brand's particular value is crucial. Brand loyalty is another widely recognized and well-understood marketing idea. Because loyal consumers don't need intensive marketing efforts, it plays a significant role in generating long-lasting benefits for the company (Clottey et al., 2008; Arshad et al., 2022). By encouraging brand loyalty, businesses may increase their market share since devoted consumers utilize the brand often and rebuff rivals' and marketing efforts (Yoo et al., 2009; Hayat et al., 2022; Faisal & Iqbal, 2023). Brand loyalty is described as a consumer's firm intention to purchase a particular brand in the future, such that meaning will persist throughout situational impacts and marketing efforts that alter behaviors. Numerous studies have highlighted the brand loyalty variable's direct influence on brand equity and presented it as a factor determining brand equity (Im et al., 2012; Iqbal et al., 2023; Riaz et al., 2023; Usaki & Baloglu, 2011)

Conversely, a customer's consideration of an array of brands is connected with the superiority of the BA of a particular brand (Moisescu, 2009; Kousar & Shafiq, 2023; Kumar & Khan, 2023). Customers are likelier to choose their favorite brands over competitors' 2006's Dimitriades. According to Cooil et al. (2007), many brand recognition surveys analyze consumer outcomes after considering reviews, brand, and sustainability. This is vital to the market's performance. Although previous researchers examined the relationship between BA and BE, there have also been several uncommon investigations on the impact of BA on the relationship between brand equity and loyalty (Mastoi, 2022; Nosheen & Danyal, 2022; Ramzan et al., 2023). This research will provide information to the body of literature on the topic by identifying the relationship between brand awareness, brand association, perceived quality, and brand loyalty with brand equity.

Brand equity is based upon the various determinants; the edifice of the brand equity is based upon the various determinants of the brand equity, which are later on measured. The focus of this research is to find out which determinants and how much these determinants have the most impact on brand equity. Fundamentally there are lots of determinants of brand equity, but for this research, select the four major determinants which are presented by Aakar. These determinants are perceived quality, brand loyalty, brand awareness, and brand association. In this research, the researcher tries to find out the major determinants putting a huge impact on brand equity in the mind of the mobile industry customer.

This research focuses on finding out the impact of perceived quality, brand awareness, brand associations, and brand loyalty on brand equity. Although previous study exists in different sector of the economy in different country, very little evidence is found in Punjab regarding this study. So, this study is going to add new evidence in mobile phone industries regarding the determinant of brand equity in the region of Punjab. This research is going to conduct in Punjab, and the mobile sector is open the new way of learning for the students and also the policymakers of the mobile phone sector. Through this research lot of people get benefits from those are having an interest in marketing. At the end of this result, readers come to know about that which determinant has a strong impact on brand equity. According to the researcher's opinion, determinants of brand equity change with the changing of sector or industry.

Literature Review

Brand Awareness and Brand Equity

Theoretical and practical findings from past research investigations support the beneficial correlations between BA and market awareness. BE and brand awareness are inextricably related since BA helps a brand stay top-of-mind in customers' memories and thoughts (Aaker, 1991; Arshad et al., 2022; Riaz et al., 2023). The requirement to assess BE and brand awareness in kind has since been shown by studies (Aaker, 1996; Hayat et al., 2022; Faisal & Iqbal, 2023). Brand recognition is the first and most crucial characteristic of a customer's brand (Tong & Hawley, 2009; Kousar & Shafiq, 2023; Kumar & Khan, 2023). Brand awareness drives BE growth in the client's mindset (Huang & Sarigollu, 2011; Mastoi, 2022; Nosheen & Danyal, 2022; Ramzan et al., 2023). There are some customer knowledge and approach characteristics in it.

H1: Brand awareness has a positive influence on brand equity.

Brand Association and Brand Equity

Strong and favorable associations support a successful brand. Brand equity is under leverage, mainly because of the relationship with the brand (Bridges et al., 2000; Ali & Shams, 2023). Additionally, Yoo et al. (2000) and Atilgan et al. (2005) said brand loyalty involves creating a powerful brand connection.

H2: Brand Association has a positive impact on brand Equity.

Brand Loyalty and Brand Equity

Brand loyalty has been identified as a significant comparable component of brand equity, considering the long-term competitive advantage in a particular sector (Subramaniam et al., 2014; Shafiq et al., 2023). According to Rios and Riquelme (2008) and Rauyruen et al. (2009), brand loyalty is a significant element of brand equity. Brand loyalty has been examined as a critical influencing element on brand equity, and it has been found that it aids in spreading brand equity in a cutthroat market. In the context of loyalty, the specific customer is ready to pay at a set price and doesn't have a high switching cost to other brands. Because of this, businesses must promote competition while bolstering the qualities that encourage brand loyalty and enhancing their brand equity (Mishra & Datta, 2011; Roshana et al., 2023).

H3: Brand Loyalty has a positive association with Brand Equity.

Perceived Quality and Brand Equity

According to Dodds et al. (1991), brand equity may favorably impact consumer perception of quality: customers may believe a well-known brand has higher-than-average quality products. According to Liu et al. (2015), brand awareness affects how quality is viewed.

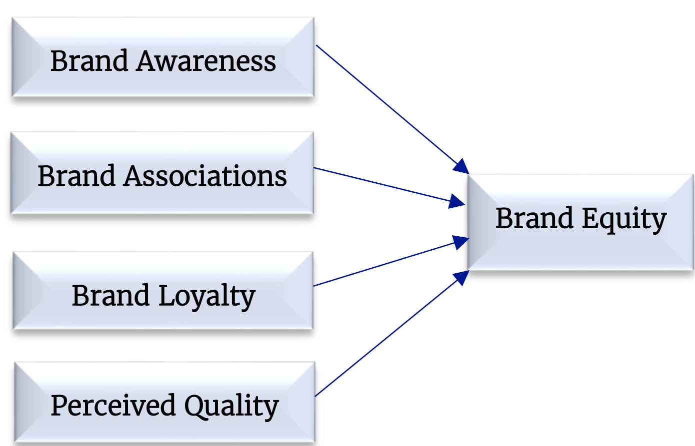
The ability of the customer to identify and recall the name of the merchant will contribute to awareness in the case of purchasing (Hartman and Spiro, 2005; Hayyat et al., 2023). Store perceived quality is "the consumer's assessment of the uniqueness or perfection of a retailer," according to Pappu and Quester (2006b).

H4: Perceived Quality has a positive connection with Brand Equity.

Conceptual Framework

The idea of brand equity has a lot of dimensions and a perplexing wonder, a few measurements of which have been experimentally tried in writing. Among a few brand equity models in writing, we have picked that built by Aaker (1991), which is given below. This model was tested in different fields and industries and also had a lot of determinants. In this research, the researcher picks four determinants as an independent variable. The most basic parts of which include the measurements' confirmation on which the mark value is based.

According to the figure which is given below, the researcher developed a model which is derived from the Aaker theory. According to this model, there are four measurements of brand equity. On the basis of these measurements, the results find out, and these measurements are an integral part of this study.



Material &Methods

This research is done in the area of Pakistan in major cities of Punjab by convenience sampling. A simple convenience sampling method was utilized, and Later around 350 questionnaires were circulated in all the major cities of Pakistan, and 334 were gotten back, from which 16 were inadequate, so they were canceled and not considered for the study. The response rate was 95.42%, of which 18.73% were female, and 81.27% were male respondents.

A questionnaire was designed having 34 items to find out the exact response of the people about the determinants of brand equity.

Data Description

The main focus of the research is to find out the determinant of brand equity and also the effect of determinants on brand equity in the mobile sector, commonly in Islamabad, Lahore, Karachi, Faisalabad, Sargodha, Multan, and also in district Layyah the major focus in Punjab. This research determines and investigate determinants of brand equity study states that these four are the major determinant of brand equity, and among these four, which one has the major effect on the brand equity of the most rapidly changing industry of mobile phones brands?

Methodology

This questionnaire is divided into four major parts. The main parts of that instrument to gather demographic data consists of age and gender information. For collecting the information, data coding is adjusted in a way that female=0 and male=1 and their age 40-50=4, 30-40=3, 20-30=2 and 13-19=1 and serial number is assigned to each questionnaire. The total number of respondents is 315. Of the 315 respondents, approximately 81% were male, and 19% were female. From all of Pakistan, 7% of respondents were from Islamabad, 5.5% from Karachi, 7% from Lahore, 8% from Faisalabad, 6% from Sargodha, 17% from Multan, and 34% from Layyah. For analyzing the research, five-point Likert-scales are planned.

The second segment of the questionnaire contains 34 five-point Likert-scale contains questions of dependent and independent variables. Extents scale is developed for analyzing these questions.1=Strongly Disagree; 2=Disagree; 3=Neutral; 4=Agree; and 5=Strongly Agree. These questions measured with the help of five Likert scales contain a higher value showing a positive attitude, and lower value showing a negative disposition and a middle-value work as neutral.

Data Analysis Techniques

The results were computed and subjected to three statistical tests. For instance, Cronbach's alpha assesses the data's dependability. The Pearson correlation test examined the inter-correlation between the independent and dependent variables. To calculate the direct and mediated effects of the variables as predicted in the research, linear and multiple regression tests are utilized. These evaluations are run on the gathered data using the statistical tool SPSS 20.0, which stands for Statistical Tool for Social Scientists.

Data Analysis

Frequency Analysis

Results show that out of three hundred and fifteen respondents from the whole of Pakistan, 256 are males representing 81%, and 59 are females representing 19% of the total respondent. This is only because the female is reluctant to show interest in responding to these types of research.

Major seven cities are included in this study from the whole of Pakistan, and most researcher intention to focus on Layyah. Of the 315 respondents, 109 belong to Layyah, representing 34.6%, 16 from Faisalabad, representing 5.1%, 53 from Multan, representing 16.8%, 19 from Sargodha representing 6%, 21 from Lahore representing 6.7%, 16 from Islamabad, 17 from Karachi, and 55 from the other cities.

The frequency of age, out of the three hundred and fifteen respondents, eighty respondents are lying in age between 13 to 19 years representing 25%, two hundred and nineteen are between the age of 20 to 30, representing 69.5%. Just fourteen are between the age of 30 to 40, representing 6%, and only two respondents are above forty, representing just .6% out of the whole respondent.

Results show that in the occupational background of the research, out of whole respondents, most students responded very well, the numerically 85% representation is made by the student, 10% response rate made by the job holder, and 2% from the businessman, and other people response rate are just 1.6%.

The frequency of the mobile user shows that still mostly a user of Nokia is present around about 50% share of the market captured by Nokia, by getting the first mover advantages through brand awareness and also by the brand associations.

Reliability Analysis

The internal consistency of each independent variable was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha. The value of .711, which is close to .7, indicates that the first variable, consisting of four items, is consistent with the overall model. Therefore, the results of this variable are reliable. Similarly, the second independent variable yielded a Cronbach's Alpha value of .792, with a total of 16 items, reinforcing the reliability of the model. The third variable's internal consistency, presented in the table, is demonstrated by a Cronbach's Alpha value of .752, and the variable comprises five items. This finding further supports the model's reliability. In the case of the fourth independent variable, brand loyalty, the obtained table displays a result of .755, indicating a favorable level of loyalty within the model. This variable consists of four items. Finally, the dependent variable, brand equity, exhibits a Cronbach's Alpha value of .718, signifying strong internal consistency within the instrument. Consequently, based on this value, the dependent variable can be considered highly reliable.

Table 1

Reliability Statistics

Variable	Reliability	No. of Items
Brand Awareness	.711	4
Brand Association	.792	16
Perceived Quality	.752	5
Brand Loyalty	.755	4
Brand Equity	.718	5

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics

Variables	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Brand Awareness	315	3.00	5.00	4.2278	.48699
Brand Association	315	1.94	4.81	3.6290	.53121
Perceived Quality	315	1.40	5.00	3.7994	.74312
Brand Loyalty	315	1.25	5.00	3.4897	.91568
Brand Equity	315	3.20	5.00	4.2679	.45717
Valid N (listwise)	315				

Correlation Analysis

Correlation is a statistical measure of how two variables move in relation to each other. The range of correlation analysis is between -1 to +1. This means that positive and negative correlations. This analysis shows how one variable correlate to the other variable, the change in one variable made how much change in the other variable, either positive movement or negative. If the value shows negative results, then the movement of the variable is negative and negatively correlates, and vice versa. If the result shows a 0 value, it means there is no correlation between the variables. Perfectly correlated variables case is so rare. From the results of the above table, the values show that there is a positive and as well as negative relation between the variables. This is because of the rapid change in cell phone technology and features. From the above table, brand equity and brand awareness shows a positive relationship and also show significant values. If we check the values of brand equity and brand association, there is a positive but significant relationship between the variables. The above table shows that brand equity and perceived quality is a negative relationship but are significant, and last, brand loyalty is a negative and insignificant relationship with brand equity. Now in the next variable, brand awareness, if there is no brand awareness, then the relationship between brand association, perceived quality, and brand loyalty with the brand equity is weak, which means when people did not aware of the brand, then how it could be possible that they perceive value or loyal with the brand. If people are associated with the brand, then research shows that they have a positive and significant relationship with perceived quality and brand loyalty. According to this research, results show that more perceived quality made more loyalty to the customer.

Table 3

Correlation Analysis

		MBE	MBAw	MBAs	MPQ	MBL
Brand Equity	Pearson Correlation	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000				
Brand Awareness	Pearson Correlation	0.377**	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000				
Brand Associations	Pearson Correlation	0.101	-0.058	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.072	0.304			
Perceived Quality	Pearson Correlation	-0.077	-0.133*	0.612**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.174	0.018	0.000		
Brand Loyalty	Pearson Correlation	0.013	-0.042	0.571**	0.507**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.822	0.453	0.000	0.000	

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Regression Analysis

The regression analysis; through this analysis, an equation generates to describe the statistical relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable. Through this regression analysis, researchers find out the continuity of the dependent variables with respect to a number of independent variables. The cause-and-effect relationship is measured through regression analysis. This analysis defines that if X is the independent variable and Y is dependent, then we can say that X predicts the Y, not the X causes Y. values of the above table shows the significant result. The above table shows that there is a strong relationship exists among the variables, which shows the dependent variable strength with respect to the independent variable. $\boldsymbol{Y} = \boldsymbol{a} + \boldsymbol{b}(\boldsymbol{x})$

Table 4

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. An error in the Estimate
1	.417 a	.174	0.163	0.41813

a. Predictors: (Constant), MBL, MBAw, MPQ, MBAs

The above table shows that 41% of relationships exist between the independent and dependent variables. The value of R square shows that this model presents the 17% results to the dependent variable. By dividing this explained variance by the total variance of the dependent variable, we arrive at the proportion of the total variance that is accounted for by the regression equation. This proportion varies between 0 and 1 and is symbolized by R^2 (R Square).

Table 5

Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
	(Constant)	2.490	0.275		9.048	.000
	MBAw	0.346	0.049	.368	7.063	.000
1	MBAs	0.201	0.061	.234	3.311	.001
	MPQ	-0.098	0.042	-.159	-2.337	.020
	MBL	-0.012	0.032	-.025	-.382	.703

a. Dependent Variable: MBE

The above table explains the standardized Beta coefficients that show the contributions of each variable to the model. Beta shows that the rate of change in the dependent variable due to one unit change in the independent variable. The t and p values showed whether the impact of the independent variables on the dependent variable is significant or not. The largest t value in the above table is (t= 7.063), and the corresponding beta value is .368, which means that brand awareness has the strongest influence on brand equity and is significant. So, there is a positive and significant relationship between brand equity and brand awareness. The results show that there is one unit change in an independent variable changes up to .368 independent variable. Thus, our hypothesis (H1, brand awareness is directly associated with brand equity) is accepted.

The value of the beta of brand associations is .234, which means there is a positive and significant relationship between brand associations and brand equity. It also means that our hypothesis (H2, brand awareness is directly associated with brand equity) is accepted. The beta value of the perceived quality is -.159 and shows a significant relationship with brand equity. The value of brand loyalty is -.025, showing a negative and insignificant relationship with brand equity. Here (H0, brand loyalty does not positively associate with brand equity) are accepted. The regression analysis shows that our three hypotheses are accepted, and one hypothesis is rejected.

Table 6

ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Regression	11.429	4	2.857	16.343	.000[b]
1	Residual	54.197	310	.175		
	Total	65.626	314			

a. Dependent Variable: MBE

b. Predictors: (Constant), MBL, MBAw, MPQ, MBAs

The above table presents the ANOVA report on the general significance of the model. As p is less than 0.05, the model is significant. Thus, among the combination of the four variables, three variables significantly predict the dependent variable. ($F= 16.343$; $p < 0.05$)

Conclusion and Discussion

This research is conducted to find out the determinants of brand equity in the mobile phone industry and also put their intentions towards the brand. The mobile sector industry is fast moving and rapidly changing industry as compared to the other industry. Being a researcher explores the behavior and attitude of people toward mobile phone brands and how they perceive them.

In this research, the researcher finds out the brand equity and the also concept of brand equity in the mind of the mobile users and also about the company. For this research, researchers used the Aaker theory of brand equity. According to this theory, there are four major determinants of brand equity, perceived quality, brand awareness, brand association, and brand loyalty, and these four act as independent variables, and brand equity is a dependent variable. Through this research regarding the cell phone company, the researcher concluded that as compared to the other brand, the behavior of the people is changed with the new technology. People do not stay on a single brand. For creating brand equity, research shows that brand awareness is the strongest determinant for building up brand equity as compared to the other three determinants. On the basis of awareness, they associate with the brand. When they associate with the brand, then the customer perceives quality and later on the loyal to the brand. The mobile phone industry is the most changing industry due to new technology and new features and software versions, so switching is very common, so people, if not aware, they do not loyal to the brand.

Finally, the researcher concludes from this research the behavior of the young generation as compared to the old age people towards the mobile phones brand is so dynamic because they found of the latest technology and latest featured cell phones, so that is why only the young people show their interest in this research because they know very well the benefits of the brand as compared to the non-brand items. So that is why their switching power is so much high regarding cell phones. In this male research response rate is four times more as compared to the females because of the culture of Pakistan. And also, the young generation's response is high because they know well about the brand as compared to the other respondent. This research consists of only the cell phone industry. This industry is a rapidly growing industry. This study concludes that still fifty percent of people are used Nokia cell phones due to their loyalty, and now the company of Nokia was purchased by Microsoft. This is a huge loss for the company. In Pakistan, there is a huge market share captured by the Nokia Company due to the old technology. Now it is out of the industry. For this research, the researcher tries to capture the whole of Pakistan, but due to a lack of reference researcher used only convenience sampling to complete this research. Most respondent is from Layyah, and a small portion of the other city respondent are captured to cover the aspects of this study.

The result of this research shows significant values; from the result of this study is mentioned that the value of Alpha is .854, which shows the significance of the study. The result of the model summary shows that model is the best fit. From this research regarding the cell phone industry, two independent variables, brand awareness and brand associations, show a positive and significant relationship, perceived quality shows a negative and significant relationship, and brand loyalty shows a negative and insignificant relationship with brand equity. This is because of the rapid change in the cell phone industry. The result of the model summary is approximately near one, which declares the best fitness of the model. In correlation analysis, brand awareness and brand associations are positive correlations, and brand loyalty and perceived quality are negatively correlated, so through this study, we conclude that the three hypotheses are accepted, and one is rejected. If we talk about the study, the study says that all determinants are pillars of brand equity. But according to this research regarding the cell phone industry, the equity of the brand is based on two variables; these are brand awareness and brand associations.

Through the multiple comparisons of this research, a researcher comes to know that the student is most interested and so much conscious about the brands, and their loyalty is so much affected by the brands. Their switching power is so much high as compared to the other brands. Their brand association and their brand loyalty are low with the brand, or researchers can conclude that their brand association and their brand loyalty are low towards the cell phone just because of the rapidly changing industry.

Taking as a view of the whole results of the research, the people who belong to Islamabad are well aware just because they are well aware of the brands, and analysis shows that people of Lahore have a high switching as compared to the other cities. The respondent from Layyah perceived high quality and highly associated with the brand and perceived high equity of any one brand.

Finally, the researcher concludes that the results of this analysis regarding the four independent variables of brand equity, brand awareness, and brand association are positively related to brand equity and show the strength of brand equity. The other two are negatively correlated with brand equity. Of the four hypothetical statements, three are accepted, and the other one is rejected.

Recommendations

After the careful analysis of this research, the researcher presented the following recommendations. For the most rapidly are fast moving and growing industry, for creating brand equity, brand awareness is the most important determinant for creating a brand image in the mind of the customer. On the basis of that awareness, the brand associations depend. When customer associates with the brands, they automatically perceive the value, and when they perceive the value, they are loyal to the brand; otherwise, they switch to the other brands. For the manufacturing of cell phones, industrialists, being a researcher, recommend that they mostly focus on brand awareness through advertisement.

Limitations

This research has been finalized within the given time period and resource and only focuses on the cell phone industry. There is also a lot of industry that should focus on brand extension, and this extension should focus on brand equity. Brand equity should be explored through the determinant, and there are a lot of determinants to be explored. For this study, the researcher chose only four determinants. This study just covers the area of Punjab and only the mobile industry.

Future Research Directions

Through this research, this research opens a new way for the upcoming scholars to explore the same topic in different industries with different variables and different determinants. This research only focuses on the cell phone industries, computer industries are still waiting for research, and also fast-moving consumer goods industries are also available for future study. This study is limited to the customer perspective. Being a researcher, the researcher suggests that the new way of research should focus on manufacturers, marketers, and policymakers. For future studies, the direction would be changed with respect to the variable and also with respect to the industry. A new researcher should focus on the other determinant for measuring brand equity according to the chosen industry. There are lots of other determinants of brand equity that still need to be explored.

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