IMPACT OF BRAND IMAGE ON CONSUMERS' PURCHASE DECISION

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Key Words:

Brand;

Laptop;

Image;

Consumers';

Purchase Decision.

Abstract:

Branding is a set of marketing and communication methods that help to distinguish a company or products from competitors, aiming to create a lasting impression in the minds of customers. In the competitive market a company can make significant impact on business environments through the creation of their own brand. This paper has shown the impact of brand image on consumers' purchase decision regarding laptop of three brands in Bangladesh. We have taken 100 consumers' perception on three brands of laptop. This 100 respondent have been selected randomly out of which 45 people purchased Hewlett-Packard (HP) laptop, 30 people purchased Dell and 25 people purchased Asus brand of laptop. We have tried to show the factors which is influencing at the time of selection of certain brands. The result of this study has shown that brand image has strongly positive impact on consumers' purchase decision of laptop in Bangladesh.

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Introduction:

A brand is a product, service, or concept that is publicly distinguished from other products, services, or concepts so that it can be easily communicated and usually marketed. A brand name is the name of the distinctive product, service, or concept. Branding is the process of creating and disseminating the brand name. Branding can be applied to the entire corporate identity as well as to individual product and service names. Out of marketing strategies, one of the most powerful strategies is to create strong brand image to reduce the uncertainty in evaluating a product. All consumers go to the market for purchasing their wants and needs, and before buying, they often take the process of choice of the brands preferred. Brand equity plays an important role to influence consumer choice process. The increasing competition in the market has resulted in marketers' shift toward the application of some strategies to attract competitive advantage in marketplace. Many organizations have already realized the value of their current customers and try to find ways of improving their lasting loyalty (Rajumesh, 2014).

Brand image could be defined as a brand that is brought to the consumer's mind by the brand association (Keller, 1993). Brand attachment is so mething far more than a mere attitudinal construct; such a concept is able to explain more complicated behaviors of consumers in relation to brand commitment. Hence, we can say that brand attachment is one of the features of consumer-brand relationship that ends in "automatic preservation of their thoughts and feelings about the brand" (Park et al., 2006).

Park and colleagues (2010) defined brand attachment as the strength of the link connecting the self to the brand. They express that brand-self connection and brand prominence are two vital factors emergence of which point to the conceptual characteristics of brand attachment. When consumers feel a mutual understanding toward a brand, they try to make them consistent with their own images. The degree of the ease and frequency of brand-related thoughts retrieval is defined as brand prominence (Park et al., 2010). Branding is used to attract and keep the consumers through the promotion of values, prestige, and life style. However, branding is a new notion. This notion is practiced in periods that can last for centuries. The word "brand" comes from the Old Norse brand, meaning to burn. As such, these origins made its way into Anglo-Saxon. It was through the use of the method of burning that the early man stamped ownership on

his livestock. In addition, trade buyers would use brands as a means of distinguishing between the cattle of one farmer from another (Clifton et al., 2003). Most of the time, there is a meddling of concepts between brand and trademark. Therefore, brand is a wider concept that will be elaborated below. It is a trademark which is used to exclusively identify a product or service with a specific company. Under the trademark implies products which are sold under the trade mark of the trading company (Lovreta & Petković, 2002). The formation of brand loyalty offers advantages in terms of businesses such as reducing marketing expenditures, being more dominant at retailer points, attracting new customers and allowing time for competing for activities.The brand loyalty, which causes positive communication among the consumers and reduces the consumers' resistance to the competitive strategies, contributes to the process that enables companies to reach more consumers (Dick & Basu, 1994).

Branding is a method used for building a substantial differential advantage by figuring out peoples' nature and psychology. More especially, it should be taken into consideration that consumer' needs and requirements are a dynamic and variable phenomenon. Therefore, they are not data which can be given once and last forever. Since branding in big companies is well organized, this research aims to focus on branding in Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). It also focuses on the way they are used. Also, there is a big difference between the small and medium enterprises and big enterprises regarding their branding activities. This is because in SMEs, the owner plays a vital role in the decision-making of the business processes without taking into consideration the operational or managerial situation (Berthon et al., 2008). Branding is usually considered as a field of big businesses. The brands and big businesses names, banks, fashion houses and cosmetics, as well as the auto-industry are common names and words that are well-known and familiar to people. Furthermore, a study on the quality of trademarks was conducted in a 2009 blind study. Consumers were blindfolded and they were asked to assess the quality of producer's brands and trademarks. In 23 out of the 29 categories, the consumers evaluated the trademarks to beof the same quality level or better compared to the brands of the producers (Miller et al., 2010). It is possible to claim that the positive, unique and distinctive brand features attributed to the brand have positive impacts on brand loyalty. When brand personality and consumer's character match, the consumer naturally chooses this brand to purchase (Li & Zhang, 2011).

The central problem of "globalization" is the tension between global homogenization and cultural heterogeneity. This problem is particularly relevant in the process of global brand communication, in which a global brand intends to develop and maintain a global identity, while the commoditization process differs among communities due to a wide number of social, cultural and economic factors. This often requires a localization of brand positioning and, therefore, also a localization of brand advertising (Zhao & Belk, 2008). Reichheld (2003) puts the emphasis on the psychological element, which deals with both attitudinal and emotional concepts of loyalty. In such approaches, customers may be behaviorally or emotionally loyal. Contrary to emotionally loyal customers who feel some sorts of emotional attachment to the brand, behaviorally loyal customers do not show any emotional bonds with it. A well-known familiar brand name associated with a positive brand image creates competitive advantages in terms of increasing consumers' interest, attention, and positive evaluation of a product (Porter & Claycomb, 1997). The consumers, who have to make a decision without knowledge, would look for various clues in order to correct this situation since they would perceive themselves under risk due to uncertainty. At this stage, the brand and the meaning of brand for the consumer would play an important role in preferences of which they are reminiscent. Although there are numerous factors that affect the attitudes and intentions of the consumer, the personality appears as the most important factor that should be carefully considered by researchers (Akin, 2011).

Modern product could not be imagined without the brand. However, brand represents the consumers' perceptions and the sentiments about a product and its performance (Kotler & Armstrnog, 2013). When a consumer becomes familiar with a well known brand, he does not want to accept substitutes. Therefore,this means that through the development of a brand, the image and the identity of the brand have an important role to the consumers (Rooney, 1995). It is a well-known fact that brands are crucial for influencing consumers' loyalty and their purchasing behavior in the marketing process. Businesses benefit from the power of brands to establish a strong bond with their consumers. The consumer-side can obtain information about both the product and the company simply by looking at the brand. Brands reflect a personality and image towards the product they represent. These reflections in the consumer's mind form their purchasing behavior (Perreault et al., 2013).

Gordon Wyner (2014) discusses that pricing is the marketing pedal with the utmost immediate effect and influential effect to businesses. Branding strategy to management decision making will translate the change prices into revenue building and ultimately to profits. Pricing is considered as the vital element of basic brand strategies. There have been many high-level trends over the last decade in context developing to pricing that are the key cores to marketing decision and planning. For successful marketing managers they should focus on all behavioral aspect of consumers with respect to price, as not all are the same. Mangers need to understand their niche consumers' with respect to shopping orientation to price, along with needs related to the brand.

The major objective of this study is to impact of brand image on consumers' purchase decision in Bangladesh. The following are the sub objectives:

(i)   To show the market position of different brand of laptop in Khulna Division of Bangladesh

(ii)   To show the reason of purchase of different brand of laptop

(iii)   To focus which brand image is creating more position in the consumers' mind.

Methodology of the Study:

Methodology is the process used to collect information and data for the purpose of making business decisions. The methodology may include publication research, interviews, surveys and other research techniques, and could include both present and historical information. (http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/research-methodology.html)

Sample Size:

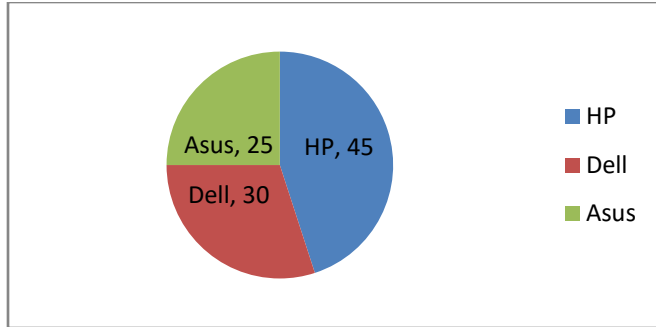Total 100 consumers have selected from khulna division of Bangladesh who are using different brand of laptop.

Figure 1. Sample size of the study

Sample Selection:

100 consumers have selected from khulna division of Bangladesh has been selected randomly.

Data Collection:

Data have been collected from 100 consumers though a open-ended questionnaires.

Formulation of Hypotheses:

H_1: There is a positive relationship between company's branding and company's sales

H_2: Strong brand image can create strong position of the products in the consumers' mind.

H_3: There is no effect of price on strong brand of the product.

H_4: There is a positive relationship between brand name and perceived quality.

H_5: There is a positive relationship between brand name and purchase intention.

Data Analysis:

To be analyzed collected data, we have used different statistical tools like, Mean, Standard Deviation and Test of hypothesis.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework:

Brand:

Brand is a sign, words, design, symbol, or a combination of these, employed to create an image in the mind of consumers' that identifies a product or service and differentiates it from its competitors.

A brand differentiates a product from similar other products and enables it to charge a higher premium, in return for a clear identity and greater faith in its function. A brand is also likely to survive longer than just an undifferentiated product. A brand is akin to a living being: it has an identity and personality, name, culture, vision, emotion and intelligence. All these are conferred by the owner of the brand and needs to be continuously looked at to keep the brand relevant to the target it intends to sell to. (http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/definition/brands)

Branding:

This is the set of marketing and communication methods that help a company to distinguish their products or services from competitors,

Branding is the process of giving a meaning to specific products by creating and shaping a brand in consumers' minds. It is a strategy designed by companies to help people to quickly identify their products and organization, and give them a reason to choose their products over the competition's, by clarifying what this particular brand is and is not. (http://www.thebrandingjournal.com/2015/10/what-is-branding-definition/)

Brand Image:

Brand image is the current view of the customers about a brand. It can be defined as a unique bundle of associations within the minds of target customers. It signifies what the brand presently stands for. It is a set of beliefs held about a specific brand. In short, it is nothing but the consumers' perception about the product. It is the manner in which a specific brand is positioned in the market. Brand image conveys emotional value and not just a mental image. Brand image is nothing but an organization's character. It is an accumulation of contact and observation by people external to an organization. It should highlight an organization's mission and vision to all. The main elements of positive brand image are- unique logo reflecting organization's image, slogan describing organization's business in brief and brand identifier supporting the key values. Brand image is the overall impression in consumers' mind that is formed from all sources. Consumers develop various associations with the brand. Based on these associations, they form brand image. An image is formed about the brand on the basis of subjective perceptions of

associations   bundle   that   the   consumers   have   about   the
brand.(http://www.managementstudyguide.com/brand-image.htm)

Influences of brand image on consumers' purchase intention:
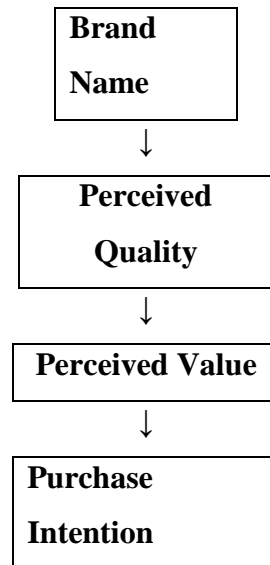

Figure 2. Conceptual framework of the study

Brand Equity:

Brand equity is the measurable totality of a brand's worth and is validated by assessing the effectiveness of these branding components. As markets become increasingly dynamic and fluctuating, brand equity is a marketing technique to increase customer satisfaction and customer loyalty, with side effects like reduced price sensitivity.[A brand is in essence a promise to its customers of they can expect from their products, as well as emotional benefits.[4] When a customer is familiar with a brand, or favors it incomparably to its competitors, this is when a corporation has reached a high level of brand equity. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brand)

Brand Preference:

Customer-based brand equity has been thought of as a prerequisite to brand preference, which in turn affects consumers' intention to purchase. Brand equity models assessed the impact of individual measures on market share, and utilized several brand equity constructs: awareness,

familiarity, weighted attributes, value for money, and overall quality of the brand (Mackay, 2001b)

Advantages of best brand image:

There are various types of advantages of best brand image which are given below:

(i)   If a company has a strong brand image then they can create directly impacts the consumer buying behavior

(ii)   Decision making process can be easier by a positive brand image.

(iii)   When a company already has a strong brand image and loyal customers, then it is often easier and less expensive for them to introduce new products in the market.

(iv)   Positive brand image make differentiates company's product or service in the marketplace.

(v)   Strong brand image works to build customer recognition. This means when a customer is shopping for a particular product or considering a company to perform a service, they recognize that the company is in the running.

(vi)   Positive brand image conveys the success of the product or service and gives results with increased sales and revenues.

Disadvantages of brand image:

There are various types of disadvantages of brand image which are given below:

(i)   Unfavorable or negative image results in the discredit of the company, and later on bringing the same brand becomes difficult.

(ii)   Brand and its products will always be recognized with the image until further changes in the brand image are prompted.

(iii)   When a product or service experiences a negative event, then it will become attached to the brand.

Analysis and Findings:

Strong brand image can create strong place of the product or service in the consumers' mind. Company can make sale more products and can make more profit over their competitors. Firstly

we have tried to show the purchase intention of different brand of laptop of Khulna division in Bangladesh:

Table 1. Showing the purchase status of different brand of laptop

Brand	Configuration	Price	No. of Buyers/ No. of Consumers (Out of total 100 consumers)
HP	HP envy 13-ad066tu laptop has Intel core i7 7th generation processor, 8 GB laptop RAM, 256 GB solid state drive, Intel HD laptop graphics card, 13.3 inch, HD web camera, card reader, wifi, bluetooth, backlit laptop keyboard, licensed Windows-10 operating system, 30.54 x 21.56 x 1.39 cm dimensions, 1.32 kg weight, silk gold laptop colo	Tk.1,01,500	10
Dell	Dell INSPIRON 15-5567 7th Gen Intel Core i7 7500U (2.70GHz, 8GB DDR4, 1TB) 15.6 Inch Display, 4GB AMD RADEON R7 M445 Graphics, FOG-GRAY Notebook (2 Yr Warranty) - Free DOS	Tk 64,000	15
Asus	Asus P4540UQ Intel Core i7 7th Gen. 7500U (2.5GHz, 8GB DDR4, 1TB+256GB SSD) 4GB Nvidia GT 940MX, 15.6 Inch FHD LED, Endless OS, Grey Notebook	Tk 81,000	5

Source: Published data in the Website.

From the above data we can say that HP brand of laptop is providing Intel core i7 7th generation processor, 8 GB laptop RAM, with the price Tk.1,01,500, Dell brand of laptop is providing 7th Gen Intel Core i7 7500U (2.70GHz, 8GB DDR4, 1TB) with the price Tk.64,000 and Asus brand

of laptop is providing Intel Core i7 7th Gen. 7500U (2.5GHz, 8GB DDR4, 1TB+256GB SSD) with price Tk.81,000. Although Asus is providing i7 7th Gen. laptop with low price yet the people of Khulna division is preferring to purchase HP brand of laptop with more price.

Table 2. Showing the purchase status of different brand of laptop

Brand	Configuration	Price	No. of Buyers/ No. of Consumers (Out of total 100 consumers)
HP	Intel® Core™ i3-7100U (2.4 GHz, 3 MB cache, 2 cores), 4 GB DDR4-2133 SDRAM (1 x 4 GB), 1TB SATA HDD,14" diagonal HD SVA BrightView WLED-backlit (1366 x 768), Intel® HD Graphics 620, DVD Writer ,Ethernet LAN, Wi-Fi, Bluetooth 4.0, HD Webcam, 1 Multi-Format SD Media Card Reader, Backup Time - 4.5 Hrs Backup, 4 Cell Li-ion Battery, Free DOS,Color-Red	Tk.36,700	35
Dell	Intel® Core™ i3-7100U Processor (3M Cache, 2.40 GHz), 4GB DDR4 2400MHz RAM, 1TB 5400 rpm Hard Drive, Intel® HD Graphics 620, 15.6-inch HD (1366x768) anti-glare LED-backlit Display, Bluetooth, DVD Optical Drive, Webcam, Audio, McAfee Anti-virus , Primary 2-cell Battery, Color - Black/ Foggy Night	Tk 35,000	25
Asus	Intel® Core™ i3-6006U Processor (3M Cache, 2.00 GHz), 4 GB DDR4, 1TB SATA HDD, 14" (16:9) LED backlit HD (1366 X 768) Glare Panel with 45% NTSC , Intel® HD Graphics 520, HD Web Camera, Super-Multi DVD, Integrated 802.11 AC (WIDI Support) (On selected models), 10/100 Base T, Built-in Stereo W Speakers And Microphone, ASUS SonicMaster Technology, 3 Cells 36 Whrs Battery, Operating System - Free DOS, Color-Silver Gradient	Tk 30,500	10

Source: Published data in the Website.

From the above data we can say that HP brand of laptop is providing Intel® Core™ i3-7100U (2.4 GHz, 3 MB cache, 2 cores), 4 GB DDR4-2133 SDRAM, with the price Tk.36,700, Dell brand of laptop is providing Intel® Core™ i3-7100U Processor (3M Cache, 2.40 GHz), 4GB

DDR4 2400MHz RAM with the price Tk.35,000 and Asus brand of laptop is providing Intel® Core™ i3-6006U Processor (3M Cache, 2.00 GHz), 4 GB DDR4, 1TB SATA HDD with price Tk.30,500. Although Asus is providing i3 laptop with low price yet the people of Khulna division prefers to purchase HP brand of laptop with more price. Since this brand has created more position in the mind of the people of the Khulna division of Bangladesh.

To focus the various things related to the selected laptop we have collected dat and are presented below with descriptive statistics:

Table 3. **Descriptive Statistics**

Variables	N	HP		Dell		Asus	
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation
The Retina display is SO MUCH nicer than any other screen.	100	4.0500	1.11351	3.7300	1.22148	3.9200	1.18646
It easier to just pick and work on a park bench, or a coffee shop, or a subway.	100	4.0400	1.10023	3.7400	1.16011	4.0600	1.09008
The Operating System (OS) is, to me, more responsive and intuitive than Windows.	100	4.1600	1.09839	3.9400	1.18765	4.0300	1.14992
The battery lasts a good 8-10 hours.	100	4.1100	1.20517	3.7700	1.28594	4.0200	1.18901
I had to pay for malware protection on my Windows PC.	100	4.1000	1.08711	3.9300	1.13043	3.9800	1.11898
On/Off time is ridiculously faster than on a Windows laptop.	100	4.2600	1.00121	4.0500	1.08595	4.1000	1.07778

Able to perform an entire OS upgrade via the same process as a Windows update.	100	4.4100	.91115	4.2400	1.06477	4.4000	.92113
The keyboard is crisp, the multi-touch pad makes lots of little tasks much easier.	100	4.1100	1.09078	3.9600	1.13636	4.0200	1.10992

Source: Field Survey

From the above table we can observe that for each question mean value of HP laptop is showing greater than the other two brands of laptop. Standard deviation of each variable of HP laptop is showing below than others two brands of laptop it indicates that variability of HP laptop is lesser than the others two brands.

Linear Regression Analysis:

Linear regression is a linear approach for modeling the relationship between a scalar dependent variable y and one or more explanatory variables (or independent variables) denoted X. The case of one explanatory variable is called simple linear regression. For more than one explanatory variable, the process is called multiple linear regressions. (This term is distinct from multivariate linear regression, where multiple correlated dependent variables are predicted, rather than a single scalar variable.)

Testing the first hypothesis:

H_1: There is a positive relationship between company's branding and company's sales

Table 4. **ANOVA**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	6.297	1	6.297	3.087	.082
Residual	199.863	98	2.039		
Total	206.160	99			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Company's Branding

b. Dependent Variable: Company's Sales

Usually, a significance level of 0.05 works well. If the p-value is greater than the significance level (0.05), we do not have enough evidence to reject the null hypothesis that there is a positive relationship between company's branding and company's sales. Here the calculated value of F is 3.087 which is less than the critical value of F (3.940) at 5% significance level so the null hypothesis is accepted and we can conclude that the there is a positive relationship between company's branding and company's sales

Testing the second hypothesis:

H₂: Strong brand image can create strong position of the products in the consumers' mind.

Table 5. **ANOVA**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	8.363	1	8.363	3.936	.050
Residual	208.227	98	2.125		
Total	216.590	99			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Strong Brand Image

b. Dependent Variable: Creating strong position of the products in the consumers' mind

Here the calculated value of F is 3.936 which is less than the critical value of F (3.940) at 5% significance level so the null hypothesis is accepted and we can conclude that Strong brand image can create strong position of the products in the consumers' mind.

Testing the third hypothesis:

H₃: There is no effect of price on strong brand of the product.

Table 6. **ANOVA**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	6.025	1	6.025	3.131	.080
Residual	188.565	98	1.924		
Total	194.590	99			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Strong Brand of the Product

Table 6. **ANOVA**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	6.025	1	6.025	3.131	.080
Residual	188.565	98	1.924		
Total	194.590	99			

b. Dependent Variable: Effect of Price

Here the calculated value of F is 3.131 which is less than the critical value of F (3.940) at 5% significance level so the null hypothesis is accepted and we can conclude that There is no effect of price on strong brand of the product.

Testing the fourth hypothesis:

H₄: There is a positive relationship between brand name and perceived quality.

Table 7. **ANOVA**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	5.980	1	5.980	2.956	.089
Residual	198.260	98	2.023		
Total	204.240	99			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Brand Name

b. Dependent Variable: Perceived Quality

From the above table we can see that the calculated value of F is 2.956 which is less than the critical value of F (3.940) at 5% significance level so the null hypothesis is accepted and we can conclude that there is a positive relationship between brand name and perceived quality.

Testing the fifth hypothesis:

H₅: There is a positive relationship between brand name and purchase intention.

Table 8. **ANOVA**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig. (P)
Regression	7.000	1	7.000	3.634	.060
Residual	188.760	98	1.926		
Total	195.760	99			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Brand name

b. Dependent Variable: Purchase intention

Usually, a significance level of 0.05 works well. If the p-value is greater than the significance level (0.05), we do not have enough evidence to reject the null hypothesis that the there is a positive relationship between brand name and purchase intention. Here the calculated value of F is 3.634 which is less than the critical value of F (3.940) at 5% significance level so the null hypothesis is accepted and we can conclude that the there is a positive relationship between brand name and purchase intention.

Concluding Remarks:

Consumers of any companies are the main element of the market and all the efforts and attention should be given to them. Each and every company should implement different strategies to keep up with the changing market conditions and to reach the consumers who constantly change their purchasing tendencies and expectations. Branding strategies is one of them. Brand is more important both for the product to be positioned and for the consumers to be able to ascribe meaning to these brands. This study can be concluded in such manner that the strong relationship was found between consumers' satisfaction and brand image regarding laptop. Nowadays, when consumers purchase a product, the connotation that the brands make the consumers feel becomes important since they also purchase it besides the quality of the product.

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