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INFLUENCE OF BRANDING ON CONSUMER PURCHASING BEHAVIOUR: A CASE STUDY OF APPLE IPHONE

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Purpose –

The purpose of this research was to finding out the influence of branding on consumer purchasing behaviour.

Design/methodology/approach- Use of quantitative approach with the association of survey interview was employed in this research.

Findings – This research was able to figure out the answers of the research questions. The background information of the respondents helped a lot to get a basis understanding of the consumer buying behaviour. Then the research was also able to pick out the important characteristics for choosing customers' perception about branding. This was also presented with different ranking for getting more depth understanding. The usefulness of the Alpple iPhone fleshing out its critical discussion in terms of users rate. The drivers of consumer purchasing behaviour were also found important in this regard. The comments of the respondents were derived through getting ranking information about different mobile phones. The satisfaction level of the respondents was evaluated through getting information regarding Apple brand as satisfied, highly satisfied, neutral, dissatisfied and highly dissatisfied.

Originality/value – This research was based on the practical investigation by the researcher.

Future research – Brand awareness research needs to involve both the customers and the employees of the research case company.

Keywords:

Consumer buying behaviour, purchasing decision, brand awareness, branding.

1.1 Introduction

As a complicated matter the buying behaviour of consumers depends and influences by a variety of matters. Social, cultural, psychological and personal factors in a broad sense influence consumers to purchase goods and services. In this regard the role of product brands in the purchasing decision of consumers play a significant role which is a matter of great interest to investigate. Brands provide “*strong rational and emotional reasons for buying*” (LePla and Parke, 2000, p. 257).

Brand can be defined as a product “but one which adds many dimensions that differentiate it in some way from other products designed to satisfy the same need” (Keller et al., 2008, p. 3). On a poll of 940 executives of 68 countries by Boston Consulting Group it was found that Apple is the number one brand among the most innovative brands list (Nussbaum, 2005). The brand of Apple is defined as cool, innovative and friendly (Adamson, 2008). It has a greater recognition of its brand’s persona. It is reported that the customers of Apple are intellectually curious and more comfortable with emotions than average people (Ibid). The number of repeated buying of Apple products or related customer loyalty is strong Kumar (2008). This is proven true in case of Apple Computers. Since Apple is widely renowned innovative brand, as a course of its innovative product development it successfully launched Apple i-phone in the market. It is a matter of great interest to know the response of the customers about this product and their buying behaviour.

This project intends to shed light on the influence of Apple brand in the purchasing behaviour of customers of Apple i-phone.

1.2 Background of Apple iPhone

The history of iPhone starts with the Apple iPhone by the initiative of its CEO Steve Jobs in 2007. In the mobile sector it is a revolutionary innovation. It is a multimedia and internet enabled Smartphone designed and marketed by Apple Inc. It is said that “*iPhone and mobile device applications are really good for simple, limited-purpose functions*” (McClure et al., 2010, p. 8). But the present combinations of the functions in the Apple iPhone is proved quite beneficial to the business persons, officials, students and teachers, researchers and many other segments of people because of its variety of functions at a time in hand. It works as a camera phone. It is the most remarkable internet linked mobile phone in the marketplace.

1.3 Research question

The principle research question to be addressed in this study is: *Does product brand has any influence on the consumers to purchase Apple iPhone?*

1.4 Objectives of the study

Broad objective

To find out the influence of branding on consumer buying behaviour.

Specific objective

- To identify and discuss the demographic information on the customer group
- To discuss the characteristics of customers’ perception about branding
- To expose the usefulness of Apple iPhone fleshing out its critical discussion in terms of users rate.
- To discuss the type of drivers’ influence of preferring the brand, and to buy Apple iPhone
- To make out recommendations as felt important regarding Apple iPhone brand.

1.5 Scope of the study

This study focused only the influence of brand product on the purchasing activities of the customers. In this regard this study was based on the key issues of brand, its influence and the purchasing behaviour of the buyers. This study also included key issues like demographic characteristics of the respondents, their perception regarding the brand, their preference for Apple iPhone and necessary recommendation areas. This research included most of the students as respondents. There were some non-student respondents as well. In these manners this study was administered following the objectives of this research.

1.6 Rationale of the study

There are various kinds of iPhone in the UK market. Most of this iPhone mostly offer similar services and opportunities for its users. There is also price pressure. It is found in a report published for year 2007 showed that in comparison to other Apple products the sales of Apple iPhone was the lowest (\$123m only) (Hollensen, 2008). The features offered by Apple iPhone are eloquent but this sales estimation sticks to question that whether customers like this product or not in contrast of other iPhones available in the market. This research is useful for the marketing officer management of Apple, professionals and academic tank thinkers to know the purchasing behaviour of the consumers in regards to the Apple brand iPhone.

Product brand name plays a vital role in the buying behaviour of the customers. There is tendency among people to buy brand product. The famous research is made by soft drink Pepsi through its Pepsi Challenge. Back in the 1970s and 1980s Pepsi-Cola launched an experiment through a very aggressive campaign using a test on taste in different supermarkets. This was done under the banner of 'The Pepsi Challenge' (Smith, 2006, p. 57). In 1975 this campaign was administered by offering two types of drinks without mentioning brand name to different people and their response on the taste of the drinks were reported. In this regard which one among the two drinks was preferable was asked to the respondents. In the taste experiments the majority went for Pepsi (Berreby, 2008, p. xix). It was evident that customers who preferred and generally drank Coke, 75% chose Pepsi in the test of taste (Trivers, 1996, p. 94). But as soon as the customers were informed that the tasty drink was Pepsi, they replied that they never buy it but drink only Coke. This proves that there is great impact of brand product on the consumers. This research is based on Apple iPhone with a view to see whether in the buying behaviour of customers, the brand of Apple iPhone has any impact on customers or not.

2.1 Review of Literature

Literature review deals with different kinds of primary, secondary and tertiary resources (Saunders et al. 2009) on any specific issue to shed light on the existing knowledge base and areas of importance that need to be dealt with. This chapter is based on the enumeration of the existing literature of both theoretical and practical knowledge based on the influence of brand on consumer purchasing behaviour. Since the research takes Apple iPhone as the case of analysis, some critical discussions relevant to this literature will be derived as well. So, key issues like brand and consumer buying in relation to Apple iPhone have got maximum importance in this chapter. So, the objectives of this chapter can be pointed as follows:

- To shed light on the conceptual issues of brand and consumer purchasing behaviour
- To pinpoint the brand image of Apple to the customers
- To delineate the existing literature on brand and consumer purchasing behaviour
- To identify the areas of importance that this research intends to shed light
- To draw a final consideration on the theoretical and investigation process with the areas of investigation by linking them to the next chapters.

2.1 Conceptual issues on branding and consumer buying

A brand must be a blend of complementary physical, rational and emotional appeals. The blend must be distinctive and result in a clear personality which will offer benefits of value to customers (Arnold 1992, p. 27).

For centuries branding has been used as a means of differentiating goods and services from one producer to another. There has been "semantic confusion" and the "instability and idiosyncratic usage" of the term brand (Stern 2006, p. 216). Seeing "diverse approaches to brand definition" (Wood 2000, p. 664) it is suggested by Kapferer (2004) that each "expert comes up with his or her own definition, or nuance to the definition" (p. 9). Anyway "a **brand**", according to Aaker (1991), "signals to the consumers the source of the product, and protects the customer and the producer from competitors who would attempt to provide products that appear to be identical" (p. 7). In this regard it is important to mention that one interesting attempt was made by de Chernatony and Dall'Olmo Riley (1998), who think about brands as composed of their components: (1) a lawful device, (2) an insignia, (3) a business, (4) an individuality system, (5) a picture in customers' minds, (6) a personality, (7) a liaison, (8) as adding price, and (9) as a sprouting body.

The purchasing behaviour of consumers is presented as a complicated activity by many (Lancaster and Reynolds 2005). In case of purchasing a product everyday varied decisions are made by the customers for reaching to a final buying decision for its consumption. Such decisions and consumption processes are identical to the process of buying behaviour of those customers. In 1996 Dibb and Simkin presented the purchasing behaviour of consumers as the decision processes and related activities of the end-users involved in purchasing and consuming products or services. According to many other the purchasing of goods and services by households or individuals or final consumers for their individual use can be termed as "**consumer buying behaviour**" (Kotler and Armstrong 2004; Armstrong *et al* 2009). Therefore, according to the definition of proposed by Michael Solomon (1996) the purchasing behaviour of the customers can be presented as:

[T]he processes involved when individuals and groups select, purchase, use or dispose of products, services, ideas, or experiences to satisfy their needs and desires (p. 7).

Some of the characteristics of the buying behaviours of the customers can be presented in the following figure.

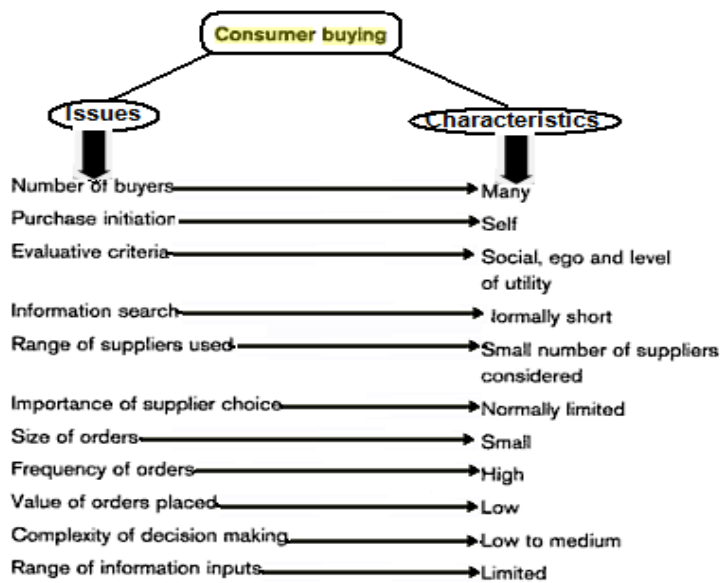


Figure 2.1: Characteristics of consumer buying behaviour (Source: Fill and Fill, 2005, p. 114).

There is significant relationship between consumer buying behaviour and brand choice. In purchasing decision the brand of the product plays the vital role in buying behaviour. The brands come to the perception of consumers as the images about such branded product and consumers can get the scope to choose the one among different brands. Brands have the impact on consumers to attract than others to be purchased more or less. It is a common trend that a well reputed brand is purchased the greatest than a lower level of reputed product or service. Such examples are available in many cases. For instance, there has been experiment on which soft drink is the favourite one to the customers between Coca Cola and Pepsi. Those drinks when served to the consumers without brand level, most of the consumers liked Pepsi, but as soon as the level was revealed the consumers changed their views and most of them said that they liked Coca Cola. This was done in the 1980s by “the Pepsi Challenge” (Smith 2006, p. 57) that eventually ensued into the ‘Cola War’ (Schuler and Jackson 2007, p. 18).

The following discussion is based on the correlative analysis of the influence of brands on the purchasing behaviour of consumers with special focus on Apple iPhone.

2.2 Apple and Apple iPhone: the brand image context

The brand image of Apple is tremendous amongst the vast majority of consumer groups. By means of skilled marketing, Apple has been able to get an affluent brand image constructed of a congregation of brand links in the perceptions of some customers, at least. It can be thought of differently by diverse customers for the links like user friendly, educational, fun, friendly, power book, graphics, creative, cool, Apple Logo, innovative, macintosh etc associated with Apple, although majority of consumers likely to share many of these links. The overall Apple revenue is found escalating although having some fluctuations (fig. 2.2).

It is already said in the introductory chapter that the number of repeated buying of Apple products or related customer loyalty is strong (Kumar 2008). In a research on “*Exploring consumer perceptions of global branding and iconization*” Dr. Gail Ferreira (2009) comes to find that 70% of the respondents voted for Apple brand name. High level of brand awareness and related recognition for Apple products is observed among customers. To differentiate its products offering and steer sales, Apple leverages brand image. Its products are with very strong brand image that its competitors have to encounter hard time to touch its sky rocketing position (Cabiddu *et al.* 2010). It is offering opportunities to sell its brand iPhone globally (Chapman and Hoskisson 2009). According to Cabiddu *et al.* (2010) Apple iPhone has brought about culture-shifting effects and a changing pattern in the use of mobile by its users. It has been said that the development of Apple iPhone has received the cult status. According to Kotler *et al.* (2009):

The launch and subsequent success of the Apple iPhone in 2008 created more hype and interest and allows Apple to maintain the image of an innovative company in tune with customer needs (p. 443).

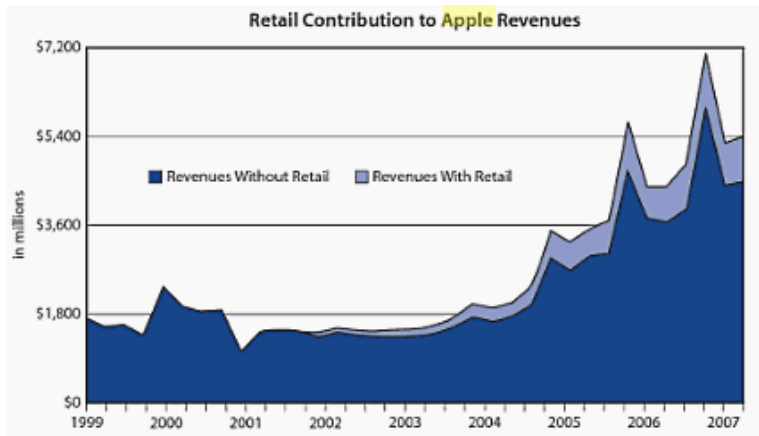


Figure 2.2: Retail sales as contribution to overall Apple revenue (Source: cited by Chapman and Hoskisson 2009, p. 25)

Some points on the brand image of Apple iPhones are mentioned, although there is still interest among the scholars, professionals and others about the influence of this mobile on the purchasing behaviour of the customers. Such curiosity leads to the analysis of the upcoming literature so that existing knowledge base can be understood while undertaking the research empirically.

2.3 The literature

[B]rands exist because they are of value to customers. ...brands act as a shorthand, in consumers' minds, of the set of functional and emotional associations of trust, so that they do not have to think much about their purchase decisions (de Chernatony and Riley; cited by Issac 2000, p. 9)

For centuries the term brand equity has been dealt with great care, although it is still approached with many manners. One such crucial manner is brand awareness that is related to the fundamental aspects of brand equity. It is considered as the prerequisite for consumer purchasing decision, since it represents those factors that place the brand into consideration into the minds of the consumers. So, brand awareness in this sense plays the vital role in determining the influence on any specific brand on the buying behaviour of the customers. It is also understood that if the brand awareness of potential consumers presents a strong positive base on any specific brand, consumers are likely to purchase that one and vice versa. Furthermore, it can also be interpreted that brand awareness determines the value of any specific brand in the minds of the customers. This consequently turned into a form of trust that some brands or any specific brand can offer great value terms of product/service quality and many other related things like product longevity, on time delivery etc. So, the statement made above is actually playing the vital role in the determination of the consumers' decision to buy any specific brand to consume. In order to comprehend and grasp the role and context of brands' influence in the purchasing decision of the customers, it is crucial to deal with their purchasing behaviours and the processes involved in the buying process. It is seen in the literature that there are different types of consumer buying behaviour and related decision levels of activities (Cant et al. 2006). However, most of the literature accords on the six stages that are involved in the purchasing decision of the consumers (Engel *et al.* 1994). These stages can nicely be presented through the following figure.

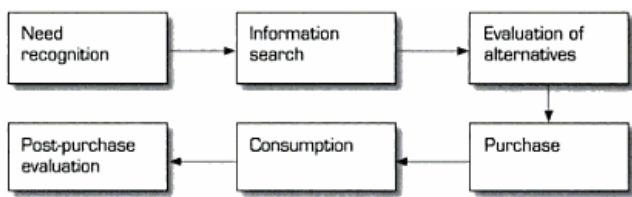


Figure 2.3: Model of consumer decision making (Engel *et al.* 1994, p. 134).

The process of purchasing begins when the consumer feels need for any product or service. This can be directed by internal stimulus (e.g., physical needs) or external stimulus (e.g., advertisements) or the both. For instance, if the individual finds that any household appliance is broken and out of order, he/she needs to replace a new one. Such kind of feeling for any kind of need is termed as need recognition. Once such need is arisen, the individual intends to look for the information about the fulfilment of such need by getting more and more information. This is called the information search stage. Though searching and collecting information the individual gets the scope to evaluate different brands at the presents of alternatives (if any). This gives him/her the scope to know about competing brands and to evaluate the one that suits him/her need. He/she varies to which good and/or

service attributes are viewed by him/her as vital, and much attention is paid to those brands that can fulfil the benefits that he/she is looking for. After final selection of the product or service the individual purchase it and starts consuming. If it is observed by the individual that such purchasing and consumption was according to his/her expectation, there is high possibility for that individual to go for that brand again if necessary.

There are considerable numbers of writers who narrate these six stages into five steps in purchasing decision (Cant *et al.* 2006; Lancaster and Reynolds 2005; Proctor 2000). Keeping all other previous five stages they just avoid the consumption point and mix it in between purchasing and post purchasing behaviour.

Customers grow some sorts of brand beliefs about the characteristics of opposite brands. These brand beliefs constitute the image of the brand. These beliefs rely on their preceding incidents with the brand, and the consequence to choosy perception, selective bend, and discerning retention. In the assessment stage, the customer forms predilection among brands and may shape a buying target to purchase the brand they choose. However, two things can interfere between the buying target and the buying decision – outlooks of other, and unanticipated situational matters.

If other consumers have had that brand related pessimistic experience, their pessimistic manner may manipulate the individual's buying intention or vice versa. An individual's decision to amend, adjourn, or shun a buying decision is greatly manipulated by apparent risk. High-priced purchases entail several risks taking. An individual tries to contract with this by assembling information from his/her friends and family, and an inclination for known brands they can trust.

After an individual has really bought the product or service, he/she will assess his/her satisfaction level – the individual will be satisfied highly, fairly satisfied, or disappointed with the buying decision. Satisfaction relies on how intimately the brand's apparent performance equals the consumers' desires. If apparent performance and excellence surpass their desires then they are pleased, even charmed. If performance descends below their expected levels of desires, they will be disappointed, and search for substitute brands in the future.

Consumers' expectations are mainly significant when conducting with services, and particularly imperative when dealing with buying made through the Internet, as these services are ethereal, and thus, consumers formulate decisions entirely on the basis of their anticipations. These anticipations are composed through a mixture of past knowledge, word-of-mouth, hype, and contact.

The degree of consumer satisfaction will control whether they will purchase the brand once more and chat positively or adversely about it to others. Greatly contented and loyal customers are inclined to go directly from the need recognition stage to the buying decision, barring out possible competitors. Consumers' contentment and loyalty are critical to the creation of thriving brands.

Brand equity was approached by Aaker (1991) as a form of basic dimensions assembled into a compound system consisted of mostly: brand professed quality, brand awareness, brand associations and brand loyalty. He also offered a "brand equity ten" model and presented it as a means of brand equity assessment (Aaker, 1996). In this model he elaborated different factors among which the fundamental one is the consideration of brand awareness.

Brand equity was presented by Kevin Lane Keller (1998) from a consumer oriented viewpoint. It was then clarified by him as "the differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to the marketing of the brand" (p. 45).

Building a robust brand within the minds of consumers, as interpreted by Farquhar (1989), stands for the creation of an upbeat brand evaluation, a reachable brand related attitude, and a reliable image of brand. Here the reachable brand related attitude in fact indicating to brand awareness.

It is observed that the important component of brand equity is brand awareness, as already mentioned, but it is undervalued very often. In the purchasing decision its role is already explained. But it serves the more. So brand awareness is not only serves as the prerequisite for consideration on the purchasing decisions of the customers, but also it plays the vital role to influence the attitudes and perceptions of those customers and thereby drive them to brand loyalty (Aaker, 1991).

Replicating the brand salience in the minds of the customers, brand related awareness can be measured at some levels like recall, recognition, brand dominance (recalling the only brand), top of mind, or, even more, knowledge regarding the brand (e.g., clear knowledge of the customers about the brand: what it stands for) (Aaker, 1996).

The first prerequisite aspect of the complete brand knowledge structure is the awareness about the brand in the minds of the customers. It is reflected in their ability to recognize the brand under diverse settings. These settings include the chances that the name of the brand will come to the mind of the potential customers and the simplicity with which such thing happens (Keller, 1993).

Following the discussion of brand awareness as the prime requirement of consumers' decision making on buying any product, there appears the scope to present it into brand recognition and a sort of brand recall. To materialize the meaning of brand recognition in this context it can be said that such recognition confirms the ability of the consumers to give priority of any specific

brand that others in the presence of many brands. The latter (brand recall) can be deciphered as the consumers' ability to retrieve the brand at the time of any given category of product, the demands satisfied by the category or at the presence of some other categories.

On the basis of the analysis of brand recall, it can be said that the involvement of brand awareness in the decision making of the consumers in the purchasing of goods and services, consumers recall his/her previous experience of relevant brand in the circumstances of a given category of product. In this case the brand awareness increases the chance that such brand may conspire as a part of the considerations of the consumers in their decision making to purchase any product or service.

The influence of brand awareness can also be presented as such an issue that can influence the consumers even at the absence of any of the associations or links of the brands in their minds. Keller (1998) goes further to mention that in the case of decision making where low level of involvement is evident, a slighter degree of brand awareness seems sufficient for the consumers to make final purchasing decision. The influence of brand can also be observed in the consumers' decision making activity at the presence of brand links that are generated from the brand related images or perception in their minds (Keller, 1998).

Such perception or mental images was presented by Stinnett (2005) as a lens of perception that helps consumers in their purchasing decision. Such lens of perception is the result of the consumers' outlook about the company (reputation, longevity, size, location and brand recognition), the people (competence, responsiveness, client-focus, predictability, high qualifications, domain expertise and "they care" perspective) or solutions (functional fit, added services, technical advantages and total cost of ownership). If those values are perceived as positive "denominations of values" through the lens of perception in terms of economic value and risk (increase revenue and reduce cost), time value and risk (shorten time to market and maximize uptime), quality value and risk (reduce product defects), guidance value and risk (access to expert advice), political value and risk (look good to others), relational value and risk (avoid potential conflict), simplicity value and risk (made the easy choice and avoid potential risks), and emotional value and risk (feeling of security), it can be said that the consumers are likely to purchase such a product or the brand.

On the basis of the analyses in the previous two paragraphs it can be said that brand awareness or brand associations in terms of mental images or through the lens of perception aid in the decision making of the consumers to purchase any goods or services. That is why in different researches it has been admitted that consumers do not purchase the products or services, they actually purchase the images of those products or services that appear in the minds of the consumers as the reality (e.g., Trivers 1996; Blythe 2006).

In consideration of brand equity as approached by Farquhar (1989), it is found that the reachable attitude was referred by him as related to how swiftly a customer can repossess brand components accumulated in his/her mental set-up (brand awareness). The outlook inauguration is at times "routine" (it arises instinctively on the basis of the mere inspection of the outlook of the object) and from time to time is "controlled" (the dynamic awareness of the person to get back formerly preserved assessment is required). It was also confirmed that only elevated reachable outlooks (brands with an elevated stage of awareness) can be germane when buying or repurchasing a brand (Farquhar, 2000). According to other scholars (Laurent, et al. 1995) three conventional instruments of brand awareness in a specified product group can be suggested. The first one is the "unaided/spontaneous awareness" (customers are requested, with no prompting, to acknowledge the brands they are familiar with in the product group – in this situation the neutral awareness of a brand is the proportion of respondents representing that they are informed and aware about that brand). The second one is the "top of mind awareness" (utilising the identical query, the percentage of respondents who acknowledge the brand first is deemed) and lastly comes the "aide awareness" (names of the brand are offered to respondents – in this situation the "aided awareness" of a brand is the proportion of respondents who designate that they are well-known about that brand). Since the future can only present the brand choice related result, the customers being thus required to cope with ambiguity. The consumer behaviour is affected by brand choice as the central problem. Meanwhile purchasing decision related risks, some of what are mentioned by Stinnett (2005), is also considered as crucial as part of brand choice. As painful risk can be perceived of often in that it may generate apprehension, in which case it is obligatory to be conducted in some way by the customer.

Among the major actions of a brand from the perspectives of customers is viewed to be the lowering of apparent buying risk, which consecutively aids to cultivate a trust-based bond. Brand awareness can sway assessment of the apparent risk of the customers and their confidence in the buying decision for the acquaintance with the brand and its features.

In the consideration of the impact of brands on the purchasing behaviour of consumers Riesenbeck and Perrey (2008) narrate a brand funnel model. Such a model is based on the five key issues: aided awareness, familiarity, consideration, purchase and loyalty. Aided awareness includes questions like whether the customer knows about any specific brand. The familiarity issue include the question to know whether that customer such products or models of brand. Consideration issue include whether the consumer considered this brand in the previous purchasing of this product or models of brand. Purchase issue denotes the fact whether the customer chose this brand of product in the last purchase. Finally the loyalty issue denotes the question about

knowing whether the customer will choose this brand again in the next purchase. This funnel model was used by McKinsey in the investigation of a specific brand of car (figure 2.4).



Figure 2.4: Applying the brand funnel to cars (Source: McKinsey Brand Health Survey, MCM/McKinsey, 2002)

Seeing great response to brand funnel model Riesenbeck and Perrey (2008) assert that:the brand funnel, in principle, can be applied to any B2B or B2C market, although it will need to be adapted to the industry segment they also contend that the number and structure of the stages will vary by industry (p. 118).

3.1 Methodology

In conducting any research the methodological input plays the vital role in the fulfilment of the intentions as offered by the definition. Investigation in any specified field is deciphered through the term methodology (Ethridge, 2004, p. 25). To search and establish or experiment the claims of or curiosity in any specific field of knowledge, some sorts of rules and resources use are implied by methodology. In every research there are various areas of logical and scientific issues that need to be measured and passed through some sequential procedures. It is the flexibility of the researcher which path and procedure to choose.

Since this research is based on the analysis of the influencing of branding on consumer purchasing behaviour using the case of Apple iPhone, related methodological steps and research processes are enumerated in this chapter. In this regard to decipher the claims of and curiosity in knowledge in the mentioned area, this research has made some attempts following some procedures. It deals with the philosophy of research, the design of this research, sources of getting relevant data, methods of collecting those data, relevant sampling issues and size of the respondents, the pattern of the analysis of data, the ethical consideration employed in this work and the limitations that the researcher had to encounter while conducting the research work.

3.1 Research philosophy

The development and the nature of knowledge are closely related to the research philosophy (Saunders et al. 2009). Since this research has the curiosity and thirst to acquire knowledge in the area of brand influence on consumers purchasing behaviour, it is phenomenological in its nature. Phenomenological research is “designed to describe and interpret an experience by determining the meaning of the experience as perceived by the people who have participated in it“(Ary *et al.* 2009, p. 471). Although there are both qualitative and quantitative approaches, an attempt has been made in this research to adopt quantitative approach. Such approach denotes of getting quantitative data that can be measured, simply speaking, in numbers.

3.2 Research design

Research design in any research is used as the blueprint. The generation of research design in any research serves the in the way that it depicts the research work from its beginning to the end and shows the sequential order of the work how it should be advanced as well as the features of the raw data (Boyatzis 1982). As it is considered as the blueprint of any research, the foci in such consideration can be presented as follows:

- Pinpointing the questions for the purpose of the research,
- Gouging out required data,
- Clear-cut specification of the data that are important to gather, and
- Figuring out the ways to analyze gathered data (Yin, 1994).

In this research first of all the researcher figured out the research problems that are dealt with added care. Then researcher prepared for the review of relevant literature, then presents the quantitative method of gathering data. Then the researcher developed a structured questionnaire to gather data from the respondents. Here the researcher gets the scope to present the pattern of data analysis. The empirical data then sequentially presented, analyzed and discussed, and finally relevant conclusion and recommendations were made. In this sequence the research design was mapped out by the researcher.

3.3 Sources of data

There are two sources of data that are used in most of the researches: primary data and secondary data. This research has made use of both of these data. Primary data are the original data that are gathered directly from the empirical field investigation. In this research the researcher made use of the primary data in the findings, discussion and conclusion and recommendation chapters. The researcher collected those primary data from different types of respondent while undertaking his field investigation. This data gathering was administered by the researcher with the use of a questionnaire based on some structured questions. These questionnaires were placed to the respondents and their responses were taken accordingly.

The vast use of secondary data can easily be found in this research. Secondary data are those sets of data that are easily available and readymade. These data are already collected by some other people or institutions but can be used for other purposes as well. These sorts of data can be collected from books, journals, magazines, newspapers, periodicals, bulletins, the Internet and from many other sources. The researcher had to gather those secondary data related to the present research topic from most of the mentioned sources. The researcher made references and necessary acknowledgement of such secondary data that are used in this research.

3.4 Primary data collection method

Data collection is one of the most important works in the research work without which the research has no value if it is primary data oriented. Since this research is based on mainly the primary data to satisfy the claims of and curiosity into knowledge already made in the introduction chapter of this research.

For gathering empirical data the researcher made use of a survey method. This method of gathering data is popular as it is often used in most of the business and management researches. It is viewed as an increasingly popular method to many (e.g. Jackson and Antonucci 1994; Zikmund 1997; Sunders *et al.* 2009). It is also viewed as a very useful method. According to existing literature survey research as a means of scientific research is used addressing three important key points like sampling, questionnaire design and data collection method. These key points are illustrated below in case of this research.

3.5.1 Sampling

Sampling is related to the respondents of the research whom the researcher places the questionnaire to get information. It is the combination of some particular components that make it possible for the researcher to choose respondents in different but specific style form the vast population to gather relevant data that the researcher intends to collect. For coping with time constraints, monetary issues and strength in conducting any research, sampling aids the researcher in varying manner. One of the big opportunities that sampling offers is that it makes almost sure of getting unbiased information from the respondents. Although there are a variety of sampling methods, in most of the researches the use of purposive sampling, random sampling or the convenient sampling are very common and popular. This research considered the use of convenient sampling. The best offer of this sampling is that it includes any respondent who is available and easy to approach.

In this research the target groups are the students' community between 20-35 ages studying at the Ethames Graduate School in London. Some of the respondents were also taken from outside the college. The target population are originated from different cultural backgrounds. However, diverse information from them was found assisting the researcher to observe different people's interest in buying iPhone. The total number of respondents in this research was 97.

3.5.2 Questionnaire design

Questionnaire design in a research is crucial because it is used as the means of getting relevant data from the respondents. Questionnaires are designed according to the research objectives generally almost proportionately in consideration of the research topic. Although there are structured and unstructured types of questionnaire and there is scope of using them individually or together, in this research the researcher prepared a structured questionnaire for gathering information. There are five important objectives in of this research. The last objectives was based on the above four objectives. So, plainly speaking, for each of the four objectives the related questions were placed in the questionnaire and there were 15 specific questions in the questionnaire.

3.5.3 Administration of the questionnaire and data collection method

For gathering data the researcher used survey interview of the respondents. This indicates that the researcher personally surveyed the respondents to get their valuable opinion in response to the questions as placed in the questionnaire.

3.5 Data analysis pattern

Data analysis is the vital part in the research that includes blending the data into 'bits' and beating those 'bits' afterwards together to decipher their meaning in relation to the research objectives. Analysis of collected data was made using Windows Excel and MS Word. Different tables, graphs were used to present the analyzed data nicely and presentably. Since this research was based on quantitative research approach, the use of numerical format is therefore evident. The use of basic statistics like percentages and some measures of central tendency were also made in the analysis of the collected data in this regard. Finally interpretation of those findings was made in another chapter under the banner of discussion of the findings.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This research was an attempt to search out the influence of branding on consumer purchasing behaviour. In this regard Apple iPhone was considered as the case of analysis. This research therefore offered five specific objectives that were investigated through field work on the respondents of different demographic backgrounds. Among the five objectives the findings of first four were presented in the findings and analysis chapter. This chapter has included the last and final objectives of this research in the analysis of the recommendations part.

With a view to administer this research work this dissertation was organized into six different chapter based on the research and research related findings, although chapter seven was also included but as a personal development related statement of the researcher. In the introduction chapter the researcher had tried to present the basic and key issue of this research was to present a clear idea about what is going to deal with in this research. In this regard an overall introduction of the whole research was made. Then the research question was placed. The five objectives then were presented that was followed by a specific objective of this research. These objectives were mainly based on the analysis and related evaluation of the influence of branding on the purchasing behaviour of the consumers in case of Apple iPhone. Then scope of the study was described. The rationale of the study was presented as a point to place some logics in favour of conducting this research. This chapter also outlined the key points that are presented in different chapters throughout this dissertation.

The literature review chapter gives basic conceptual background of the key concepts that are used in this research with detailed and critical analysis of the available literature. In this regard the definition of brand and consumer purchasing behaviour were defined and narrated. With great importance the discussion on brands was placed in this chapter. Various theoretical issues were dealt with that were found relevant to the analysis. This literature showed great dealings with brand equity to deal with the influence of branding on the purchasing behaviour of the consumers. In this regard related discussion was made on brand awareness, consumer perceptions and image of the brands and the like issues in relation to the research objectives taken in this research. As final consideration this research uses the brand funnel model as a means of conducting the research.

Methodology chapter detailed the research methodology used in this research. In this regard the details of the research design, the methods, sampling, ways of data collection, data presentation etc. are presented in this chapter so that at a glance the reader can have the idea how the research is administered from its inception to the finalization of the dissertation.

Afterwards the presentation and analysis of the findings were presented in chapter four. This chapter was a response to the four objectives of this research. Simply it can be placed in the following manner.

- *To identify and discuss the demographic information on the customer group*

It was presented in the data presentation and analysis chapter in a great detail. It showed that although most of the respondents were students they were from different countries with different religions, incomes, marital status and educational backgrounds.

- *To discuss the characteristics of customers' perception about branding*

It was presented in the whole of the mentioned chapter after the discussion of demographic information of the respondents.

- *To expose the usefulness of Apple iPhone fleshing out its critical discussion in terms of users rate.*

The rating of Apple iPhone in varying manner was presented in the mentioned chapter in a great detail. It showed that most of the respondents rated it as "A" rating meaning sometimes as very good or highly satisfactory or strongly agree.

- *To discuss the type of drivers' influence of preferring the brand, and to buy Apple iPhone*

Different kinds of drivers like brand name, functions, sight/appearance advertisement and referenced by people like drivers were placed. The respondents provided in most of the cases the positive response to these drivers that play the role to influence them to purchase Apple iPhone.

In chapter five results and discussion were made on the basis of the theoretical and literature review considering the findings that were presented in the previous chapter. Then the conclusion and recommendation was presented that finally lead this work completed. The last chapter of this dissertation was presented as the personal development related statements of the researcher.

Evaluation of Results

Related and necessary presentation, analysis and discussion of the findings were already explained in the earlier chapters. To those analyses the evaluation could be presented in a way that this research was conducted to a specific segment of society mostly: the students' community and a few numbers of general people or non-students. This research had taken a very small size of sample for conducting this research. To these points the research was seemed having limitations. In this research there was no involvement of any officials of Apple iPhone. So it gave little scope to the researcher to deal with such a big topic of branding within a very tight time schedule.

To overcome those limitations different steps could be taken. Proper negotiation with the organization in London branch could be developed to get information and respondents from the official sector. The involvement of multi-people could be ensured if general people were taken as the respondents without only focusing on the students. A big sample size could be taken to undertake this research. Since this research is related to the choice and behavioural issues of the respondents, the involvement of qualitative research by the side of quantitative method could also be taken. To maintain the time frame the researcher could remain very much strict to each part of work as outlined in the Gantt chart that was presented in the research proposal.

Recommendations based on Evaluation

In case to the open questions on the recommendation regarding Apple iPhone a variety of responses were found. These recommendations came to the fore of the respondents because this research enabled them to think about what they liked and disliked about this iPhone. When the respondents found their mental position and their responses to the question placed earlier in the questionnaire they were actually at a state to realize what they actually look for from the Apple brand. They, therefore, placed their recommendations.

According to the respondents the big size of Apple iPhone is awkward. According to them the size of such phones could be a little bit smaller that can be easily portable and can be placed into the pockets and be easy to carry.

There were considerable respondents who thought that the weight of Apple iPhone is heavier than some others of the same kind. They therefore recommended that the weight could be reduced. If it is done more consumers, according to them, will buy the iPhone. In this regard they suggested Apple Company to take necessary initiatives.

Since the operating system sometimes seems complex to some of the respondents, it was recommended that the operating system could be developed in a more flexible manner so that mass people can easily use it.

It was reported by some of the respondents that iPhone battery is not much good. So quality battery can be placed.

It was reported by some of the respondents that girls does not like iPhone than boys. So proper consideration in this regard is necessary for the company and also in this regard more investigation can be made by the company to know the reasons and therefore, to take necessary actions.

There were few respondents who said that they would like to have different colours of Apple iPhone. The Company can take it into its consideration.

Most of the respondents reported that the price of Apple iPhone is very high. There are lots of consumers, according to them, who want to purchase it, but the high price constraint fails to fulfil their desire. So most of the respondents made recommendations and it was based on decreasing the price of Apple iPhones.

Future Work

The future research in the same area can be developed by incorporating responses from both the official employees of Apple iPhone or Apple Company as well as diversified categories of mass people. In this regard both qualitative and quantitative methods as combined methodology can be used in the investigation process. In the research brand awareness issues could be taken on the basis on comparative discussion of the related models and theories in considering the features of the brands that is taken for conducting the research as a case.

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