

Cognitive Consequences of Digital Brand Personality Perception

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ABSTRACT: Understanding how customers assign humanlike qualities and personality traits to a brand is becoming increasingly crucial for marketing researchers and practitioners in the digital age since brand personality has a big impact on consumers' brand awareness and brand association. This research project aims to examine the influence of digital brand personality perception on brand association and brand awareness in Pakistan's telecommunications industry, as well as to analyze the cognitive effects of this perception. A well-known theory of self-congruity was used to analyze the phenomenon and clarify the correlations between the variables. A total of 1536 clients of Pakistan's telecom industry were given a questionnaire, which was used to gather data. IBM AMOS analyzed the data to measure the relationship between the variables. According to the study, all the variables under investigation appear to have a strong and positive link. In addition to adding to the corpus of research, this study will help professional managers and marketers develop branding strategies that consider the concept of brand personality.

KEYWORDS: digital brand personality perception, brand awareness, brand association

Introduction

The rise of businesses utilizing digital media has altered how consumers purchase and sell items, look up information about products and services, and communicate with businesses and other consumers (Correa, Hinsley, and De Zuniga 2010). Businesses employ a variety of digital media channels, including websites, blogs, forums, and social networking platforms, to try to manage their consumer interactions. In addition to providing some special options for interaction (Kaplan and Haenlein 2010; Hanna, Rohm, and Crittenden 2011), using digital media gives a way to accomplish branding goals at a lower cost (Felix, Rauschnabel, and Hinsch 2017). Despite the fact that the production, pharmaceutical, and tourist industry sectors use and dominate digital media significantly (Adweek 2018), the rapid expansion of the telecom industry needs also to be considered. According to Svendsen and Prebensen (2013), the telecom business is seeing significant development that is accompanied by ongoing rivalry. Unquestionably, digital media has become more significant in a business's overall advertising approach (Macarthy 2018), and more businesses are using digital media to connect with customers (Okazaki and Taylor 2013). Despite this, certain businesses are far more successful than competitors in reaching customers through digital media (Hanna Hanna, Rohm, and Crittenden 2011). Mindful adaptation, developing communities, and ability to absorb are necessary for having an effective digital media outreach plan (Culnan, McHugh, and Zubillaga 2010). Additionally, showcasing the unique qualities of the organizations on digital media (Leonardi and Vaast 2017) and successfully implementing a personified approach (Men and Tsai 2015) are also necessary. Thus, "brand personality," or basically "the set of human characteristics associated with the brand" (Aaker 1997), plays an indisputable role in fostering effective digital media engagement (Hu et al. 2018) and aiding organizations in managing customer opinions (Xu et al. 2016). Furthermore, compared to people who are not users of digital media, consumers form far more favorable opinions of brands' personalities and images, per the study by Walsh et al. (2013).

Additionally, there has been a notable shift in Pakistan's telecom sector as a result of the business's increasing level of competition (Leisen and Vance 2001). Over the past 20 years, there has been a significant increase in the number of fiercely competitive cellular telecom

service providers (Svendsen and Prebensen 2013). Numerous telecom service providers worldwide adhere to businesses marketing techniques. Consumers acquire a large number of mobile telecom services as a result of the awareness and attachment they have formed with digital brand identities, both of which are heavily promoted. Customers are convinced to purchase a specific product in this way. Additionally, it has been noted that businesses advertise a particular aspect of the product or bundle offered by a cellular telecom network in order to raise attention and establish a connection. Businesses with strong brands have recognized the importance of branding. According to The World's Most Valuable Companies (2017), these companies have unique connotations that help people recognize them globally.

Owing to Pakistan's extremely fierce competition and crowded cellular service provider market, businesses are concentrating on keeping their current clientele and enticing them to move to other products. It is clear from the aforementioned instance that brand personality is a quality that cannot be overlooked. This research aims to investigate rigorously the effects of digital brand personality perception, namely brand awareness and brand association. Additionally, this research creates a framework for evaluating performance and predictivity based on artificial intelligence.

The majority of the study so far has focused on how customers react emotionally and behaviorally to digital BP perceptions. Cognitive effects, on the other hand, have not gotten as much focus in the study, and further studies could examine how digital BP perceptions affect factors like brand awareness and connections to brands. Direct impacts of consumers' perceptions of digital brand perception on dependent variables linked to cognition, affect, and relationships, as well as brand (Mishra, Singh, and Koles 2021; Saeed et al. 2021).

According to Vacas, Azar, and Machado (2020), a few studies looked at cognitive consequences, which are the direct effects of BP perceptions on customers' ideas and logical assessments of a web page or business. Cognitive consequences are still not well studied, despite the evaluated studies showing that digital BP perceptions improve things like perceived quality (Vacas, Azar, and Machado 2020) or website quality (Poddar, Donthu, and Wei 2009). Similarly, only a small number of research found that BP directly increased brand equity (Anselmsson and Tunca 2019; Garanti and Kissi 2019).

The study has two research questions:

Q1. Is there a relationship between digital brand personality perception and brand awareness?

Q2. Is there a relationship between digital brand personality perception and brand association?

Companies are becoming more complicated as a result of a growing variety in current unpredictable globe. A competitive edge fuelled by core capabilities, the substantially quicker rate of technical development, promotional instruments and tactics, and consumer reactions and patterns are all factors contributing to the complexity of the business landscape. For the purpose of developing and improving brand personality and gaining a competitive advantage over rival businesses, the strategically important idea of managing digital brand personality perception necessitates careful thought. Given the importance of the aforementioned occurrence, this work is important from both an academic and a practical standpoint.

Literature Review

Digital Brand Personality Perception

The focus of BP research has increasingly turned to the digital realm in recent years (Garanti and Kissi 2019; Torres and Augusto 2019). In digital relationships on webpages (Shobeiri, Mazaheri, and Laroche 2015), social networking sites or with virtual brand agents, scientists have started to investigate the way buyers link companies with anthropomorphic traits. The current understanding regarding consumers' digital brand personality perceptions is still fragmented and scattered throughout these various digital contexts, given the growing focus on research. It will be difficult for investigators to fully comprehend what is already known and will impede the development of fresh

investigations that are going to advance the discipline if digital BP studies keep appearing in an unconnected way.

Studies have focused mostly on the conative outcomes, which are behavioral intents. Digital BP is a highly interactive construct, according to a number of research studies in this field of study. Even while the different publications showed that digital BP perceptions improve things like perceived quality (Vacas, Azar, and Machado 2020) or website quality (Poddar, Donthu, and Wei 2009), there is still a lack of study on cognitive consequences. Furthermore, just a few studies (Anselmsson and Tunca 2019; Garanti and Kissi 2019) discovered a direct positive impact of BP on brand equity.

Brand Awareness

Romaniuk, Wight, and Faulkner (2017) define brand awareness as the capacity of consumers to identify or remember that a brand is part of a specific product category. The ability of consumers to recognize (identify) a company in a variety of marketplace settings is closely linked to the strength of its visibility and effects in their thoughts (O'Guinn, Allen, and Semenik 2009). According to the concepts given above, brand awareness is the knowledge of a brand's presence and connection to a certain product.

Khurram, Qadeer, and Sheeraz (2018) state that recall along with recognition are each of the fundamental components of brand awareness. The capacity of customers to recall a brand within a particular product category is known as recall. In addition, customers' ability to identify a company as soon as they receive or witness information about a product is known as recognition (Yunita, Nazaruddin, and Nailis 2019; Pomalaa, Mursityo, and Herlambang 2018).

Brand Association

A connection among consumers and the qualities connected to their memories of a brand or brands is known as brand association (Chandra and Keni 2019). Muzammil, Rachma, and Rizal examined how brand association affected iPhone buyers at the University of Malang. Customers benefit from brand association while digesting and remembering brand-specific knowledge. The favorable feelings customers have with a brand provide them with an incentive to purchase particular goods. As a result, vendors must find new strategies to attract prospective customers due to intense competition. Jeon and Baeck (2016) found that, in this case, the brand association produces a mental image of a brand. According to Mohan et al. (2018) and Muhonen, Hirvonen, and Laukkanen (2017), branding is also essential for developing powerful brands in small and medium-sized enterprises.

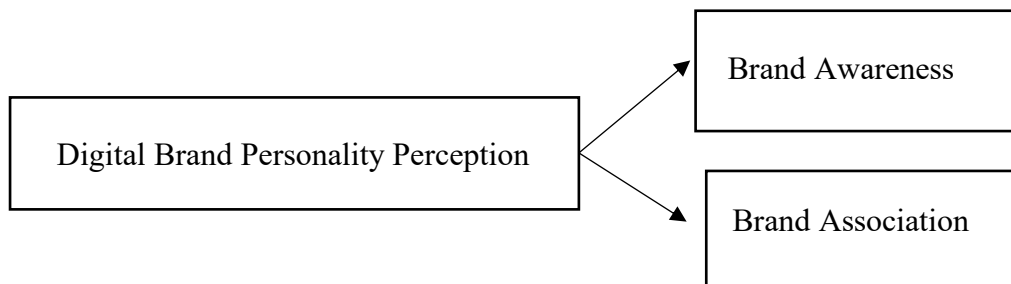
Relationship between digital brand personality perception, brand awareness and brand association

To get a competitive edge over rivals, businesses strive to develop distinctive brands with exceptional personalities (Chung and Park 2017) that set them apart from rivals. Consumers are anticipated to become more devoted to a business that effectively distinguishes itself in their minds by offering unique features. This is achieved through brand awareness and association. Different brand personality features positively impact both brand awareness and brand association when studying the market for video games and toys. Brand recognition and connection will increase with the degree of attractiveness and customer identification with the brand personality. A study on Islamic bank customers found that brand personality had a favourable impact on brand recognition and association. Numerous intricate elements that support online business-to-customer interaction must be investigated in order to comprehend how brand personality is viewed on digital media and how it may develop into brand recognition and brand association.

The present study makes use of SIP theory, which was first created by Joseph Walther in 1992 and is predicated on the idea that subscribers of technology-mediated interaction can form

connections that are just as solid as those formed in person, in an effort to explain the aforementioned behaviors. When employing an approach that is often limited to written signs, the stated theory "focuses on how communicators adapt to the absence of nonverbal cues" (Walther et al. 2015).

Theoretical Framework



Hypotheses

H1: There is a positive relationship between digital brand personality perception and brand awareness

H2: There is a positive relationship between digital brand personality perception and brand association

Methodology

This study employed a quantitative methodology to collect data on the cognitive effects of digital brand personality perception in Pakistani telecom service providers. Statistical data were analyzed using the quantitative approach. A systematic questionnaire that was disseminated via online platforms along with private relationships was used to collect the data of respondents. The internet was used to reach the clients of cellular service providers, and respondents were given access to a Google Forms survey link. To guarantee inclusion and remove the possibility of common method bias, a number of steps were taken. The researcher made certain that the questions had no right or incorrect answers, that no financial information was requested, and that answers would stay confidential. The formula provided by Krejcie and Morgan (2005) was used to determine a sample size of 1536 answers. Customers of Pakistani cellular service providers will serve as the unit of analysis.

A pilot research was carried out prior to collecting the data from those who participated. To make sure the questionnaire items are understandable, a pilot sample will be created. Demographics, brand personality statements, brand awareness, and brand association will make up the final instrument's four sections. The brand personality scale is employed to measure brand personality. Brand personality was measured on Likert scale, ranging from 1 to 5. Four items recommended by Yoo et al. (2000) were used to measure overall awareness, and three items by Yoo et. al (2000) were used to test brand association. Both brand association and total brand awareness were assessed using a five-point Likert scale, with 1 denoting "strongly disagree" and 5 denoting "strongly agree."

SPSS version 24.0 and LISREL 9.30 was used to analyze the data for structural equation modelling. Examining the appropriateness of the research models and forecasting the variables influencing each research hypothesis are the objectives of the study. The internal consistency, content, convergent, and discriminant validity of the model constructs and their items were examined in order to determine their appropriateness (Anderson and Gerbing 1988). Hypotheses, a structural model, confirmatory factor analysis, and exploratory factor analysis were put to the test.

Analysis and Results

The data was first analyzed for missing values. To strengthen the findings, a few missing values were discovered and substituted. Additionally, a few significant values were identified and substituted into the corresponding mean values. Following an examination of the data's characteristics, regression analysis and correlation were carried out.

Table 2. Correlation Matrix of Variables

	Digital brand personality perception	Brand awareness	Brand association
Digital brand personality perception	1		
Brand awareness	.472	1	
Brand association	.381	.437	1

The correlation table indicates that brand awareness, brand association, and digital brand personality evaluation are all strongly positively correlated. There is a significant positive correlation between the variables because not one of these variables has a significant value greater than 0.05. Furthermore, each variable in this table has a correlation statistic value of 1, which indicates that all of the constructs are properly related to one another.

There is strong positive correlation of digital brand personality perception with brand awareness and brand association, according to the regression analysis using SPSS. Thus, every one of the research's hypotheses is approved. Due to heightened rivalry brought about by modern developments in the telecom sector of Pakistan they are now emphasizing the value of their digital brand personality perceptions as ways to strengthen their competitive edge. Each and every indicator, including digital brand personality perception, brand awareness and brand association are seen to have a positive correlation with one another. This indicates that brand awareness and brand association will increase in tandem with improvements in digital brand personality perception.

Table 3. Regression Analysis

		Outcome								
		Y1(Brand awareness)				Y2 (Brand association)				
Antecedent		Coeff	SE	T	p		Coeff	SE	T	p
X1 (Digital brand personality perception)	B₁	.132	.038	2.436	.0456	B₂	.167	.156	1.673	0.047
Constant	A₁	1.65	.502	4.645	.000	a₂	3.335	.713	6.987	.000
		R² = .45 F (1536) = 5.984, p < .05				R² = .34 F (1536) = 5.998, p < .05				

Theoretical and Managerial Implications

This research provides practical management and marketing applications in addition to scholarly concept formulation. In line with earlier research and theories on the subject, this study shows a substantial correlation between the perception of digital brand personality, brand awareness, and brand association. Consequently, it adds to the body of current research. Due to the telecom industry's rapid expansion over the past ten years, the company now has the potential to attract significant foreign investment. FDI can hurt local businesses by increasing competition and taking advantage of their established brands and scale economies, even if it is a good thing for the nation's growth in any area.

With the aid of the present research, entrepreneurs and senior managers will be able to develop tactical strategies and make crucial choices for their brands. Depending on their location, telecom is significantly impacted by buying expenditures.

Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

The study was conceptually limited because there was a dearth of secondary data on the topic. Several investigations on the topic have already been conducted in economies of the west. This limits the study's ability to choose secondary data and compels them to examine international studies on the topic. The study is limited to a small number of Pakistani urban spatial centers where the sample is gathered. Other populations, in general, will not be affected by the survey's findings.

The present research focuses only on the perception of the personality of digital brands. Other important tactics that have not been covered in this study, such as consumer behavior and commitment, can also have an impact on brand awareness and brand association. Therefore, more research is needed to consider more recommended approaches. It is possible that the convenience sampling method used in this study added bias into the data gathered. This is yet another disadvantage of the sampling-based data collection technique. To avoid the bias that convenience sampling introduces, an alternative sample technique may be used.

Direction for Future Research

Future research could expand the currently underway investigation's focus to encompass all of Pakistan, but it is now restricted to a few cities. A further gap that is not addressed in the present research is the lack of numerous additional elements that could influence brand association and awareness. It is possible that the next study will include more predictor variables in addition to the one at hand.

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