

The Impact of Branding Strategy on Brand Awareness and Purchase Intention: A Literature Review

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Abstract

Branding strategies have evolved as a strategic framework for ensuring brand awareness among consumers. Many practitioners and academics have focused on examining the relationship between branding strategies, brand awareness and consumer purchase intentions. Although brand awareness is found to be the driving force behind purchase intentions, few studies suggested that purchase intentions are predicted by consumer attitude. Therefore, consumer attitude has been examined in this study as a variable that supplements the relationship between brand awareness and consumer purchase intentions through a series of stages as defined in the AIDA (Awareness, Interest, Desire and Action) model, which has further been interpreted as AI(A)D(P)A model for this study. The additional A and P presents the attitude and purchase intentions which substitute the interest and desire respectively. Grounded in the theoretical analysis, this study analysed the impact of branding strategies on brand awareness and purchase intention within the luxury garments industry of Pakistani by specifically targeting youth. The recommendations for future studies have also been presented in this study.

Published by IJRP.ORG. Selection and/or peer-review under responsibility of International Journal of Research Publications (IJRP.ORG)

Keywords: Branding, Strategy, Brand Awareness, Consumer attitude, AIDA, Purchase intention, Youth, Luxury garments

1. Introduction

Branding has evolved as a strategic view point which focuses on creating customer value. The primitive nature of branding underlies a set of determinants that constitutes a branding strategy (Holt, 2015). These elements will be investigated in this research paper to analyse how a firm's branding strategy is built to influence consumers' purchase intentions and attitude. Chovanová et al. (2015) asserted that branding enables the consumer to recognise a product by inducing brand awareness through different branding strategies. According to Chi et al. (2009), brand awareness acts as the function of memory that allows consumer to retrieve relevant product information whenever he or she is exposed to the brand. The purpose of branding strategies is to influence consumer's attitude and purchase intentions towards a brand by inducing significant brand awareness that could stimulate actual purchase behaviour among consumers (Shahid et al., 2017). Rawal (2013) claimed that the relationship between consumer's brand awareness and purchase intentions has not received much attention in the current academic discourse (Goyal, 2014; Tariq et al., 2013). Moreover, consumer attitude has found to be the predictor of consumer purchase intention (Bayne, 2011; Shah et al., 2012). Aaker (2010) also confirmed that the consumer attitude is shaped by the knowledge and information induced in the minds of consumers in the form of brand awareness. Therefore, this research paper tends to investigate the consumer attitude as the mediating variable that constructs a link between brand awareness and consumer purchase intention.

Branding strategies and their subsequent influence on brand's image and consumer perception has received greater attention within retail industry (Chovanová et al., 2015; Zhang, 2015). However, the luxury garments industry is in dire need of growing attention from brand managers to instigate branding as a core element in building luxury fashion brands (Kapferer and Bastien, 2009). According to Haq (2015), the Pakistani fashion industry contains 40% luxury brands that contribute a huge sales volume to the overall economy. Narula (2017) further added that most of these luxury brands are demanded and purchased by the youth in Pakistan. Therefore, this study focuses on investigating the branding strategies of luxury garments in Pakistan and how these branding strategies influence brand awareness and purchase intention among youth.

2. The Literature Review about Branding Strategy

Keller (2003) defined branding strategy as the plan of action that focuses on differentiating the product or service in the minds of consumers. For Kapferer (2008), Srivastava and Gregory (2010) and Strizhakova et al. (2008), the branding strategies of luxury brands are designed to identify and position the brand with positive attributes to attract and retain potential customers, build brand awareness and stimulate desired purchase behaviour among consumers. Truong et al. (2009) witnessed that the young generation is the target of luxury brands in the contemporary world due to their financial flexibility and choice versatility. These brands establish their branding strategies around certain attributes that according to Okonkwo (2007) build the foundation of these brands. Many researchers have focused on identifying the key determinants underlying luxury branding strategies (For e.g.; Arora, 2013; Beverland, 2004; Bruce and Kratz, 2007; Dubois et al., 2001; Heine, 2011; 2012; Jackson, 2004; Moore and Birtwistle, 2005; Kapferer, 2008; Okonkwo, 2007; Riedmeier, 2012). Choo et al. (2012) and Megehee and Spake (2012) also supported their assertion by identifying premium price, rarity, exclusive distribution, emotional association, aesthetics, quality, symbolic values and exclusivity as the key determinants sharpening a luxury branding strategy. According to Heine (2011; 2012), luxury brands tend to differentiate their branding strategies from other brands based on such attributes as premium prices, high quality, rarity, extraordinariness, symbolic value and aesthetics. Thus, based on the analysis of past researches, it has been revealed that quality, price, aesthetics, rarity, place and promotion are the most reckoned attributes underlying luxury branding strategies as depicted in the following table:

Determinants of Luxury Branding Strategy										
	Dubois , Laurent and Czellar (2001)	Heine (2011 , 2012)	Riedmeier (2012)	Arora (2013)	Okonkwo (2007)	Jackson (2004)	Bruce and Kratz (2007)	Moore and Birtwistle (2005)	Kapferer (2008)	Beverland (2004)
Price	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	
Non-necessity	✓									
Quality	✓	✓			✓				✓	✓
Multi-sensuality	✓									
Exceptionality	✓									
Heritage	✓							✓		✓
Aesthetics	✓	✓			✓		✓	✓		
Symbolic value		✓						✓	✓	✓
Extraordinariness / uniqueness/ exclusiveness/ rarity	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Exclusive distribution/ placement		✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	
Material refinement			✓							
Design			✓							
Longevity			✓							
Limitations			✓							
Promotion/ Communication				✓	✓			✓	✓	✓
Emotional Appeal					✓					
Differentiation					✓					
Innovation					✓		✓	✓		
Creativity					✓		✓	✓		
Craftmanship					✓	✓				
Authenticity									✓	
Direct Marketing					✓			✓		✓
Publication Relations					✓			✓		✓
Celebrity Endorsement					✓			✓		✓

Table 1: Source: Self-designed based on past studies

According to Pihl (2014), Pakistani luxury garments industry is also embracing the emerging trends in luxury branding world as many brands are using fashion bloggers as the means of inducing awareness among youth (Keinan et al., 2015). According to Ahmad et al. (2015), while some see this as part of promotion while others see it as a means of strengthening their associations with audience in fashion shows. Nevertheless, for Hussain (2015), online media is changing consumers' perceptions about luxury fashion brands as luxury fashion Houses, like the House of Arsalan Iqbal, are specifically using social media and other online platforms to promote awareness about their new collections among youth (Secret Closet, 2017). Thus, branding strategies cumulatively present how a brand tends to register among the minds of consumers based on its key determinants.

3. Brand Awareness and Consumer Purchase Intention

Luxury brands increase their brand awareness by employing several branding strategies that have highlighted in the above section (Arora, 2013; Beverland, 2004; Bruce and Kratz, 2007; Dubois et al., 2001; Heine, 2011; 2012; Hussain, 2015; Jackson, 2004; Keinan et al., 2015; Moore and Birtwistle, 2005; Kapferer, 2008; Okonkwo, 2007; Riedmeier, 2012). However, Baker (2016) argued that the perception of consumers should be met by the luxury brands in devising branding strategies. Consumers' based branding framework is made up of such factors as symbolic association, brand pricing and brand awareness (Farris et al., 2010).

According to Kapferer and Bastien (2009), brand awareness significantly influences the consumer purchase decisions that are made on the basis of consumer's cognitive and affective evaluation. AIDA (awareness, interest, desire and action) model serves as a primitive framework in this study to evaluate consumer's cognitive, affective and behavioural phase i.e. consumer's perception, feelings and behaviour for the product respectively as shown below in the figure (Belch and Belch, 2011). Hauge (2011) further added that the consumer's exposure of the brand also results in building consumer attitude through the same stages. Therefore, consumer attitude predicts the interest, intention and behaviour of consumer towards the brand (Chandon, 2011); not the brand awareness. Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2009) and Kotler and Keller (2012) also claimed that brand awareness primarily influences consumer attitude (i.e. Interest with respect to AIDA model) which eventually stimulates purchase intention among consumers.

Purchase intention is defined by Shahid et al. (2017) as the consumer's desire to purchase a specific product or brand which is influenced by the consumer's evaluation (attitude/interest) towards the brand (Chandon, 2011; Rawal, 2013; Wijaya, 2012). Thus, this research adapts AIDA model with the variation of AI(A)D(P)A to substitute the acronyms of interest and desire with consumer attitude and purchase intention respectively to investigate the influence that branding strategies have on brand awareness and consumer purchase intentions.

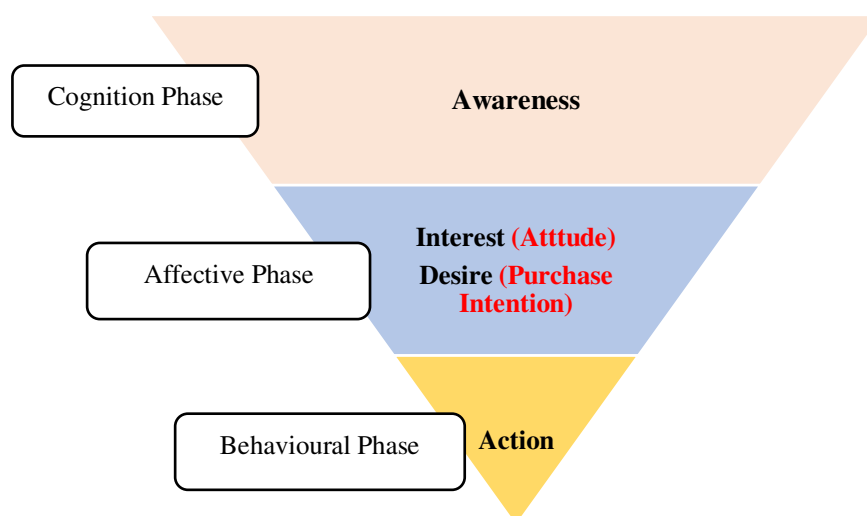


Figure 1: AIDA model adapted to this study – AI(A)D(P)A Source: (Wijaya, 2012)

3.1 Impact of Branding Strategy on Brand Awareness

Branding encompasses a range of functions including communication tools and brand awareness strategies (Songer, 2014). Wheeler (2009) further enunciated that branding strategies are built around the functions that ensure customer loyalty and build brand awareness. Thus, many researchers have clearly indicated a link between branding strategies and brand awareness. According to Kotler and Keller (2013), the major purpose of branding strategies is to promote recognition and familiarity of brands among consumers so that they could engage in buying those brands. Here, Kotler et al. (2013) tried to extend the functions of branding strategies to purchase intentions of consumers. Nevertheless, Hanke (2015) criticised that the brand awareness is the main function of branding strategies adopted by luxury fashion brands. Therefore, this study tends to investigate the impact of branding strategies on brand awareness of luxury fashion brands.

Da Silva and Alwi (2006) believed that in true sense, the distinguished attributes of branding lay the foundation for building brand image and brand awareness in the expansion of fashion brands. This conceptualisation of branding is also appreciated by the luxury sellers that place quality, aesthetics, pricing and exclusivity of the brand as the core elements of a successful branding strategy (Kapferer and Bastien, 2009). In this regard, Pakistani luxury garments industry is no exception since fashion bloggers (Ahmad et al., 2015; Pihl, 2014), fashion shows (Hussain, 2015), online promotions (Mahmood, 2015) and brand recognition (Hussain, 2015) are being actively utilised by many Pakistani luxury fashion brands as the means to induce brand awareness among youth that constitute a major portion of luxury demand in Pakistan (Narula, 2017).

The survey study of Bain & Company in 2013 revealed that luxury goods with premium price, quality, aesthetics and rarity are preferred by consumers. This indicates that people now seem to prefer quality, design, rarity and aesthetics over any other feature while choosing luxury brands (Haberler, 2014). A “Consumer 2050” report of HSBC also confirmed that in the developing countries, consumers especially middle class are spending more on luxury goods (Milliyet, 2013). Thus, brand managers are focusing more on inducing the brand awareness through building strong branding strategies. Heine (2012) asserted that a branding strategy is built on several key attributes that cause an increase in the brand awareness. Heine (2011) also attributed that a branding strategy is a key determinant that sets luxury branding apart from the traditional marketing methods. Thus, branding strategies certainly leads towards the formation of successful brand awareness that is the first stage of AIDA model as discussed earlier in this study.

3.2 Impact of Brand Awareness on Customer Attitude

Percy and Rossiter (2006) affirmed that strategies that are used for increasing brand awareness underlie a basic goal of developing consumer attitude towards the brands. Brand awareness has been attributed as the key factor in building brand value and has also been conceptualised as the major predictor of consumer’s attitude and knowledge possess about the brand (Shahrokh et al., 2012). However, Chovanová et al. (2015) considered brand awareness as the prerequisite for buying decisions of consumer. Chandon (2011) negated this assertion in his study by stating that consumer attitude influences the purchase behaviour and intentions of consumers. Thus, the studies of Chandon (2011) and Shahrokh et al. (2012) try to address the gaps between brand awareness and consumer purchase intentions by proposing consumer attitude as another variable which forms the basis of relationship between these two variables.

Ajzen and Albarracín (2007) defined attitude as the evaluation of consumer about the favourableness or unfavourableness of the brand. A consumer’s evaluation of the brand represents the consumer attitude or interest that eventually leads to a consumer’s purchase of the brand (Wijaya, 2012). In this study, attitude is interpreted as the “Interest” stage of AIDA model that represents consumer’s evaluation of the brand (Belch and Belch, 2011). Martinez et al. (2009) also promulgated that consumer’s evaluation of a brand is based on the cognitive structures that are developed based on the knowledge supplemented in the form of brand awareness. These cognitive structures denote the first stage i.e. Awareness of AIDA model (Ghirvu, 2013) which helps the consumer in forming an attitude towards the brand.

Dense and Depelsemacher (2010) attributed consumer’s attitude towards the brand to the knowledge structures possessed in the mind of consumers. Therefore, luxury brands employ such branding strategies that build strong awareness and position of the brand in consumers’ minds (Shahrokh et al., 2012). Martinez et al. (2009) contended that the consumer interchanges affection and knowledge mentally for the brand to build an association with the brand. Thus, the two phases of AIDA model i.e. cognitive phase and affective phase tends to be associated with each other, forming a more congruent relationship between brand awareness and consumer attitude (Hauge, 2011; Rawal, 2013).

Considering the assertions of Wu and Wang (2014), it can be concluded that consumers’ willingness to buy a brand is affected by their attitudes which are formed as a result of their recognition and awareness level. This

confirmed the findings of Aaker (2010) for this study that brand awareness significantly influences the perceptions and attitude of consumers.

3.3 Impact of Customer Attitude on Consumer Purchase Intention

Intention has been defined as another component of affective attitude while behavioural intention denotes the subjective likelihood of an individual in engaging certain behaviour or act (Yang et al., 2014). According to Tariq et al. (2013), purchase intention refers to a planned behaviour that a consumer exhibits while purchasing a product. Thus, Chen (2007) attributed purchase intention to the behavioural intention which is determined by a consumer's attitude towards his purchases – sometime called as the purchasing attitude too.

According to some preliminary studies, consumer attitude towards the brand positively influences their intentions to purchase (Chen, 2007; Dean et al., 2008; Thøgersen, 2007). In the same vein, Anas et al. (2013) also contended that a positive attitude directs a consumer towards the purchase intention i.e. higher the consumer's favourability for the brand, the more will be the impact on their purchasing power. Many studies have indicated the positive role of affective attitude in shaping consumer's perception (Li et al., 2008) and purchase intention for the brand (Hung et al., 2011; Shukla and Purani, 2012). Hauge (2011) confirmed these findings by linking affective attitude with the second phase of AIDA model i.e. affective phase which suggests that attitude affects a consumer's desire to engage in the product purchase. Thus, desire is interpreted as intention for the purpose of this study (Belch and Belch, 2011; Wijaya, 2012).

Bian and Forsythe (2012) further demonstrated that the affective attitudes can be represented by such feelings as enjoyment, positivity and contentment with the brand which come with the possession of brand. Thus, consumer's attitude reflects the consumer's perceptions and intentions towards the brand (Zhan and He, 2012). The study of Chinese luxury brands revealed that the positive attitude of consumers increases the likelihood of consumer's future purchase intentions towards the brand (Bian and Forsythe, 2012; Zhang and Kim, 2013).

The current studies have also revealed a clear link between consumer attitude and purchase intention by positing that the purchase behaviour is reasonably explained by the two determinants; purchase intention and consumer attitude (Amatulli and Guido, 2011; Choi, 2014; Li and Mousseaux, 2013). In various studies, AIDA model has been used to investigate consumer attitude and its subsequent influence on consumer's purchase intention of fashion brands (Bayne, 2011; Jin and Kang, 2011; Rehman et al., 2014). The findings of these studies also revealed a positive influence of consumer attitude on consumer's purchase intention; thus, providing a base to conclude the outcomes of this research.

The following table presents a number of studies that have confirmed the relationship between branding strategy, brand awareness, consumer attitude and consumer purchase intention:

Perspective	Authors	Objective
Impact of Branding Strategy on Brand Awareness	Kapferer and Bastien (2009)	To delineate the strategies for luxury branding from fashion perspectives
	Heine (2011; 2012)	To propose the foundation of luxury and luxury branding; building the identity of luxury brands
	Hanke (2015)	To investigate the growing awareness of luxury brands given the excessive use of digital media
Impact of Brand Awareness on Consumer Attitude	Percy and Rossiter (2006)	To examine the relationship between brand awareness and brand attitude
	Dense and Depelsemacher (2010); Shahrokh et al. (2012)	To identify how consumer reacts towards brand extension; influence that new brands' awareness creates on consumer's attitude
	Chovanová et al. (2015)	To analyse the impact of brand and its related features (brand awareness, brand recognition, brand image and attitude) on consumer behaviour
	Chandon (2011)	To explain how consumer choices are influenced by their awareness of the private label brands
	Ajzen and Albarracín (2007)	To predict consumer behaviour based on the number of actions and stages he or she goes through
	Ghirvu (2013)	To explore how AIDA model works with respect to brands and products

Impact of Consumer Attitude on Consumer Purchase Intention	Rawal (2013)	To identify the series of stages a consumer goes through which making purchase decision
	Chen (2007); Yang et al. (2014)	To explain how consumer attitude predicts consumer purchase intention towards products
	Hung et al. (2011)	To identify the antecedents on consumer purchase intention
	Wijaya (2012)	To explain the hierarchy of effects in predicting consumer response to advertisements
	Bian and Forsythe (2012)	To demonstrate the consumer's purchase intentions for luxury brands
	Zhang and Kim (2013)	To investigate the factors underlying consumer attitude and purchase intention of luxury fashion consumption in China
	Amatulli and Guido (2011); Jin and Kang (2011)	To identify the determinants of purchase intentions of luxury fashion goods

Table 2 Source: Self-generated for this study based on the critical analysis of past studies

4 Suggestions for Future Studies

4.1 Enrich the Connotation of Branding Strategy

In the recent researches, branding strategies have become an essential component of building brand awareness and consumer purchase intentions (Amatulli and Guido, 2011; Bian and Forsythe, 2012; Heine, 2011; 2012; Jin and Kang, 2011; Shahid et al., 2017; Zhang and Kim, 2013). As suggested by Yang et al. (2014), consumer attitude has remained central to predicting consumer's intention and behaviours towards luxury brands; thus, making behavioural intention a core focus of all the branding strategies. Anas et al. (2013) also conferred that consumer tends to engage in purchase and repeat purchase behaviour due to the enhanced brand image and brand awareness. Thus, the current unprecedented competitive level of luxury fashion marketplace paves the way for exploring the relationship between branding strategies and consumer purchase behaviour and repeat purchase behaviour through a mediating variable i.e. consumer attitude.

4.2 Linking Purchase Intention with Purchase Behaviour

The purchase behaviour and purchase intentions, although seem as quite similar, are contrasted with each other through fine lines of academic discourse. The purchase behaviour of consumers towards luxury fashion brands is predicted through a number of factors including brand awareness, price, symbolic association, image and purchase intention (Rawal, 2013). Farris et al. (2010) believed that the purchase intentions of consumers act as the precursor of their purchase behaviour. These intentions underlie the cognitive and affective evaluation of consumers which according to AIDA model represents consumer responses to product or brand through a series of stages i.e. Awareness, Interest, Desire and Action (Belch and Belch, 2011). This model leads to explain the purchase behaviour of consumer based on his or her evaluations of the brand (Gofman, 2015), thus giving a more explicit way for future studies to investigate the link between purchase intention and purchase behaviour by adapting AIDA model within the context of their studies.

4.3 Branding Strategy, Customer Attitude and Purchase Behaviour

The relationship between branding strategy, brand awareness and consumer purchase intention has been extensively researched (Shahid et al., 2017). Nevertheless, most of these studies have been conducted on the organic food and retail industries (Chen, 2007; Dean et al., 2008; Thøgersen, 2007; Yang et al., 2014). Therefore, there remains a question about the validity and expansion of these studies on other contexts i.e. luxury garments industry, manufacturing industry, private label brands industry.

Moreover, although the relationship between branding strategy, brand awareness and consumer purchase intention has been conferred and examined in this study (Bayne, 2011; Chi et al., 2009; Shah et al., 2012) there still remains certain disagreements among researchers with respect to the direct relationship between each of these variables (Dense and Depelsemacher, 2010; Jaiyeoba et al., 2015; Lu et al., 2015). Especially, many researchers have claimed that consumer purchase intentions do not get directly impacted by brand awareness (Hung et al., 2011; Wijaya 2012), rather some mediating factors like consumer attitude supplements the relationship between the two. Moreover, further relationship between purchase intention and purchase behaviours can be discussed to critically analyse the claim of researchers that customer attitude predicts the behaviour of consumer towards brands (Amatulli and Guido, 2011; Jin and Kang, 2011; Zhang and Kim, 2013). Thus, future studies could extend their scope to investigate the interrelationship between consumer attitudes, purchase intention and purchase behaviour.

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