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Revisiting Consumer-based Brand Equity: Gender-based Analysis

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Abstract: This study aims to revisit the influence of communication sources on consumer mindset and on resulting consumer behavior. More specifically, the study addresses the impact of social media and traditional media on brand image and awareness and their impact on brand attitude. The study further determines the impact of brand attitude on purchase intention. By using a 5-point Likert scale questionnaire, the data was collected from the consumers of Karachi, Pakistan and on 302 useful responses, the structural equation modeling (SEM) technique was employed to test the hypotheses. Results revealed that brand image only affects brand attitude and brand attitude positively affects purchase intention. Furthermore, the communication mediums significantly impact both brand awareness and brand image. The findings have highlighted that social media platforms play a key role in creating a positive brand image and awareness. The results of the gender-based analysis revealed that social media highly affects the brand image and brand awareness for both males and females. The study's findings will help the policymakers in designing the strategies aiming at enhancing brand equity. The research provides insight into communication medium in the creation of brand equity, which is one of the first attempts in this region. The study moreover determines the gender-based differences that are much needed to cater audience appropriately.

Keywords: Purchase intention, brand awareness, brand image, attitude, social media communication.

Introduction

The media landscape has changed significantly over the last ten years (Mangold & Faulds, 2009), and have brought significant improvements in the means of communication (Arif, Aslam, & Ali, 2016). Social media domains like Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, LinkedIn, and the other blogging platforms are progressively switching traditional media by opening new doors for marketers to promote their brands more effectively and to reach a significant number of individuals. This is the reason; organizations are concentrating on social media over traditional media for brand communication because through social media they can manage and monitor activities such as numbers of comments, likes, and shares (Chahal & Rani, 2017). Furthermore, statistics showed that 2.77 billion users use social media around the world therefore, companies trying to reach, engage and interact

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through this marketing channel as they consider this as an integral marketing channel (Kim & Ko, 2012).

Consumers search for the required information extensively through using social media. Hence, it opens doors to gain insights into consumer behavior around the world and this eventually helps companies in increasing their brand equity (Lim, Pham, & Heinrichs, 2020). The rapid development of social media enlightened the question that whether this advancement lessens the market's control on brand management. Past studies have emphasized that firms should evaluate the effectiveness of social media on key success measures. A study conducted by Nielsen (2010), pointed that 70% of internet users trust social media platforms for the evaluation of a brand. In addition, social and traditional media influence the sales of a brand (Stephen & Galak, 2010).

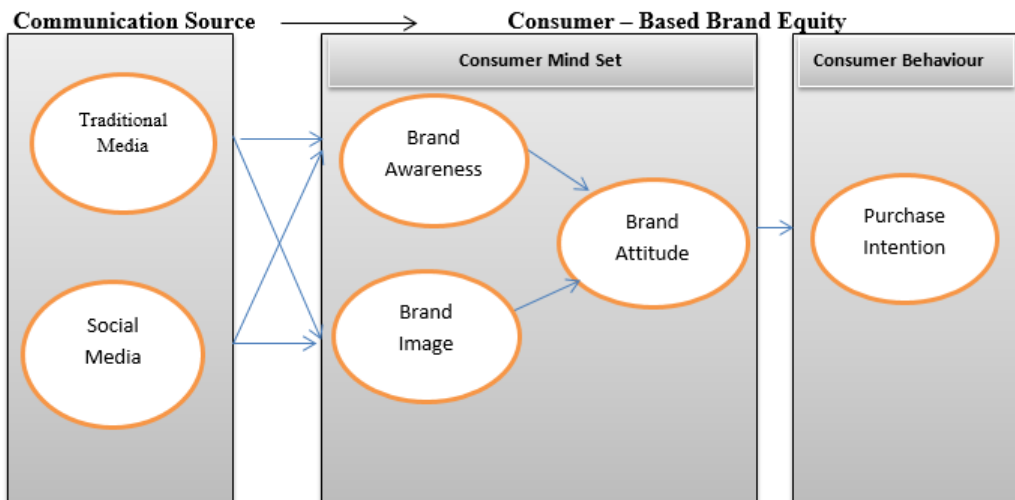
Pakistan, as an emerging nation, focused on the growth of information and communication technology keenly over the last 15 years and, this shows a reasonable growth in the usage of the internet in Pakistan. The social media users in Pakistan were increased by 9 million in 2021, and currently, there are 46 million users. This is the reason that social media has now also become a vital part of everyone's life in Pakistan. However, research determining the role of social media and traditional media in the creation of brand equity is still limited in the context of developing countries, and detailed study is required to understand this community. Moreover, there is a need to revisit whether traditional media still matters for the brands in the creation of brand equity or it becomes obsolete. The marketers have debated that traditional media is losing its power (Digital Marketing, 2018), and hence this shows the need to revisit the role of traditional media and social media in determining brand equity. Considering this, the present study attempts to test the impact of traditional and social media on consumers with regard to brand equity. This study also further aims to identify the role of gender in relation to communication mediums in determining brand equity drivers and purchase intention. In past, limited studies have addressed the role of genders in the creation of brand equity and it is quite essential for marketers to know how to cater to males and females effectively.

Theoretical Foundation

The brand value chain framework proposed by K. L. Keller and Lehmann (2003) explained different types of effects triggered by the efforts of the marketing mix. According to Aaker (1996); K. L. Keller and Lehmann (2003), a company's control on marketing communication is focused on the traditional brand value chain. It does not consider the effect of consumer information on social media platforms. Due to this reason, a modified form of the brand value chain has been taken to foresee the organizational and consumer communication activities. The improved brand value chain has four levels. First, the brand communication media (social media or traditional media), the second level is based on the consumer's mindset that consists of awareness and image of the brand. The third level is related to consumer behavior that derives in the form of purchase intention. Lastly, the company's financial performance in terms of the turnover (inventory or sales) and the market share. According to J. M. Keller (2008), stages two and three create consumer-

based brand equity, which is considered as brand strength. The objective of this study is to examine the impact of communication media on consumer-based brand equity, which constitutes the first three stages of the brand value chain. Based on this concept, communication media is divided into traditional and social media communication. According to [Zajonc and Markus \(1982\)](#), different mediums of marketing communications have an unlike effect on consumer's mindset. Using different mediums as a communication channel permits marketers to generate and interchange information about brands with customers and build strong and positive brand information in customers' minds ([Kim & Ko, 2012](#)). The consumer mindset has two dimensions i.e. brand awareness and brand image. Brand Awareness is the measurement of the accessibility of a brand in the memory of the customer. We can measure it through brand recall. Brand image means how a consumer perceives a brand. This overall leads to brand attitude. Consumer mindset influences consumer behavior where purchase intention is a resultant outcome. Therefore, consumer-based brand equity is the consequence of consumers' reactions to brand communication activities ([Bruhn, Schoenmueller, & Schäfer, 2012](#)). Figure 1 represents the research model.

Figure 1
Framework of the study



Hypotheses Development

Schema Theory firstly described the linkage between communication mediums and consumer-based brand equity. This theory explained that brand communication work as stimuli and this stimulation form the attitude of the consumer ([Goodstein, 1993](#)). Other researchers including [Halkias \(2015\)](#) have also employed schema theory for conceptualizing brand awareness. The stimulation caused by the communication triggers a positive influence on consumers' brand awareness' and brand image. Hence, brand communica-

tion has a positive link with brand equity. In sum, brand-based communication transmits brand knowledge specifically about brand awareness and brand image (Bruhn et al., 2012). According to Yoo, Donthu, and Lee (2000), both social and traditional media plays a significant role in creating brand equity by increasing the probability that consumer will consider this brand and choose, which turn into a habit. Marketers always try to communicate about their brand, both on traditional media and social media to put the brand in limelight.

Brand awareness describes in what way consumers associate brands they intend to own. Brand awareness is shaped by the communication process and it is a crucial part of communication to create awareness (Macdonald & Sharp, 2000; Netemeyer et al., 2004). Consumers get aware of the brand via effective marketing communication that can be from television, radio, newspaper, or online communication medium as it gives the idea of product quality, its integrity and helps in product evaluation and selection. Consumer's decision significantly derives brand awareness, which helps in building up brand equity. Hence, brand awareness is a major component in creating brand equity (Pouromid & Iranzadeh, 2012; Sagynbekova, Ince, Ogunmokun, Olaoke, & Ukeje, 2021).

The brand image explains consumers' use of the brand to imitate the symbolic meaning of brand and consumption (Lau & Phau, 2007). Consumers perceive that well-regarded brands have good quality. Brands that are in the consumer's eye give confidence to the companies to launch new brand under the umbrella of the same brand and it also helps in boosting up the sales of the current brand (Wu, Yeh, & Hsiao, 2011). Marketing communications create positioning and brand image in the eyes of the consumer. According to Suki (2013), consumer awareness of brand image influence purchase decision. If the consumer is unfamiliar with the brand, they are unlikely to purchase the brand. Consumers also associate their brand with the celebrity or any famous figure and that is why communication medium focuses on celebrity endorsement in their advertising. Likely to other communication mediums, word of mouth also affects brand image. Faircloth, Capella, and Alford (2001) confirmed that brand image significant effect on brand equity. Studies have shown that social media communication affects brand awareness and brand image (Dewindaru, Syukri, Maryono, & Yunus, 2022).

Based on the above discussion, it can be hypothesized that;

H₁ Brand-based traditional media communication has a positive impact on (H1a) brand awareness and (H1b) brand image.

H₂: Brand-based social media communication has a positive impact on (H2a) brand awareness and (H2b) brand image.

According to Bruhn et al. (2012), brand attitude is the evaluation of the brand. Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) explained that brand attitude is influenced by numerous combinations of brand-based associations that can be brand awareness and brand image. Company status and its outcomes are measured through customers' opinions or impressions of the organization including brand awareness, opinions about the quality, and attitudes toward the brand and purchase intentions. The hierarchy of Effects (HOE) model

also explains the relation of purchase intention, brand awareness, brand quality, and brand attitude (Jung & Seock, 2016). HOE model suggests that consumers perceive and use marketing communication information in three phases. These three stages described by the HOE model are cognitive (thinking), affective (feeling), and conative (doing). Conferred to this model, consumer-first gets knowledge and awareness of the brand, which builds negative or positive feelings for the brand and finally, this feeling turns into purchasing or rejecting the brand. Existing research supports that brand awareness influences brand attitude and purchase intention and image affect brand attitude. According to Jacoby, Szybillo, and Busato-Schach (1977), while buying brands consumers are more likely to buy familiar and renowned brands. Further, Hoyer and Brown (1990) stated that brand awareness is sufficient in the case of buying low involvement products even in the absence of a well-formed attitude. In the decision-making process, consumers rely on brand awareness as it saves time. In addition, Chakravarti and Janiszewski (2003) stated that brand awareness helps the consumer in choosing the brand at the time of purchase. Moreover, Washburn and Plank (2002) found a positive impact of brand awareness on the purchase intention of the consumer. Huang and Sarigöllü (2014) emphasized in the study of brand awareness and market outcome that brand awareness is prominently associated with brand attitude. According to Pappu, Quester, and Cooksey (2005), perceived quality determines a consumer's attitude and purchase intention. Few other researchers stated that the higher the perceived quality, the higher the brand attitude. Therefore, it can be hypothesized that:

H_{3a}: Brand Awareness has a positive impact on brand attitude.

H_{3b}: Brand Image has a positive impact on brand attitude.

Attitude and behaviour are the extensively studied area in consumer behaviour research (Spears & Singh, 2004; Aslam, Farhat, & Arif, 2021). Poon and Prendergast (2006) stated that attitude and purchase behaviour is correlated in the HOE Model. Attitude is basically a feeling and evaluation of the consumer about a certain brand or service and it is an effective aspect of the HOE model. Whereas, purchase intention is a conative dimension, and it describes the behaviour of the consumer in purchasing a product or service. Brand attitude leads to behavioural intention. Thus, the brand attitude has a significant impact on purchase intention (Aslam et al., 2021; Tan & Goh, 2018). Wall, Devine-Wright, and Mill (2007) reflect behavioural intention as an immediate psychological precursor to one's actual behaviour, which is a significant element between attitude and actual behaviour. Fishbein and Ajzen (1977) found a positive and significant relationship between attitude and purchase intention. Few other researchers including Aslam, Farhat, and Arif (2019); Wu et al. (2011) also reported that consumer attitude impacts consumer purchase intention. Therefore, it can be hypothesized that;

H₄: Brand Attitude has a positive and significant impact on purchase intention.

Research Methodology

Data Collection Procedure and Sample Size

In this study, data was gathered through a self-administered Likert scale questionnaire from the social media users of Karachi, Pakistan. The questionnaire was comprised of two parts. The first part was related to the demographics and social media usage, whereas, the second part was related to the constructs that measure through a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 (1 = Strongly disagree and 5 = Strongly agree). A non – probability purposive sampling approach was used in order to get the responses from the social media users. The purposive sampling technique is commonly used by researchers for gathering specific information from a specific type of people (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). The questionnaire was dispersed among the respondents to be filled in by hand and additionally soft forms (Google docs/forms). To get the responses, the online Google doc form was shared with friends, family, and colleagues through Whatsapp. The link of the Google doc form was also posted on different social media platforms. Few of the responses were gathered in hard copies by visiting different places such as universities, malls, restaurants, etc.

As per the report published by Perrin (2015) on Pew Research Center, most likely 90% of the respondents who use social media are young adults aged from 18 to 29. Therefore, the majority of the data was from the people who belong to the age of 18 years old using social media for their personal or business purpose. In total, 350 responses were gathered on which data screening steps were performed in order to check for missing values and to detect outliers. Firstly, missing values were replaced by series mean values, and then outliers were determined and removed. The univariate outliers were detected by using the z-score method, and multivariate outliers were determined by the Mahalanobis distance method. In total, 48 outliers were identified that were removed from the sample of 350. Hence, 302 responses were left as usable responses for further analysis.

Statistical Techniques

With the help of SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) computer software, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was performed using varimax rotation. Reliability was assessed via Cronbach's alpha and validity was measured through confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). In CFA, values of composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE) were assessed which should be above 0.7 and 0.5 respectively. Further, discriminant validity was tested based on criteria suggested by Fornell and Larcker (1981). Full measurement model tests were undertaken to test the fitness of the model followed by hypotheses testing using structural equation modeling (SEM) in AMOS (Analysis of Moment Structures) computer software.

Data Analysis

Demographics of the Respondents

Table 1 depicts the demographic profile of respondents. In total 48% were male and 52% were female. The larger part of the respondents was from the age bracket from 24-29 (50.3%), high contribution of graduate students was seen with 57.3% followed by post-graduate holdings 35.43%. Most of the social media usage hours are seen as more than 3 hours which is 27.2% lead to 1 to 2 hours and 10 to 30 minutes appeared as 16.9%. From the collected data, 73.8% of respondents were mostly employed followed by those who are students, as 15.6%.

Table 1
Demographic Profile of the Respondents

(n = 302)	Frequency	%
Gender		
Female	157	52
Male	145	48
Age		
18-23	98	32.5
24-29	152	50.3
30 above	52	17.2
Education Level		
Intermediate/A Level	4	1.3
Graduate	173	57.3
Post-graduate	107	35.43
Others	18	6
Social Media Usage		
Less than 10 minutes	45	14.9
10-30 minutes	51	16.9
31-60 minutes	48	15.9
1-2 Hours	51	16.9
2-3 Hours	25	8.3
More than 3 hours	82	27.2
Job Type		
Student	47	15.6
Employee	223	73.8
Self Employed	19	6.3
Others	13	4.3

Source: Authors' Computation

The Measurement Model

SEM assumptions were initially checked with the validation of data for further analysis by applying different statistical techniques. EFA was performed in order to explore the constructs underlying the data. The value of KMO and Bartlett's was 0.940 meeting the threshold value of > 0.7 , which validates the sampling adequacy. Reliability was measured by using Cronbach's alpha with a cut-off value of above 0.6 (Hu & Bentler, 1999). All constructs resulted in the value of Cronbach's alpha ranging from 0.727 to 0.921. Moreover, the EFA loadings of all the construct items were found above 0.6 meeting the suggested threshold of > 0.6 (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2006).

Further, composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE) were assessed during CFA in order to confirm the validity. The values of composite reliability should be more than 0.7 (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988), and the values of AVE should be greater than 0.5 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). All the values of CR and AVE exceeded the acceptable value, and validate the data for further analysis. Moreover, it is suggested that CFA loadings should be above 0.50 (Hair et al., 2006) that also meet the recommended criteria. Table 2 represents the overall results of EFA, Cronbach's alpha, and CFA results.

Table 2
Exploratory Factor and Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Items	EFA Loadings	CFA Loadings	Adapted Source
<i>Social Media Communication Cronbach's Alpha = 0.727 , CR= 0.848 , AVE = 0.527</i>			
SMC1	0,723	0,66	Magi (2003), Tsiros et al. (2004), Bruhn et al. (2012)
SMC2	0,735	0,718	
SMC3	0,682	0,704	
SMC4	0,683	0,797	
SMC5	0,593	0,745	
<i>Traditional Media Communication Cronbach's Alpha = 0.828 , CR= 0.826 , AVE =0.613</i>			
TMC1	0,776	0,762	Magi (2003), Tsiros et al. (2004), Bruhn et al. (2012)
TMC2	0,712	0,795	
TMC3	0,764	0,792	
<i>Brand Awareness Cronbach's Alpha = 0.921, CR= 0.889, AVE =0.627</i>			
BA1	0,745	0,731	Yoo et al. (2000), Bruhn et al. (2012)
BA2	0,719	0,71	
BA3	0,82	0,804	Sasmita and Suki (2015)
BA4	0,835	0,828	
BA5	0,805	0,871	
BA6	0,761	0,794	
<i>Brand Image Cronbach's Alpha = 0.899, CR= 0.874, AVE =0.537</i>			
BI1	0,734	0,76	Scott and English (1989), Verhoef et al. (2004)
BI2	0,73	0,765	
BI3	0,653	0,762	Sasmita and Suki (2015)
BI4	0,51	0,716	
BI5	0,562	0,646	
BI6	0,56	0,742	
<i>Brand Attitude Cronbach's Alpha = 0.906, CR=0.886 , AVE =0.609</i>			
BATT1	0,645	0,729	Low and Lamb (2000), Bruhn et al., (2012)
BATT2	0,649	0,801	
BATT3	0,712	0,806	
BATT4	0,749	0,764	
BATT5	0,7	0,8	
<i>Purchase Intention Cronbach's Alpha = 0.911, CR= 0.904, AVE =0.654</i>			
PI1	0,621	0,778	Bruhn et al. (2012), Grewal et al. (1998)
PI2	0,612	0,834	
PI4	0,801	0,833	
PI5	0,752	0,832	
PI6	0,724	0,763	

Source: Authors' Computation

Discriminant validity was also assessed by the recommended criteria of Fornell and Larcker (1981). According to them, the square root of AVE should be greater than the corresponding correlation of the constructs. Table 3 represents the results of discriminant validity. All the values of the square root of AVE are above the corresponding correlational values present in their corresponding row and columns. Hence, discriminant validity is achieved.

Table 3
Test of Discriminant Validity

	SMC	TMC	BA	BATT	BI	PI
Social Media Communication (SMC)	0,725					
Traditional Media Communication (TMC)	0.567 ***	0,782				
Brand Awareness (BA)	0.490 ***	0.487 **	0,7918			
Brand Attitude (BATT)	0.610 ***	0.525 **	0.510 **	0,7803		
Brand Image (BI)	0.620 ***	0.499 **	0.647 **	0.731 **	0,732	
Purchase Intention (PI)	0.611 ***	0.496 **	0.473 **	0.751 **	0.700 **	0.808

Note: Diagonal values are square root of AVE and correlation values are beneath the diagonal.

*** Correlation is significant at < 0.01

** Correlation is significant at < 0.05

Source: Authors' Computation

Model Fitness and SEM

According to Browne (1993), the value of RMSEA should be less than 0.08. A threshold value of CFI, TLI, IFI should be greater than 0.9 (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). Values of PCFI and PNFI should be above 0.5 (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). The value of χ^2/df should be less than 3. SRMR is considered a good fit if it is less than 0.08 (Hu & Bentler, 1999).

For the measurement model, the value of root mean square of approximation (RMSEA) = 0.072, comparative fit index (CFI) = 0.911; Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) = 0.901; Incremental Fit Index (IFI) = 0.910; Parsimony comparative fit index (PCFI) = 0.61; Parsimony normed fit index (PNFI) = 0.59. Value of χ^2/df = 2.540; standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) = 0.03, all indicating a good and acceptable fit of the model. As mentioned earlier, SEM was used to test the relationship between the constructs. Model found a good fit (RMSEA = 0.072; CFI = 0.911; TLI = 0.91 IFI = 0.912; PCFI = 0.792; PNFI = 0.750; χ^2/df = 2.540; SRMR = 0.04). All the values met the threshold values.

Table 4
Hypothesis Testing

Path	Coefficient	S.E.	CR	p-value	Results
TMC → BA	0.347	0.06	5.79	***	Supported
TMC → BI	0.278	0.052	5.38	***	Supported
SMC → BA	0.455	0.073	6.27	***	Supported
SMC → BI	0.725	0.082	8.83	***	Supported
BA → BATT	0.037	0.044	0.8	0.42	Unsupported
BI → BATT	0.785	0.074	10.6	***	Supported
BATT → PI	0.912	0.09	11.2	***	Supported

Table 4 presents the results of hypotheses testing. The results declared that both social media communication and traditional media communication positively affect brand image and brand awareness. However, social media communication largely affects brand image and brand awareness. The findings also revealed that brand image has a significant impact on brand attitude whereas; brand awareness has an insignificant impact on brand attitude. Moreover, brand attitude significantly affects purchase intention.

Gender Analysis

The findings of the gender-based analysis revealed that both social media communication and traditional media communication affect brand image and brand awareness. However, for both males and females, social media plays a highly significant role in determining the brand equity drivers i.e. brand image and brand awareness. The findings moreover provided the insight that social media communication largely affects male respondents in determining both brand image and brand awareness. Moreover, brand awareness significantly affects the brand attitude of the male consumers only, whereas, brand image significantly affects the brand attitude of both male and females. However, it largely affects the brand attitude of male consumers. Lastly, the results declared that brand attitude is a contributing factor for purchase intention as the results declared a significant relationship for both males and females.

Table 5
Gender Analysis

Path	Male		Female	
	Coefficient	P	Coefficient	p
TMC → BA	0.33	***	0.107	***
TMC → BI	0.265	0.002	0.387	0.001
SMC → BA	0.541	***	0.491	0.001
SMC → BI	0.733	***	0.51	***
BA → BATT	0.105	0.045	0.041	0.619
BI → BATT	0.838	***	0.784	***
BATT → PI	0.902	***	0.702	***

Conclusion and Discussion

Technological advancements have provided various modes of communication (Aslam, Hussain, Farhat, & Arif, 2020) such as social media communication. This is an additional medium for brand communication, and many of the companies are now extensively utilizing this platform as likely as a traditional medium for their brand communication. Marketers have questioned whether conventional media is losing its power (Digital Marketing, 2018). Still, businesses are open to strategically using both communication mediums to gain the maximum benefits. Therefore, the function of traditional media and social media in determining brand equity should be revisited. Considering this, the study aims to revisit the role of traditional and social media communication in determining brand equity. Moreover, the study further examines the gender differences as there are very few studies that have examined the role of gender in determining brand equity by considering communication mediums.

The findings of the study revealed that both communication mediums (i.e. traditional media and social media) have a significant impact on brand awareness. However, social media communication ($\beta = 0.455$, $p = 0.000$) exerts a higher impact on brand awareness as compared to traditional media communication ($\beta = 0.347$, $p = 0.000$). This shows that social media communication is more effective in creating brand awareness. In past, the study of Bruhn et al. (2012) identified that traditional media communication is more effective

for brand awareness. The results highlighted that social media is actually gaining more value as people are extensively using this platform. Similarly, both communication mediums have a significant impact on brand image. In this also, social media communication ($\beta = 0.725$, $p = 000$) exerts a stronger effect on brand image as compared to traditional media ($\beta = 0.278$, $p = 000$). In past, studies have shown that social media communication largely affects the functional brand image and it does not affect hedonic brand image. However, the other study identified that social media communication affects both hedonic and functional brand image (Ali, Iraqi, Khan, & Salam, 2019). Comparative analysis of the mediums declares that social media of communication such as LinkedIn, Pinterest, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and the other blogging platforms are best suited to increase brand awareness and brand image. Moreover, the results further declared that traditional communication medium is still important in building brand awareness and brand image. This establishes the clear idea that the joint impact of these mediums will increase brand equity.

The results further revealed that brand awareness has an insignificant impact on brand attitude ($\beta = 0.037$, $p = 0.42$) whereas brand image has a significant and a strong impact on brand attitude ($\beta = 0.785$, $p = 000$). The insignificant finding of brand awareness on brand attitude is consistent with the findings of Ali et al. (2019). This shows that getting aware of the brand does not mean that consumers have a positive brand attitude maybe they perceived negative awareness about the brand. The results also showed that brand attitude positively affects purchase intention ($\beta = 0.912$, $p = 000$). This finding is consistent with (Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2016; Ali et al., 2019; Bruhn et al., 2012).

The study also compared the gender roles in the creation of brand equity. The findings revealed a very interesting insight and have showed that traditional media play a vital role for males in the creation of brand awareness whereas, traditional media strongly influence brand image for females. Moreover, social media communication largely affects the brand awareness and brand image of males. In Pakistan, the majority of the males are using the internet and social media whereas, they are less exposed to traditional media (Adnan et al., 2018). This could be a reason that social media communication is a highly effective communication source for males. For females, social media is also an effective source of communication and that largely affects brand image and awareness. The results further explained that brand awareness significantly affects the brand attitude of males, whereas, it does not have any influence on the brand attitude of females. Lastly, the brand image significantly affects the brand attitude of both males and females. Also, brand attitude plays a role in developing the intention to purchase.

Implications

The study has several practical and theoretical contributions. Such as, the study provides insights related to both medium of communication and have confirmed that both media of communication has their own importance. In addition, this study provided a better understanding based on the gender analysis and confirmed that for both males and females, social media communication plays an essential role in developing brand equity. The study also enriches the literature from the context of a developing economy.

The findings of the study revealed that both traditional media and social media play a significant role in developing brand image and in the creation of brand awareness. Hence, it is a suggestion to the brand managers to properly utilize both channels for marketing communication. The traditional media still play a vital role, and therefore managers should effectively develop an appropriate strategy in the advertising budget allocation for both sources of communication. Social media has gained a lot of attention from consumers and hence marketers should not neglect this channel. Moreover, brand image plays a key role in developing a positive attitude. This is a reason that proper positioning, clear and concise message should be delivered to the audience as this develops consumers' purchase intention. A combination of traditional media and social media communications gives the best marketing mix for favorably influencing brand equity. The gender-based analysis also provides relevant insights to marketers. The findings provided an insight that social media play an effective role in brand awareness and brand image of males and females.

Limitations of the study

The study provides recent knowledge related to the role of traditional media and social media in the creation of brand equity. However, a few limitations are there that need to address by future studies. For example, this study mainly focused on two broad mediums of marketing communication (i.e. traditional media and social media) and, hence future studies can consider other mediums of communication like sponsorship in replacement of traditional media and taking a comparison of it with social media communication. This study only focused on brand image and brand awareness as the dimensions of brand equity. However, future studies can consider other dimensions of brand equity and can bifurcate brand image into a hedonic brand image and functional brand image. In the future, studies can also consider user-generated social media marketing and firm-created marketing in determining brand equity. This study has considered the role of gender, however, comparative analysis among millennials and generation- Y can bring additional insight. Furthermore, the findings of the study cannot be generalized to every industry. Hence, it is recommended to consider specific brands or categories to understand the clear mechanism of marketing communication.

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