

**Research Article**

# **Impact of brand communication on brand personality: Moderating mechanisms of brand equity in the telecommunication sector of Pakistan**

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Submitted: 30 June 2022

Revised: 30 August 2022

Accepted: 17 September 2022

## **ABSTRACT**

The utmost aim of this paper is to examine the impact of brand communication on brand personality and the moderating mechanisms of brand equity in the telecommunication sector of Pakistan. The phenomenon was examined by applying a well-known theory of self-congruity to explain the moderating function performed by brand equity between the two variables, brand communication, and brand personality. A questionnaire was distributed and collected from 1536 customers in the telecommunication sector of Pakistan, using Telenor, Ufone, Zong and Jazz networks. The data was examined by IBM AMOS to examine the proposed relationships. The study's results suggest a strong moderating effect of brand equity on the relationship between brand communication and brand personality. In this sense, it not only contributes to the body of literature but also aids professionals and marketing managers in creating branding strategies that take into account the idea of brand personality.

**Keywords:** *Brand Equity; Brand Personality; Brand communication*

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

One of a company's most significant resources is said to be its brand. Strong and identifiable brands enhance company success and are crucial in influencing consumers' perceptions of goods and companies (Madden et al., 2006). Experts have shown that the personality of brands arises exactly like those of people (Aaker, 1997). Customers collaborate with businesses while being treated as individuals, helping brands create those identities and establish significant relationships with them (Fournier, 1998). Consumers normally look for firms with characteristics that match their own or the traits exhibited by beloved idols (Batra et al., 2012; Sirgy, 1982). The success of several advertising campaigns depends on the building, enhancing, and strengthening the image of the business.

According to Aaker (1997), brand personality (BP) is an important element for distinguishing a product itself from rivals and also for connecting with consumers since

buyers see businesses as possessing human-looking qualities and characteristics (Fournier, 1998). One extremely important advantage of Brand Personality is the distinctive characteristic that sets it apart from similar market rivals that creates a character in the shape of personality. (As stated by Akin, 2017). Similar to a love connection between two individuals, customers and brands have a relationship with one another. These two individuals might be entertaining companions or personal friends that savor one another's presence and feel fulfilled when they're together (Rajagopal, 2006). Brand Personality is influenced by people's lives and opinions of the company image, claims (Plummer, 2000). It's crucial to create a Brand Personality that matches the company's attributes. On the subject of choosing the right Brand Personality for sustainable products and services, including such moral or environmental companies, nevertheless, a minimal investigation has been performed.

An analytical framework of resource-based theory, performance outcomes and positioning strategies was provided by Degoma (2016). The present research uses an approach to investigate the relationship among these traits whilst evaluating Pakistan's telecom industry's Brand Personality, which ultimately results in increased competitiveness. In marketing words, assets are resources that are available to strategists and some other company personnel and also that, if utilized by the company's advertising, may result in valuable outcomes (Morgan et al., 2011). The fundamentals of a company's competitiveness will be built on such valued outcomes, and they'll be maintained within the company even when the price, scarcity, uniqueness, and durability of these resources change (Barney et al., 2021).

The importance of the value of a brand in educational studies is comparable to that of enterprises. Depending on it, businesses might get an edge over competing brands (Keller et al., 2011). The greatest and quick sector in the globe, the services industry is responsible for the bulk of global output growth in the proportion of developed countries. The largest and speediest industry, in general, is this one. The services industry is one of Pakistan's industries that are constantly expanding, according to Hasan and Rahman (2017). Compared to agriculture and manufacturing, it has a bigger impact on the national budget. The services sector expanded by 4.71 percent, according to the Pakistan Economic Survey 2018-2019. And from the other hand, the service sector's contribution to GDP has grown from 37.2 percent in 1980–1981 to 61.52 percent in 2018–19. Therefore, the services sector is vital to increasing the GDP of Pakistan.

One of the biggest challenges faced by the Telecom industry of Pakistan is to gain highest number of market share. This sector is highly concentrated, and the telecom industry is incredibly competitive. To keep and attract new clients to their business, mobile firms must have a leading market position. The telecom sector is always competing, and so this fiercely competitive sector is expanding significantly (Svendsen & Prebensen, 2013). Strong brand personalities are used by most telecommunications companies. Another problem faced by this sector is customer switching. Powerful consumer relationships might be facilitated through branding. Through all of these robust customers, competitiveness could well be attained (Keller, 2010). Branding efforts are made to develop Brand Personality since it plays a significant role in building brands. The primary objective of this study is to empirically

measure the moderating role of brand equity in building brand personality in telecom sector of Pakistan and in addition to it, this study also measures the relationship between brand communication and brand personality in telecom sector of Pakistan.

This study aims to assist the analysts and executives in Pakistan's telecom industry. Businesses employ a range of strategies to improve Brand Personality. This study investigated the function of brand communication (BC) in producing brand personality (BP), with the moderating function of brand equity (BE), to develop a theoretical model and apply it to Pakistani Telecommunication service providers. A strong brand should also understand that a customer associates a human trait with a business and also how he sees it to be successful. This study will add to the body of information, which will support managers in creating effective advertising for telecom firms.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

If compared to a generic version, brand equity (Brand Equity) refers to the best that a company generates from a good that is well reputation. Businesses may create Brand Equity for their goods by creating them memorable, enjoyable, monumental, and appealing (DeVita & Schivinski, 2019; Ramesh et al., 2018). Consumers would willingly pay an exorbitant value for goods when a company is effective in building favorable Brand Equity for it, even when they could purchase the same item from just a rival for less money. Therefore, the company's strong Brand Equity enables them to generate enormous profits on all fronts (Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2015). Communication plays an essential role in supporting brands to build consumer-based substantial brand equity (Gilal et al., 2022). Such platforms have become an effective mode of communication for brands to establish communication (Hosen et al., 2021).

Frequently employed marketing strategies of communication for building Brand Equity are advertising and sales promotions (Buil et. al., 2013). Businesses spend a large percentage of company expenditures on promotion and advertising to raise brand awareness and enlighten consumers about the brands. Companies are frequently under pressure to adhere to the choices taken by the business owners to convey consistent signals about the franchise brand when it comes to business considerations about promotional and advertising expenses. As good branding messages are spread across the network chain, the customer loyalty of the franchiser will rise if the licensees chose to follow the business managers' policies on promotion and marketing efforts (Kim & Hyun, 2011; Yoo et al., 2000).

Nevertheless, it is also feasible the operators can elect not to fully participate in ads due to the distinctive character of the licensing environment in which licensees also have some influence over its management (Evanschitzky et al., 2020; Kidwell et al., 2007). Since this product cannot be regularly conveyed throughout this situation, pressures on advertisements and promotions will not help to enhance Brand Equity (Grashuis, 2019). Therefore, it is vital to ascertain if the widespread consensus about the association between promotional costs and Brand Equity also remains true in the situation of franchises. This proposes the hypothesis as follows:

H<sub>i</sub>: There is a positive impact of brand communication on brand equity.

A distinctive Brand Personality will have a big influence on how well consumers rate the product. Product line evaluation is dependent on identification and personality, according to Richardson et al. (1994), study which is supported by additional research. Additionally, Beldona and Wysong (2007), reported the results of their research, which showed that Brand Personality had a strong positive effect on product overall quality. According to research like Lin's (2010) findings, Brand Equity has a favorable effect on Brand Personality.

Brand Personality has a significant influence on Brand Equity, according to research conducted by Ling et al. (2014). A distinctive Brand Personality will have a considerable effect on the brand value ranking. Consumers' brand evaluation is dependent on the identification and personality of the brand, according to second research by Richardson et al. (1994). Additionally, (Beldona & Wysong, 2007) provided the results of their research, which showed that Brand Personality had a considerable positive effect on brand overall quality.

According to Lin (2010), the qualities of the business, such as the routes, delivery, or labeling, as well as the connections that the brand has made in the minds of consumers and the organization that is creating the brand all contribute to the Brand Personality. His research examined the processes whereby product personalities are created as well as factors that influence how consumers perceive brand personalities. Brand Equity is one of the factors, according to the research, which influences Brand Personality.

H<sub>2</sub>: There is a positive impact of brand equity on brand personality

He highlighted the importance of Brand Equity as a moderator in increasing the link between marketing efforts, in terms of Brand Communication, and the result or impact. Raggio and Leone (2006), established a conceptual framework in resource-based theory. If a company's communication strategy causes consumers to admire favorably that particular brand in comparison to non-branded goods in the same class, Brand Communication and Brand Equity are positively correlated (Yoo et al., 2000). It is true to say that precise and intelligent Brand Communication boosts Brand Equity by increasing the likelihood that the product would become ingrained in buyers' minds. It would solidify the selection and streamline their choice approach when deciding which product to favor (Keller, 1993; Yoo et al., 2000). Brand communication on customers creates awareness and helps in building brand image (Han, 2020). It also enables brand association and provides consumers with a virtual brand experience (Joshi & Garg, 2021).

Previous studies have found how depending on the circumstances or conditions of the consumers, advertisements can just have a good or detrimental impact on the loyalty of a brand. Since it enhances a strong brand and attitude towards the brand, Brand Communication has a beneficial impact on Brand Equity (Yoo et al., 2000). An experimental study discovered that Brand Communication reduces the cost of transferring and works against the propensity for repurchasing.

Whenever a customer engages with an organization or close communication is established, this connection might even moderate the qualities that the customer perceives. Therefore, Brand Personality is not just influenced by Brand Equity developed by

the company, but also by user-generated Brand Communication. Because many other customers find the content for being credible and reliable, user-generated Brand Communication is typically seen as neutral compared to company Brand Communication (Christodoulides et al., 2012).

The underlying study's hypothesis is taken from the research mentioned above with the moderating function of Brand Equity (brand awareness, perceived quality, brand association, and brand loyalty) in the link between Brand Communication and Brand Personality.

H<sub>3</sub>: Moderating role of brand equity is played in between brand communication and brand personality

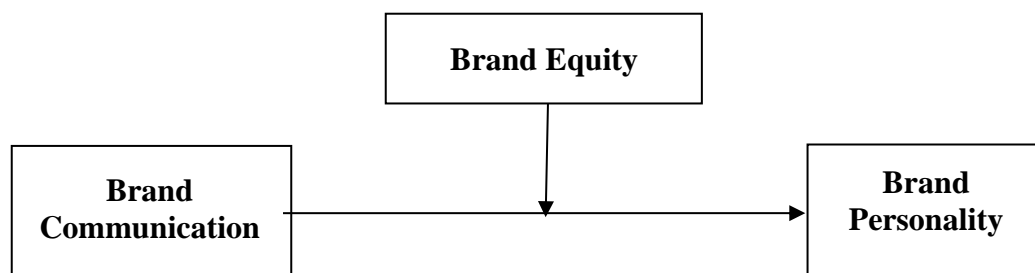


Fig. 1. Conceptual framework of moderating role of brand equity is played in between brand communication and brand personality

### 3. METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1. RESEARCH APPROACH

The purpose of this research was to examine the impact of brand communication on brand personality with the moderating effect of brand equity in telecommunication sector of Pakistan. The study was based on cause and effect design and follow the hypothetic deductive approach of examination. Some hypotheses were generated and tested to reach at the final conclusion.

#### 3.2. POPULATION

This research was conducted to examine the phenomenon of brand personality in the presence of brand communication and brand equity in the major sector of Pakistan and that sector was telecommunication. Telecommunication sector is the backbone of the economy of Pakistan. The said sector organizations are working in all the main cities of Pakistan. To achieve parsimony in the study, only ten (10) major cities were chosen for investigation. The participants were from Lahore, Faisalabad, Rawalpindi, Gujranwala, and Multan represent Punjab, while Hyderabad and Karachi stand in for Sindh, Peshawar for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Quetta for Balochistan.

### 3.3. SAMPLE

Because of the fact that population of the study was not known, so non-probability sampling technique of convenience sampling was used. The convenience sampling method was used to collect data at the individual level because of the time and financial constraints. Personal efforts were done for the purpose of data collection. A total of 500 participants were contacted to fill out the questionnaire but only 425 respondents responded on the questionnaire. From those only 396 respondents questionnaire were able to include in the analysis, due to some data quality issues. Hence, the final analysis was performed on 396 questionnaires.

### 3.4. DATA COLLECTION

With the purpose of data collection a questionnaire was developed and some already developed scales were used to gather the data. Participants got structured questionnaires by email and were asked them to fill in person. Respondents were guaranteed that all information will be treated with confidentiality and it will only be used for educational purposes.

### 3.5. MEASURES

For the purpose of developing questionnaire some well known scales were adapted from the literature. The Brand Equity was measure with 30 items taken from the Lee and Leh (2011), scale. For the brand personality scale Aaker's, Brand Personality scale was used which is the most commonly used Paschen et al. (2017), in the measuring the said construct. The said scale was consist of 36 items with the five point Likert Scale anchors. For the measurement of brand communication 15 items scale from Grace and O'Cass' (2005), work were used.

### 3.6. TIME HORIZONS

This study was cross-sectional in nature and the questionnaire were filled only on one point of time.

## 4. DATA ANALYSIS

### 4.1. RESPONDENTS DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Respondents were asked about their gender, life status, qualification, and their biological age. From the total 396 respondents, Male Respondents were 234 which were 59.09% of the total sample. While the Female Respondents 162, which were 40.91% of the total sample.

When the respondents were asked about their life status, Married were 213, which were 53.79%, Unmarried, were 116, which were 29.29%, In a Relationship were 55, which were 3.89% and the divorce were Divorced were 12, which were 3.03% of the total respondents.

The respondent's qualification is an important variable in the consumer psychology research and in the sample of this study, respondents having Bachelor degree were 132, which were 33.33%, respondents having MA/MSc/Masters degrees were 167, which were 42.17%, respondents having MS/MPhil degree were 89, which were 22.47% and the respondents having PhD degree were only 8, which were 2.02% of the total sample.

**Table 1.** Respondent's Demographic Characteristics

Demographics	Frequency	%
<i>Gender</i>		
Male Respondents	234	59.09
Female Respondents	162	40.91
Total	396	100
<i>Life Status</i>		
<i>Married</i>	213	53.79
Unmarried	116	29.29
In a Relationship	55	13.89
Divorced	12	3.03
Total	396	100
<i>Qualification</i>		
Bachelor	132	33.33
MA/MSc/Masters	167	42.17
MS/MPhil	89	22.47
PhD	8	2.02
Total	396	100
<i>Biological Age</i>		
20-25 Years	197	49.75
25-30 Years	116	29.29
30-35 Years	34	8.59
35-40 Years	29	7.32
Above 40 Years	20	5.05
Total	396	100.00

The other important demographic characteristic of the respondent is their biological age and in the sample of this study, the respondents having age between 20-25 Years were 197, which were 49.75% of the total sample. the respondents having age between 25-30 Years were 116, which were 29.29%, the respondents having age between 30-35 Years were 34, which were 8.59%, the respondents having age between 35-40 Years were 29, which were 7.32% of the sample. Finally the respondents having age above 40 Years were only 20, which were 5.05% of the total sample of this study.

## 4.2. DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS AND CORRELATIONS

The variable's average score was analyzed by calculating the mean and it was found that all the mean values are above 3, it means the respondent's tendencies on the five point likert scale was toward the agree poll. All the scales were having reliability statistics above .70, so it can be said that all the scales were reliable.



**Table 2.** Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

Constructs	Mean	SD	N	Scale Reliability (Alpha)	Brand Communication	Brand Equity	Brand Personality
Brand Communication	3.21	0.328	396	.88	1		
Brand Equity	3.35	0.549	396	.79	.538*	1	
Brand Personality	3.62	0.479	396	.77	.675*	.715**	1

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The correlation analysis revealed that all the variables are having positive and significant correlation with each other. So it can be inferred that all the variables are in direct relationships.

### 4.3. REGRESSION ANALYSIS

IBM SPSS version 26 was used to examine the data. The regression analysis was performed to examine the relationship between the variables. In the first step hypothesis H1 was test and found that Brand Communication is positively and significantly influencing the Brand personality, ( $b_1=0.380$ ,  $SE=0.079$ ,  $T=4.810$ ,  $p=.000$ ). Hence the said hypothesis was found true. In the second step hypothesis H2 was tested and found that Brand Equity is positively and significantly impacting the Brand Personality ( $b_2=0.244$ ,  $SE=0.033$ ,  $T=7.393$ ,  $p=.000$ ). Consequently, the hypothesis H2 was found true. Finally the third hypothesis H3 was tested and found that Brand Equity is positively and significantly moderating the relationship between Brand Communication and Brand Personality ( $b_3=0.140$ ,  $SE=0.024$ ,  $T=1.66$ ,  $p=.000$ ). Hence the hypothesis H3 was also found true.

**Table 3.** Regression Analysis

Antecedent	beta	Coeff.	Outcome Variable		
			Brand Personality		
			S.E.	T	p
Brand Communication	$b_1$	0.380	0.079	4.810	.000
Brand Equity	$b_2$	0.244	0.033	7.393	.000
Interaction (BCxBE)	$b_3$	0.140	0.024	1.66	.000
Constant	i	1.221	0.187	5.83	.000
$R^2 = .427$			$F (311) = 12.431$		$p < .01$

Consequently, the regression results are substantial, proving that Brand Equity considerably increases and moderates the relationship between Brand Communication and Brand Personality.

Brand Equity's importance for boosting Brand Communication and fostering consumer loyalty has indeed been researched by (Dooley, 2001). Brand Equity has been shown by Allameh et al. (2010), to be one of the most important elements in today's competitive but advanced society. It's indeed critical to the long growth of the businesses. Additionally, it plays a big part in developing a personal brand and getting the most consumers.

## 5. DISCUSSION

An essential component of a brand's identity is its Brand Equity. If a company wishes to benefit from its brand personality and achieve sustained success, a particular modification



in the Brand Equity components is necessary. As shown by the current research, organizations that focus on Brand Equity, brand personality, and Brand Communication get excellent outcomes.

Numerous research has examined the development of Brand Personality, including the following: Balmer and Gray (2000), The growth of a corporation's individuality may be aided by Brand Equity, according to Melewar and Bartholmé (2011), and Kapferer (2004). Marketing professionals also must comprehend why consumers view a product as well as how they connect personality characteristics to that product to design a successful brand strategy. However, this might be challenging to examine how Brand Equity elements, acting like a moderating function, shape a brand's personality. By including Brand Equity as a moderator, the present study adds to the growing body of literature. Although Brand Equity is not as well recognized in Pakistan, it doesn't imply that it doesn't have an impact on organizational structure (Jabbar, 2014). Pham and Gammoh (2015), asserts that Brand Equity characteristics are essential in fostering a favorable consumer opinion of the product. The current study closes a gap in the body of research in a specific organizational context, so it will examine Brand Equity as a moderating variable among Brand Communication and Brand Personality.

## 5.1. RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLEMENTATIONS

A conceptual model that demonstrates how Brand Communication impacts Brand Equity, with Brand Equity serving as a moderating variable, is empirically evaluated. It offers a wide range of doable tactics for executives that want to provide customers with a positive impression of the business. The results showed that Brand Communication and Brand Equity influenced Brand Personality development. All of this indicates that businesses with more Brand Equity would be in a better position to develop a brand personality. Therefore, a company that contains certain Brand Equity characteristics enhances the brand's personality.

Critics, however, contend that such an idea has to be examined from a broader perspective and even in the context of Brand Equity creation. Brand Communication is important for creating Brand Equity, brand attitude, and customer loyalty. A brand's personality plays an important role in its growth.

This research provided a fresh notion by assessing the relationships between brand personality, Brand Communication, and Brand Equity to develop innovative organizational designs from a marketing point of view and to address issues posed by emerging economies, such as Pakistan's telecom industry. So, this research also made an effort to solve the problems facing Pakistan's telecom sector by measuring the linkages between them. To accomplish Brand Personality goals, Brand Communication and Brand Equity play a crucial role. The vision statements of large businesses, both for-profit and nonprofit businesses, now contain Brand Equity strengthening methods. It aids and offers generally acknowledged standards for updating, enhancing, and assessing the organization's outmoded processes and practices in the modern, developing environment. This managerial expertise of brand

personality has been extremely helpful to and beneficial to many telecommunications sector firms.

## **6. FUTURE RESEARCH AVENUES, STUDY LIMITATIONS AND CONCLUSION**

Cross-sectional research simply shows how the many research factors relate to one another at a specific period. In this inquiry, a cross-sectional study design is employed. Due to the non-longitudinal character of the study, the cross-sectional can affect some situations that take place after the data is gathered. This may cast doubt on the generalizability of the study's findings. The research participants' responses in the context of their backgrounds are probably unknown to them. Probably, the respondents don't fully get the Brand Personality qualities, Brand Communication features, or Brand Equity because most people tend to focus on the fundamental advantages rather than the mental and emotional aspects of a brand. The importance of Brand Equity in the formation of Brand Personality was highlighted by the study. Additionally, data imply that Brand Equity modifies the association between Brand Equity and Brand Communication. To create compelling brand personalities, executives at telecommunication companies must place a larger emphasis on Brand Equity. An empirical study indicates that Brand Communication and Brand Equity are crucial in shaping a brand's personality. The study's conceptual framework gained a lot of significant factual validity because of the findings. According to the study's conclusions, there is a statistical significance and favorable association between every component of BE, BC, and BP.

### **Author Contributions:**

Conceptualization, Dr. Rauza.; Introduction and Literature review, Dr. Rauza; methodology, Dr. Rauza.; software, Dr. Qlander Hayat.; validation, Dr. Saif ul Mujahid Shah and Dr. Arshad Ali Shah.; formal analysis, Dr. Qlander Hayat.; Findings and results, Dr. Arshad Ali Shah and Dr. Saif ul Mujahid Shah; original draft preparation, Dr. Rauza.; writing—review and editing, Dr. Rauza and Dr. Qlander Hayat Future research avenues, limitations and conclusion, Dr. Rauza. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

### **Funding:**

This research received no external funding

### **Institutional Review Board Statement:**

Not applicable

### **Informed Consent Statement:**

Not applicable

### **Data Availability Statement:**

Not applicable

## Acknowledgments:

Nil

## Conflicts of Interest:

This study involves no conflict of interest

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