# Assessing Customer-Based Brand Equity and Brand Competitiveness of an Electronic Brand in Bangladesh

Dil Ruba Tanu[1], Selim Ahmed[2*], Wasib Bin Latif[3]

Faculty of Business Administration, Bangladesh University of Professionals, Mirpur, Dhaka[1]

World School of Business, World University of Bangladesh, Dhanmondi, Dhaka[2&3]

dilrubatanu@yahoo.com[1]

selim.ahmed@business.wub.edu.bd[2]

wasib.latif@business.wub.edu.bd[3]

[*]Corresponding author

**Abstract-** *This study measures brand equity and brand competitiveness of the Minister brand in Bangladesh. The present study investigates significant difference or conformance on five dimensions of brand equity, namely perceived quality, brand awareness, brand association, brand affection, and brand loyalty based on customers' demographic information such as gender, age, marital status and income. It also identifies significant difference or conformance on brand competitiveness based on demographics. In this study, 500 self-administered survey questionnaires were distributed to customers of Minister in Bangladesh of which 348 useful responses were returned for 69.6% valid response rate. The research data were analysed based on reliability analysis, independent samples t-tests and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) using SPSS-23 version software. The research findings indicate that married customers have a better perception of brand loyalty of electronic products compared to single customers. The findings also indicate that customers aged between 21-30 years are more passionate (brand affection) about electronic goods compared to other age groups. The findings are expected to provide guidelines for enhancing the level of brand equity and competitiveness in Bangladesh's electronic industries as well as other countries.*

**Keywords:** *Perceived quality; brand awareness; brand association; brand affection; brand loyalty; brand competitiveness*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Competitiveness has become one of the major concerns for business and trade-related activities in today's competitive environment (Karimi et al., 2013)[16]. All enterprises wish to remain competitive (Wayne-Pace and Stephan, 1996)[30]. Since competitiveness is about securing a competitive advantage (Baumann et al., 2017)[6], it has remained a principal topic of research in both marketing and management fields. Brand competitiveness is significant to outperform market rivals through producing value via a combination of price and product quality (Winzar et al., 2018)[32].

Electronics goods and services have become a major business segment in Bangladesh. It is marked as a "thrust sector" in Bangladesh's 2010 National Industrial Policy (Ahmed et al., 2016)[5]. Not long ago, Bangladeshis preferred to buy imported electronics especially from Japan and Singapore; but now local consumers have started buying locally produced electronics goods (Begum and Zami, 2018)[8]. Begum and Zami found that in 2016-2017, market demand for electronics goods rose to 1.85 million with a positive growth rate of 8.8%. Local Bangladeshi electronics brands are competing with global giants like Samsung, Singer, Sony, Mitsubishi and others. In this context, it is vital for a local brand to maintain its brand equity and competitiveness. Also, it is significant to understand consumers' perceptions of local brands. To this end, we seek to identify the determinant factors of brand equity as well as brand competitiveness.

Despite this emerging potential of the electronics industry in the Bangladeshi market, there has been a lack of research on how local companies can retain their brand equity and competitiveness. Thus, it is worth investigating the factors affecting Bangladeshi consumers' perception of these issues. Minister has emerged as a dominant local manufacturer in the home appliance based electronics industry in Bangladesh (Begum and Zami, 2018)[8]. As the electronics industry is developing rapidly in Bangladesh, Minister is performing better in the dynamic electronics environment. No other study has examined the determinants of brand equity and competitiveness in the Bangladeshi electronics industry. Therefore, it is important for Minister to have a clear understanding of its brand equity and competitiveness from the customer point of view.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Measuring Customer-Based Brand Equity

Customer-based brand equity refers to the differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to the marketing of the brand (Datta et al., 2017)[10]. Hence, brand equity is conceptualised from the perspective of the individual consumer. Customer-based brand equity occurs when the consumer is familiar with the brand and holds favourable, strong, and unique brand associations in the memory. According to Kotsi (2018)[19], firms measure the equity associated with their brands on a regular basis.

Firms use a simple paper and pencil instrument to measure brand equity. The advantage of this scale is not only a small number of items but also the ability to measure the individual dimensions of brand equity. Thus, measuring brand equity will enable companies to evaluate their marketing programmes. The customer-based brand equity can be measured by several factors. However, this study defines brand equity based on perceived quality, brand awareness, brand association, brand affection and brand loyalty. These five factors are derived from Aaker (1991)[1] and Keller (2003)[17].

Perceived quality is "a special type of association, partly because it influences brand associations in many contexts and partly because it has been empirically shown to affect profitability" (Aaker and Joachimsthaler, 2000)[3]. Zeithaml (1988)[34] said that perceived quality is "the consumer's judgement about a product's overall excellence or superiority." The author emphasised that perceived quality is different from objective or actual quality. It is a higher-level abstraction rather than a specific attribute of a product.

Brand awareness is the extent to which consumers are familiar with the qualities or image of a particular brand of goods or services (Malik et al., 2013)[23]. It is consciousness about the firm to the consumer. It enhances the potential customer's ability to associate with a certain company's product or service (Langaro et al., 2018)[20]. It also recognises the availability and existence of a company's product or service, and it is important to differentiate similar products or services from competitors. Brand awareness consists of brand recognition and brand recall performance. Brand recognition relates to consumers' ability to confirm prior exposure to the brand when given the brand as a cue (Romaniuk et al., 2017)[27].

Brand association is anything which is deep-seated in the customer's mind about the brand. According to Aaker (1991)[1], brand associations build and create positive attitudes and feelings towards brands in the minds of customers that enhance brand image. Thus, the brand association is the second antecedent of a proposed conceptual framework of brand image (Latif et al., 2014).

Brand affection is related to the customer's emotional behaviour. In a modern consumer attitude model, emotions create relationships between cognitive evaluations and behavioural intentions (Langner et al., 2016)[21]. Within the emotional perspective, customers will increase their affection level about brands (Barlow and Maul, 2000)[7]. Moreover, the affection level contributes positively to perceptions of the customers (Hemsley-Brown and Alnawas, 2016)[15].

Brand loyalty is at the heart of brand equity; it is a critical component of brand equity (Aaker, 1991)[1]. According to Keller (2016), brand loyalty is the central concern of brand equity. Building brand loyalty requires investments in marketing programmes that target current and potential consumers. Through marketing programmes, brand loyalty can influence the consumers' mind-set and lead to

brand awareness, brand associations, attitude and behaviour towards the brand (Hariharan et al., 2018)[14].

## 2.2 Brand Competitiveness

The brand competitiveness of a firm reflects its capability to capture the market using innovative marketing ideas through its business relationships (Webster, 1988[31]; Wong and Teoh, 2015)[33]. The capability of a partner in a business relationship to successfully address opportunities depends upon its ability to contribute to the competitiveness of the partnership (Day, 1994)[11]. Having the capability to serve a larger customer base builds the competitiveness of the reseller and increases the attention that the reseller receives from brands offering competing or complementary products (Fan and Tong, 2018)[12]. The higher the competitiveness of a brand, the higher its capability to adopt innovative marketing initiatives in a competitive marketplace. Likewise, the higher the capability of a brand to adopt innovative marketing initiatives, the higher its competitiveness in a competitive marketplace (Miličević, Mihalič, and Sever, 2017)[25].

## 3. METHODOLOGY

The present study used self-administered survey questionnaire to determine the brand equity and brand competitiveness of Minister Brand in Bangladesh. The survey questionnaire was developed based on seven sections. The first section refers demographic information of the respondents such as gender, marital status, age and income. The second section pertain perceived quality that consists of five items. The third section consists of five items which refers brand awareness. The four refers brand association which consists of seven items. The fifth section is about brand affection which consists of five items. The sixth section is brand loyalty that consists of six items. The last but not least section is brand competitiveness which consists of five items. In this study, authors used five points Likert scale to measure the six research variables. These six variables items' were adapted from previous studies such as Lee et al. (2011)[22], Tong and Halwey (2009)[29], Pappu et al. (2006)[26], and Aakar (1991)[1]. This study distributed 500 survey questionnaires to the respondents who have experienced about the Minister Brand in Bangladesh. Out of 500 distributed survey questionnaires, authors received 348 useful responses that give 69.60 percent response rate. The research data were collected from various places in Bangladesh, namely Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna, Comilla, Barisal, and Rajshahi. After collecting data it was analysed by reliability analysis, independent samples t-test and one-way ANOVA using SPSS version 23.

## 4. FINDINGS

### 4.1 Respondents' Demographic Profile

In this study, there were 300 male respondents (86.2%), whereas female respondents numbered only 48 (13.8%). Married respondents were 315 (71.92%), and single respondents were 123 (28.08%). The respondents were of different age groups: below 20 years (3.2%), 21 - 30 years (40.8%), 31 - 40 years (40.2%), 41 - 50 years (13.5%), and above 50 years (2.3%). Married respondents were 266 (76.4%), whereas single respondents were 82 (23.6%). Regarding income, 57 (16.4%), 128 (35.8%), 90 (25.9%), 44 (12.6%), 14 (4.6%), and 13 (3.7%) respondents' income were below Taka 10000, Taka 10000 – Taka 20000, Taka 21000 – Taka 30000, Taka 31000 – Taka 40000, Taka 41000 – Taka 50000 above Taka 50000 respectively (see Table 1).

Table 1: Respondents' Demographic Profile

| Description | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Gender | | |
| Male | 300 | 86.2 |
| Female | 48 | 13.8 |
| Age Group | | |
| 20 years or below | 11 | 3.2 |
| 21 - 30 years | 142 | 40.8 |
| 31-40 years | 140 | 40.2 |
| 41 - 50 years | 47 | 13.5 |
| Above 50 years | 8 | 2.3 |
| Marital Status | | |
| Single | 82 | 23.6 |
| Married | 266 | 76.4 |
| Income | | |
| Below Taka 10000 | 57 | 16.4 |
| Taka 10000 - Taka 20000 | 128 | 36.8 |
| Taka 21000 - Taka 30000 | 90 | 25.9 |
| Taka 31000 - Taka 40000 | 44 | 12.6 |
| Taka 41000 - Taka 50000 | 16 | 4.6 |
| Above Taka 50000 | 13 | 3.7 |

## 4.2 Reliability Analysis

Reliability refers to the extent to which measurements of a particular test are repeatable (Malhotra, 2010). According to Hair et al. (2010, p. 123), reliability is an "assessment of the degree of consistency between multiple measurements of variables". In other words, "the reliability of a measure is an indication of the stability and consistency with which the instrument measures the concept and helps to assess the 'goodness' of a measure" (Sekaran, 2006, p. 203)[28].

The present study used Cronbach's alpha to measure the internal consistency of 34 items for perceived quality, brand awareness, brand association, brand affection, brand loyalty and brand competitiveness. Cronbach's alpha score ranges from 0 to 1, with values close to 1 indicating high consistency. When the value of Cronbach's alpha is greater than 0.7, then the item scales are regarded as reliable (Hair et al., 2010)[13].

Table 2 illustrates the Cronbach's alpha for six dimensions of the research variables. The alpha values ranged from 0.70 to 0.77, exceeding the minimum requirement of 0.70 Cronbach's alpha without having to delete any items. Based on the reliability analysis, Cronbach's alpha value for perceived quality is 0.75, and brand awareness is 0.70. For brand association, brand affection and brand loyalty, the Cronbach's alpha values are 0.77, 0.73 and 0.74 respectively. Finally, the Cronbach's alpha value for brand competitiveness is 0.76. Since all the variables achieved the required Cronbach's alpha value, the overall instruments were deemed reliable for this study.

Table 2: Reliability Analysis of the Research Variables

| Dimension | Number of Items | Cronbach's Alpha |
|---|---|---|
| Perceived Quality | 6 | 0.75 |
| Brand Awareness | 5 | 0.70 |
| Brand Association | 7 | 0.77 |
| Brand Affection | 5 | 0.74 |
| Brand Loyalty | 6 | 0.73 |
| Brand Competitiveness | 5 | 0.76 |

### 4.3 Measuring Customer-based Brand Equity and Brand Competitiveness

The present study measures brand equity and brand competitiveness of an electronics company in Bangladesh based on six dimensions namely; perceived quality, brand awareness, brand association, brand affection, brand loyalty and brand competitiveness. These dimensions were examined by independent samples t-test and one-way ANOVA (see Table 3, 4, 5 and 6).

#### 4.3.1 Independent Samples t-Tests

Independent samples t-tests were performed to identify the differences or conformance among customer perceptions on perceived quality, brand awareness, brand association, brand affection, brand loyalty and brand competitiveness based on gender and marital status (Tables 3 and 4). The results of the independent samples t-tests indicate that there is no significant difference between male and female respondents on these six variables (Table 3). However, Table 4 illustrates that there is a significant difference between single and married respondents. Married customers have a better perception of brand loyalty compare to single customers ($\mu = 4.033$, $p = 0.05$). The reason is that married customers use more electronic devices for family purposes compared to the unmarried customer.

Table 3: Independent samples t-test on gender

| Variable | Gender | N | Mean | t-value | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Perceived Quality | Male | 300 | 4.1689 | 0.587 | 0.558 |
| | Female | 48 | 4.1285 | | |
| Brand Awareness | Male | 300 | 4.0293 | 0.668 | 0.505 |
| | Female | 48 | 3.9792 | | |
| Brand Association | Male | 300 | 4.1448 | 0.460 | 0.645 |
| | Female | 48 | 4.1131 | | |
| Brand Affection | Male | 300 | 4.1100 | 1.151 | 0.250 |
| | Female | 48 | 4.0250 | | |
| Brand Loyalty | Male | 300 | 4.0206 | 1.559 | 0.120 |
| | Female | 48 | 3.8958 | | |
| Brand Competitiveness | Male | 300 | 4.1093 | 0.755 | 0.451 |
| | Female | 48 | 4.0458 | | |

Table 4: Independent samples t-test on marital status

| Variable | Marital Status | N | Mean | t-value | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Perceived Quality | Single | 82 | 4.1729 | 0.188 | 0.851 |
| | Married | 266 | 4.1623 | | |
| Brand Awareness | Single | 82 | 3.9900 | -0.723 | 0.470 |
| | Married | 266 | 4.0346 | | |
| Brand Association | Single | 82 | 4.1286 | -0.262 | 0.793 |
| | Married | 266 | 4.1434 | | |
| Brand Affection | Single | 82 | 4.0450 | -1.129 | 0.260 |
| | Married | 266 | 4.1135 | | |
| Brand Loyalty | Single | 82 | 3.9042 | -1.971 | 0.050* |
| | Married | 266 | 4.0332 | | |
| Brand Competitiveness | Single | 82 | 4.1250 | 0.459 | 0.647 |
| | Married | 266 | 4.0932 | | |

**Note:** * variable is significant at the 0.05 level

#### 4.3.2 ANOVA Tests

According to Hair et al. (2010), ANOVA is a statistical technique for testing whether there is no significant difference between two or more population means. This study used one-way ANOVA to investigate the significant difference or conformance among age groups and income of the respondents. According to the results of ANOVA tests, there is a significant difference among the different age groups on brand affection ($F = 2.834$, $p = 0.025$). The results indicate that those customers aged between 21 - 30 years are more passionate about the electronic products ($\mu = 4.1282$) compared to other age groups (see Table 5). The ANOVA results also indicate that a significant difference among the different customer income groups concerning brand association ($F = 3.390$, $p = 0.005$). Customers with incomes between Tk 41000 – Tk 50000 have a better perception of the brand association of the electronic items compared to other income groups (see Table 6).

Table 5: One-way ANOVA tests on age group

| Variable | Age group | N | Mean | F-value | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Perceived Quality | 20 years or below | 11 | 3.9545 | 1.334 | 0.257 |
| | 21 - 30 years | 142 | 4.1890 | | |
| | 31-40 years | 140 | 4.1262 | | |
| | 41 - 50 years | 47 | 4.2376 | | |
| | Above 50 years | 8 | 4.2083 | | |
| Brand Awareness | 20 years or below | 11 | 3.8364 | 1.192 | 0.314 |
| | 21 - 30 years | 142 | 4.0056 | | |
| | 31-40 years | 140 | 4.0157 | | |
| | 41 - 50 years | 47 | 4.0979 | | |
| | Above 50 years | 8 | 4.2500 | | |
| Brand Association | 20 years or below | 11 | 3.9481 | 1.379 | 0.241 |
| | 21 - 30 years | 142 | 4.1630 | | |
| | 31-40 years | 140 | 4.1010 | | |
| | 41 - 50 years | 47 | 4.2128 | | |
| | Above 50 years | 8 | 4.2679 | | |
| Brand Affection | 20 years or below | 11 | 4.0364 | 2.834 | 0.025* |
| | 21 - 30 years | 142 | 4.1282 | | |
| | 31-40 years | 140 | 4.0386 | | |
| | 41 - 50 years | 47 | 4.1191 | | |
| | Above 50 years | 8 | 4.0750 | | |
| Brand Loyalty | 20 years or below | 11 | 3.7879 | 0.768 | 0.546 |
| | 21 - 30 years | 142 | 4.0035 | | |
| | 31-40 years | 140 | 3.9940 | | |
| | 41 - 50 years | 47 | 4.0567 | | |
| | Above 50 years | 8 | 4.1458 | | |
| Brand Competitiveness | 20 years or below | 11 | 4.0000 | 0.417 | 0.796 |
| | 21 - 30 years | 142 | 4.1423 | | |
| | 31-40 years | 140 | 4.0729 | | |
| | 41 - 50 years | 47 | 4.0894 | | |
| | Above 50 years | 8 | 4.0500 | | |

**Note:** * variable is significant at the 0.05 level

Table 6: One-way ANOVA tests on income

| Variable | Age group | N | Mean | F-value | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Perceived Quality | Below Tk 10000 | 57 | 4.1667 | 1.684 | 0.138 |
| | Tk 10000 - Tk 20000 | 128 | 4.1797 | | |
| | Tk 21000 - Tk 30000 | 90 | 4.1352 | | |
| | Tk 32000 - Tk 40000 | 44 | 4.0568 | | |
| | Tk 41000 - Tk 50000 | 16 | 4.4063 | | |
| | Above Tk 50000 | 13 | 4.2436 | | |
| Brand Awareness | Below Tk 10000 | 57 | 4.0561 | 0.435 | 0.824 |
| | Tk 10000 - Tk 20000 | 128 | 4.0281 | | |
| | Tk 21000 - Tk 30000 | 90 | 3.9911 | | |
| | Tk 32000 - Tk 40000 | 44 | 3.9682 | | |
| | Tk 41000 - Tk 50000 | 16 | 4.1125 | | |
| | Above Tk 50000 | 13 | 4.1077 | | |
| Brand Association | Below Tk 10000 | 57 | 4.1378 | 3.390 | 0.005** |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Tk 10000 - Tk 20000 | 128 | 4.1652 | | |
| | Tk 21000 - Tk 30000 | 90 | 4.0381 | | |
| | Tk 32000 - Tk 40000 | 44 | 4.1039 | | |
| | Tk 41000 - Tk 50000 | 16 | 4.4375 | | |
| | Above Tk 50000 | 13 | 4.3736 | | |
| Brand Affection | Below Tk 10000 | 57 | 4.0842 | 1.347 | 0.244 |
| | Tk 10000 - Tk 20000 | 128 | 4.1078 | | |
| | Tk 21000 - Tk 30000 | 90 | 4.0467 | | |
| | Tk 32000 - Tk 40000 | 44 | 4.0682 | | |
| | Tk 41000 - Tk 50000 | 16 | 4.2250 | | |
| | Above Tk 50000 | 13 | 4.3692 | | |
| Brand Loyalty | Below Tk 10000 | 57 | 3.9561 | 0.565 | 0.727 |
| | Tk 10000 - Tk 20000 | 128 | 4.0078 | | |
| | Tk 21000 - Tk 30000 | 90 | 3.9981 | | |
| | Tk 32000 - Tk 40000 | 44 | 3.9697 | | |
| | Tk 41000 - Tk 50000 | 16 | 4.1354 | | |
| | Above Tk 50000 | 13 | 4.1538 | | |
| Brand Competitiveness | Below Tk 10000 | 57 | 4.0807 | 0.618 | 0.686 |
| | Tk 10000 - Tk 20000 | 128 | 4.1109 | | |
| | Tk 21000 - Tk 30000 | 90 | 4.0622 | | |
| | Tk 32000 - Tk 40000 | 44 | 4.0727 | | |
| | Tk 41000 - Tk 50000 | 16 | 4.2750 | | |
| | Above Tk 50000 | 13 | 4.2308 | | |

**Note:** ** variable is at the 0.01 level (2 tailed).

# 5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Brand power is critical for any corporate business organisation in today's market. Since its inception, it has been a top priority for marketing scholars and academicians. Nevertheless, the concept of brand competitiveness is emerging, especially in developing economies. Brand name alone cannot build a brand. Establishing a market-leading brand capacity has been indispensable for competitiveness in the long run (Butkus and Masullo, 2016)[9]. Brand competitiveness can facilitate market share, maintain profitability, enable business firms to impose higher price and generate customer loyalty (Ahmad and Sapry, 2008)[4]. Surprisingly, studies have not paid much attention to understanding the brand competitiveness of a particular industry segment. Hence, the present study has measured brand equity and brand competitiveness of Minister Electronics in Bangladesh to identify the customers' perception.

The findings indicate that married customers have better brand loyalty to Minister compared to unmarried customers. Also, young customers (age 21-30 years) have better brand affection compared to other age groups. Young customers are more passionate about electronics brand compared to others. Also, customers with incomes ranging from Tk 41000 – Tk 50000 are happy with the brand association of Minister compared to other income groups. To meet different customer expectations, the Minister Company needs to create a unique and favourable brand to provide customers with a reason to buy their products.

# 6. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This study focused solely on the Minister brand of Bangladesh, and thus the results might not apply to other companies. Since this study covered only one electronic company in Bangladesh, future research is suggested to include other companies to measure customer perception on perceived quality, brand awareness, brand association, brand affection, brand loyalty and brand competitiveness of the electronic brand in different countries, different cultures, different demographic groups, using probability sampling techniques to ensure the generalizability of results.

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