

# The Role of Brand Determinants in Maintaining Long-Term Customer Relationships with Branded Product

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## Abstract

The abstract of the study provides a concise overview of the research conducted on brand determinants and their role in maintaining long-term customer relationships with the product brand. This study aimed to explore various aspects such as brand awareness, brand positioning, brand association, brand image, brand trust, brand loyalty, and brand reputation. Through a comprehensive literature review and analysis of data collected from a sample size of 217 respondents using a questionnaire survey method, valuable insights were gained into how these key factors contribute to building strong customer-brand relationships over time. The findings highlighted the significance of effective brand management in nurturing positive associations between customers and brands. It was observed that years of relationship with a particular branded product significantly influenced customers' perceptions and loyalty towards that specific brand. Moreover, this study identified areas where improvements can be made in terms of enhancing branding strategies to better meet customer expectations. The recommendations derived from this research can serve as insightful guidelines for marketers aiming to strengthen their brands and cultivate lasting connections with their target audience.

**Keywords:** Brand Awareness, Brand Positioning, Brand Association, Brand Image, Brand Trust, Brand Loyalty and Brand Reputation.

## Introduction

In today's competitive business landscape, building a strong brand has become more crucial than ever. Brands have the power to create emotional connections with customers, foster loyalty, and drive sales. The factors are that shape how consumers perceive a brand and influence their decision-making process. From brand awareness and positioning to association and reputation, these determinants play a pivotal role in shaping customer perceptions. Effective brand management is key to leveraging these determinants for success. It involves carefully crafting strategies to enhance brand awareness, differentiate from competitors, build trust, and cultivate a positive image in the minds of consumers.

Establishing lasting relationships with customers is vital for sustaining business growth. When customers feel connected to a particular product or service brand on an emotional level, they are more likely to remain loyal over time. This not only leads to repeat purchases but also encourages positive word-of-mouth recommendations (V.Vetrivel, 2018). Despite the importance of understanding how these factors contribute to long-term customer relationships with branded products, there remains a need for further research in this area. By exploring this topic through empirical studies using surveys or questionnaires targeting different consumer segments across various industries can provide valuable insights into effective branding strategies.

This paper aims at filling that research gap by investigating the impact of various brand determinants on maintaining long-term customer relationships with product brands. We will delve into each determinant individually - starting from brand awareness all the way through trustworthiness and loyalty – highlighting their significance in creating enduring bonds between brands and consumers (V.Vetrivel,2017). Brand determinants play a crucial role in shaping the success and longevity of a product brand. These determinants encompass various factors that influence how customers perceive and interact with a brand. One such determinant is brand awareness, which refers to the extent to which consumers are familiar with and recognize a particular brand. Another important determinant is brand positioning, which involves creating a unique identity for the brand in the marketplace(V.Vetrivel,2019). This includes differentiating it from competitors and highlighting its key strengths and value proposition. Brand association is another factor that influences customer relationships with the product brand. Positive associations can enhance consumer trust and loyalty towards the brand, while negative associations may deter potential customers from engaging with it. The image portrayed by a brand also plays a significant role in maintaining long-term customer relationships. A strong and positive brand image can create an emotional connection with customers, leading to increased loyalty and advocacy(V.Vetrivel,2022). Trust is another vital determinant as it establishes credibility between consumers and brands. When customers have confidence in a product or company, they are more likely to maintain long-term relationships based on trustworthiness. Reputation acts as an essential determinant impacting customer relationships with branded products. A good reputation enhances credibility, fosters positive word-of-mouth referrals, encourages repeat purchases, and attracts new customers. Considering these determinants allows companies to effectively manage their brands' perceptions among consumers. By understanding what influences customer behavior towards their products or services over time, organizations can make informed decisions about marketing strategies aimed at building strong long-term customer relationships.

### **Importance of brand management**

Brand management plays a pivotal role in the success and longevity of a product brand. It involves carefully crafting and implementing strategies to create, maintain, and enhance a brand's image, reputation, and customer relationships. One of the key reasons why brand management is important is that it helps build brand awareness. By focusing on creating strong associations between the brand and its target audience through consistent messaging and visual identity, companies can increase their visibility and recognition in the market (V.Vetrivel,2023). Additionally, effective brand management ensures proper positioning of the brand in consumers' minds. Through strategic marketing efforts, brands can differentiate themselves from competitors by highlighting unique value propositions or emotional

connections with customers. Building strong customer relationships is another crucial aspect of successful brand management. By consistently delivering on promises made to customers through quality products or services, brands can establish trust and loyalty among their consumer base. Moreover, effective brand management contributes to shaping a positive perception of the brand. Brands that consistently deliver exceptional experiences are likely to develop a favorable reputation over time.

### **Customer Relationship with Branded Product**

Building a strong and lasting relationship between customers and a branded product is crucial for long-term success. When customers develop a connection with a brand, they are more likely to remain loyal and continue purchasing the product over time. Years of relationship play a significant role in strengthening this bond. As customers interact with the brand repeatedly, they become familiar with its values, quality, and reliability. This familiarity breeds trust and confidence in the product, leading to increased customer loyalty. Brand awareness also plays a vital role in shaping customer relationships. When customers recognize and recall a brand easily, it creates an impression of credibility and consistency. A well-established brand image builds trust among consumers as it assures them of consistent quality standards. Additionally, brand positioning influences how customers perceive the value proposition offered by the product. Effective positioning strategies can differentiate a branded product from its competitors, making it stand out in the market. By understanding their target audience's needs and desires, brands can position themselves as relevant solutions that fulfill these requirements. Brand association is another critical determinant that impacts customer relationships. Associating positive attributes or experiences with a particular brand creates emotional connections that go beyond functional benefits alone. These associations make customers feel attached to the brand on an emotional level. Moreover, building trust through consistent delivery of promises helps solidify customer relationships further. Customers who trust the brand are more likely to recommend it to others too - word-of-mouth being one of the most powerful marketing tools available (V.Vetrivel, 2017). Maintaining good reputation is essential for sustaining long-term customer relationships with any branded product. A positive reputation enhances credibility while negative perceptions can quickly erode consumer trust. By focusing on these determinants like years of relationship-building efforts along with effective branding strategies such as increasing awareness, and positioning products strategically, a company can cultivate stronger bonds between their customers and branded products.

### **Need of the study**

The need for this study arose from the recognition that brand determinants play a crucial role in maintaining long-term customer relationships with a product brand. In today's competitive market, where consumers are bombarded with numerous options, it is imperative for businesses to understand and effectively manage their brands. Brand management encompasses various aspects such as brand awareness, positioning, association, image, trust, loyalty, and reputation. These elements collectively contribute to creating a strong brand identity and influencing consumer behavior. By understanding the factors that influence customers' perceptions of a brand and their willingness to establish long-term relationships with it, businesses can develop targeted strategies to enhance these determinants. This knowledge can help companies differentiate themselves from competitors and build lasting connections with customers (V.Vetrivel, 2015). Despite extensive research on branding topics like brand equity or consumer behavior towards brands but there is still a gap in understanding the specific role of different

brand determinants in shaping long-term customer relationships. By conducting this study using a sample size of 217 respondents through questionnaires we aim to bridge this gap by exploring the relationship between these determinants and customer loyalty over an extended period of time.

### **Research gap of the study**

Understanding the research gap is crucial in any study as it helps identify the areas that need further exploration. In the context of this particular study on brand determinants and customer relationships, there are several gaps that have been identified. While previous research has extensively discussed the importance of brand management in maintaining long-term customer relationships, there is a lack of empirical evidence linking specific brand determinants to these relationships. This study aims to bridge this gap by examining how factors such as brand awareness, positioning, association, image, trust, loyalty and reputation contribute to sustaining customer-brand relationships over time. Most existing studies focus on short-term effects rather than long-term relationship dynamics. By taking into account years of relationship between customers and brands in our analysis, we aim to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how these determinants evolve and impact customer loyalty over time. Moreover, previous literature tends to overlook the role of external factors such as competitive landscape or market conditions on brand-customer relationships. This study seeks to address this gap by considering both internal (brand-related) and external (market-related) factors in analyzing their influence on long-term customer-brand interactions.

### **Statement of the problem**

The statement of the problem is a crucial aspect of any research study. It helps to clearly define the issue or challenge that the study aims to address. In this case, the problem statement revolves around understanding the role of brand determinants in maintaining long-term customer relationships with a product brand. One key aspect is brand awareness, which refers to how well customers recognize and recall a particular brand. Another determinant is brand positioning, which involves creating a unique and favorable perception of the brand in relation to competitors. Brand association also plays a significant role as it connects certain attributes or qualities with the brand in consumers' minds. Brand image, on the other hand, encompasses overall perceptions and impressions people have about a specific brand. Building trust with customers is essential for maintaining long-term relationships. Trust can be influenced by factors such as consistent delivery of quality products or services and transparent communication. Brand loyalty arises when customers repeatedly choose one particular brand over others based on their positive experiences and satisfaction levels. Brand reputation refers to how consumers perceive the overall standing and credibility of a company's products or services within its industry. Understanding these various determinants will help companies develop effective strategies for building strong customer relationships.

### **Review of Literature**

Keller(1993) seminal work provides a comprehensive framework for understanding and managing customer-based brand equity. The author emphasizes the importance of brand knowledge and awareness in building strong customer relationships. Keller's model serves as a foundational piece for understanding the role of brand determinants in maintaining long-term customer relationships. Aaker' (1996) research delves into the measurement of brand equity and its implications across different

products and markets. The author's insights are valuable in understanding how brand determinants contribute to sustaining customer relationships over time. Fournier and Yao's (1997) work offers a fresh perspective on reviving brand loyalty through the lens of consumer-brand relationships. Their study sheds light on the role of emotional connections and trust as key determinants in maintaining long-term customer relationships with a product brand. Yoo and Donthu (2001) present a multidimensional approach to measuring consumer-based brand equity, encompassing various determinants such as brand awareness, perceived quality, and brand loyalty. Their research contributes to understanding the complex interplay of factors that influence long-term customer relationships with a product brand. Kim and Hyun's (2011) model explores the impact of marketing-mix efforts and corporate image on brand equity within the IT software sector. Their findings offer valuable insights into how these factors shape long-term customer relationships with a product brand. Chaudhuri and Holbrook's (2001) study examines the chain of effects from brand trust and affect to brand performance, emphasizing the pivotal role of brand loyalty in driving long-term customer relationships with a product brand. Erdem and Swait's (1998) research focuses on brand equity as a signaling phenomenon, shedding light on how consumers interpret signals conveyed by brands to form long-term relationships with them. . Srivastava et al.(1998) framework for analyzing market-based assets and shareholder value provides valuable insights into how brands can create long-term value through strong customer relationships. Biel and Bridgwater's (1990) study on attributes of likeable television commercials offers insights into how branding elements can influence consumer perceptions and contribute to maintaining long-term customer relationships. Rust et al. (2000) book provides an in-depth exploration of driving customer equity through the lens of customer lifetime value, offering strategic perspectives on maintaining long-term customer relationships with product brands.

### **Research Methodology**

When conducting a study on brand determinants and their role in maintaining long-term customer relationships with the product brand, it is crucial to have a clear and effective research methodology. In this particular study, a sample size of 217 participants was chosen to ensure that the findings are representative of the target population. To collect data from the participants, a well-designed questionnaire was used. The questionnaire consisted of carefully crafted questions that aimed to assess various aspects related to brand determinants such as brand awareness, brand positioning, brand association, brand image, brand trust, brand loyalty, and brand reputation. The questionnaire was distributed among individuals who had been customers of the specific branded product for at least two years. These criteria allowed us to focus on those who had established long-term relationships with the product and were familiar with its branding elements. Participants were asked to rate their agreement or disagreement with statements related to each determinant using Likert scale responses. Additionally, open-ended questions were included in order to gather qualitative insights about participants' perceptions and experiences regarding the branded product. The collected data was then analyzed using statistical techniques like regression analysis and correlation analysis. These analytical methods helped identify any significant relationships between different variables such as years of relationship with the product brand and various Brand Determinants. By following this rigorous research methodology approach involving a substantial sample size and an insightful questionnaire design process, we were able to obtain valuable insights into how different Brand Determinants contribute to maintaining long-term customer relationships with a specific branded product.

**Analysis and interpretation**

**Table 1: Opinion towards Brand determinants based on the number of years relationship in the brand of product**

Brand determinants	No of years relationship	Mean	S.D	ANOVA Result		Post-hoc test
				F-value	P-value	
Brand awareness	1	3.16	1.02	18.721	0.001*	1,2 vs 3,4
	2	3.04	1.46			
	3	3.78	0.67			
	4	3.93	0.18			
Brand positioning	1	3.01	1.06	34.984	0.001*	1,2 vs 3,4
	2	3.06	1.38			
	3	3.86	0.79			
	4	4.29	0.30			
Brand association	1	3.18	1.11	32.577	0.001*	1,2 vs 3,4
	2	2.97	1.37			
	3	3.85	0.72			
	4	4.32	0.14			
Brand image	1	3.24	1.19	28.374	0.001*	1,2 vs 3,4
	2	2.90	1.45			
	3	3.99	0.85			
	4	4.13	0.54			
Brand trust	1	2.96	1.19	37.363	0.001*	1,2 vs 3,4
	2	3.00	1.33			
	3	3.82	0.75			
	4	4.35	0.12			
Brand loyalty	1	2.90	1.12	30.747	0.001*	1,2 vs 3,4
	2	3.16	1.71			
	3	3.85	0.85			
	4	4.36	0.32			
Brand reputation	1	2.79	1.11	43.419	0.001*	1,2 vs 3,4
	2	3.13	1.41			
	3	3.89	0.80			
	4	4.30	0.47			

Source: Primary data computed; \* Significant @ 1% level.

Table 1 reveals that opinion towards Brand determinants is based on the years of relationship with the product brand. The researcher has classified the number of years of relationship in the brand of product,

such as one-year relationship, two-year relationship, three-year relationship, and four-year relationship; mean and standard deviation values are calculated for each group.

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant difference of opinion towards brand determinants based on the number of years of relationship in the brand of the product

In order to examine the stated hypothesis one, way ANOVA is executed, the brand determinants of customers are brand awareness, brand positioning, brand association, brand image, brand trust, brand loyalty and brand reputation, which are found to be significant because the calculated P-value is significant.

Hence, brand awareness, positioning, association, image, trust, loyalty, and reputation significantly vary based on the years of relationship between the brand or product. Hence, the stated hypothesis is rejected.

In the case of brand awareness based on years relationship, 4-year relationship in the brand of product secured the mean value of 3.93, followed by three years relationship in the brand of the product secured the mean value of 3.78, 1 year in the brand of the product secured a mean value of 3.16, 2 years relationship in the brand of product secured a mean score of 3.04. It is noted that the number of years of relationship in the brand of the product has a difference of opinion towards brand awareness of customers. The calculated F-value is 18.721, and the P-value is 0.001, which is significant at a one per cent level. Hence, there is a significant difference of opinion towards brand awareness of customers based on the number of years of relationship between the brand or product. It was found that the four-year relationship in the product brand has higher brand awareness. However, a year's relationship with the product brand has lower brand awareness.

About brand positioning, four four-year relationships in the brand of the product secured a mean score of 4.29, followed by three three-year relationships in the brand of the product have a mean score of 3.86, 2 years relationships in the brand of the product have a mean score of 3.06 and 1-year relationship in the brand of the product have the mean score of 3.01. It is noted that the number of years of relationship in the brand of products has different opinions towards brand positioning of customers. The calculated F-value is 34.984. Moreover, the P-value is 0.001, significant at a one per cent level. Hence, there is a significant difference of opinion towards brand positioning of customers based on the number of years of relationship in brand of product. It is found that Four years relationship with the product brand leads to higher brand positioning in the customer relationship. However, One year relationship in the brand or the product has a lower level of brand positioning.

Regarding brand association of customers based on number of years relationship, 4 years relationship in the brand of product secured the mean value of 4.32, followed by three years relationship in the brand of product secured a mean value of 3.85, 1-year relationship in the brand of product secured a mean value of 3.18 and 2 years relationship in the brand of product secured a mean score of 2.97. It is noted that the number of years of relationship between the brand of the product has a different opinion towards the brand association of customers. The calculated F-value is 32.577, and the P-value is 0.001, significant at the one per cent level. Hence, there is a significant difference of opinion towards brand association based on the years of relationship between the brand or product. It is found that a four-year relationship in the

brand product has a higher level of brand association, whereas two years in the brand product has a lower level of brand association.

In the case of brand image, a 4-year relationship in the product has a mean score of 4.13, followed by a year relationship in the product, which scored a score of 3.99. 1-year relationship in the brand of the product secured a mean value of 3.24, and 2 years relationship in the brand of the product scored a mean score of 2.90. It is noted that the number of years of relationship between brands of products has different opinions towards customers' brand image. The calculated F-value is 28.374, and the P-value is 0.001, which is significant at a one per cent level. Hence, there is a significant difference of opinion towards brand image based on the years of relationship between the brand or product. It is found that the four-year relationship in the product's brand has a higher brand image, and a two-year relationship in the product's brand has a lower brand image.

For brand trust, 4-year relationship in the brand of the product secured a mean value of 4.35, followed by a year relationship in the brand of the product secured a mean value of 3.82, 2 years relationship in the brand of the product secured a mean score of 3.00 and 1-year relationship in the brand of product secured a mean value of 2.96. It is noted that the number of years of relationship in the brand of the product has a difference of opinion towards brand trust of customers. The calculated F-value is 37.363, and the P-value is 0.001, significant at a one per cent level. Hence, there is a significant difference of opinion towards brand trust based on the years of relationship between the brand or product. It is found that a four-year relationship in the brand of product has a higher level of brand trust, and a one-year relationship in the brand of product has a lower level of brand trust.

Concerning brand loyalty, four four-year relationships in the brand of the product have a mean score of 4.36, followed by three three-year relationships in the brand of the product secured a mean value of 3.85, 2 years relationships in the brand of the product scored a mean score of 3.16 and 1-year relationship in the brand of product scored a mean value of 2.90. It is noted that the number of years of relationship between brands of products has different opinions towards customers' brand loyalty. The calculated F-value is 30.747, and the P-value is 0.001, which is significant at a one per cent level. Hence, there is a significant difference of opinion towards brand loyalty based on the years of relationship between the brand or product. It is found that a four-year relationship with the brand product has a higher level of brand loyalty, and a one-year relationship with the brand product has a lower level of brand loyalty.

For brand reputation, a four-year relationship in the brand of the product has a mean score of 4.30, followed by a three-year relationship in the brand of the product secured a mean score of 3.89, and 2 years relationship in the brand of the product scored a mean value of 3.13 and 1-year relationship in the brand of product scored a mean score of 2.79. It is noted that the number of years of relationship between the brand of the product has a different opinion towards the brand reputation of customers. The calculated F-value is 43.419, and the P-value is 0.001, which is significant at a one per cent level. Hence, there is a significant difference of opinion towards brand reputation based on the years of relationship between the brand or product. It is found that a four-year relationship in the product brand has a higher brand reputation. However, a one-year relationship with the product brand has a lower brand reputation.



From the ANOVA result, it is significant at a one per cent level while observing the P-values. Hence, there is a significant difference of opinion towards Brand determinants based on the number of years of relationship in the brand or product.

In order to find out the difference between the number of years of relationship in the brand of product and brand determinants of customers, further Bonferroni post hoc test is applied. This test result found that one- and two-year relationships in the brand of product differed from other groups towards brand awareness, brand positioning, brand association, brand images, brand trust, brand loyalty and brand reputation.

### **Recommendation and suggestions**

Recommendations and suggestions of this study provide insights and guidance for future actions. Based on the findings of this research on brand determinants and long-term customer relationships with product brands, several recommendations can be made.

- It is important for companies to focus on building strong brand awareness among their target audience. This can be achieved through strategic marketing campaigns that highlight the unique features and benefits of the brand. By creating a strong presence in the market, companies can ensure that customers are aware of their brand and consider it when making purchasing decisions.
- In addition to brand awareness, brand positioning is also vital. It is essential for companies to position their brands in a way that differentiates them from competitors and resonates with their target audience. By effectively communicating the value proposition of their product or service, companies can attract loyal customers who align with their brand's values.
- Brand association is another aspect that should be considered by businesses. Creating positive associations between the brand and desirable attributes or experiences can strengthen customer loyalty. This could be achieved through partnerships or collaborations with other reputable brands or by consistently delivering high-quality products or services.
- Building a strong brand image requires consistent efforts towards maintaining excellent customer service standards. Companies should focus on exceeding customer expectations at every touch point to enhance trust and credibility among consumers.
- Maintaining a good reputation is critical for long-term success. Companies must actively monitor online reviews and feedback from customers to address any issues promptly while continuously improving upon existing offerings.

By implementing these recommendations, businesses will have a better chance of fostering lasting relationships with customers based on trust, loyalty, and satisfaction

### **Conclusion**

After conducting extensive research on the role of brand determinants in maintaining long-term customer relationships with the product brand, it is evident that proper brand management plays a crucial role in establishing and nurturing these relationships. Throughout this study, we have examined various aspects such as brand awareness, positioning, association, image, trust, loyalty, and reputation. These factors collectively contribute to building a strong bond between customers and the branded product. Our research findings indicate that years of relationship with a particular brand can significantly impact customer loyalty. It is essential for brands to consistently reinforce their values and deliver exceptional

experiences to maintain long-lasting connections with their customers. Furthermore, our study emphasizes the importance of brand reputation in sustaining customer relationships. A positive perception about the brand not only fosters trust but also encourages customers to remain loyal even when faced with competitive alternatives.

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International Journal of Commerce and Management Research, Volume 9, Issue 5, 2023, Pages1-5.

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