

The Effects of Brand Equity on Purchase Decision Process of Local Shoes Buyers in South West Ethiopia

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Abstracts

The basic objective of the project is to measure the effects of brand equity on purchase decision process of local shoes buyers in South Western Ethiopia. To attain the objectives both quantitative and qualitative approach were employed. Moreover, a descriptive inquiry along with causal research design was used. Primary data were obtained from survey questionnaires from local shoes buyers and foot wear sellers; however, secondary sources such as books, journals, internet etc. were used. The investigators used convenience sampling technique of non-probability sampling method in selecting samples from South West Ethiopia cities, Jimma, Agaro, Bedelle, Metu and Nekemet. The study consists a sample of 160 respondents were selected from local shoes buyers in South Western Ethiopia. Brand equity dimensions correlation test and multiple regression analysis revealed that brand quality and brand association have positive and significant impact on purchase decision. But brand loyalty and brand awareness are not the most important determining factors while purchasing local shoes relative to other variables. To recommend domestic manufacturers have to use Made in Ethiopia marketing campaigns, domestic shoes local marketers should consider ethnocentrism while preparing different promotional tools, and marketers should improve the quality and style of domestic shoes products with the producers of local shoes and Ethiopian local companies should use ethnocentrism in their marketing strategy formulation strategy to shape consumers attitude while making comparisons between domestic and foreign products and local shoes manufacturers try to create brand loyalty and can be formed through brand trust, commitment, satisfaction, perceived value, image, association and quality.

Key words: Brand Loyalty, Brand Quality, Brand Awareness, and Brand Association,

1. INTRODUCTION

❖ **Background to the Study**

Nowadays consumers have various products and services available to satisfy their needs. These products and services come from around the world because of globalization. Globalization affects and changes consumer behavior through the decrease of trade barriers, expansion of foreign trade, more unified markets, increased travel, multi-nationally operating firms, and technological advancements (Douglas & Nijssen, 2003).

According to Tudin and Ying (2010) because of globalization, the world is becoming one village and the international trade is growing more than ever. A product that is produced in one part of our world is found to be marketed in the other extreme by the next day. It is a fact that growth of international trade and globalization noticeably increased the presence on the market of products of different nations. As a result of severe competition and involvement of foreign organizations, companies become more interested on consolidating their position in the local markets.

Brand equity is a key marketing asset (Ambler 2003; Davis 2000), which can engender a unique and welcomed relationship differentiating the bonds between the firm and its stakeholders (Capron and Hulland 1999; Hunt and Morgan 1995) and nurturing long term buying behavior. Based on Yoo et al., 2000, understanding the dimensions of brand equity, then investing to grow this intangible asset raises competitive barriers and drives brand wealth. For firms, growing brand equity is a key objective to achieve through gaining more favorable associations and feelings amongst target consumers (Falkenberg, 1996).

Conceptualizations of consumer-based brand equity have mainly derived from cognitive psychology and information economics. The dominant stream of research has been grounded in cognitive psychology, focusing on memory structure (Aaker 1991; Keller 1993). Moreover, Keller (2008) identified the conceptual dimensions of brand equity as: brand awareness, brand associations, perceived quality, brand loyalty, and other proprietary brand assets such as patents, trademarks and channel relationships.

Previous research established a positive effect of brand equity on consumer preference and purchase decision (Cobb-Walgren et al., 1995); market share (Agarwal and Rao 1996); consumer perceptions of product quality (Dodds et al., 1991); shareholder value (Kerin and Sethuraman 1998); consumer evaluations of brand extensions (Aaker and Keller 1990); consumer price insensitivity (Erdem et al., 2002); and resilience to product-harm crisis (Dawar and Pillutla 2000). There is still no comprehensive research has been found to investigate the brand equity and purchase decision of in Ethiopia particularly in Southwestern Ethiopia shoe market in the country. Yet, the idea has been given no attention both by researchers and marketing managers in our country cases.

❖ **Statement of the problem**

Few studies have been made by researchers in some countries on the issue of brand equity on consumer purchase decision. Aaker (1991) and Keller (1993) developed the foundation for

consumer-based brand equity research. From a cognitive psychology approach, Aaker (1991) defines brand equity as a set of brand assets linked to a brand, its name and symbol that add to or subtract from the value provided by a product or service to a firm and/or to that firm's customers. These assets are brand awareness, perceived quality, brand associations, brand loyalty and other proprietary assets. Keller (1993) develops an alternative view and defines the concept of consumer-based brand equity as the differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to the marketing of the brand. Following these two approaches, this study uses a consumer-based brand equity measure that consists of four key constructs: brand awareness, perceived quality, brand associations and brand loyalty and examines these on consumers' willingness to pay price premiums, consumers' attitude towards brand preference and purchase intention.

According to Danaei and Andaliby (2013), study on the determinants of brand equity on Iranian young consumers: the results showed that brand loyalty, brand awareness, brand association and perceived quality are the most influential factors in the formation of brand equity and associated each other and affects consumers decision.

Studies by Burman et al. (2009) proposed that to sustain the brand competitiveness, the brand equity study should incorporate an integrated brand equity dimensions. Thus, the fulfillment of these brand equity elements will increase the company performance, including the customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Shafi and Madhavaiah (2013) pointed out that consumer purchase decision and user satisfaction are influenced by brand equity dimensions. They are useful in helping consumers to process or retrieve information, provide a reason to purchase, generate positive attitudes or emotions, offer a basis for extension, differentiate the brand as well as shape and control information in consumers' memory and consistency of purchasing (George, Low & Lamb, 2000; Martensen & Gronholdt, 2003).

In addition, Konkik and Rozyr (2008) conducted a study on the effect of brand equity on tourist destinations service users in Malaysia. The brand equity dimensions namely: brand awareness, brand association, brand loyalty, brand image and perceived quality and based on the results all factors of brand equity dimensions have been associated with each other and positively affected tourist destination service users.

Nigam and Rajiv (2011) researched the impact of brand equity on customer purchase decisions in relation to car owners in central Haryana in India. The result showed that brand equity dimensions: customer loyalty, trustworthiness, brand quality, brand awareness and innovative features have positive relationship with that of purchase decision.

Moreover, Khosrav and Mohammed (2016) conducted a study on the effect of brand equity on services subscribers of mobile operators in Tehran, Iran. The results showed that all brand equity dimensions have a direct and positive impact on intent to use about portal services of mobile operators. Brand Loyalty is ascertained by the degree, which shows repeated consumer buying patterns and how consistently consumers purchase the same brand. It is the worth of any brand (Ramirez, Espindola, Ruízy Hugueth: 2019; Ramírez, Lay, Avendañoy Herrera: 2018). Brand

loyalty is the consumer's willingness to buying the same product of a particular brand again and again rather than choosing another brand. Hence, it is often termed as the success of brand equity. The customer's satisfaction with the product makes him buy that product more often, and he prefers it over other brands that offer the same products; this gives the brand a competitive edge and makes the brand more desired and famous. Brand equity and brand loyalty have an active link or association between them.

There is still no comprehensive research has been found to investigate the brand equity and purchase decision of in Ethiopia particularly in Southwestern Ethiopia shoe markets in the country. Therefore, the purpose of the research is to investigate the casual relationship among dimensions of brand equity (brand awareness, brand awareness, perceived quality, and brand loyalty) and purchase decision of consumers in the context of Southwestern Ethiopia in particular. Yet, the idea has been given no attention both by researchers and marketing managers in our country case.

✓ **Hypotheses of the study**

- ✚ H1: Brand loyalty has a positive significant relationship with South West Ethiopia consumer s'purchase decision.
- ✚ H2: Perceived quality has a positive significant relationship with South West Ethiopia consumers' purchase decision.
- ✚ H3: Brand awareness has a positive significant relationship with South West Ethiopia consumers' purchase decision.
- ✚ H4: Brand association has a positive significant relationship with South West Ethiopia consumers' purchase decision.

❖ **Objectives of the Study**

✓ **General Objective**

The basic objective of the project is to examine the effects of brand equity dimensions on purchase decision process of local shoes buyers in South West Ethiopia

✓ **Specific Objectives**

Specific objectives of the study are following:

- To clarify the effect of brand loyalty on South west Ethiopia consumers' decision making of Shoe market
- To identify the effect of brand quality on the South west Ethiopian consumers' decision making for Shoe market
- To clarify the effect of brand Association on the South west Ethiopian consumers' decision making for Shoe market
- To recognize the effect brand awareness on the South west Ethiopia consumers' decision making for Shoe market.

❖ **Significance of the Study**

The significance of the study has the following importance:

- The finding of the study could help useful for local companies on their formulation of marketing strategies to protect and defend their business from foreign company's competition and also the output of the study has to be taken as a base to launch a made-in home campaign strategy.
- It is very valuable for firms who want to increase the market share of their brand, especially talking about the shoes companies, as it will underlie and highlight the consumer insights and perceptions that are moulded by the influence played by brand dimensions in their purchase decision of shoes products.
- In addition to the above benefits the study is contribute more in awareness creation concerning the issue and it could be a base for future researches

❖ **Scope of the Study**

This research focus on influence of brand Equity on consumer purchase decision shoes buyers in South West Ethiopia. Thus, this study was just conducted only selected shoes shopping areas in South West Ethiopia big towns: - Jimma, Agaro, Bedelle, Metu and Nekemet, The research is delimited with only these variables i.e. Loyalty, Perceived Quality, Brand Awareness and Brand Association on the purchasing decision of the Ethiopia shoes consumers.

❖ **Limitations of the Study**

The problems that were encountered while conducting this study was mainly time and finance. The unavailability of adequate literature in Ethiopia context on the topic under study forced the researcher to focus on limited literatures and empirical findings from other countries. Furthermore, this study only covers the perception of respondent and did not study about the expectation of respondent.

2. Literature Review

A brand is a name, term, sign, symbol or design or combination of them, intended to identify the goods and service of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competition (Keller, 2009). The brands help the producer and the consumer to distinguish between the similar products. It also works to create confidence in the products and help producers in the definition of their product to keep the customers and the maintain quality of the products.

Brands play an important role in ensuring the marketing policy system pursued by companies to promote themselves or for their services and products, which in one way or another contributes to the organization of the role of corporate brand in influencing the motives of buying customers and achieve a high competitive advantage by employing the money to maintain the quality and improvement which ensures continuous fame. Brand is the "name, term, design, symbol, or any other feature that identifies one seller's product distinct from those of other sellers (American Marketing Association Dictionary, 2011).

The term brand equity has become one of the most important marketing concepts since the 1980s. The concept of brand equity has been discussed in many different ways. Previous research has divided brand equity into three categories, i.e. the customer-based perspective

(Aaker, 1991), the financial perspective (Simon and Sullivan, 1993), and the combined perspective (Anderson, 2007). Aaker (1991) defines brand equity as a set of brand assets and liabilities linked to a brand, its name, and symbol that add to or subtract from the value provided by a product or service to a firm and/or to that firm's customers.

Conceptualizations of consumer-based brand equity have mainly derived from cognitive psychology and information economics. The dominant stream of research has been grounded in cognitive psychology, focusing on memory structure (Aaker 1991; Keller 1993). Aaker (1991) identified the conceptual dimensions of brand equity as brand awareness, brand associations, perceived quality, brand loyalty, and other proprietary brand assets such as patents, trademarks and channel relationships.

The former four dimensions of brand equity represent consumer perceptions and reactions to the brand, while proprietary brand assets are not pertinent to consumer based brand equity. Keller (1993) looked at consumer based brand equity strictly from a consumer psychology perspective and defined it as the differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to the marketing.

According to this conceptualization, a brand has a positive (or negative) value if the consumer reacts more (or less) favorably to the marketing mix of a product of which he/she knows the brand name than to the marketing mix of an identical yet unbranded product. Consumer response to the marketing mix of a brand can be translated at various stages of the purchase decision making sequence such as preference, choice intentions and actual choice. According to Keller (1993), brand knowledge is a key antecedent of consumer based brand equity and is in turn conceptualized as a brand node in memory to which a variety of associations have been linked.

Vinh and Huy (2016) found that perceived quality, brand association and brand loyalty had positive effects on overall brand equity. But brand awareness had not shown significant effect on overall brand equity. Overall brand equity had positive impact on brand preference and purchase decision. Brand preference had positive influence on purchase decision. Khan, Rahmani, Hoe and Chen (2015) confirmed that causal relationship among brand equity dimensions and purchase intention were established. Perceived quality and brand loyalty had shown significant influence on purchase decision. Naeini, Azali and Tamaddoni (2015) found perceived quality had shown significant effect on creation of brand equity and brand equity had the highest effect on purchase intention

✓ **Importance of Brand Equity**

Researchers have been able to show that the brand equity of a product affects consumer preferences and purchase intention (Cobb-Walgren et al. 1995), market share (Agarwal & Rao 1996), long-term cash flows and future profits (Srivastava & Shocker 1991), consumer perceptions of product quality (Dodds et al. 1991), stock prices (Simon & Sullivan 1993), mergers and acquisitions (Mahajan et al. 1994), creates sustainable competitive advantage (Bharadwaj et al. 1993) and resilience to product-harm crisis (Dawar & Pilltula 2000). Brands with high brand equity enjoy high consumer preference, purchase intention, purchase, loyalty, and even higher stock returns (Cobb-Walgren et al 1995, Aaker & Jacobson 1994).

As for the most important function for the brand that it provides for its owner protection through guaranteeing the exceptional right to utilize it , unless ask for another party to utilize from it in exchange for compensation or payment. However, this study, will examine the impact of brand and equity dimensions i.e. Loyalty, Perceived Quality, Brand Awareness and Brand Association on the purchasing decision of the Ethiopia shoes consumers.

✓ **Brand Equity Dimensions**

Brand equity is a very complex and multi-dimensional concept and phenomenon. Keller (2000) focused on two main concepts related to two components: brand awareness and brand communications. Aaker (1991, 1996) categorized elements related to brand equity in five categories: perceived quality, brand loyalty, brand awareness, brand relationship and other Company assets such as patents, trademarks and ... in these five dimensions of brand, the first four dimensions represents clients and assessing their reactions to the brand and these four dimensions provide a better understanding of customers. Many studies focused on measuring brand equity based on the customer. So obviously strong brand equity means that customers have high awareness to the brand name, have a positive image of brand in their mind and perceived quality associated with the particular brand ensures their loyalty to the brand. The brand relationships are not the only main aspects related to brand equity, but like brand loyalty is considered as the main factor in the buying process. Brand relationship includes thoughts, feelings, perceptions, images, experiences, and insights of consumer associated with a particular brand.

There are four Brand Equity dimensions: Loyalty, Perceived Quality, Brand Awareness and Brand Association.

❖ **Loyalty for the Brand**

According to Rubini's (2010) case study, brand loyalty is defined as an event of consumers' purchasing the same product category, either a conscious or unconscious decision process measurement of how frequently a customer is likely to buy a product from the same brand. A strong brand is created by a high loyalty level that in turn allows for higher margins and price points which enable the brand trade acceptance and low price elasticity to maximize the company revenues (Benson & Hedren, 2013). It is expensive to find new customers rather than to retain existing customers; thus, having loyal customers is crucial in reducing the cost for attracting new customers (Rowley, 2005).

Based on Yupingliu (2007), loyalty entails re-purchasing a certain product that the consumer considers as his favourite ,with a strong tendency not to give up this brand , even in the case of the of existence of promotional effects that aim to send away the consumer from dealing with this product , in favour of other products. Although the relationship between the consumers' satisfaction about the products and their loyalty is not clear, satisfied consumers are generally considered as more loyal than retaining unsatisfied customers. So, the following hypothesis is designed:

H1: Brand loyalty has a significant relationship with consumer purchase decision in an shoes products.

❖ **The Perceived Quality of the Brand**

According to Kotler (2008) it encompasses the features and characteristics of a product or service that bears on its ability to satisfy stated or implied needs. In other words, product quality is defined as “fitness for use” or ‘conformance to requirement (Russell and Taylor, 2006). Perceived quality is one of the significant elements in the brand equity model (Aaker, 1991; Aaker 1996). A number of researchers have concluded that perceived quality and brand equity are significantly related (Shahrohki, 1998; Yoo, Donthu & Lee, 2000). In evaluating brand equity, perceived quality is reported as a vital part of the study (Shafi & Madhavaiah, 2013).

Similarly a number of researchers have concluded that perceived quality and brand equity are significantly related (Shahrohki, 1998; Yoo, Donthu & Lee, 2000). In evaluating brand equity, perceived quality is reported as a vital part of the study (Shafi & Madhavaiah, 2013). Perception of good quality may encourage consumers to choose the brand and eliminate alternative brands by leading them to identify and differentiate the superiority of the specific brand (Yoo et al, 2000). Aaker (1991) claimed that perceived quality enables the company to charge a premium price which increases the company profits. This is confirmed in the study carried out by Lee, Kumar and Kim (2010), where consumers are more likely to purchase the brand among the competing brands with a superior price when a brand is perceived to have high quality.

H2: Perceived quality has a significant relationship with consumer purchase decision in shoes products.

❖ **Brand Awareness**

Brand awareness is the main basis of brand equity (Aaker, 1996; Shahrohki, 1998; Tong & Hawley, 2009). The consumer’s ability to identify or evoke a brand that has a weak linkage between the brand and the product categories is called brand awareness (Bornmahr, Göransson & Svensson, 2005). Keller (1993) proposed three main reasons for supporting brand awareness in a significant role in the consumer purchase decision. The first reason is about the chances that the brand has of being a part of the consideration set. He believed purchasing will increase when the brand awareness increases. Secondly, the decisions on the brands in the consideration set are affected by brand awareness even though there are no other essential brand associations.

H3: Brand awareness has a significant relationship with consumer purchase decision in shoes products.

❖ **Brand Association**

Brand association increases the impressiveness of a specific brand; therefore, brand association and brand equity have a strong relationship (Aaker, 1991). The main association and differentiation elements of brand equity normally involve the image dimensions unique to a brand (Shahrohki, 1998).

Brand association also includes other elements such as the produce usage, consumer lifestyles, competitors, and country of origin (Shafi & Madhavaiah, 2013). The features of the product or the product independent aspect reflect brand association (Chen, 2001). Brand image is formed when a set of association is structured in a significant way (Tong & Hawley, 2009). Shafi and Madhavaiah (2013) pointed out that consumer purchase behavior and user satisfaction are influenced by associations of a well-established brand name. Importantly, brand association is

useful in helping consumers to process or retrieve information, provide a reason to purchase, generate positive attitudes or emotions, offer a basis for extension, differentiate the brand as well as shape and control information in consumers' memory (George, Low & Lamb, 2000; Martensen & Gronholdt, 2003). Thus, the following hypothesis is suggested: *H4: Brand association has a significant relationship with consumer purchase decision in shoes products.*

❖ **The Purchasing Decision**

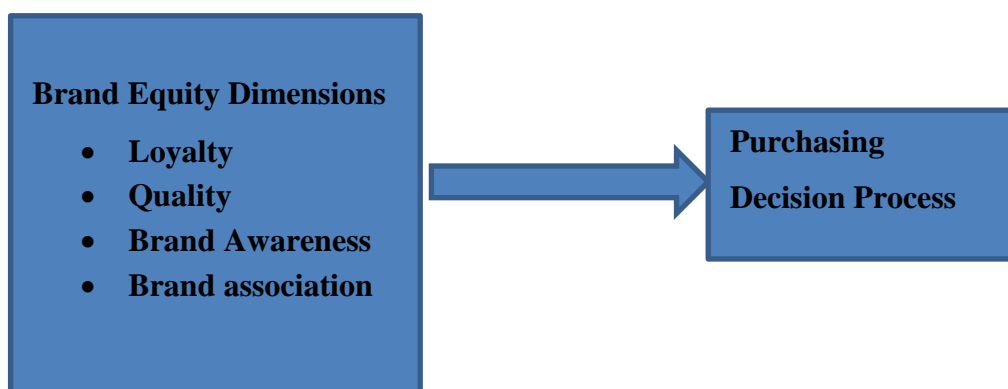
The process of the purchasing decision includes five stages. These stages are realizing the need, then searching for the information, then evaluating the alternatives, then making the decision of purchasing, and finally the post-purchasing behaviour. So, it is clear that the process of purchasing began long time before the actual purchasing. So, marketers need to focus on the whole process of purchasing, instead of focusing on the decision of purchasing only (Kotler & Keller, 2009).

The process of decision making of the consumer began through him realizing his unsatisfied needs and desires. From here the consumer will realize the difference between his actual status (as a case) and his ideal needs which he desired to satisfy through some social and psychological aspects. These needs are the ones that motivate and stimulate him to make the decision (Mullins et al, 2008). From here, the importance of the purchasing decision arises, especially for the shopping goods. The dimensions of brand equity considered as the independent variables i.e. loyalty, quality, marketing communications, historical tradition and country of origin and purchasing decision represent the dependent variable in this research. Based on this the following research frame work is constructed.

✚ **Conceptual Framework**

Independent Variables

Dependent Variable



3. Material and Methods

✓ **Research Design**

For this study, explanatory (determine the cause-effect relationships) and descriptive (description of the state of affairs as it exists at present) were applied in this research. The major purpose of explanatory design is the relationship between brand equity dimensions and consumers purchase

decision. The Consumers characteristics were analysed by descriptive statistics (the state of affairs as it exists at present). The nature of this study was survey approach. The purpose of a survey approach is to obtain primary data; however, secondary sources such as books, journals, internet etc. were explored.

✓ **Research Approach**

To secure dependable information, both qualitative and quantitative methods (mixed methods) of research were employed. As suggested by Johnson (1999), there is no hard and fast rule to use the one and reject the other, but prevailing trends favor the use of both quantitative and qualitative methods in relation to the topic.

✓ **Study Population and Sampling**

The population of the study was shoes buyers in South West Ethiopia big cities: - Jimma, Agaro, Bedelle, Metu and Nekemet, First, because in these areas there are potential and common shops for shoes trading and I can get the potential and right buyers from big towns South West Ethiopia big towns- Jimma, Agaro, Bedelle, Metu and Nekemet.

Although there are no universally accepted rules that are used to determine the sample size of a given study, usually sample size depends on the population to be sampled. The sample size selected here is considered as representative of the target population and large enough to allow for precision, confidence and generalizability of the research findings. The reason is that from these different cities researcher took 160 respondents/ shoes buyers based on some quota from these areas and finally it can help us to infer or generalize for the data analysis part because researchers used inferential statistical analyses like correlation and multiple regression. In addition the researcher selected sellers or traders of shoes from these towns for each town for interview. According to Sekaran (2009) and Anderson et al. (2009), convenience sampling is a non-probability sampling technique where subjects are selected because of their convenient accessibility and proximity to the researcher.

✓ **Data Collection Instrument**

For the purpose of gathering primary data, modified standardised questionnaires were developed and administered with the selected sample respondents for each of the two studies (Momani, 2015). Accordingly, one modified standardised questionnaire was prepared for Branding Equity dimensions on Consumer purchase decision. The questionnaire was developed to incorporate all constructs in the research model. Several items on each construct were developed and all of the items were measured by using a five-point Liker-type response scales, anchored at 5 strongly agree and 1 strongly dis-agrees.

✓ **Data Analysis Techniques**

The collected data were analysed in line with the stated research objectives. More specifically, both descriptive and inferential statistical analyses were employed for the study. For the purpose of analysis, SPSS 20.0 version was used to carry out descriptive statistics and correlation analysis. Additionally, multiple regression analysis was carried out to see the influence of independent variables on the dependent variable and narrative approach for qualitative part.

✓ **Model Specifications**

To analyse the data, different kinds of statistical methods including descriptive statistics, and inferential statistics (correlation and multiple regressions) were employed to examine and predict the relation and contribution of the predictors for each study. Finally, the results of both descriptive as well as inferential results were presented by appropriate figures, per cents and tables. Thus, the following multiple linear regression developed to make the research more effective in analysing the influences of independent variables (Brand Loyalty, Brand Quality, brand awareness and brand association) on the dependent variable (Consumers Purchase Decision).

The models are as follows:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4$$

Where,

Y= Consumers Purchase Decision

X1 =Brand Loyalty,

X2 = Brand Quality,

X3= Brand awareness, and

X4= Brand association

β_0 = is the constant.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter, the empirical data collected from the survey were analyzed and presented for discussion purpose. Specifically, demographic characteristics of respondents and data analysis of results were discussed below.

Table 1 Respondents Characteristics

S/No.	Item	Respondents	
		Number	%
1	What is your gender?		
	Male	87	54.6
	Female	73	45.4
	Total	160	100
2	What is your category age?		
	18-25	22	13.8
	26-35	57	35.6
	36-45	51	31.8
	>45	30	18.8
	Total	160	100
3	What is your educational qualification?		
	< Diploma	67	41.9
	Diploma	52	32.5
	Degree	26	13.6

	Maters	11	6.9
	Above Maters	4	2.1
	Total	160	100
4	What is your income?		
	<1200	41	26.5
	1201-2000	51	31.9
	2001-3000	29	18.2
	3001-4000	18	11.3
	Above 4000	21	13.1
	Total	160	100

Source: SPSS Output from Survey Data, 2019

Regarding item 1 of table 5.1.1, majority 87 (54.6%) of the respondents were males while 73 (45.4%) of them were females. This implies that there was about equal distribution of questionnaire among two genders in our study.

The next issue is age category of respondents. Majority 57 (36.6%) of the respondents were in the category 26-35 age, 51 (31.8%) of the respondents were in the category of 36-45 age, 30 (18.8%) of the respondents were in the category of above 45 age and 22 (12.8) of them were in the category 18-25 age. This implies that majority of consumers in the working ages of the society in south western Ethiopia.

As far as their qualification concerned, majority respondents 67 (41.9%) of the respondents had below diploma, 52 (32.5%) of the respondents had diploma, 26 (13.6%) of the respondents had Bachelor degree, 11(6.9%) of the respondents had mater degrees, 4 (2.1%) of the respondents had above master. This implies that majority consumers in the study area had diploma and below diploma level.

Item 4 of table 5.1.1 the monthly income of respondents, majority 51 (31.9%) of the respondents were having income 1200-2000 birr, 41 (26.5%) of the respondents were having income of less than 1200 birr, 29 (18.8%) of the respondents were having income 200-3000 birr, 21 (13.1%) of the respondents were having income above 4000 birr and 18 (11.3%) of them were having income 3000-4000 birr. This implies that majority of consumers income levels were 2000 and below that in the study of brand equity in the Ethiopian case.

✓ **Scale Reliability Analysis**

In this research coefficient alpha was used to assess the internal consistency of a brand quality dimensions, whereas correlation coefficient analyses were carried out to assess discriminant validity of the scale used to collect data. Hence, scale reliability as measured by Chronbach's alpha was found to be 0.9431 (observed from table 2) which give bold green light as to the acceptability of the scale for subsequent analyses. As can be seen from table 2 below, the internal consistencies of attributes in the scale are quite high. This is evidenced by alpha coefficients

ranging from 0.6232 lowest to 0.8589 highest which are higher than the cutoff coefficient value of 0.60 suggested in the literatures.

✓ **Reliability Coefficients (alphas)**

Table 2	No. of Items	Alpha coefficient
Dimension		For dimension
Brand Loyalty	5	.7736
Brand Quality	7	.7442
Brand Awareness	4	.7984
Brand Association	4	.8167
Consumer Purchase		
Decision	7	.8415
Linear Combination (Total scale Reliability)		.9431

Table 3 Correlations among Variables

Correlations

		Brand Loyalty	Brand Quality	Brand Awareness	Brand Association	Consumer purchase Decision
Brand Loyalty	Pearson Correlation	1	.515**	.537**	.513**	.553
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	160	160	160	160	160
Brand Quality	Pearson Correlation	.515**	1	.470**	.250**	.398**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	160	160	160	160	160
Brand Awareness	Pearson Correlation	.537**	.470**	1	.390**	.534**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	160	160	160	160	160
Brand Association	Pearson Correlation	.513**	.250**	.390**	1	.468**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.001	.000		.000
	N	160	160	160	160	1600
Consumer Purchase Decision	Pearson Correlation	.553**	.398**	.534**	.468**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	160	160	160	160	160

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

Correlation Coefficient is used to estimate the strength and direction of linear relationship association between independent (X) and dependent (Y) variable ranging from -1 to +1 (Zikmund, Babin, Carr & Griffin, 2012 in X year). If the value indicates a +1, there is a total positive correlation between the variables, at 0 there is no correlation, and at -1 there is a total negative correlation between the variables. According to Junoh and Yaakob (2011), the magnitude relationship will be explained as $r = 1.0$ as perfect relationship; $r = -0.7 - 0.9$ as high relationship; $r = 0.5 - 0.69$ substantial; $r = 0.3 - 0.49$ as moderate; $r = 0.1 - 0.29$ as low relationship and $r = 0.01 - 0.09$ as slight relationship or negligible. Thus, the result of this study as stated in Table 2 shows that the four independent variables (brand loyalty, Brand quality, Brand awareness, and Brand association) are significantly correlated to the dependent variable (consumer purchase decisions) where p-value is at 0.000 and the relationship magnitude is substantial.

There is a significant (p-value <0.01) and positive correlation between consumer purchasing decision and the various components of branding. There is a significant association (p-value <0.01, R= 0.553) between consumer purchasing decisions and brand loyalty. There is also a significant association (p-value <0.01, R= 0.398) between consumer purchasing decision and brand quality. Furthermore, there is a significant association (p-value <0.01, R= 0.534) between Consumer purchase decisions and brand Awareness. Finally, there is a significant correlation (p-value <0.01, R=0.468) between brand association and Consumer purchase decision.

H1: There is a significant relationship between brand loyalty and consumer purchase decision in a local shoes.

In Table 3, brand loyalty and consumer purchase decision is found to be statistically significant with the coefficient value of +0.553 and the significant level (p-value) of 0.000. Therefore, H1 is concluded that to be accepted with sufficient evidence. Brand loyalty is found to have a substantial relationship with consumer purchase decision; however, there is sufficient evidence to conclude that brand loyalty significantly influences consumer purchase decision in a local brand of footwear. Therefore, the first objective of the study is reached. The finding reported in Aaker's (1996) study also claimed that brand loyalty influences consumer purchase decision. Brand loyalty is the first most influential determinant to customer purchase decision of footwear in a local shoes brand. The loyal consumer intends to purchase the local brand of footwear again and again, even in the near future as mentioned by Rubini (2010) in her case study. Indirectly, brand loyalty will give more profit as mentioned by Rowley (2005) where it is expensive to find new customers compared to retaining existing customers, thus, loyal customers are beneficial in reducing cost as compared to attracting new customers.

H2: There is a significant relationship between perceived brand quality and consumer purchase decision in a local shoes.

Perceived quality is found to have the lowest coefficient value of 0.398 with the significant level (p-value) of 0.000. Table 3 shows the positive relationship between perceived quality and consumer purchase decision. Therefore, hypothesis is accepted. Perceived quality is found to have a moderate relationship with consumer purchase decision; however, there is sufficient evidence to conclude that perceived quality significantly influences the consumer purchase decision in a local shoes brand of footwear. Therefore, the second objective of the study is reached. The findings are similar to the study by Pappu et al. (2005) who stated that perceived quality differentiate the brand from competing brands and influences the consumer purchase decision. Based on the result above, perceived quality is the fourth influential determinant of brand equity towards consumer purchase decision of local footwear brand. The respondents found that the perceived quality of international brand is reliable; therefore they expected superior performance from the local brand. It was supported by Yoo et al. (2000) where the perception of good quality may encourage consumers to choose the brand and eliminate the alternative brands by leading them to identify and differentiate the superiority of the specific brand. Thus, in the perspective of customers, the local brand of footwear offers good quality and excellent features that will increase the confidence level of the consumers towards the footwear and hence it will affect the consumer purchase decision.

H3: There is a significant relationship between awareness and consumer purchase decision in a local shoes.

Based on Table 3, brand awareness is significantly related with consumer purchase decision with correlation coefficients of + 0.534. The p-value of the brand awareness is 0.000 which is less than 0.05 and this is sufficient evidence that H3 is accepted. Brand awareness is found to have substantial relationship with consumer purchase decision; however, there is sufficient evidence to conclude that brand awareness significantly influences the consumer purchase decision in a local brand of footwear. Therefore, the three objective of the study is achieved. The finding of this study is similar to the finding of Keller (1993) who claimed that brand association influences the consumer purchase decision. Furthermore, brand awareness which is identified as the third influential determinant also influences the customers purchase decision of footwear in a local brand. As consumers are overwhelmed by the many choices available in the market, brand awareness enables the respondents to differentiate between international brands and local brands. It is consistent with the finding of Bornmakr et al., (2005) that brand awareness is the consumer's ability to identify or evoke a brand that has a weak linkage between the brand and the product categories. The higher the awareness level towards the brand, the higher the chances the consumer will purchase the brand.

H4: There is a positive relationship between brand association and consumer purchase decision in a local shoes.

As shown in Table 2, brand association significantly influences the consumer purchase decision (correlation coefficient = + 0.468). The correlation coefficient of brand association is ranked the third highest among all independent variables. The p-value for brand association is less than 0.05 (p-value = 0.000) and this is sufficient evidence to conclude that H4 is accepted. Brand association is found to have only a moderate relationship with consumer purchase decision. There is sufficient evidence to conclude that brand association significantly influences consumer purchase decision in an international brand of footwear. Therefore, the fourth objective of the study is achieved. Furthermore, this study also shares similar findings with Shafi and Madhayaiah (2013) who pointed out that the brand association influences the consumer purchase decision. The logo, status and style of the international brand that matches the consumer's personality will affect the consumer purchase decision as it is well regarded by the consumer's friends and family. It is consistent with Keller's (1998) statement on brand association. Thus, the unique brand image of the international brand of footwear affects the consumer purchase decision too.

✓ **Multiple Regression Analysis**

This study also incorporates multiple regression analysis as the impact of four independent variables (brand association, brand awareness, brand quality and brand loyalty) is studied on one dependent variable i.e. is consumer purchase decision of local shoes in South Western Ethiopia.

Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Squared	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.654 ^a	.427	.413	.45479

- a. Predictors: (Constant), Brand Loyalty, Brand Quality, Brand Awareness, Brand Association)*
- b. Dependent Variable: Purchase Decision*

The model summary shown above helps to deduce that how much the predictor variables are responsible to explain the impact on the dependent variable. If we look at the R square column, it shows that the predictor variables help explain 42.7% of the dependent variable. The value is quite reasonable and the model used in this research helps to highlight that about 42.7% of variance in consumer purchase decision of local shoes in South Western Ethiopia is because of the four independent variables studied in this study. Adjusted R square value which is 41.3%, corrects R square value to tell what is actually happening in the whole population which is also quite reasonable.

In other words, by surveying 160 respondents, their impact of brand equity is accounted for 42.7% of variation in consumer purchase decision of local shoes in South Western Ethiopia and this thus shows the relationship between the brand equity and consumer purchase decision of local shoes in South Western Ethiopia is relatively high. The standard error of the estimate is 0.45% which also quite low, it means that only 0.45% of deviation is present in whole population.

ANNOVA Table

The ANOVA shows the true depiction of what is happening in population and from the table shown above, the significance value is 0.000 which is less than 0.05 and for this reason it clarifies that consumer purchase decision of mobile is influenced by brand association, brand awareness, brand quality and brand loyalty.

ANNOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sign.
1	Regression		4	6.285	30.387	.000b
	Residual		156	.207		
	Total		160			

- a. Dependent Variable: Purchase Decision*
- b. Predictors: (Constant), Brand Loyalty, Brand Quality, Brand Awareness, Brand Association*

Pearson Correlation Analysis

Model		Unstandartised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	t	Sig.	Tolerance
		B	St. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	1.026	.236		4.343	.000	
	<i>Brand Loyalty</i>	.275	.087	.258	3.168	.002	.529
	<i>Brand Quality</i>	.055	.043	.092	1.277	.003	.681
	<i>Brand Awareness</i>	.180	.056	.244	3.238	.001	.621
	<i>Brand Association</i>	.232	.069	.236	3.344	.001	.644

The coefficient table helps to detect which independent variable makes the most and least contribution in explaining the dependent variable and from the above table it is evident that the brand loyalty independent variable makes the most contribution in explaining the impact of brand equity on consumer purchase decision by observing the standardized coefficients beta value which is 0.413. The least contribution was made by brand quality variable in explaining the relationship between brand equity and consumer purchase decision of mobiles by having a value of 0.092.

The tolerance column helps to identify whether the predictor variables have multi co linearity and having a value more than 0.7 means that the independent variables are overlapping with each other and revision of model is required but from the above table it is evident that the values of all the predictor variables are less than 0.7. By looking at the results, therefore the regression equation will come out to be:

Y: 1.026 +.258X1 +.092X2+ .224X3 + .236X4

✓ **CONCLUSIONS**

The results revealed that majority of the respondents believed that brand association, brand awareness, brand quality and brand loyalty guided and influenced their purchase decision whenever buying local shoes in South Western Ethiopia.

The results from correlation and multiple regression analysis showed that biggest contributor was from brand loyalty predictor variable in explaining purchase decision, meaning majority of the respondents felt that their loyalty towards the current brand they used, guided their purchase decision for local shoes.

Second most strong correlation and contribution was from brand association, respondents claimed that the mobile brands helped them set a definition of themselves; it helped mold the judgments others made about them and influenced them to purchase accordingly.

The Pearson correlation test and multiple regression analysis also revealed that brand quality and brand awareness are not the most important determining factors while purchasing a local shoes relative to other variables.

The study also helped to expose that even a functional product like local shoes is purchased on basis of brand loyalty and brand association, backed by brand quality and brand awareness.

✓ **RECOMMENDATIONS**

When it comes to Brand loyalty can be seen to be formed through brand trust, commitment, satisfaction, perceived value, image, association and quality. Therefore, when a firm succeeds in establishing loyalty amongst its customers it adds value to the brand and creates strong brand affiliation, reduces marketing expenditure and influences other potential customers through positive word-of-mouth. Furthermore, customers, particularly South Western Ethiopia who tend to be loyal towards a brand are those with high experience and involvement levels with that particular smartphone brand, as brand loyalty cannot exist without prior purchase and use experience.

Perceived product quality can be significantly different from the actual manufacturing quality of products, such that, although the actual quality of products is good, it is possible that the products may be perceived negatively. Therefore, local shoes companies should not only ignore the concept of perceived quality concept but also ensure that the consumer perceptions of quality match actual quality. However, despite popular belief that perceived quality of local shoes may drive consumers to choose a certain brand over another competing brand which eventually will lead to an increase in brand equity, this line of thought does not necessarily apply to consumers in South Western Ethiopia.

The Brand awareness plays an important role in consumer decision-making process in general, and subsequently can be concluded to apply in the context of local footwear purchase. It increases the likelihood of a brand being a member of the consideration set, that is, a collection of brands to choose from. Furthermore, it has been shown that consumers adopt a decision rule to buy familiar brands. Brand awareness can therefore be seen to affect decisions about brands in the consideration set. Fundamentally, high levels of brand awareness increase the probability of brand choice among footwear, produce greater consumer and retailer loyalty, decrease vulnerability to competitive marketing actions and influence the formation.

For local shoes, brand associations can be represented by the functional and experiential attributes offered by the specific brand. The combination of tangible and intangible attributes creates a brand identity, that is, a unique set of brand associations that the brand strategist aspires to create or maintain, which drives brand associations. Therefore, the identity of the specific local footwear brand impacts brand associations and ultimately sales revenue.

To improving and encouraging products brand equity, it is important to establish the fact that different brand equity dimensions contribute to the overall equity in different ways, and that a relationship exists among the dimensions. Marketing managers who are often restricted due to limited resources (e.g. money, time, and manpower) to implement branding strategies, can make good use of the findings of this study by prioritizing and allocating resources across.

Through hypotheses testing the study revealed that brand awareness, brand association and brand perceived quality have a strong & significant degree of relationship with consumer buying decision of local footwear. So, the domestic marketers can adapt this knowledge to their marketing plan and activities to satisfy customers and provide the offerings based on the factual consumers' needs. Local shoes manufacturing Firms can increase sales by offering the right brand features; qualities which customers expect to stimulate the purchase decision.

✓ SUGGESTION FOR FUTURE RESEARCHERS

In this research, future suggestion for the next researchers is to identify other variables that influence consumers' purchasing decision, because the variables used in this study are only able to influence consumer buying decisions by 42.7%% in southwestern Ethiopian and more places would have been included in the future in Ethiopian context to test the variables. In addition, studying the relationship among different components of Brand Equity dimensions on consumer Buying Behavior, this study suggests testing same frame work in other countries and also other industries as well.

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