

## **Impact of Consumer Preference on Brand Loyalty: Mediating Role of Advertisement Effectiveness**

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### **Abstract**

*The purpose of this study is to analyze the mediating role of advertisement effectiveness on the relationship of consumer preferences and brand loyalty. The study is explanatory and cross section approach is employed to accumulate the data from the customers of different telecommunication companies. The target area selected for the purpose of study was the city of Lahore. Simple random sampling is used to draw the samples. The study is based on the survey carried out with 250 users of telecommunication companies in the city of Lahore, Pakistan. The data collected through consumers is analyzed using SPSS. Outcome generated revealed that customer preferences, brand loyalty and advertisement effectiveness are significantly correlated. The results validated the significant positive relationship between the said variables. Moreover, it is found that advertisement effectiveness serves as significant mediating variable in the relation between consumer preferences and brand loyalty. Practical implication of the findings and unexplored areas in this field have been mentioned along with the recommendation for future research.*

**Keywords:** Advertisement effectiveness, Brand Loyalty, Satisfaction, Brand Image, Consumer Preferences.

### **Introduction**

The recent age of competition has forced organizations to struggle for their quest to gauge highest share of market by drawing customers' attention using different strategies like personalized products, online shopping mode, advertisements campaigns etc. During recent years, the overall pattern of markets have been changed due to globalizations where every organization tries to maximize profits by gaining high market share. Customers are now more aware about the strategies of the organizations and with every passing day, it becomes challenging to appeal and retain customers' interest. Without any proper planning, it is almost impossible for an organization to control the market by gaining monopolies and knocking down its contenders.

Advertisement, for a company, is regarded as a medium of communication to target consumers in order to update them about the features of product and services. Companies use different promotional strategies as a vital device to construct product awareness and inspire potential customers which eventually influence their purchasing decision (Aguirre, Grewal, Mahr, Ruyter, & Wetzels, 2015). Since the last decade, scales

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of advertisement strategies have been spread enormously due to availability of speedy technological advancement especially in telecom sector. Customers are now being well aware and cultured through diverse communication mode (via social as well as electronic media) (Chovancova, Jibril, Kwarteng, & Pilik, 2019). It is evident that effective contents of advertisement can change the buying behavior of the consumers by feeding them better knowledge about the products (Gupta & Maity 2016). In this way, advertisement can help customers in selecting required brand. In the 90's and even earlier, the companies only focused on advertisement through electronic or print media but conditions are much improved now and marketers have alternative to appoint their customers (Amoako, Anabila, Effah, & Kumi, 2017). Now, the mode of advertisement has completely changed and along with using electronic or print media, companies heavily focus on digital and social media to interact with target customers. Further, advertisement through online exhibitions, social media is more common which not only can spread the information about products and services to customers in far-flung areas but can also have substantial impact on cost cutting (Gautam & Sharma, 2017). The value of advertisement starts from a trial and then rests on sales frequency. If the potential sales are going to enhance it means that companies are following successful advertising campaign. When customers will be engaged in repeated purchase in reaction to the advertisement it means that advertisement is successful in achieving customers' loyalty.

Customer loyalty, is mainly a purchase action of customer towards any brand (Goldsby, Stank, & Vickery, 1999). Advertisement plays key role to retain the customers' loyalty (Cengiz, Ayyildiz, & Er, 2007) and to decrease consumers' perceived risk (Davies, 1996). Further almost every research study showed that through an effective campaign of advertisement, companies can have positive trends in retention of customers and profitability of the organization (Cengiz *et. al.*, 2007; Montgomery & Wang, 2003). Moreover, recent researches have also focused that advertising is used not only as a tool to reach target consumers but it can also encourage customers' assertiveness and buying attitudes (Abideen, Latif, & Saleem, 2011). Basically, effective advertisement can be used to get awareness about the customers' needs and behavior which leads towards brand loyalty.

Brand loyalty, portrays a psychological attribute exhibited by potential consumers towards a particular brand. If the favorite brand is costly and has a high turnover, it means that the particular brand must be providing some valuable and distinctive features to his customers as per their needs and perceptions (Bowen & Shoemaker, 1998; Ansary & Hashim, 2018). A consumer behavior towards steady buying is the perception that the particular product is above all alternatives available in the market. It encourages potential customers to sustain regular purchases of that product.

Many past authors have argued that brand loyalty reduces advertisement expense as it always remains less costly to retain and nurture loyal customer rather than attracting new ones (Tepeci, 1999; Boulding, Kalra, Staelin, & Zeithaml, 1993). Reliability and loyalty about a particular brand are prompted through customer's choice and dedication to involve in purchase actions and also the frequency of purchases particular brand in definite period (Armario, Castro, & Ruiz, 2007). So, brand loyalty is the affection and self-satisfaction of customers which makes them loyal or retain to preferred brand. In this way, consumer preferences would be regarded as probability of consumer involvement to a particular brand. The successful organizations always try to maintain a balance among consumer demands and their loyalty. A vast body of knowledge explored that consumer intention to involve in purchase is affected by effective advertisement and brand name.

Normally the aim of brand awareness is to update customers about products and changing their beliefs about brand for the sake of trust development (Ewing, Jevons, Melewar, Pittard, & Small, 2007). Generally, it is vital for organizations to develop long lasting brand image by using affective advertisement and branding techniques to attract customers' preferences towards a particular brand. Customer preference points towards enhanced performance, profitability and relationship in long run between sellers and customers. Overall revenue stream of organization strongly depends on how effectively an organization is capable of capturing loyal customers which buy their products regularly regardless of modifications in price (Anjum, Arshad Hussain, Khokhar Qureshi, & Samran, 2011). Repeated purchases by customers are signals of customer loyalty, satisfaction as well as customer preference about that particular brand.

Due to development of telecommunication sector in Pakistan during the last few years, there has been huge competition among major players in telecommunication companies. From the beginning of this century, the scope of telecom sector is intensified. So, the companies try to promote their product repeatedly for the sake of survival. Due to intense competition, telecommunication sector has to focus on the quality and uniqueness of the products which are deliberated through advertisement in order to tailor consumer preferences and preserve their loyalty. The current study intends to provide causal relation between customer preferences with attached brand loyalty in the presence of the mediating role of effective contents of the advertisement focusing telecommunications sector of Pakistan. The main research objective is as follows:

*“To explore the mediating role of advertisement effectiveness in shaping the causal linkage of consumer preference and brand loyalty”*

### **Theoretical Background and Hypothesis Development**

Consumers' preference of any brand is a signal of their satisfaction and to that brand. Maiyaki, Mokhtar, and Noor (2011) explained that through proper planning of

categorizing and gratifying customers’ needs, organizations may easily transform their prospective customers to loyal ones. Basically, consumer loyalty is a mixture of consumers’ positive beliefs and their purchase behavior and interests. Both customer loyalty as well as customer preferences are considered as best tools to realize competitive advantage from potential participants (Ali *et al.*, 2010). Credibility, commitment and trust are the major precursors that lead towards customers’ loyalty and stimulate customers’ intention to opt frequent and timely consumptions. For the objectives of current study, commitment, credibility and trust are involved as a proxy for customers’ loyalty. As, brand loyalty denotes the degree a customer remains loyal to brand so, customer’s consistency in repeatedly buying the preferred brand is regarded as loyalty.

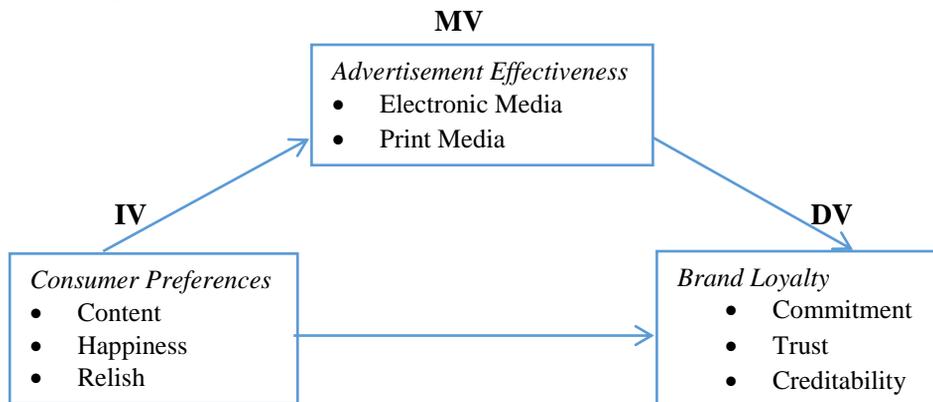


Figure 1: *Conceptual Framework*

Customers’ commitment is measured by the degree of their commitment towards specific brand, without focusing on how many other alternatives are accessible in the market. So, customers’ trust is measured by his self-reliance to particular brand. Higher, the satisfaction with particular brand, the higher he will remain stick to it and ultimately loyal. While, the proxy for credibility is examined through customers’ reliability and trustworthiness on companies’ products. When consumers are satisfied with feature of any brand, positive beliefs and thoughts are developed in their minds which may lead towards brand preferences. In this way, the repeated purchase of same brand shows customers’ loyalty and trust for that particular brand. So, brand loyalty is assumed to be an outcome of consumer preference. So, the hypothesis would be:

*H<sub>1</sub>: Consumer preference positively leads towards brand loyalty*

The repeated purchase behavior of the customer shows the customer satisfaction. This factor of consumer satisfaction not only induces brand customers for frequent purchases but also forces customers to share their valuable experiences related to brand within their social circles. So, in this way brand image is forwarded to other people

through the word of mouth advertisement and causes retention as well as growth of potential customers. To attract, retain and grow potential consumers' loyalty and preferences, customer satisfaction is regarded as one of important attributes in service oriented companies as customers now a days are more apprehensive about services quality (Khokhar *et al.*, 2011).

Frequency of repeated purchases of brand depicts the attached loyalty of the customer with that particular company's brand. Targeting and attracting new customers is a costly avenue for companies than retaining existing loyal and trusty customer. Loyal consumers automatically act as brand ambassador by spreading positive image about the service quality (Siddiqi, 2011). So, loyal customers are perceived to be success factor to gain market share and making business successful. Customers always prefer those brands with which they are satisfied and are attached emotionally. Customer choices and decisions about brand selection must be taken with high importance while assuming customer preferences. So, customer satisfaction is gauged as an attribute of the customer preferences. Satisfied customer will involve in repeated purchase behavior.

Consumer selection about specific brand is effected by advertisements strategies. Effective advertisements act as a tool to modify beliefs, thoughts and preferences of targeted consumers. It is all about companies' capacity to attract their customers and involve them through creative advertisement. Advertisement also works to attract new customers. So, the hypothesis would be:

*H<sub>2</sub>: Consumer preference has positive impact on advertisement effectiveness*

Effective advertisement about the products and services is an important feature with which companies can deliver updated information to front target consumers. If any brand image is communicating effectively to its customers, then it will work to force or convince people to make purchases decisions about that particular brand. In order to influence the target market, effective, structured and impressive advertisement must be developed and designed (Goldsmith, Lafferty, & Newell, 2000). Advertisement effectiveness is measured by mode of advertisement by exploiting multiple modes of communications. Consumers develop their perception and preferences based on advertisements designs which ultimately affects their loyalty for particular brand. Companies have to handle the loyalty of brand while developing advertisements of that particular brand. So, the hypothesis would be:

*H<sub>3</sub>: Advertisement effectiveness is positively linked to brand loyalty*

Consumer preferences act as a tool to retain customers' loyalty and this relation is strengthens by the presence of effective advertisement. Without dealing technically with advertisements, the loyalty of the customers cannot be achieved at its full and companies will not be able to retain their customers. So, consumer preference about a

particular brand is influenced by effective advertisement content and this effective advertisement lead customer to develop their brand loyalty and retain with this particular brand in long run. To attract new customers and retain existing one is a function of development of brand loyalty, in which effective advertisement plays very important role. So, the hypothesis in this regard would be:

*H4: Advertisement effectiveness strengthens the linkage of consumer preference with brand loyalty.*

### Research Methodology

This causal study aims to determine the mediating role of advertisement effectiveness on the relationship of consumer preferences and brand loyalty. Target population is the users of all ages from telecommunication sector in Pakistan. To collect responses almost 300 questionnaires were distributed, out of which 250 properly filled questionnaires were received. Stratified random sampling technique is applied for collecting data from consumers. So, 139 questionnaires were filled from Warid and Jazz users, 66 from Ufone, 29 Telenor and 17 from Zong users. Data was collected using primary data collection methods. 300 questionnaires were distributed among the respondents to measure their response for this particular research. Out of 300 questionnaires 15 were not returned, 15 were omitted during analysis due to missing data, total 250 usable questionnaires were left for analysis. Hence, the response rate or return rate was 83.33% which is considered good for analysis. Following variables have been used in the research:

Table 1: *Variables of Concern*

Variable	Symbol	Proxy for	Measure	Exp. Relation
Customer Satisfaction	CP	Preferences	Contentment Happiness Relish	Positive
Commitment	C		Devotion Bond Adherence	
Trust	T	Brand Loyalty	Confidence Faithfulness Assurance	Dependent
Credibility	Cr		Integrity Reliability Validity	
Advertisement Effectiveness	AE	Advertisement	Electronic media	Positive

Following regression model is anticipated for conducting regression analysis to evaluate the influence of predictor on Brand loyalty.

$$CP = \alpha_0 + \beta_1 BL + \beta_2 AE + \epsilon_i$$

Where, CP stands for consumer preferences, BL means brand loyalty and AE stands for advertisement effectiveness.

### Data Analysis and Conclusion

After handling missing data problems, univariate analysis of reliability, descriptive statistics and multivariate analysis were performed. Pilot study was conducted to detect the reliability of the sample data by performing Cronbach's Alpha test. The reliability analysis ensured that Cronbach's alpha value is .946 which proved that the adequate level of the internal consistency is present and based upon this result further analysis can be proceeded. The table 2 displayed presents the results.

Table 2: *Reliability Statistics*

Sr. no.	Variables	Cronbach's Alpha
1	Consumer Preference	0.859
2	Advertisement Effectiveness	0.836
3	Brand Loyalty	0.815

Table 3 defines the summary statistics and Pearson correlations' results which directs the significance of association among variables (Triola, 2008). Table 3 also expresses the summary statistics in the form of mean and standard deviation for each variable. The value of mean as well as standard deviation is found to be high for advertisement effectiveness of (48.26 & 11.38) followed by brand loyalty (46.70 & 10.29) and consumer preferences (44.27 & 9.82).

Table 3: *Pearson's r Correlation*

	Mean	SD	CP	BL	AE
Consumer Preferences	44.27	7.82	1		
Brand loyalty	46.70	8.29	.757**	1	
Advertisement Effectiveness	48.26	8.38	.697**	.657**	1

\*\*Correlation is significant at .01 level

Results indicated the presence of significant relationship between and among all variables ( $p = .000$ ). From the results of table 3, it can be concluded that values of Pearson's r for each variables is above .6 which ensures moderate, significant and positive correlation between all variables. It is obvious from the results obtained in table 3 that the greater value of correlation ( $r = .697$ ) between AE and CP while three exists low correlation between AE and BL ( $r=.657$ ). CP and BL also showed positive, significant and strong association ( $r=.757$ ). To estimate the presence of causal linkage, regression analysis is performed for hypothesis 1.

Table 4: *Model Summary*

Model	R	R Square	Adj. R Square	Std. Error
1	.757 <sup>(a)</sup>	.573	.572	6.73

Model summary of hypothesis 1 showed that R-Square value is .573 which shows that almost 57% of the variations in brand loyalty is explicated by consumer preference.

Table 5: *Regression Estimates*

	B	Sig.	F	Sig.
(Constant)	10.550	.000	313.397	.000
Consumer preference	.764	.000		

The results of regression for hypothesis 1 are shown in table 5. It is clear from the results that consumer preferences have significant positive linkage with brand loyalty (F=313.397, p=.000). Hence, the study rejects null hypothesis of no linkage of consumer preference with brand loyalty. These results are in line with the results obtained in the study of Kurt and Atrek (2012) which also showed the presence of significant relationship of consumer preferences with customer loyalty. The estimation of the linkage between consumer preference and advertisement effectiveness, table 6 declares the results.

Table 6: *Model Summary*

Model	R	R Square	Adj. R Square	Std. Error
1	.617 <sup>(a)</sup>	.626	.624	6.89

From table 6 of model summary, it is clear that 61.7% of the variations in advertisement effectiveness are explicated by consumer preference.

Table 7: *Regression Estimates*

	B	Sig.	F	Sig.
(Constant)	7.349	.000	442.523	.000
Consumer preference	.854	.000		

From the results of table 7, it is clear that consumer preference shared a significant positive influence on advertisement effectiveness (F=442.523, p=.000). So, it is proved that consumer preference is dependent on and influenced by advertisement effectiveness. To test the link of advertisement effectiveness with brand loyalty, hypothesis 3 is tested and results are shown in table 8 and table 9.

Table 8: *Model Summary*

Model	R	R Square	Adj. R Square	Std. Error
1	.584 <sup>(a)</sup>	.478	.456	7.52

The results from model summary exhibited that 47.8% of variations in the brand loyalty are explicated by advertisement effectiveness.

Table 9: *Regression Estimates*

	B	Sig.	F	Sig.
(Constant)	14.459	.000	217.335	.000
Advertisement Effectiveness	.579	.000		

From the results of F statistic, it is clear that advertisement effectiveness has significant direct exposure on brand loyalty (F=217.335, p=.000). Such significant values are also found in the study of Fatma, Hollebeek, Islam, Khan, and Rahman (2019) in which advertisement proved to be linked to brand loyalty positively. Hence, the study rejects the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis that advertisement effectiveness has strong positive linkage with brand loyalty.

To further extend the analysis, the study analyzes the mediating impact of advertisement effectiveness, on the linkage of consumer preferences and brand loyalty using Baron and Kenny (1986) mediation analysis. They explained that the existence of mediation effect depends on 4 conditions. In first condition, the predictor must be significantly associated with dependent. Second, the predictor must be significantly linked to the mediator variable. Third, the mediator must be directly and significantly linked with dependent. Fourth, both the predictor as well as mediator must be associated significantly to dependent variable. Finally, the mediation effect is validated when the influence on dependent variable from predictor variable is less than to the influence obtained in first equation.

Table 10: *Model Summary*

Model	R	R Square	Adj. R Square	Std. Error
1	.669 <sup>(a)</sup>	.587	.542	6.40

From table 10, it could be concluded that 58.7% of variations in brand loyalty are elucidated by advertisement effectiveness as well as consumer preferences.

Table 11: *Summary of Mediation Estimates*

	IV	DV	R Sq.	Regression equation	sig
1	Consumer Preferences	Brand Loyalty	.573	BL = 10.550 + .764 (CP)	.000
2	Consumer Preferences	Advertisement Effectiveness	.666	AE = 7.349+ .854 (CP)	.000
3	Advertisement Effectiveness	Brand Loyalty	.478	BL = 14.459+ .579 (AE)	.000
4	Advertisement Effectiveness & Consumer Preferences	Brand Loyalty	.587	BL = 12.345 +.659(CP)+.348(AE)	.000

The table 11 shows the summary of mediation analysis. It is clear that first condition of mediation is satisfied explaining direct significant impact of consumer preference on brand loyalty (p-value .000). Further, the second condition of mediation

analysis is also fulfilled by explaining the direct significant impact of CP on AE. The results shown in table 11 also validate the third condition as the relationship between AE and BL is proved to be significant and linear. Further, the last condition is also satisfied and AE is related to the BL significantly while controlling consumer preference. Further, the linkage of CP and BL in fourth equation became slightly weak compared to the linkage of CP with BL in first equation from .659 to .764 representing presence of partial mediation impact of AE on the linkage of CP and brand loyalty. Clearly, the results show strong and direct impact of consumer preferences on brand loyalty. It means while making advertisement contents, companies should focus on the preferences and satisfaction of their target customer's to retain them as loyal customers. Moreover, results also explain the fact that effective contents in advertisements plays vital mediating role in catching customer interests, preferences and ultimately their loyalty. It not only tends to force customers to remain loyal to the brand but interactive advertisements keep customers' stick to specific brand or product.

Overall from the obtained results, it can be concluded that consumer preferences have showed a significant influence on brand loyalty. The results also revealed the fact that brand preferences of the customers impact the effectiveness of advertisement in positive way and this relation of brand preference and advertisement effectiveness leads towards brand loyalty. So the present study provides evidences that customers' loyalty can be achieved and maintained by effective contents of advertisement which is developed keeping in view customers preferences. It can also be ascertained that by neglecting any dimension of customer preference described above can lead company to face critical financial as well as customers loss. Results of present study appeared to be aligned with the arguments discussed in previous literature. As Kurt and Atrek (2012) discovered that if companies pay considerable attention in delivering reliable information and strong products quality, it will enhance their customer's satisfaction which ultimately influences preference and build loyalty for target customers. If organizations feel the need to improve customer and organization relationship they should first focus on customer's satisfaction.

### **Conclusion**

This research clearly focuses customer's behavioral factors which forces them to get satisfaction from a particular brand and influence their purchase decisions. Customers' satisfaction, trust, loyalty and mode of advertisements are among some of the crucial factors which take companies to build the paradigm to attract more and more loyal customers. Brand loyalty is personal characteristics of the customer about their feeling of particular brand. If a customer is happy and satisfied with the qualities of a particular brand, he remains loyal to it, so to catch the brand loyalty, the feelings of the customers

should be handled very carefully. This could be done by adopting multiple advertisement strategies and tools. Outcomes from this research contribute to the body of knowledge to aware organizations to focus on sensitive factors of feelings and beliefs of the customers while making advertisement of telecommunication companies in Pakistan. Empirical evidences obtained support clearly the notion that customer preferences play dynamic role in building and retaining their loyalty. Further, the role of advertisement in this regard cannot be ignored. As in this competitive age, it becomes really difficult for companies to retain and maintain long term loyalty of the customers.

In this regard, eye catching and thoughtful advertisements can influence the minds and perceptions of the consumers which will be helpful to retain their loyalty with that particular brand. Brand loyalty of the customers is in turn related to the organizational credibility and this factor will be helpful to predict the future of brand in the market. So, it is easy to develop a positive brand image but it is really hard to maintain and retain that image in this competition arena. Companies can only seek intentions of their target customers to prefer their brands by developing creative and effective advertisement strategies. Further, service quality will add fuel to fire and boost their experiences of particular brand which will in turn be helpful in retaining their loyalty. Long term success of any company is dependent on how they handle the needs and preferences of their customers.

The results of current theoretical framework provide many practical implications. These useful recommendations can help managers to attain maximum market share by grabbing loyal customers for their brands. In current era, "Customers" are considered as a source for the success or failure of companies. So, managers of the companies should take detailed information from them before launching their products into the market. It would be helpful to address the needs of their existing customers and for attracting new customers. The organizations should also develop and maintain some feedback systems so that by close monitoring of customers, companies can improve their performance and compete in the market with maximum target share.

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