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The Effect of Purpose Branding on Brand Equity

by

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Abstract

Purpose brands create powerful means of differentiation in the minds of customers as they are tightly associated to the job for which customers hire them. Advertising and WoM communication play a vital role in building awareness for the purpose brands and creating positive and strong brand associations, which result in brand equity. Brand equity is the added value a brand name brings to a product or service besides the functional benefits. Brand equity in case of purpose brands is built when the product does the job and people talk about it. High brand equity implies that customers perceive that the brand is of high quality, have positive and strong associations related to the brand, and are loyal to the brand associations (Aaker, 1991, 1996; Keller, 2003).

The in-depth interviews revealed that the purpose brands of Google and Apple iPod were closely tied to the job for which customers hired these brands, and they were primarily built on WoM communication. The findings suggested that the two purpose brands had relatively higher mean scores, and enjoyed significant differences in mean scores in terms of the three core dimensions of brand equity, compared to relatively more generic brands. It was concluded that there is a difference in the influence of purpose brands, compared to relatively more generic brands, on brand equity, and the influence seems to be positive.

The purpose brand approach has significant implications for marketing communications. Job-specific brands create meaningful differentiation in the customers' minds, which could imply that marketers may need to spend less on overall advertising, other than the occasions of creating brand awareness when the product is launched and for reminder advertising. This in turn could improve the profitability of the companies. Purpose brands should be able to create a strong 'pull' for a brand and in this event, Internet marketing becomes a powerful tool for information dissemination. The limitations of the research are that the brand selection could be refined to enable selection of more combinations of purpose brands and relatively generic brands, and the sample could include more than just student samples.

DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

"I declare that my work entitled "The effect of purpose branding on brand equity" for the degree of MSc. in Marketing Management, embodies the results of an original research programme and consists of an ordered and critical exposition of existing knowledge in a well-defined field.

I have included explicit references to the citation of the work of others or to my own work which is not part of the submission for this degree"

Syma Shafi

September 12, 2006

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Abbreviations & Glossary

ATT	Attitude
BAA	Brand Awareness/Associations
BL	Brand Loyalty
PDMP	Portable Digital Media Players
PI	Purchase Intentions
PQ	Perceived Quality
SE	Search Engines

Advertising	Any paid form of nonpersonal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods, or services by an identified sponsor
Brand awareness	The ability for a buyer to recognize or recall that a brand is a member of a certain product category
Brand associations	Anything linked in memory to a brand
Brand equity	The added value a 'brand name' brings to a product or service besides the functional benefits
Brand loyalty	Tendency to be loyal to a brand, which is demonstrated by the intention to buy the brand as a primary choice
Perceived quality	The consumer's [subjective] judgement about a product's overall excellence and superiority
Purpose Brand	The brand of a product that is tightly associated with the job for which it is meant to be hired
W o M communication	Oral, person-to-person communication between a perceived non-commercial communicator and a receiver regarding a brand, a product, or a service

1. Introduction

In consumer marketing, brands can be critical to the success of companies, as they often provide the primary points of differentiation between competitive offerings. More than simply a name, symbol or a tagline, a brand is a set of associations and expectations with a company or product evoked in the minds of consumers (Kumar et al, 2004). According to Schroeder et al (2006), brands have become a vital dimension of the so-called marketing democracy. Today brands represent economic entities and sources of power which impose modes of thinking and behaving. The term ‘brand equity’ emerged in the 1980s and today most top executives agree that brand equity is one of the most important assets of the organisation (Herremans et al, 2000). Referred to as ‘brand equity’ Keller (2003) summarises the power of a brand as “what resides in the minds of customers”. Brand equity can be defined as the added value a ‘brand name’ brings to a product or service besides the functional benefits (Aaker, 1996). The most recent literature on competitive advantage considers brand equity as a relational market-based asset because it resides outside the firm and arises from the relationships that final users have with brands (Srivastava et al, 2001; Hooley et al, 2005).

In an article published in Harvard Business Review last year, Christensen et al (2005) defined a purpose brand as the brand of a product that is tightly associated with the job for which it is meant to be hired. Most of today’s strong brands, like Crest, eBay, and Kodak, started out as purpose brands. Purpose branding provides a meaningful way to create a differentiation in the customers’ mind and build brand equity. Brand equity is built when the purpose brand does the job and customers talk about it. On the basis of these considerations, and connecting purpose branding and brand equity literature, this study aims to examine the effect that purpose branding has on brand equity. Therefore, the objectives of the study are to analyse the concept of purpose branding, examine the role of advertising and word-of-mouth (WoM) communication in brand-building, and examine how purpose brands affect the brand’s equity.

To address these objectives, the rest of the paper is organised as follows. First of all, the concept of purpose branding is analysed from an overall marketing perspective. Consequently, the role of advertising and WoM communication in brand-building is discussed, which in turn contributes to building brand equity. The importance of brand equity and its core dimensions are discussed. Subsequently, the method used to test the hypotheses, data collection and the results are described. The motivation of the study was to discern the difference in the influence of purpose brands, compared to relatively generic brands, on brand equity.

The study encompassed two product categories of search engines and portable digital media players. A total of six brands were tested in the study, with three brands belonging to each of the two above mentioned product categories. The three brands per category were further sub-divided into one purpose brand and two generic brands for each product category. The purpose brand of Google (Christensen et al, 2005) was tested against two relatively generic brands, MSN Search and Excite, for the product category of search engines. The purpose brand of Apple iPod (Christensen et al, 2005) was tested against two relatively generic brands, Creative Zen and Samsung Yepp (YH-925), for the product category of portable digital media players. Multi-methods were employed to gather data, which included qualitative research at the explorative stage of the study, followed by quantitative research. In-depth interviews were used to get a feel of the key issues and gather insights, and on-line surveys were used to test the hypotheses of the study.

Finally, the results are discussed in terms of their implications for managerial practice, and the limitations of the research are taken into account.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Branding

Branding has been around since a long time primarily as a means to distinguish the goods of one producer from those of another (Keller, 2003). An old brand definition states that a product is a physical entity made in the factory, whereas, a brand is a physiological entity made in our minds (Lindstrom, 2004). A brand may be viewed not only as a sign added to products to differentiate them from competing products, but as a semiotic engine, the function of which is to constantly produce meaning and values (Schroeder et al, 2006). Traditionally, marketing executives have concentrated their efforts on points of difference, which are essentially the benefits that set each brand apart from the competition (Keller et al, 2002). These differences may be rational and tangible, related to product performance of the brand, or they may be emotional, symbolic, and intangible and related to what the brand represents. Today, proper brand positioning requires a careful consideration of a brand's points of difference, while at the same time creating points of parity with other products (Keller, 2000; Keller et al, 2002). According to Keller (2000), one of the traits among the top ten traits shared by the world's strongest brands, is that the brand excels at delivering the benefits that customers truly desire. Customers buy a product because its attributes, combined with the brand's image, the service, and other tangible and intangible factors, create an attractive whole.

Contrary to conventional wisdom in marketing, Barwise et al (2004) argue that it is the focus on generic category benefits that reflects how buyers actually choose between competing offers. Research on buyer behaviour suggests that, from the perspective of the customer, product categories matter more than individual brands. The world begins to look different when marketers place themselves in the shoes of the customer. In most cases, the purchase is triggered by a simple need, and the customer meets the need by making a category purchase. Companies have wrongly assumed that they need to offer something unique in order to attract business. Buyers rarely look for uniqueness of a brand. Other elements like price, availability and familiarity play a vital role. Therefore, simply better businesses differentiate

themselves by providing the generic category benefits better than the competition, like the case of Orange, instead of providing unique selling propositions (USPs) that the competitors do not provide (Barwise et al, 2004).

There are certain similarities in the arguments put forward by Barwise et al (2004) and Christensen et al (2005). Christensen et al (2005) coined the term ‘purpose branding’ which has been discussed in the following section.

2.2.Purpose branding

Christensen et al (2005) have observed that out of the thirty thousand new consumer products launched every year, over 90% fail, and that happens after marketing professionals have spent huge budgets trying to understand what customers want. Christensen et al (2005) argue that the problem is that some of the fundamental paradigms of marketing, which include methods of market segmentation, brand-building, and understanding customers, are broken. The CEO of Procter & Gamble, A. G. Lafley, supports the argument in saying that, “We need to reinvent the way we market to consumers. We need a new model” (Christensen et al, 2005, p. 76). Christensen et al (2005) believe that instead of focusing on extremely narrow demographic segments and product extensions that are irrelevant to consumers, marketers should focus on the jobs consumers need to get done, as these jobs will point the way to purposeful brands that consumers will hire.

The purpose brand approach focuses on a bottom-up approach, from identifying the jobs that arise in people’s lives to creating the job-specific purpose brand, instead of the top-down approach of creating a product and then finding ways of selling the idea to customers. An excellent example of one such purpose brand is Fed-Ex. The job of “I-need-to-send-this-from-here-to-there-with-perfect-certainty-as-fast-as-possible” frequently came up in people’s lives. Customers hired several ways to do the job, ranging from US postal service to UPS trucks. Fed-Ex designed its service to do the exact same job and when it did it well continually, Fed-Ex became the first brand that came to people’s minds whenever they needed to do that specific job. Today, it has become a verb in the international language of business that is linked with that job.

Christensen et al (2005) have argued that when people find themselves in the need to get a job done, they hire products to do that job for them. If the marketer can understand the job, design a product and associated experiences in purchase and use in order to do that job and deliver the product in a way that reinforces its intended use, then when the customers need to get the job done, they will hire the product. Barwise et al (2004) have emphasised a similar notion, wherein they have argued that companies can be successful simply by getting close to the customers, understanding what matters most to them, and providing it simply better than the competition. Furthermore, competitive advantage comes from knowing the company's customers, and understanding how they choose and delivering what matters most to them.

Focusing a brand on a job creates meaningful differentiation, and leads to opportunities for premium pricing and growth. The concept of purpose brands becomes important as it offers solutions to much of the problems faced in marketing practice today. However, job-focus can be a scary idea for some companies. Perhaps, this is one of the reasons why strong purpose brands are rare. When a company communicates the job a brand is designed to do perfectly, it also communicates what jobs the brand must not be hired to do (Christensen et al, 2005). For example, Casio's G-Shock watches are communicated as "durable" watches and are associated that way in the consumer's mind. Casio's G-shock watches, therefore, do not have associations of being chic, stylish or luxurious in the minds of consumers. Most companies create brands that are not tied to any specific job and they are advertised with a subtle differentiation in image, in the hope that the brand will be hired by every customer for every job, which does not happen. Therefore, purpose brands form a clear differentiation in the minds of customers, which is not true for relatively more generic brands.

Almost every job people need or want to do has a functional, social and emotional dimension, and the marketers' job is to understand these dimensions and design products that are targeted to do the job. In that, the job and not the customer, becomes the fundamental unit of analysis for a marketer (Christensen et al, 2005). In

the existing literature on market segmentation, benefit segmentation bears certain similarities with this approach, wherein it entails dividing the market into groups according to the different benefits that consumers seek from the particular product. Each benefit group, in case of benefit segmentation, can have distinctive demographic, psychographic and behavioural characteristics (Kotler et al, 2005). More can be achieved by understanding the jobs that arise in people's lives, instead of understanding the typical customer. For example, Google was designed for the job of "finding information", not for a search demographic (Christensen et al, 2005). Similarly, eBay was designed in order to help people sell personal items and not for the auction psychographic.

Branding is all about endowing products and services with the power of brand equity (Keller, 2003) and purpose branding provides a meaningful way to create a clear differentiation in the customers' mind and build brand equity. Advertising and WoM communication play a significant role in creating brand awareness and associations, which is discussed in the following section.

2.3. The Role of Advertising & WoM in Brand-building

Marketing communications essentially represent the voice of a brand and the means through which the brand can establish a dialogue and build relationships with consumers (Kotler et al, 2005). There are five principal marketing communications tools: advertising, sales promotion, public relations, direct marketing and personal selling. For the purpose of this project, only advertising and word-of-mouth communication will be considered, as Christensen et al (2005) have discussed their role in brand-building. Keller defined advertising as "any paid form of nonpersonal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods, or services by an identified sponsor" (Keller, 2003, p. 286). While the traditional media of TV, print and radio continue to be popular, the appreciation of the new media, which includes the Web, mobile communications and computer games, is essential to target the young people today (Lindstrom, 2004). Advertising remains an extremely popular brand building activity, especially for creating brand awareness. However, there is considerable doubt about the ability of advertising to persuade the target audience in a way that

positively affects consumer buying behaviour and attitudes toward the brand, and the effect on sales is hard to determine (Fill, 2005). Another problem with advertising is that it suffers from low credibility in that audiences are less likely to believe messages delivered through advertising as compared to other marketing communications tools.

According to Barwise et al (2004), marketing communications usually focus on building brand equity. Marketing communications can also be used to trigger or reinforce a perceived need, for example, a Coke billboard may remind customers to drink the product more. Christensen et al (2005) build a similar argument, wherein the role of advertising is that of clarifying the job that the brand can do well and making more people realise that they need to do that job. For example, the reason behind the exceptional growth of the Arm & Hammer brand is a set of job-focused products combined with a communication strategy that makes people realise that there is a product that they can trust when they find themselves needing to get the job done. Therefore, advertising by itself cannot build brands. It can, however, create brand awareness through communicating a brand's ability to do the job well. Advertising cannot be considered as a substitute for designing job-specific products. Moreover, advertising is an extremely expensive way to build a brand. Notably, most of the great brands were built before their owners began to advertise. Christensen et al (2005) quote examples of Harley Davidson, Disney, Google, and eBay, wherein all these brands had a strong reputation and even brand loyalty before a lot was spent on advertising. Companies spend a significant amount of their annual budgets on advertising but not all advertising leads to building brand equity.

It is important to note that the five elements of the promotional mix can be supplemented by one of the most powerful forms of marketing communication, which takes the form of word-of-mouth (WoM) recommendation (Fill, 2005). Arndt (1968) describes WoM communication as simply "oral, person-to-person communication between a perceived non-commercial communicator and a receiver regarding a brand, a product, or a service" (p. 190). In addition to the benefits that traditional advertising brings to a brand, WoM is considered as the biggest advertiser

of any brand and customers pay more attention to WoM, because it is perceived as credible and generated by people who are perceived as having no self-interest in promoting a product (Silverman, 1997; Schupak, 2006). Notably, satisfied and loyal customers generate new business through positive WoM recommendations to both prospective and existing customers of the organisation.

While WoM communication offers credibility to a brand, the importance of advertising cannot be undermined as it is a powerful way of creating strong and favourable brand associations and generating positive feelings towards the brand. Therefore, advertising plays a vital and often controversial role in contributing to brand equity. In the next section the importance of brand equity to the consumer and firm, and its dimensionality is discussed.

2.4. Brand equity

Brand equity is an intangible asset for organisations, which exhibits the qualities essential for creating a sustainable competitive advantage (De Chernatony et al, 1999). Brand equity, in an abstract sense, provides marketers with a strategic bridge from their past to their future (Keller, 2000). Brand equity has been expressed as the positive differential effect that knowing the brand name has on consumer response to the product or service (Kotler et al, 2005). Brand equity concerns itself with issues that make a particular brand recognisable and favourable over other alternatives in the marketplace (Aaker, 1996). Brand equity exists in the hearts and minds of consumers and other players in the market place and is mostly assessed on the basis of observed behaviours (Ambler, 1997). Brand equity building and management has become a key priority for many organisations, in all types of industries, in all types of markets (Keller, 2000). This is due to the benefits that high brand equity brings to an organisation, as it adds value for customers, helps to create defensible competitive positions, is inherently complex, takes time to develop and is non-transferable to other organisations (De Chernatony et al, 1999).

The brand equity construct has become very important as the key to understanding the objectives, mechanisms, and the net impact of the holistic impact of marketing (Reynolds et al, 2005). Researchers have found that brand equity positively affects

long-term cash flow and future profitability of the organisation, stock prices, merger and acquisition decision making, (Simon and Sullivan, 1993), a consumer's willingness to pay premium prices (Keller, 1993), sustainable competitive advantage and overall marketing success (Ambler, 1997; Ballester et al, 2005; Yoo et al, 2000). Almost every marketing activity plays a role, successfully or unsuccessfully, to build, manage, and exploit brand equity (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993; Yoo, Donthu, and Lee, 2000). According to Keller (2000), consumer knowledge is at the heart of brand equity. The power of a brand lies in what consumers have experienced and learned about the brand over time. The dollars spent on marketing can therefore be thought of as investments in what consumers know, feel, believe, think and recall about the brand.

Brand equity is a multi-dimensional concept (Aaker, 1991, 1996). The dimensionality of brand equity, in general, and the dimensions of brand equity used in the study, in particular, is discussed in the next section.

2.5. The Dimensions of Brand equity

Aaker's (1991) model proposes that brand equity creates value for both the customer and the firm, value for the customer enhances value for the firm, and brand equity consists of multiple dimensions (Figure 1). Yoo et al (2000) extended Aaker's model in two ways. Firstly, a separate construct of brand equity was placed between the dimensions of brand equity and the value for the customer and the firm. The brand equity construct essentially shows how individual dimensions are related to brand equity. Secondly, marketing efforts were added as antecedents of brand equity, assuming that they have significant effects on the dimensions of brand equity. Yoo et al (2000) define brand equity as "the difference in consumer choice between the focal branded product and an unbranded product given the same level of product features" (p. 196). This definition entails the comparison of two products that are the same in all respects except the brand name, for example, Apple's product versus no-name product. The difference in consumer choice between the two products can then be assessed through measuring the intention to buy or preference for the focal brand compared with the no-name product. For the purpose of this study, the brand equity

construct suggested in the conceptual framework of brand equity by Yoo et al (2000), has been used to understand the core dimensions of brand equity (Aaker, 1991, 1996; Keller, 1993).

There have been numerous ways of measuring and estimating brand equity ever since the term “brand equity” emerged in the 1980s (Myers, 2003). However, there is little agreement on what the measures of brand equity should be (Table 1). Aaker offers his “Brand Equity 10” (Aaker, 1996), Keller offers his CBBE model (Keller, 2003) and its associated measures, and Equitrend, Interbrand and Y&R use complex formulas that make use of four or more constructs (Aaker, 1996; Fill, 2005; Keller, 2003; Reynolds et al, 2005). The greatest consistency across the recommended measures is in the measures of “perceived quality” and “user satisfaction/loyalty”, as Aaker, Keller and Equitrend recommend these measures as the foundation of brand equity (Table 1, Reynolds et al, 2005).

Table 1: Recommended/Applied Brand Equity Measures

	Aaker	Keller	Y&R	Equitrend	Interbrand
Associations		x	x		
Awareness	x	x			
Differentiation	x		x		
Distribution coverage	x				
Esteem			x		
International					x
Knowledge			x		
Leadership	x				xx
Legal protection					x
Market share	x				
Market trend					x
Marketing support					x
Perceived quality	x	x		xx	

Perceived value	x			
Personality	x		x	
Price premium	xx			
Relevance			x	
Salience				x
User satisfaction/loyalty	x	x		xx
Stability				x

Source: Aaker (1996); Keller (2003)

Christensen et al (2005) believe that purpose brands like eBay, Crest etc. did the job and customers talked about it and that is how brand equity is built. Brand equity can be destroyed when marketers do not tie the brand to a purpose. When marketers build a generic brand that does not signal to the customers when they should and should not use the product, marketers face the risk that people might hire the product for a job that it was not designed to do, which would lead to customers distrusting the brand.

As proposed by Aaker (1991, 1996) and Keller (1993), brand equity consists of four dimensions: brand loyalty, brand awareness, perceived quality, and brand associations (Figure 1). These brand equity dimensions have been popularly accepted as valid and comprehensive (Yoo et al, 2001). Operationalising brand equity essentially involves consumer perceptions (such as brand awareness, brand associations, and perceived quality) and consumer behaviour (such as brand loyalty and paying a price differential) (Myers, 2003). In the following section, the key dimensions of brand equity are discussed in detail.

Figure 1: Brand equity



Source: Aaker (1991), p. 17

2.5.1. Brand awareness & Brand associations

Brand awareness is “the ability for a buyer to recognize or recall that a brand is a member of a certain product category” (Aaker, 1991, p. 61). Therefore, brand awareness consists of both brand recognition and recall (Keller, 2003). Brand awareness is the anchor to which other associations can be attached and forms the first step in the communication task. Brand awareness can range from recognition to domination. Recognition relates to merely being aware of the brand and its existence but domination is where a brand is the only one a consumer can think of, for a particular product or service (Aaker, 1991).

Associations are defined by Aaker (1991) as “anything linked in memory to a brand” and brand image as “a set of [brand] associations, usually in some meaningful way” (Aaker, 1991, p. 109). Brands are not physical items produced in a factory, but stories created in our minds (Lindstrom, 2004). Brand associations are complicated and interconnected, and consist of a multiplicity of ideas, instances, and facts that essentially establish a solid network of brand knowledge (Yoo et al, 2000). Keller (2003) proposed the customer-based brand equity (CBBE) framework, which entails that the power of a brand essentially lies in what resides in the minds of the consumers and what they have experienced and learned about the brand over time. CBBE occurs when a customer has a high level of brand awareness, holds some favourable, strong and unique brand associations, and perceived quality of the brand and its products. According to Keller (2003), the two main sources of brand equity are brand awareness and brand image. The former consists of brand recognition and brand recall performance and a high level of brand awareness ultimately leads to learning advantages, consideration and choice advantages. The latter is created by marketing activities that link strong, favourable, and unique associations to the brand in the memory of the consumer. Brand awareness combined with strong associations creates a specific brand image that leads to higher consumer preferences.

2.5.2. Perceived quality

Zeithaml (1988) defined perceived quality as “the consumer’s [subjective] judgement about a product’s overall excellence and superiority” (Zeithaml, 1988, p. 3). Perceived quality is the quality of the brand that resides in the consumer’s mind. Perceived quality is not the actual quality of the brand but how the consumer evaluates the brand, subjectively. Perceived quality cannot be objectively measured, as perceptions and judgements about quality are involved, in that it is an intangible, overall feeling about a brand (Aaker, 1991), which are in unison with concepts of consumer and cognitive psychology.

Marketing communications play an important role in how the overall brand is perceived. Perceived quality of a brand is a mix of image characteristics from advertising, packaging, word-of-mouth, and usage experiences (Ambler, 1997).

Perceived quality of a brand should have a positive relationship with brand loyalty and it can result in a price premium for the brand. Aaker (1991) mentions that if a brand has high perceived quality in one context (a particular brand or product), it is often assumed by the consumers that it will have high quality in another related context.

2.5.3. Brand loyalty

Brand loyalty is a measure of the attachment that a customer has to a brand (Aaker, 1991). According to Aaker (1991), the brand loyalty of the customer base is often the core of a brand's equity. If customers are indifferent to the brand and buy on the basis of price, features, and convenience with little concern for the brand name, it is likely that there is little equity. Therein lays the challenge for the marketer to provide a product or service that is competitively priced, distributed and supported by marketing communications, in a way that meets or exceeds customer expectations, leading to repeat patronage by the same customers and positive WoM to others (Barwise et al, 2004). As brand loyalty increases, the vulnerability of the customers to the actions of competitors is reduced. Brands with high equity often have a large number of committed buyers. A high level of customers' commitment can be seen in many ways. Indicators of commitment include the amount of interaction and communication that is involved with the brand and how important the brand is to the customers in terms of their activities and personality (Aaker, 1991). Loyalty can be interpreted in many different ways, ranging from affective loyalty ("what I feel") to behavioural loyalty ("what I do") (Javalgi et al, 1997; Morgan, 2000). Similarly, Too et al (2001), view loyalty as a multi-faceted construct which takes into consideration both affective and behavioural components.

Brand loyalty is main driver of brand equity as it is deemed as the path that leads to marketing advantages, such as price premiums, reduced marketing costs, greater trade leverage and market share, which have been closely associated with brand equity (Aaker, 1991; Park et al, 1994). It is noted that loyal customers often make recommendations to other prospective or existing customers by WoM

communication, thereby generating new business and value to the firm (Reichheld, 1996).

In a consumer culture, people no longer consume for functional satisfaction only. It is noted that consumption has increasingly become meaning-based and brands are frequently used as symbolic resources for the construction and maintenance of identity (Elliot et al, 1998). Brand communities are active participants in the brand's larger social construction. Research by Muniz et al (2001) suggests that brand community directly affects all four components of brand equity (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 2003). Muniz et al (2001) defined a brand community as a non-geographical community based on a set of structured relations between the admirers of a brand. The central facet of a brand community is the triangular relationship between consumer, consumer and the brand and such a community exists for brands like Macintosh, Ford Bronco and Saab (Muniz et al, 2001). Keller (2003) believes that a strong brand community can lead to a socially embedded loyalty and brand commitment.

It is seen that purpose brands create powerful means of differentiation in the minds of customers as they are tightly associated to the job for which customers hire them. Advertising and WoM communication play a vital role in building brand awareness and creating positive and strong brand associations, which result in brand equity. As discussed, brand equity is a multidimensional concept. The three core dimensions of brand equity are perceived quality, brand loyalty and brand awareness/associations (Aaker, 1991, 1996; Keller, 2003). High brand equity implies that customers perceive that the brand is of high quality, have positive and strong associations related to the brand, and are loyal to the brand.

The difference in response patterns of consumers regarding purpose brands, compared to relatively generic brands, will be examined in the study to come to meaningful conclusions. Similar to Yoo et al (2000), the study involved students and known brands. While the study makes use of some of the brand equity-related scales of Yoo et al (2000, 2001), the distinguishing aspect of the study is that it focuses on how purpose brands in comparison to relatively generic brands differ in terms of

brand equity. Online survey questionnaires were designed for each of the selected purpose brands and relatively generic brands in order to discern the difference in the influence of the brands and resulting brand equity.

The next chapter summarises the discussions that precede and illustrates the motivation for this study of the effect of purpose branding on brand equity. This is followed by the detailed 'Methodology' of the study, which highlights how the study was conducted and discusses how and why the selected methods were chosen.

3. Methodology

This study is based on the literature and its discussion already presented on ‘Purpose Branding’, ‘Role of advertising and WoM in Brand-building’, and ‘Brand Equity’. Purpose (job-specific) brands create brand equity when the product does the job for which it was hired and customers talk about it. Thereby purpose brands create opportunities for meaningful differentiation, premium pricing and product category growth (Christensen et al, 2005). Advertising and WoM communication plays an important role in creating positive brand associations and brand awareness (Fill, 2005).

The aim of this study is unique in the sense that there is no formal research to support the claim that purpose brands indeed create a difference, compared to generic brands, in terms of influencing brand equity. For the purpose of this study, the three dimensions of brand equity comprising of brand loyalty, perceived quality, and brand awareness/associations, along with overall brand equity (Yoo et al, 2000), determine the brand equity from the consumers’ perspective. Therefore, the hypotheses of the study is presented as

H1: There is a difference in the influence of purpose brands, compared to relatively generic brands, on brand equity.

Multi-methods were employed in the study to enable triangulation to take place (Saunders et al, 2003). The following sections focus on how and why the products and research methods were selected for the study, the procedure through which the study was conducted, and the measures that were used in the study.

3.1. Product stimuli selection

Two diverse product categories of Portable Digital Media Players (PDMP) and Search Engines (SE) were selected as product stimuli essentially for three reasons. First and foremost, the purpose brands selected for these two categories, namely Apple iPod and Google, have been discussed in the literature on purpose brands (Christensen et al, 2005). Secondly, the categories differ in many aspects, such as consumption situation, frequency of use etc. The use of these categories would

broaden the generalisability of the findings (Yoo et al, 2000). Lastly, the respondents (University students studying in the UK) are familiar with the two product categories, as shown in the usage rates, which means that there is a higher probability of reliable and valid responses.

The purpose brands selected for the study were Apple iPod and Google. Both the brands are closely tied to the job for which they are meant to be hired, which is 'finding information' in the case of Google and 'help-me-escape-the-chaos-in-my-world' job in case of Apple iPod (Christensen et al, 2005). Two competing brands for each product category were selected carefully. The two competing but relatively more generic brands selected in the PDMP category were Creative Zen and Samsung Yepp (YH-925). The two competing brands selected in the SE category were MSN Search, which is a search engine of Microsoft, and Excite.

Google was the top brand in a global survey of best brands, and as shown in a survey of Brandchanell.com, it has achieved the status of the brand that had the most impact on peoples' lives (Mazur, 2003). Today, Google is the dominant Internet search brand and has become a verb. Interestingly, Google has achieved this status mainly through the use of word-of-mouth. The simplicity and power of the Google experience is exemplified by the fact that if one is to "google" Google, it yields 57.4 million results, while MSN yields 13.9 million links (Krol, 2004). Excite was one of the pioneering "dotcoms" of the 1990s (www.wikipedia.org). Aaker et al (2004) have quoted Excite in some of the commonly used search engines on the Web. MSN Search advertises massively and makes use of its home page as a default for Hotmail, which is a widely used email service. Excite and MSN Search offer a wide range of services, all of which are not closely tied to a purpose, especially that of search.

Apple iPod, launched by Apple in 2001, was one of the first digital music players available in the market. The product became extremely fashionable almost immediately, due to its product features combined with distinctive advertising. The launch of the iTunes online music service in 2003, marked another giant leap for Apple and the iPod, wherein the iTunes provided easily accessible, legal music and

videos for the computers and specifically for the iPod. The iPod and iTunes together provide the most user-friendly combination for managing digital media and taking it on-the-go, thereby reducing the chaos in the lives of the users. People often mistakenly say that they are getting an iPod, when they actually meant that they were purchasing a digital music player (Hennessy, 2004). Apple iPod is deemed by a majority of people as a category of its own, due to its small size and sheer attractive design, despite the increasing amount of competition in the category.

Creative Zen and Samsung Yepp, the two relatively more generic brands in this study for the SE category, have been in the market for the same number of years as the iPod, but they do not provide a worry-free solution to the customers. With a host of other features like audio recording, these digital media players do not exclusively belong to the player category anymore, which is increasingly diluting the purpose of these brands (www.creative.com; www.samsung.com). The two selected competing brands are quite similar to iPod, but they are heavier to carry on-the-go and are more difficult to use and manage. The relative popularity of the products is revealed by the market shares of digital media players, where iPod enjoys the leading market share of 76.5% (www.businessweek.com). It is noteworthy that while Samsung was rated as the 20th brand in the Interbrand ratings of Global Best Brands for 2006 (www.interbrand.com), its portable digital media players are not amongst the market leaders. However, Samsung's corporate brand name does lead to some favourable brand associations.

3.2. Procedure

3.2.1. Qualitative Research Method

Qualitative research is often used to generate hypotheses and identify variables that should be included in quantitative research. The purpose of qualitative research is to describe and explain information and conscious and subconscious feelings, to explore and interpret complex phenomena and to develop new theory (Malhotra et al, 2006). Qualitative research does not measure; it essentially provides insight (Ruyter et al, 1998). The advantages of qualitative research include rich insights and

greater depths of understanding, while the disadvantages include the volume of data, complexity of analysis, and high costs (Milliken, 2001). Due to the advantages inherent to the qualitative research technique, face-to-face in-depth interviews were used at the initial explorative stage of the study with the aim of getting a feel of the key issues, and gathering insights and greater depth of understanding (Milliken, 2001) regarding the purpose of selected brands, or lack of it. Also the technique was used to examine the role that advertising and WoM communication played in the creation of favourable brand associations, which in turn result in brand equity. Judgemental non-probability sampling was used for the in-depth interviews wherein the population elements were purposely selected based on judgement (Malhotra et al, 2006).

A total of 20 in-depth face-to-face interviews were conducted with University students, which were divided equally such that 10 in-depth interviews were conducted each for Search Engines and Portable Digital Media Players. The interviews were essentially unstructured and started with broad questions about the product category and progressively got narrower with specific questions about brands.

After the in-depth interviews revealed that Google and iPod were indeed closely associated with the jobs for which consumers were hiring these brands (Christensen et al, 2005), the next step in the study was to use the quantitative research method of online surveys to investigate the effect of purpose brands, compared to the relatively generic brands, on brand equity.

3.2.2. Quantitative Research Method

The purpose of quantitative research is to explain and predict and to test, confirm, and validate theory. Quantitative research essentially focuses on survey techniques based on a structured questionnaire (Malhotra et al, 2006; Aaker et al, 2004). The research findings are described in numerical data, statistics, and are scientific and formal (Aaker et al, 2004). With the increasing use of Internet in survey techniques, it is believed that quantitative research is relatively less costly (especially via email)

but the findings may give quantity, but the findings are abstract compared to qualitative methods. On-line surveys when properly conducted have significant advantages over other forms of surveys. The quantitative research technique of on-line survey questionnaires was used because of the inherent advantages of low-cost, larger subject pool, and a faster response time and rate, compared to traditional mail surveys, and eliminating the interviewer bias, which is prevalent in qualitative techniques (Illieva et al, 2002; Evans et al, 2005). The details of the questionnaire used for the study are discussed in the following section.

3.2.3. Instrument

For the purpose of this study, on-line questionnaires were developed and hosted online on a private server. Six versions of the questionnaire were made for the six brands surveyed in the two product categories, which were dynamically assigned to participants. Only the brand names and respective product categories were altered in the questionnaires, with other things staying the same. The order of questions was kept similar across the different versions of the questionnaire. A pilot study was conducted initially wherein the participants were asked to indicate any unclear wording in the questions.

A link to the questionnaire was sent via an email to participants, with a brief of the study. The questionnaires with the consent form were delivered to the participants through a micro-website (www.symashafi.com/unis). The website and questionnaires were developed using Open Source standards, PHP/ MySQL. The participants were provided with a URL link of the above website embedded in an email. The brands were randomly allocated to the participants using PHP programming.

The home page of the study informed the participants that the purpose of the research was to generate new insights about effective ways to manage brands successfully. The participants were assured that the information gathered would be confidential and anonymous and that they can withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason. The main page led the participants to the 'Consent form'.

After giving consent, the participants were directed to the ‘Screening Questionnaire’, which further led to the main ‘Questionnaire’.

3.2.4. Sample

The sample elements for both qualitative and quantitative research techniques comprised of University students. All participants in the qualitative study were users of the product category for which they were interviewed. However, the participants of the quantitative on-line survey included both users and non-users. The validity and generalisability of student samples has been questioned as the student population does not fully represent the general population (Yoo et al, 2000). However, the use of student samples was not a real drawback for this study as surveys showed that students were primary consumers who had experienced (i.e. bought and/or consumed) the two product categories used as stimuli in this study. The respondents’ product category use experience, measured by a yes-no item of “Have you ever used product category X”, was 98% for Search Engines and 67% for Portable Digital Media Players. The respondents’ brand usage experience, measured by a yes-no item of “Have you ever used brand X”, was 100% for 58% respectively for the two purpose brands used in the study, namely Google and Apple iPod. The brand usage experience for the relatively generic brands was measured as 59% and 30% for MSN Search and Excite respectively in the Search Engine category, and 7% and 6% for Samsung Yepp and Creative Zen respectively in the Portable Digital Media Players category. Their current usage rates were 97% and 60% for Search Engines and Portable Digital Media Players respectively. Therefore, the respondents were a relevant segment for the study because they were a major consumer segment for the selected products.

The respondents had a larger number of females wherein 57% of the respondents in the survey were female while 43% were male. An overwhelming 58% of the respondents had ages between 20-24 years, 26% between 25-29 years, 3% between 30-34 years, 2% between 35-40% and 11% of the respondents were above 40 years in age. The fact that 84% of the respondents have ages between 20-29 years is because the sample comprised of University students.

The overall response rate of the questionnaires totalled to 136 respondents. Despite random allocation of the questionnaires, there was a discrepancy in the number of questionnaires answered for each brand. The largest number of questionnaires (26) was filled for Google and iPod, while the lowest number (16) was filled for Excite. This was perhaps due to the low brand awareness levels of some of the generic brands. The respondents were reduced to a total of 15 respondents per brand, such that the total respondents amounted to 90 for the six brands. This was done in order to achieve a balance in the data. A random process of selection of responses was used for this purpose.

3.3. Measures

The questionnaire consisted of items related to the dimensions of brand equity (Aaker, 1991, 1996; Keller, 1993), overall brand equity, and items related to purchase intentions, product category involvement and attitudes towards the brand (Yoo et al, 2000, 2001). Some questions related to demographic information of the respondents were included at the end of the questionnaire. The brand equity items were evaluated with a five-point Likert scale with anchors of 1="strongly disagree" and 5="strongly agree".

The measures were generated on the basis of items used in the relevant literature and the definitions established in this study. In line with existing literature (Yoo et al, 2001), product category and brand experiences were measured in the screening questionnaire with simple yes or no items. The item measuring product category usage was "Have you ever used any brand of product category X?"; for brand usage experience, "Have you ever used brand X?"; and for current usage, "Do you currently use any brand of product category X?". Next, brand equity items were measured in the main questionnaire. Subsequently, brand purchase intention, attitude toward the brand, and product category involvement were measured. Purchase intention was measured as "I would like to buy X" and "I intend to purchase X", with the use of a five-point scale. Brand attitude was measured with three five-item scales of "very bad/very good", "very nice/very awful", and "extremely likeable/extremely unlikeable". Product category involvement was measured with four five-

point items as “I am very involved with product category X”, “I use product category X very often”, “I am an expert user of product category X”, and “I am not interested in product category X”. The questions in the questionnaire were formulated in such an order that brand equity items were asked before the items regarding attitude and purchase intention. This was in effect to reduce the halo effect. The halo effect is the error in human perception and judgement of any artefact based on some other, often non-related, property of the artefact (Murphy et al, 1993).

3.3.1. Perceived quality

The three perceived quality items were designed by Yoo et al (2000, 2001), which in turn are based on the work of Dodds et al (1991). These items were designed to make an assessment of the consumer’s subjective judgement of a brand’s overall excellence instead of individual elements relating to quality (Table 2).

3.3.2. Brand loyalty

The first three items of brand loyalty (Table 2) have been designed by Yoo et al (2000, 2001) in order to capture the overall attitudinal loyalty to a specific brand instead of measuring behavioural loyalty. These brand loyalty items are based on previous research (Beatty et al, 1988) and were adopted and modified by Yoo et al (2000, 2001). The last item, “I recommend X to others (friends etc.)”, has been added for the purpose of this study to explore the strength of the connection between brand loyalty and WoM recommendation (Table 2).

3.3.3. Brand awareness/associations

Brand awareness was measured simply as brand recognition, rather than brand recall. The items designed by Yoo et al (2000, 2001) have been used, which are based on existing literature (Srull, 1984; Rossiter et al, 1987). Brand associations are a richer concept than mere brand awareness, and the items designed by Yoo et al (2000, 2001) capture the overall perceptual strength of associations with the brand. The items are based on the definition of brand association proposed by Keller (1993).

3.3.4. Overall Brand equity (OBE)

OBE was measured with a four-item Likert scale developed by Yoo et al (2000, 2001), which is in line with the definition of brand equity as proposed by Keller (1993). The four items entail the difference in consumer choice between the focal brand and an unbranded product, given the same level of product features overall (Ballester et al, 2005). Therefore, the only point of difference available to the respondents was the brand name. The incremental value caused to the focal brand, due to the brand name, can be assessed through the four OBE items (Table 2).

Table 2: Constructs measurement summary

Item description	
12-item MBE(Multidimensional brand equity)	
Perceived quality	
QL1	The likely quality of X ^a is extremely high
QL2	The likelihood that X would be functional is very high
QL3	The likelihood that X is reliable is very high
Brand loyalty	
LO1	I consider myself to be loyal to X
LO2	X would be my first choice
LO3	I will not buy other brands if X is available at the store
LO4	I recommend X to others (friends etc.)
Brand awareness/associations	
AW1	I can recognise X among other competing brands
AW2	I am aware of X
AS1	Some characteristics of X come to my mind quickly
AS2	I can quickly recall the symbol or logo of X
AS3	I have difficulty in imagining X in my mind (r) ^b
Four-item OBE (Overall Brand equity)	

OBE1	It makes sense to buy X instead of any other brand, even if they are the same
OBE2	Even if another brand has the same features as X, I would prefer to buy X
OBE3	If there is another brand as good as X, I prefer to buy X
OBE4	If another brand is not different from X in any way, it seems smarter to purchase X
^a X indicates a brand name ^b (r) indicates reverse scoring	

3.4. Reliability check

In a pilot study conducted with a total of 15 respondents, Cronbach's measure reliability coefficient was first calculated for the items of each construct. Although most items in the constructs were based on previous research (Yoo et al, 2000, 2001; Ballester et al, 2005) thereby implying their reliability, it was important to calculate Cronbach's alpha coefficient as an indicator of internal consistency (Pallant, 2005), as the items had been tailor-made for this particular study. Cronbach's alpha measures of the items in the constructs are shown below.

Table 3: Reliability Statistics

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Perceived Quality	.768	3
Brand loyalty	.819	4
Brand awareness/associations	.723	5
Overall Brand equity	.829	4
Purchase intentions	.964	2
Product Category Involvement	.720	4
Attitude towards the brand	.847	3

The Cronbach alpha coefficient is above .7 for all the constructs which means that the scales have internal consistency and are therefore reliable.

The next chapter discusses the results of the data collected using in-depth interviews and on-line survey questionnaires. The on-line questionnaires was based on literature and comprised of the measures discussed in this chapter.

4. Results & Analysis

4.1. Interviews

The in-depth interviews revealed that Google and iPod, the two purpose brands in the study, enjoyed top-of-mind recall. Google enjoyed top-of-mind recall in all the interviews conducted for Search Engines category, while the top-of-mind recall for iPod was approximately 90%. This was due to the fact that the users of Search Engines used Google for the purpose of finding information 99% of the time, while some users of Digital Portable Media Players remembered the brand they were using before they recalled the Apple iPod.

The findings revealed that both Google and iPod are brands, which are mostly closely associated with the jobs for which consumers hire the brands, compared to the other brands in the study. Yahoo was found to be the only competitor for Google but the consumers were not satisfied with Yahoo Search. Even users of other brands of Digital Media Players recognised iPod as the best brand in the category. The most liked attributes of Google included its simple and usable interface, the quality of search, ability to give knowledge rather than information, and the simple process of search engine optimisation. The most liked attributes of iPod included its attractive and compact design which is best suited for carrying music on-the-go, usability, chaos-free interface with iTunes, and that iPod is 'cool'. Since people carry Digital Media Players mostly while commuting, the emotional function of iPod as a fashion symbol, along with its distinctive functional attributes, makes it the top choice in the category.

WoM communication played the most important role in case of both the purpose brands, as brand knowledge, favourable brand associations, and purchase decisions regarding both brands were based on the basis of trust provided by the recommendation of friends and opinion leaders. While 40% of the participants recalled iPod's advertising, in the form of hoardings at train stations and popular roads in London, as distinctive and eye-catching, it was the WoM communication that played the most significant role in building positive and strong brand

associations. Approximately 30% of participants in the Digital Media Players category visited Apple's corporate website frequently to get information about new products, which contributed to their introduction to the iPod. This illustrates the power of Apple's brand community (Muniz et al, 2001) thereby inspiring Apple aficionados to engage with the Company and other people about the brand. About 30% of the participants noted that MSN Search and Yahoo advertise extensively on the Internet but according to them Google is "so good for searching" that it does not need to advertise. All the participants in both product categories affirmed that they would recommend the iPod and Google to others, as they are the strongest brands in their minds in the respective product categories.

The findings of the in-depth interviews reveal that the selected purpose brands in the study, Google and iPod, are indeed tightly associated with the jobs for which the customers hire these brands (Christensen et al, 2005). Moreover, WoM communication played the most important role in building strong positive brand associations to the purpose brands. Advertising and the corporate website of Apple did play a role in the favourable associations towards the iPod, but Google is built entirely on WoM communication.

4.2. Survey

The means of the items falling in their respective constructs of perceived quality, brand loyalty, brand awareness/associations and overall brand equity (OBE) (Table 2) were calculated. The means of purchase intentions, product category involvement and attitude towards the brand (Section 3.3) were also calculated. Calculating the mean scores of the constructs is statistically correct as the Cronbach alpha coefficients of the constructs (Table 3) show that the scale is reliable. Subsequently, an analysis of clustered bar charts of the means across product categories was conducted. The clustered bar chart of perceived quality (PQ) across the two product categories (Figure 2) shows that Google has the highest PQ followed by iPod. Creative Zen, the relatively more generic brand, has relatively higher level of PQ compared to other generic brand, but its PQ is still lower than the two purpose brands.

Figure 2: PQ across Product Categories

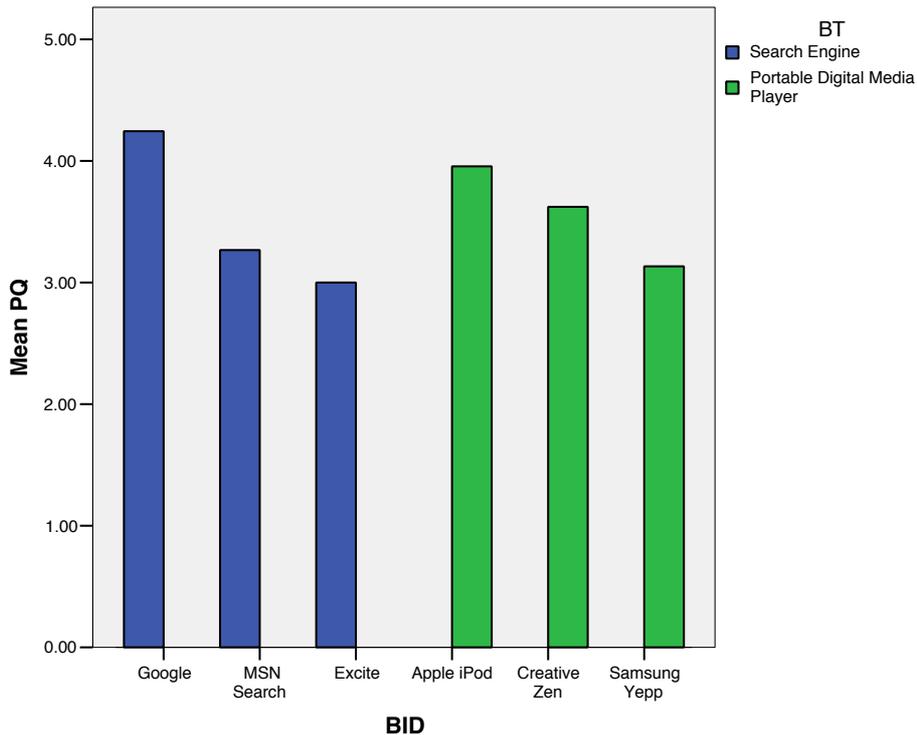


Figure 3 shows that Google and iPod have the highest brand loyalty (BL). The BL of Google is notably higher compared to that of iPod. The relatively generic brands enjoy lower levels of BL compared to the two purpose brands. However, the BL for the two generic brands in the Portable Digtible Media Player category is higher than the BL for the two generic brands in the Search Engine category.

The brand awareness/associations (BAA) across the two product categories (Figure 4) show that Google and iPod have high levels of BAA compared to the relatively generic brands. MSN Search does enjoy a relatively higher level of BAA among the generic brands, but it is still lower than the levels enjoyed by purpose brands.

The overall brand equity (OBE) for Google is the highest, which is followed by the other purpose brand, Apple iPod (Figure 5). Among the generic brands, Samsung Yepp enjoys relatively higher OBE, but its mean score of OBE is lesser than the mean scores of the two purpose brands.

Figure 3: BL across Product Categories

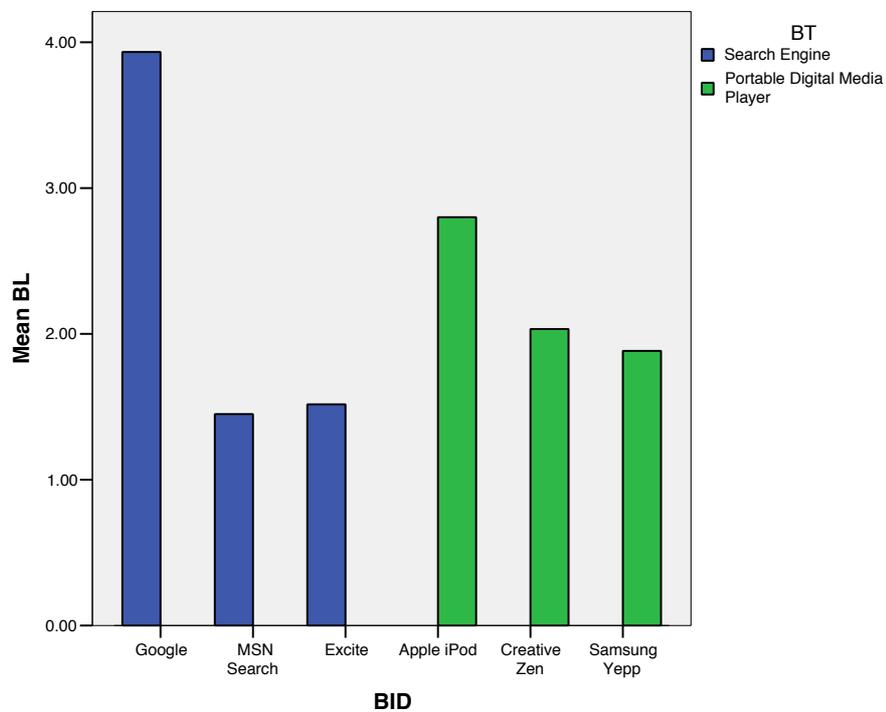


Figure 4: BAA across Product Categories

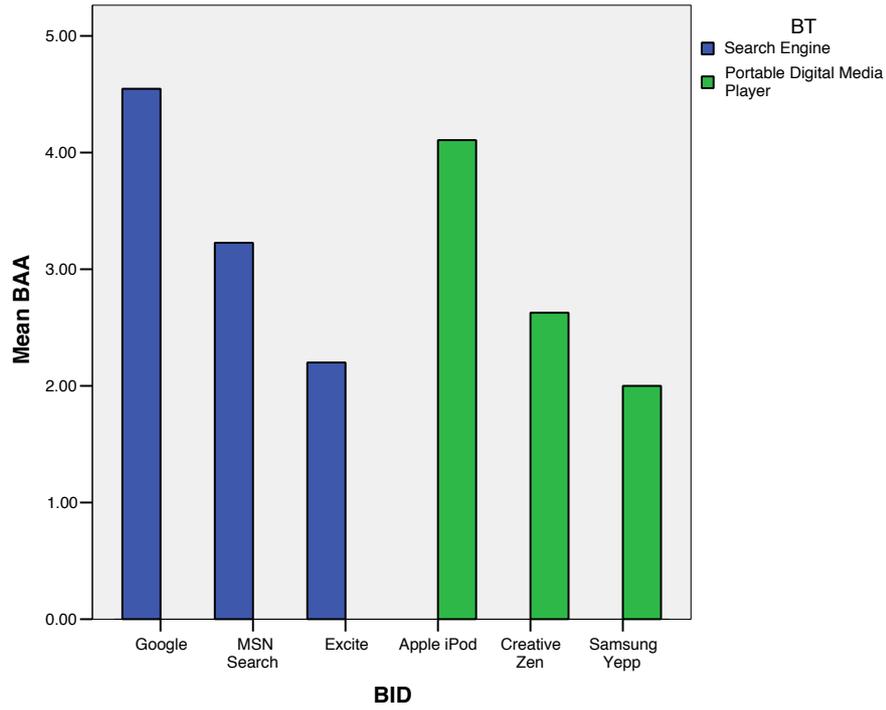
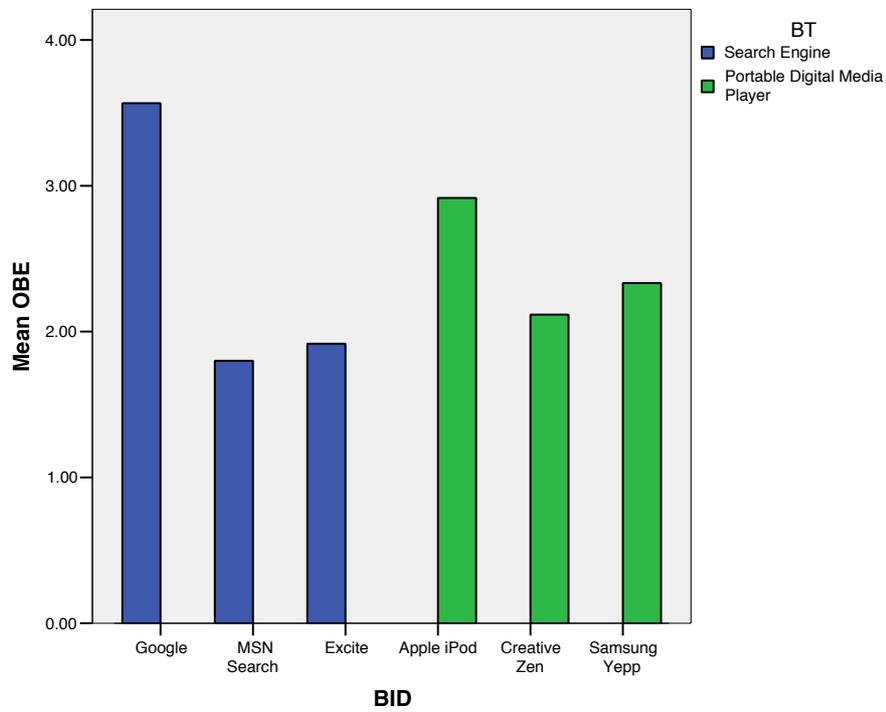


Figure 5: OBE across Product Categories



It is seen that the purchase intentions (PI) for Google and iPod are much higher than those for the relatively more generic brands, as revealed by the plotting of the mean scores in the chart (Figure 6).

The product category involvement (PCI) is much higher in case of Search Engines, as compared to Portable Digital Media Players (Figure 7).

It is seen that Google enjoyed the most positive attitude towards the brand from the respondents, followed by the iPod (Figure 8). The relatively more generic brands enjoy positive attitudes too but the two purpose brands have higher mean scores.

Figure 6: PI across Product Categories

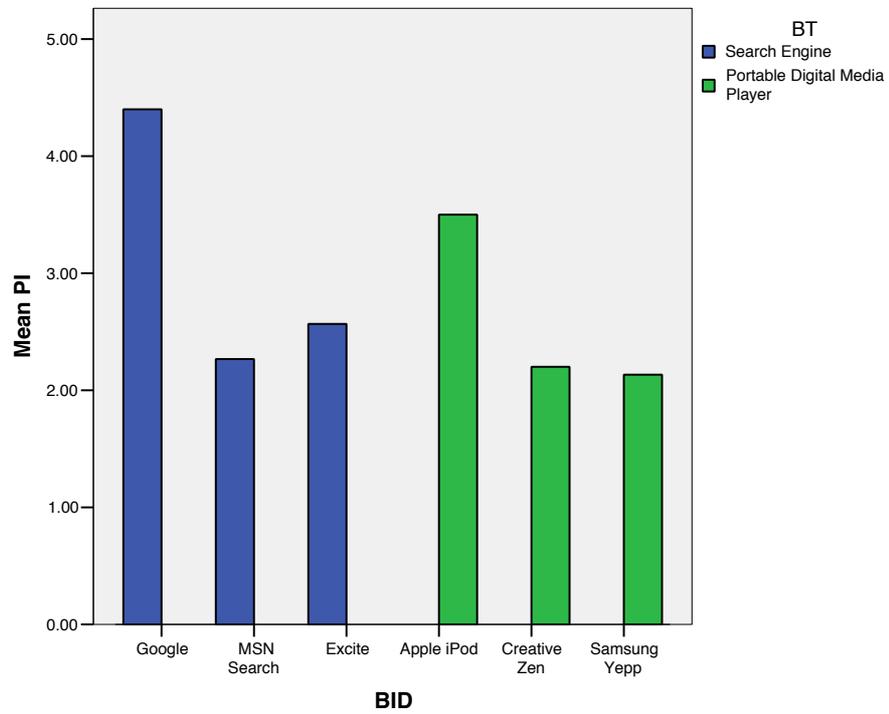


Figure 7: PCI across Product Categories

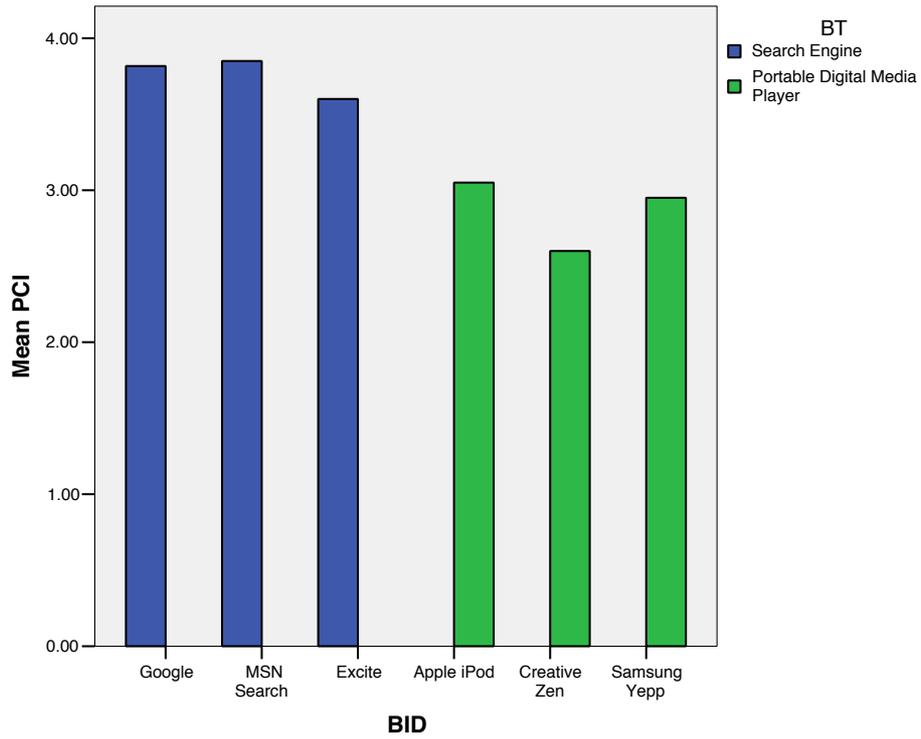
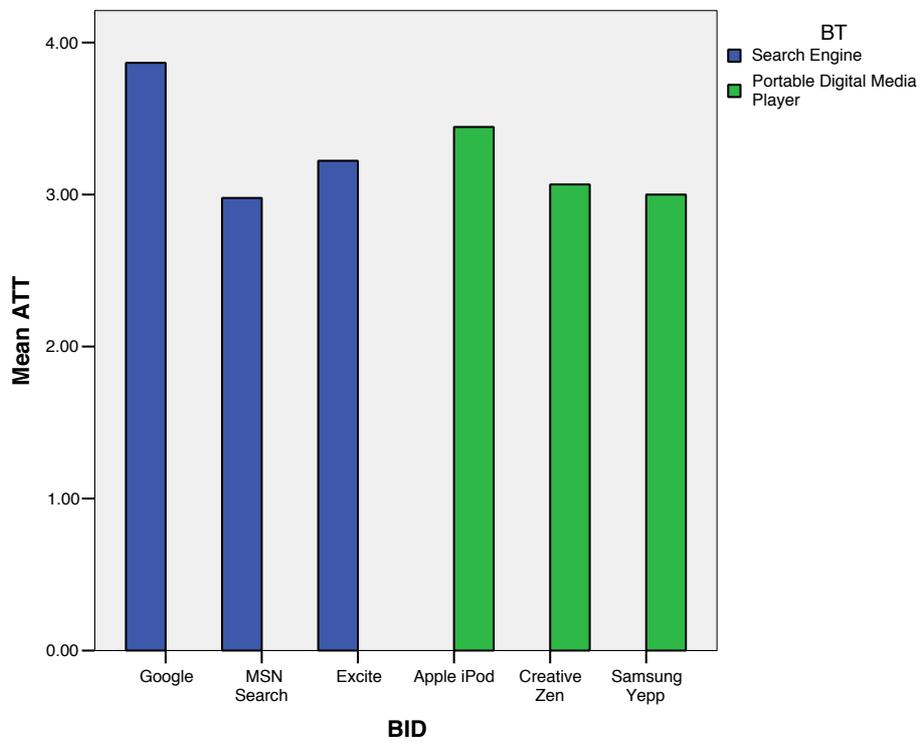


Figure 8: Attitude towards Brand across Product Categories



One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

The analysis of variance (ANOVA) has been used as the study entails a comparison of the mean scores of more than two groups. A one-way between-groups analysis of variance was conducted to explore the effect of brands on levels of Perceived Quality (PQ), Brand Loyalty (BL), Brand Awareness/Associations (BAA), and Overall Brand Equity (OBE). ANOVA was conducted to explore the effect of brands on Purchase Intentions (PI) and Attitude towards the brand (ATT) also. The ANOVA for Search Engines (SE) is conducted followed by the same for Portable Digital Media Players (PDMP).

Table 4: ANOVA (SE – PQ)

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	12.879	2	6.440	9.244	.000
Within Groups	29.259	42	.697		
Total	42.138	44			

Post Hoc Tests

Multiple Comparisons; Dependent Variable: PQ; Tukey HSD

(I) BID	(J) BID	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Google	Excite	1.24444(*)	.30477	.001	.5040	1.9849
	MSN Search	.97778(*)	.30477	.007	.2373	1.7182
Excite	Google	-1.24444(*)	.30477	.001	-1.9849	-.5040
	MSN Search	-.26667	.30477	.659	-1.0071	.4738
MSN Search	Google	-.97778(*)	.30477	.007	-1.7182	-.2373
	Excite	.26667	.30477	.659	-.4738	1.0071

* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

There was a statistically significant difference at the $p < .05$ level for the three brands [$F(2,42)=9.2, p < .001$]. Post-hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean score for Google was significantly different from MSN Search. Also, the mean score for Google was significantly different from Excite. MSN Search did not differ significantly from Excite (Table 4).

Table 5: ANOVA (BL – SE)

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
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Between Groups	60.058	2	30.029	50.669	.000
Within Groups	24.892	42	.593		
Total	84.950	44			

Post Hoc Tests

Multiple Comparisons; Dependent Variable: BL; Tukey HSD

(I) BID	(J) BID	M e a n Difference (I-J)	S t d . Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					L o w e r Bound	U p p e r Bound
Google	Excite	2.41667(*)	.28111	.000	1.7337	3.0996
	M S N Search	2.48333(*)	.28111	.000	1.8004	3.1663
Excite	Google	-2.41667(*)	.28111	.000	-3.0996	-1.7337
	M S N Search	.06667	.28111	.969	-.6163	.7496
M S N Search	Google	-2.48333(*)	.28111	.000	-3.1663	-1.8004
	Excite	-.06667	.28111	.969	-.7496	.6163

* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

There was a statistically significant difference at the $p < .05$ level for the three brands [$F(2,42)=50.7, p < .001$]. Post-hoc comparisons indicated that the mean score for Google was significantly different from MSN Search. The mean score for Google was significantly different from Excite also. MSN Search did not differ significantly from Excite (Table 5).

Table 6: ANOVA (BAA – SE)

	S u m o f Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	41.516	2	20.758	31.376	.000
Within Groups	27.787	42	.662		
Total	69.303	44			

Post Hoc Tests

Multiple Comparisons; Dependent Variable: BAA; Tukey HSD

(I) BID	(J) BID	M e a n Difference (I-J)	S t d . Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	U p p e r Bound
Google	Excite	2.34667(*)	.29700	.000	1.6251	3.0682
	M S N Search	1.32000(*)	.29700	.000	.5984	2.0416
Excite	Google	-2.34667(*)	.29700	.000	-3.0682	-1.6251
	M S N Search	-1.02667(*)	.29700	.004	-1.7482	-.3051
M S N Search	Google	-1.32000(*)	.29700	.000	-2.0416	-.5984
	Excite	1.02667(*)	.29700	.004	.3051	1.7482

* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

There was a statistically significant difference at the $p < .05$ level for the three brands [$F(2,42)=31.4, p < .001$]. Post-hoc test indicated that there was significant difference in the mean score for Google, MSN Search and Excite (Table 6).

There was a statistically significant difference at the $p < .05$ level for the three brands [$F(2,42)=18.8, p < .001$]. Post-hoc test indicated that the mean score for Google was significantly different from MSN Search. The mean score for Google was significantly different from Excite also. However, MSN Search did not differ significantly from Excite (Table 7).

Table 7: ANOVA (OBE – SE)

	S u m o f Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	29.286	2	14.643	18.827	.000
Within Groups	32.667	42	.778		
Total	61.953	44			

Post Hoc Tests

Multiple Comparisons; Dependent Variable: OBE; Tukey HSD

(I) BID	(J) BID	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Google	Excite	1.65000(*)	.32203	.000	.8676	2.4324
	MSN Search	1.76667(*)	.32203	.000	.9843	2.5490
Excite	Google	-1.65000(*)	.32203	.000	-2.4324	-.8676
	MSN Search	.11667	.32203	.930	-.6657	.8990
MSN Search	Google	-1.76667(*)	.32203	.000	-2.5490	-.9843
	Excite	-.11667	.32203	.930	-.8990	.6657

* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

There was a statistically significant difference at the $p < .05$ level for the three brands regarding PI [$F(2,42)=29, p < .001$] and ATT [$F(2,42)=5.5, p = .008$] respectively. Post-hoc test for PI indicated that the mean score for Google was significantly different from MSN Search. The mean score for Google was significantly different from Excite also. However, MSN Search did not differ significantly from Excite. Post-hoc test for ATT indicated that the mean score for Google was significantly different from MSN Search. The mean score for Google did not differ significantly from Excite. The mean score for MSN Search did not differ significantly from Excite also (Table 8).

Table 8: ANOVA (PI & ATT – SE)

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
PI	Between Groups	40.011	2	20.006	29.007	.000
	Within Groups	28.967	42	.690		
	Total	68.978	44			
ATT	Between Groups	6.326	2	3.163	5.488	.008
	Within Groups	24.207	42	.576		

Total	30.533	44			
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Post Hoc Analysis

Multiple Comparisons; Tukey HSD

Dependent Variable	(I) BID	(J) BID	M e a n Difference (I-J)	S t d . Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
PI	Google	Excite	1.83333(*)	.30325	.000	1.0966	2.5701
		M S N Search	2.13333(*)	.30325	.000	1.3966	2.8701
	Excite	Google	-1.83333(*)	.30325	.000	-2.5701	-1.0966
		M S N Search	.30000	.30325	.588	-.4367	1.0367
	M S N Search	Google	-2.13333(*)	.30325	.000	-2.8701	-1.3966
		Excite	-.30000	.30325	.588	-1.0367	.4367
ATT	Google	Excite	.64444	.27722	.063	-.0291	1.3179
		M S N Search	.88889(*)	.27722	.007	.2154	1.5624
	Excite	Google	-.64444	.27722	.063	-1.3179	.0291
		M S N Search	.24444	.27722	.655	-.4291	.9179
	M S N Search	Google	-.88889(*)	.27722	.007	-1.5624	-.2154
		Excite	-.24444	.27722	.655	-.9179	.4291

* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

The ANOVA for the PDMP category is conducted in the following section.

There was a statistically significant difference at the $p < .05$ level for the three brands [$F(2,42)=7.3$, $p=.002$]. Post-hoc comparison indicated that the mean score for iPod was significantly different from Samsung Yepp. Apple iPod did not differ

significantly from Creative Zen. Creative Zen did not differ significantly from Samsung Yepp (Table 9).

Table 9: ANOVA (PQ – PDMP)

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	5.131	2	2.565	7.288	.002
Within Groups	14.785	42	.352		
Total	19.916	44			

Post Hoc Tests

Multiple Comparisons; Dependent Variable: PQ; Tukey HSD

(I) BID	(J) BID	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Apple iPod	Samsung Yepp	.82222(*)	.21665	.001	.2959	1.3486
	Creative Zen	.33333	.21665	.284	-.1930	.8597
Samsung Yepp	Apple iPod	-.82222(*)	.21665	.001	-1.3486	-.2959
	Creative Zen	-.48889	.21665	.073	-1.0152	.0375
Creative Zen	Apple iPod	-.33333	.21665	.284	-.8597	.1930
	Samsung Yepp	.48889	.21665	.073	-.0375	1.0152

* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

There was a statistically significant difference at the $p < .05$ level for the three brands [$F(2,42)=4, p=.026$]. Post-hoc comparison indicated that the mean score for iPod was significantly different from Samsung Yepp. Apple iPod did not differ

significantly from Creative Zen. Creative Zen did not differ significantly from Samsung Yepp (Table 10).

Table 10: ANOVA (BL – PDMP)

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	7.253	2	3.626	4.009	.026
Within Groups	37.992	42	.905		
Total	45.244	44			

Post Hoc Tests

Multiple Comparisons; Dependent Variable: BL; Tukey HSD

(I) BID	(J) BID	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Apple iPod	Samsung Yepp	.91667(*)	.34729	.031	.0729	1.7604
	Creative Zen	.76667	.34729	.082	-.0771	1.6104
Samsung Yepp	Apple iPod	-.91667(*)	.34729	.031	-1.7604	-.0729
	Creative Zen	-.15000	.34729	.903	-.9937	.6937
Creative Zen	Apple iPod	-.76667	.34729	.082	-1.6104	.0771
	Samsung Yepp	.15000	.34729	.903	-.6937	.9937

* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

There was a statistically significant difference at the $p < .05$ level for the three brands [$F(2,42)=16.2, p < .001$]. Post-hoc comparison indicated that the mean score for iPod was significantly different from Samsung Yepp. The mean score for iPod was significantly different from Creative Zen also. Samsung Yepp did not differ significantly from Creative Zen (Table 11).

Table 11: ANOVA (BAA – PDMP)

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	35.106	2	17.553	16.203	.000
Within Groups	45.499	42	1.083		
Total	80.604	44			

Post Hoc Tests

Multiple Comparisons; Dependent Variable: BAA; Tukey HSD

(I) BID	(J) BID	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Apple iPod	Samsung Yepp	2.10667(*)	.38005	.000	1.1833	3.0300
	Creative Zen	1.48000(*)	.38005	.001	.5567	2.4033
Samsung Yepp	Apple iPod	-2.10667(*)	.38005	.000	-3.0300	-1.1833
	Creative Zen	-.62667	.38005	.237	-1.5500	.2967
Creative Zen	Apple iPod	-1.48000(*)	.38005	.001	-2.4033	-.5567
	Samsung Yepp	.62667	.38005	.237	-.2967	1.5500

* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

Table 12: ANOVA (OBE – PDMP)

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	5.136	2	2.568	2.402	.103
Within Groups	44.900	42	1.069		
Total	50.036	44			

Post Hoc Tests

Multiple Comparisons

Dependent Variable: OBE

Tukey HSD

(I) BID	(J) BID	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Apple iPod	Samsung Yepp	.58333	.37754	.281	-.3339	1.5006
	Creative Zen	.80000	.37754	.098	-.1172	1.7172
Samsung Yepp	Apple iPod	-.58333	.37754	.281	-1.5006	.3339
	Creative Zen	.21667	.37754	.835	-.7006	1.1339
Creative Zen	Apple iPod	-.80000	.37754	.098	-1.7172	.1172
	Samsung Yepp	-.21667	.37754	.835	-1.1339	.7006

There was no statistically significant difference at the $p < .05$ level for the three brands (Table 12).

There was a statistically significant difference at the $p < .05$ level for the three brands regarding PI [$F(2,42)=8.3$, $p=.001$]. There was no statistically significant difference for the three brands regarding ATT. Post-hoc comparison for PI indicated that the mean score for iPod was significantly different from Samsung Yepp. The mean score for iPod was significantly different from Creative Zen also. Samsung Yepp did not differ significantly from Creative Zen (Table 13).

Table 13: ANOVA (PI & ATT – PDMP)

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
PI	Between Groups	17.811	2	8.906	8.287	.001
	Within Groups	45.133	42	1.075		
	Total	62.944	44			
ATT	Between Groups	1.723	2	.862	2.205	.123
	Within Groups	16.415	42	.391		
	Total	18.138	44			

Post Hoc Tests

Multiple Comparisons; Tukey HSD

Dependent Variable	(I) BID	(J) BID	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
PI	A p p l e iPod	Samsung Yepp	1.36667(*)	.37852	.002	.4470	2.2863
		Creative Zen	1.30000(*)	.37852	.004	.3804	2.2196
	Samsung Yepp	A p p l e iPod	-1.36667(*)	.37852	.002	-2.2863	-.4470
		Creative Zen	-.06667	.37852	.983	-.9863	.8530
	Creative Zen	A p p l e iPod	-1.30000(*)	.37852	.004	-2.2196	-.3804
		Samsung Yepp	.06667	.37852	.983	-.8530	.9863
ATT	A p p l e iPod	Samsung Yepp	.44444	.22828	.138	-.1102	.9990
		Creative Zen	.37778	.22828	.234	-.1768	.9324
	Samsung Yepp	A p p l e iPod	-.44444	.22828	.138	-.9990	.1102
		Creative Zen	-.06667	.22828	.954	-.6213	.4879

	Creative Zen	A p p l e iPod	-.37778	.22828	.234	-.9324	.1768
		Samsung Yepp	.06667	.22828	.954	-.4879	.6213

* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

5. Conclusion

The findings of the in-depth interviews conducted at the initial explorative stage of the study showed that the selected purpose brands of Google and Apple iPod were indeed closely tied to the jobs for which consumers hired these brands. Both these brands were built primarily on WoM communication, while Apple's corporate website and distinctive advertising played a role in positive brand associations and reinforcement. The findings of the quantitative online surveys discerned the differences in the influence of purpose brands compared to relatively generic brands on brand equity.

An analysis of the clustered bar charts revealed that Google and Apple iPod purpose brands had higher mean scores for the brand equity dimensions of perceived quality (PQ), brand loyalty (BL), and brand awareness/associations (BAA). The mean score of overall brand equity (OBE) (Yoo et al. 2000) was also higher for the two purpose brands compared to the relatively more generic brands. Samsung Yepp enjoyed relatively high OBE, compared to other generic brands, but that did not manifest into statistically significant differences between Samsung and competing brands. It was noted that while to an extent all of the selected brands enjoyed positive attitudes, it was Google that had the highest mean score, followed by Apple iPod. Also, Google had the highest mean score for purchase intentions, followed by the other purpose brand, Apple iPod. Notably, Search Engines (SE) had higher product category involvement compared to Portable Digital Media Players (PDMP). Google had the highest mean scores overall for all the studied constructs, followed by Apple iPod.

ANOVA and post-hoc comparison test showed that the mean score for Google was significantly different from both Excite and MSN Search in terms of PQ. There was a significant difference in the mean score of iPod and Samsung Yepp in terms of PQ. The ANOVA results for BL for both product categories were the same as those for PQ. Since brand loyalty refers to the tendency to be loyal to a brand, which is demonstrated by the intention to buy the brand as a primary choice (Oliver, 1997), it is seen that there is a significant difference in the mean score for iPod, in terms of PI, from both Samsung Yepp and Creative Zen.

For Brand Awareness/Associations (BAA), there was a significant difference in the mean score of Google, MSN Search and Excite. It is noteworthy that the mean score of Excite was the lowest amongst the three brands. The mean score of iPod was significantly different from Samsung Yepp and Creative Zen in terms of BAA. Brand awareness and associations have a positive relationship with brand equity as they convey quality and commitment, which lead to a positive consumer behaviour towards the brand (Yoo et al, 2000), which is demonstrated through the difference in PI for iPod and the two relatively generic brands. The mean score of Google for overall brand equity was significantly different from both Excite and MSN Search, while the difference in mean score for the same was not statistically significant in case of the PDMP category. Lastly, there was a significant difference in the mean score of Google, for PI, from both Excite and MSN Search. Similarly, a significant difference in the mean score for PI was noted for iPod from both Samsung Yepp and Creative Zen. In terms of attitude towards the brand (ATT), there was a significant difference in the mean score for Google from MSN Search. There was no significant difference in the mean scores for ATT in the PDMP category.

In conclusion, the mean scores of Google were significantly different from MSN Search and Excite in all the three core dimensions of brand equity, and PI. This is in line with the existing literature on brand equity wherein high perceived quality of a brand would make the consumers select the particular brand over other competing brands (Zeithaml, 1988; Aaker, 1991). It is seen that purpose brands of Google and Apple iPod had relatively higher mean scores in the clustered bar chart analysis, and enjoyed significant differences in mean scores in ANOVA also. Therefore, the two purpose brands enjoy significant differences from their relatively more generic counterparts in terms of the three dimensions of brand equity, and also overall brand equity in case of Google. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a difference in the influence of purpose brands, compared to relatively more generic brands, on brand equity, and the influence seems to be positive.

6. Discussion

Google and iPod as purpose brands enjoy higher brand equity compared to the relatively generic brands. It is interesting to note that the difference in the product categories has yielded differences in the overall results for the two purpose brands. Search engines (SE) have become more of a commodity today since a lot of people use them and they are essentially free of cost. Portable Digital Media Players (PDMP), on the other hand, are more of a luxury and can border onto a high involvement brand. This is exemplified by the usage rates of the two product categories, which was 97% for SE and 60% for PDMP. To a certain extent, this phenomenon explains why Google has differences from the two generic brands across all brand equity dimensions, and OBE, while iPod does not have significant differences from Creative Zen in terms of PQ and BL. No significant difference in OBE for the PDMP category signifies that consumers pay attention to features and functionality when it comes to decisions regarding luxury brands which border on to high involvement products.

Notably, no significant differences in mean scores were found for MSN Search and Excite for PQ, BL and OBE. The only significant difference for MSN Search and Excite was in the case of BAA, wherein the mean score of Excite was quite low compared to that of MSN Search and Google. Interestingly, Excite has been there since before Google and MSN Search came onto the horizon, and it was a popular brand (Aaker et al, 2004; www.wikipedia.org). However, Excite has not been able to maintain its brand equity in the face of increasing competition, due to the dilution of its search job. There were no significant differences in mean scores for Creative Zen from Samsung Yepp in all the dimensions of brand equity. Despite the advertising of Creative Zen and the corporate brand name of Samsung (www.interbrand.com), Apple iPod was clearly positively different in the minds of the consumers (Ambler, 1997; Keller, 2003) from the two generic brands.

Both the qualitative and quantitative research findings suggest that purpose brands positively influence brand equity (Aaker, 1991, 1996). Purpose brands create real differences in the minds of the consumers, which are created and reinforced through

advertising and WoM communication (Silverman, 1997; Fill, 2005; Christensen et al, 2005, Schupak, 2006). Interestingly, Apple iPod meets all the functional, social and emotional dimensions of the job for which consumers hire the brand (Christensen et al, 2005). As one of the respondents in an in-depth interview replied,

“iPod is sexy! It is easy to use – its not just about listening to music but even about transferring the music from the computer and recharging the media player. It’s just easy! Plug it in the computer and that’s it!”

The purpose brand approach has significant implications for marketing communications. Job-specific brands create meaningful differentiation in the minds of the consumers, which could imply that marketers may need to spend less on overall advertising, other than the occasions of creating brand awareness when the product is launched and for the purpose of reminder advertising. Lesser advertising expenditure means that the profitability of the companies would tend to improve, with positive growth effects. The power of positive WoM may reach newer levels, as purpose branding, when successfully applied should result in satisfied and loyal customers who may play the role of opinion leaders (Reichheld, 1996). The positive effects of brand communities (Muniz et al, 2001) exist for the iPod, as seen in the in-depth interviews. Apple aficionados indeed have a strong attachment with the brand, which is exemplified by their high level of interaction with the brand and willingness to recommend the brands to others. The purpose branding approach should be able to create a strong ‘pull’ for a brand and in this event, Internet marketing becomes an ever more powerful tool for information dissemination with its inherent lower costs.

It is worth noting that the study has some limitations, as is the case with all exploratory research. The selected brands and the selected sample may not be the most appropriate combination possible. The brand selection needs to be refined to enable selection of more combinations of purpose brands and relatively generic brands. The findings could further be improved as more reliable scales for measuring brand equity are formalised. These modifications to the research design would require more resources, including a larger sample, which would ideally include more than just student samples.

In summary, the study suggests that there is a clear difference in the influence of purpose brands, compared to relatively generic brands, on brand equity. It is safe to say that purpose brands lead to higher brand equity when compared to relatively generic brands.

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