

## **Brand Equity of Movie Theatres in Urban City**

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**Abstract:** *This research attempts to examine the brand equity of movie theatres in the Urban City of Nepal. Descriptive and causal research design was used. Primary cross-section data were collected, and structured questionnaires were distributed for collecting responses. A survey was done in this research. Two-hundred data were collected. PLS-SEM is applied using Smart PLS 3.0. Brand association, brand loyalty, and perceived quality are important factors for building brand equity in movie theatres. No support was found for brand awareness. This research contributes to the movie owners to make the branding strategy for building a powerful movie theatre brand in urban cities.*

**Keywords:** *Brand Equity, Movie Theatres, PLS-SEM.*

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### **I. Introduction**

Companies are dealing with brand management activities to be competitive in the business field. Successful brand management supports companies differently handling their products, and markets remain strong in the marketplace. Keller (2003) posits brand equity as a set differential marketing effect because of depends on the brand knowledge of customers. Brand equity is the contribution of the brand name backed by customers, channel partners, and the company itself efforts. Aaker (1991) argues that brand equity is the source of competitive advantage for the firm. The brand name adds value to the brand, and value is either increased or decreased. In academia, many kinds of research (Aaker, 1991, 1996; Ailawadi, Lehmann, & Neslin, 2003; Keller, 1993; Lassar, Mittal, & Sharma, 1995; Prasad & Dev, 2000; Yoo & Donthun, 2001) were done, and the findings support to this line. Brand equity is the perception of customers, and it is not expressed, so the company should handle the strategic brand management functions to nurture the particular brand (Keller, 2003).

Multiplexes have been credited in recent days for people to watch the movies. It built markets for movie enthusiasts like shopping at the mall and hypermarkets. People got out of the house to watch films. People tend to watch movie in movie theaters rather than at home. The prosperity of customers helps to watch films at the film theatre. So, these days shopping and watching movies are part of the lifestyles of urban people in Nepal.

Though Nepali and Hindi films occur in most cinemas, Kathmandu's theater also hosts fine English films. QFX Jai Nepal, QFX Central, QFX Kumari Cinema, and Major Cinema are the easiest to hit (Cinema, n. d.). There are around 20 cinema halls in Kathmandu Valley (Cinema, n. d.; Now showing n. d.). Movie watching was still a favorite time in theaters with a surrounding sound system and big pictures (Cinema halls, n.d.). Multiplexes will achieve a high-end film experience in Nepal (Cinema halls, n.d.). We were bound to see films in the same old structure as other movie theatres. However, now it is time to shift, and modern film theaters offer premium entertainment and service for years (Cinema halls, n.d.).

### **II. Literature Review**

#### **Brand Equity**

Farquhar (1989) posits that brand equity is the added value to the product. Pappu, Quester, and Cooksey (2005) suggest that brand equity is said to be consumer-based brand equity. Aaker (1991) considers brand equity as a bundle of assets (liabilities) linked to the name and symbol of a brand that adds to or subtracts from the value provided to the consumer by product/service. Brand equity is a multidimensional concept with four major dimensions: brand awareness, brand associations, perceived quality, and brand loyalty (Aaker, 1991).

Brand equity is viewed by Keller (1993) as the distinctive effect of brand knowledge on consumer reaction to the brand's marketing. Brand equity happens when customers are aware of the brand and have some favorable, strong, and unique brand associations in mind (Keller, 1993). Brand equity theory is basically based on Aaker's brand equity model (1991, 1996) and Keller's consumer-based brand equity model (1993). Keller's consumer-

based brand equity highlights, basically, brand awareness and brand image (Keller, 1993). In this research, the author has borrowed Aaker's brand equity model (Aaker, 1991).

### **Brand Awareness**

Aaker (1991) posits brand awareness means customer's strength to know the brand very well among competing brands by their name, terms, symbol, and logo. The consumer knows the status of the brand in its product category. Aaker (1996) explains that brand awareness can be expressed in four levels of awareness: recognition, recall, and top of mind and brand dominance. Brand awareness contributes to building brand equity (Aaker, 1991; Kapferer, 1997; Keller, 1993; Agrawal & Rao, 1996; Krishnan, 1996; Mackay, 2001). Brand awareness increases the brand trust that, in turn, enhances consumer buying (Keller, 2003). Brand recognition is important for newly launched products (Keller, 1993). Brand recall and top of mind is useful for current brands in the markets (Aaker, 1991)

### **Brand Associations**

When a customer is aware of the brand with ease, it is comfortable associating with the brand. So, brand associations follow brand awareness (Aaker, 1991; Washburn & Plank, 2002). Aaker (1991) depicts a customer associate brand of product attributes, benefits from the brand, its use, product class, lifestyle, competitors, and country of origin. It is everything about brand-related thoughts, feelings, experiences, attitudes, and beliefs (Kotler & Keller, 2012). It is anything in the customer's memory about the brand (Aaker, 1991). Keller (1993) posits that brand association is expressed in three ways: favorability, strength, and uniqueness of brand associations that have a differential impact on the customer's mind. Brand associations support brand equity (Farquhar & Herr, 1993; Chen, 1996; Brown & Dacin, 1997; Biel, 1992). Chen (2001) argues that customers may have product associations and organizational associations.

### **Perceived Quality**

Perceived quality means customer's perceptions of the products' total quality and greatness in a particular product category (Zeithaml, 1988). When a brand has been perceived as high quality, it gives benefits to organizations like reasons for purchasing the brand, different from competing brands, offer premium price and increasing trade interest and expands brand line (Aaker, 1991; Szymanski & Henard, 2001; Kayaman & Arasli, 2007; Morton, 1994). Perceived quality stimulates customer to buy the brand (Aaker & Jacobson, 1994) and deliver customer satisfaction (Szymanski & Henard, 2001). Perceived quality may be expressed in terms of color, appearance, design, form, and available product information (Acebron & Dopico, 2000; Bernues, Olaizola & Corcoran, 2003). Perceived quality enhances to brand equity (Aaker, 1991; Feldwick, 1996; Kapferer, 1997; Kamakura & Russel, 1993; Martin & Brown, 1991)

### **Brand Loyalty**

Brand loyalty is an important element of brand equity (Horng, Liu, Chou & Tsai, 2012). Brand loyalty means customers like the product very much and frequently buy them (Bowen & Shoemaker, 1998). It is a kind of customer attachment to the brand (Aaker, 1991). Loyal customers purchase the product more in amount and often do not switch to other brands in any way. Customers have positive word of mouth towards the brand and communicate the brand to others (Aaker, 1991). If a loyal customer base is formed, the company's promotion cost can be reduced. New customers are also to be attracted. Brand loyalty is part of brand equity (Aaker, 1991). Gremler and Brown (1996) argue brand loyalty may be behavior loyalty or cognitive loyalty. Behavior loyalty means consumers repeatedly purchase the brands (Keller, 1998) as it is their first choice (Oliver, 1999). Cognitive loyalty means brand comes first in the customer mind, as the brand already resides in the customer mind (Gremler & Brown, 1996). It is related to brand awareness, as the brand is positioned at the top of mind (Keller, 1998). Yoo and Donthu (2002) depict that brand loyalty contributes largely to a company's profit and value-generating activities. Its relation is to the brand price (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). The price premium is possible because customers are loyal to the brand (Aaker, 1996).

The brand association, perceived quality, and brand loyalty confirmed by Koirala and Shrestha (2015) significantly impacted brand equity. There was no significant positive effect of brand awareness on brand equity. Kazemi, Hoseini, and Alavije (2013) examined lubricant markets, and empirically declared that brand loyalty and perceived quality are the supporting factors for lubricants' brand equity. Nevertheless, brand awareness and associations are not supporting factors for building brand equity in lubricants markets. Jansson and Dass (2012) studies on mobile operators' brand equity and found brand associations, brand loyalty, and brand trust are important factors for customer-based brand equity among the Swedish mobile network. Gordon (2010) examined the brand equity of tourism destination and found that the cognitive image and affective image of tourism destination positively affect destination brand equity. Tong and Hawley (2009) studied the Chinese sportswear market and confirmed that brand association and brand loyalty are powerful brand equity

dimensions. There was poor support found for the dimensions of perceived quality and brand awareness. Atilgan, Aksoy, and Akinci (2005) studied the beverage industry and found brand loyalty as the most influential brand equity element. However, brand awareness and perceived quality did not affect brand equity. Taylor, Hunter, and Lindberg (2005) measured the customer based brand equity in financial services and confirmed brand awareness and brand loyalty are important factors for financial services brand equity.

Gautam and Shrestha (2018) studied brand equity and purchase intention of smartphones in Nepalese markets. Neupane (2018) found that brand awareness and brand association positively connect with brand equity in Nepal's mobile phones. Gautam and Shrestha (2016) studied determinants of brand equity in digital satellite television services as a Dish Home of Nepal case and found that brand association is an important factor for increasing brand loyalty programs. Shrestha (2012) analyzed the dairy milk sector's brand equity in Nepal and found perceived quality, brand associations, and brand loyalty effect on brand equity. Brand awareness does not support to brand equity.

Some studies have been done on brand equity in the Nepalese context (Gautam & Shrestha, 2018; Gautam & Shrestha, 2016; Neupane, 2018; Shrestha, 2012). Brand equity measurement in the movie theatres has not been done yet in Nepal. This research is designed to measure movie theatres' brand equity in the Urban City of Nepal.

The research questions of the study are as follows,

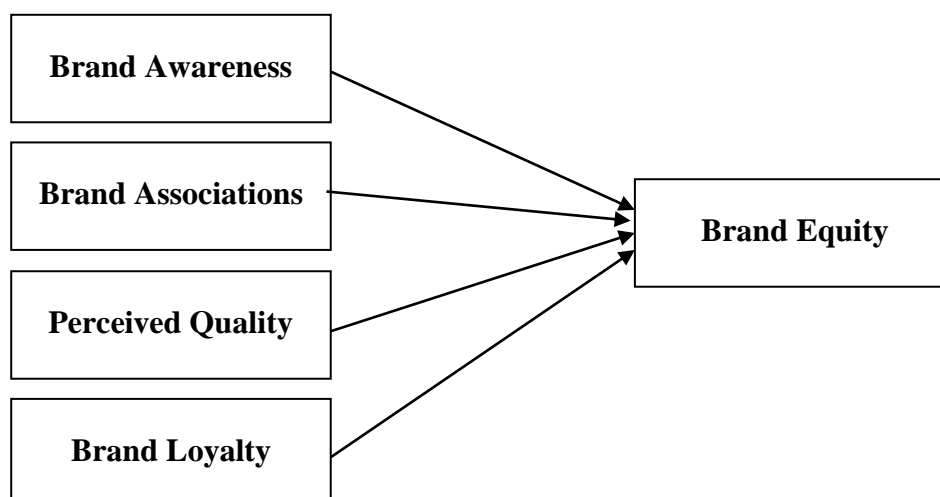
- What is the influence of brand awareness on the brand equity of movie theatre?
- What is the effect of brand associations on the brand equity of movie theatre?
- What is the influence of perceived quality on the brand equity of movie theatre?
- What is the influence of brand loyalty on the brand equity of movie theatre?

The research objectives are as follows,

- To examine the influence of brand awareness on the brand equity of movie theatre.
- To measure the effect of brand associations on the brand equity of movie theatre.
- To analyze the impact of perceived quality on the brand equity of movie theatre.
- To assess the influence of brand loyalty on the brand equity of movie theatre.

This research would be a new layer in the latest literature on multiplex brand equity. The results would greatly assist the marketing/brand manager of movie theatres. Managers should refer the importation to the brand equity characteristics and the corresponding configuration of the marketing programs. It helps to make loyal customer base that always be the company's mates and well-wishers. The research framework shows the variables under study. It shows the interplay between variables. Figure 1 shows the research framework.

**Figure1: Research Framework**



From Figure1, the following hypotheses are proposed,

H1: Brand awareness influence brand equity

H2: Brand associations influence brand equity

H3: Perceived quality influences brand equity.

H4: Brand loyalty influence brand equity.

### **III. Research Methods**

Descriptive and causal research design (Malhotra & Birks, 2006) was used to attain the study's objectives. Descriptive research design seeks to present the collected information in detail (Malhotra & Birks, 2006; Zikmund, 2000). Causal research tests the hypotheses proposed for this research. Research constructs were derived from a review of the literature.

The study population is movie viewers in Kathmandu City, which is the Capital City of Nepal. Two hundred movie viewers were taken as samples for this research, which is enough (Kline, 2011). Eldred (1987) argues that samples between 100 to 200 are sufficient for meaningful analysis. A convenient sampling method was applied for gathering responses (Henry, 1990; Kayaman & Arasli, 2007; Kobayashi, 2011). Cavana, Delahaye, and Sekaran (2000) demonstrate that convenient sampling methods are effective and suitable for response selection.

The analysis is based on cross-sectional primary data. Structured questionnaires were designed for gathering primary cross-sectional data. Research instruments were based on a five-point Likert scale designed by "1=Strongly Disagree" to "5= Strongly Agree".

Data were collected from respondents in different locations of Kathmandu City who have watched a movie for six months recently. Ghauri and Gronhaug (2005) posit that people's actions can hardly be learned without specifically asking questions about the people involved.

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) is used to test the proposed model. SEM technique is used for measurement of validity and reliability of the measures used in the survey. Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM with Smart PLS 3.0 is used for 5000 sub-samples bootstrapping in this research (Hair, Hult, Ringle & Sarstedt, 2013).

Sixty-two percent of respondents were male, and thirty-eight percent of respondents were female. Respondents at the age between 20 to 30 years and 30 to 40 years denoting 58 and 20 percent in total. Fifty-five percent of respondents were bachelor's degree, followed by 35 percent of master's degree respondents.

The research is entirely consumer-based and does not concentrate on income, profitability, and market share. The analysis is also based on the self-administered questionnaire's primary data among the multiplex theatre viewers' chosen. If the findings are to be extended across other multiplexes, future research needs to be performed.

### **IV. Results and Discussion**

#### **Measurement Model**

The measurement model was assessed by examining the internal reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity (Hair, Sarstedt, Ringle, & Mena, 2012). The composite reliability (CR) of each construct should exceed 0.70 to confirm the study's internal reliability (Hair et al., 2012). The average variance extracted (AVE) and item loadings were used to assess the convergent validity (Fornell, & Larcker, 1981). Average variance extracted (AVE) and item loadings of 0.50 or greater show convergent validity (Fornell, & Larcker, 1981).

**Table 1: Evaluation of the Outer or Measurement Model**

<b>Constructs</b>	<b>Items</b>	<b>Loading</b>	<b>CR</b>	<b>AVE</b>
<b>Brand Association</b>	BS5	1.000	1.000	1.000
<b>Brand Awareness</b>	BW4	0.899	0.860	.754
	BW3	0.837		

<b>Brand Equity</b>	BQ1	0.742	0.838	.633
	BQ2	0.807		
	BQ3	0.836		
<b>Brand Loyalty</b>	BL4	1.00	1.000	1.000
<b>Perceived Quality</b>	PQ1	0.770	0.825	0.703
	PQ2	0.902		

Table 1 displays all build loadings of indicator variables exceeding 0.7. AVE is greater than 0.5, so discriminant validity is achieved (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Composite reliability exceeds 0.7, and AVE exceeds 0.6. Composite reliability exceeds AVE. So, converging validity is verified (Fornell, & Larcker, 1981).

Fornell and Larcker Criterion (1981) are also useful to verify discriminating validity. The diagonal line shows the construct's Square root of AVEs, and it must be higher from the inter-item correlation values of rows and columns (Henseler, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2015). Table 2 outlines it.

**Table 2: Discriminant Validity (Fornell and Larcker Criterion)**

	<b>Brand Association</b>	<b>Brand Awareness</b>	<b>Brand Equity</b>	<b>Brand Loyalty</b>	<b>Perceived Quality</b>
<b>Brand Association</b>	<b>1.000</b>				
<b>Brand Awareness</b>	0.346	<b>0.869</b>			
<b>Brand Equity</b>	0.379	0.399	<b>0.796</b>		
<b>Brand Loyalty</b>	0.353	0.399	0.589	<b>1.000</b>	
<b>Perceived Quality</b>	0.164	0.222	0.279	0.067	<b>0.839</b>

Table 2 shows the average square root of variance obtained from each construct in a diagonal line (bold) is greater than its correlation with the other constructs, thus confirming discriminating validity and distinguishing each construct from each other (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The study is appropriate for final assessment (Henseler et al., 2015).

The Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) calculates the ratio of average indicator correlations between constructs, divided by indicator correlations within the same construct (Henseler et al., 2015). In the literature, a maximum 0.9 threshold is proposed (Hair, Hult, Ringle & Sarstedt, 2017; Henseler et al., 2015; Henseler, Ringle & Sinkovics, 2009).

**Table 3: HTMT**

	<b>Brand Association</b>	<b>Brand Awareness</b>	<b>Brand Equity</b>	<b>Brand Loyalty</b>	<b>Perceived Quality</b>
<b>Brand Association</b>					
<b>Brand Awareness</b>	0.413				
<b>Brand Equity</b>	0.451	0.565			
<b>Brand Loyalty</b>	0.353	0.485	0.693		
<b>Perceived Quality</b>	0.189	0.342	0.426	0.184	

Table 3 highlights the HTMT matrix in which values below 0.9 imply adequate discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2017; Henseler et al., 2015; Henseler et al., 2009). All constructs are below the threshold and thus demonstrate sufficient discriminant validity.

**Structural Model**

The structural model evaluates the connection between constructs. A bootstrapping approach was used to evaluate the hypotheses at a significance level of 0.05 ( $p < 0.05$ ). At the 5 percent significance level, the relationships between endogenous and exogenous constructs were evaluated using the path coefficient ( $\beta$ ) and t-statistics values greater than 1.96 (Hair et al., 2012). The  $R^2$  value was used to quantify the exogenous constructs' proportion of the structural model variance (Henseler et al., 2015). Hypothesis testing is described in Table 4.

**Table 4: Path Analysis**

Hypothesis	Beta	t-value	p-value	Decision
<b>H1: Brand Awareness -&gt; Brand Equity</b>	0.114	1.513	0.130	Not Supported
<b>H2: Brand Association -&gt; Brand Equity</b>	0.137	2.536	0.011	Supported
<b>H3: Perceived Quality -&gt; Brand Equity</b>	0.199	3.470	0.001	Supported
<b>H4: Brand Loyalty -&gt; Brand Equity</b>	0.482	7.795	0.000	Supported

Table 4 expresses the relationship between brand association and brand equity ( $t=2.536$ ,  $\beta= .137$  and  $p\text{-value}=0.011$ ), perceived quality and brand equity ( $t=3.470$ ,  $\beta=0.199$  and  $p\text{-value}=0.001$ ) and brand loyalty and brand equity ( $t=7.795$ ,  $\beta=0.482$  and  $p\text{-value} = 0.000$ ) were significant at 5% level of significance. Thus, H2, H3, and H4 were supported. The connection between brand awareness and brand equity ( $t=1.513$ ,  $\beta=0.114$ , and  $p\text{-value}=0.130$ ) was not significant at the 5% level of significance. So H1 is not supported. This research confirmed that brand association, perceived quality, and brand loyalty were important factors in brand equity.

**V. Discussion and Conclusion**

Of the four brand equity dimensions examined in this study, brand association, perceived quality, and brand loyalty significantly influenced the brand equity. This study aims to examine the brand equity of the movie theaters of the Urban City of Nepal. It was found that Brand awareness does not support brand equity. This result is consistent with Koirala and Shrestha (2015), Atilgan et al. (2005); Kazemi et al. (2013); Shrestha (2012); Tong and Hawley (2009). Customers are aware of the movie theatre's location, and their primary focus is on the release of movies in the theatre. It is also partially contrast with Taylor et al. (2005).

This research also proved that perceived quality affects brand equity. The findings are aligned with Kazemi et al. (2013), Koirala and Shrestha (2015), and Shrestha (2012). People have the mindset that multiplex theatres are releasing the new and international movie at the time when releasing globally.

Brand loyalty influence brand equity is consistent with Atilgan et al. (2005); Jansson and Dass (2012); Kazemi et al. (2013); Koirala and Shrestha (2015); Taylor et al. (2005); and Tong and Hawley (2009). People used to watch the movie in multiplexes from time to time or at leisure time. People prefer to watch the movie at the multiplex.

The brand association supports brand equity. This result is consistent with Gordon (2010), Jansson and Dass (2012); Shrestha (2012); Gautam and Shrestha (2016); Koirala and Shrestha (2015); and Tong and Hawley (2009). People have a strong, favorable, and unique connection with the movie theatre. From online ticket booking through the mobile application to in theatre services, multiplexes' services are remarkable to movie viewers.

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