UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

THE IMPACT OF BRANDING STRATEGIES ON BRAND CONSCIOUSNESS OF PAKISTAN'S LOCAL AIRLINES: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF BRAND KNOWLEDGE

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ABSTRACT

The study investigates the role of brand consciousness in the aviation sector of Pakistan, where customers are increasingly inclined to prefer foreign airlines over locally owned carriers. This study examines the impact of brand experience, brand communication, and brand attachment on brand consciousness, with brand knowledge mediating these relationships in the context of Pakistani airlines. The study's framework is underpinned by customer-based brand equity. Customer-based brand equity plays an important role in understanding a brand's marketplace dynamics and can help Pakistani airlines compete with international airlines. This study uses a quantitative methodology to collect data from customers travelling on Pakistani airlines through airports in Pakistan via a survey questionnaire. Furthermore, SmartPLS software is used to assess measurement models and evaluate structural models based on the 350 valid responses obtained. Brand communication, brand attachment, and brand consciousness are being measured as single-layer constructs, whereas brand knowledge and brand experience are being measured as higher-order constructs. Brand knowledge has two dimensions (brand awareness and brand image), and brand experience has four dimensions (sensory, affective, behavioral, and intellectual experiences). The findings reveal that brand experience and brand attachment significantly influence brand knowledge, whereas brand communication does not show a significant relationship with brand knowledge. Furthermore, brand knowledge has a significant impact on brand consciousness, while the direct relationships between brand experience and brand consciousness, brand attachment and brand consciousness, and brand communication and brand consciousness are insignificant. Brand knowledge significantly mediates the relationship between brand experience and brand consciousness, as well as between brand attachment and brand consciousness; however, the mediating effect of brand knowledge between brand communication and brand consciousness is not supported. The study offers insights for locally owned Pakistani airlines to strengthen brand-related strategies, increase their customer share, and enhance their competitive position against foreign carriers. The study is one of the few that investigate the role of brand consciousness and its predictors in the context of Pakistan.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviations

B.com	Brand Communication
BA	Brand Attachment
BC	Brand Consciousness
BE	Brand Experience
BEA	Brand Experience Affective
BEB	Brand Experience Behavioral
BEI	Brand Experience Intellectual
BES	Brand Experience Sensory
BK	Brand Knowledge
BKA	Brand Awareness
BKI	Brand Image
CBBE	customer-based brand equity

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Preamble

This thesis is organized into five chapters, each of which serves a unique purpose in addressing the research questions and objectives of this research. The present chapter, which is Chapter 1, discusses the background of the research starting with the introduction to the study. This chapter also presents the problem statement, where the underlying problem is discussed in brief that needs to the addressed and solved. This chapter further presents the gaps in the existing literature in the shape of contextual gaps, conceptual gaps, and theoretical gaps. After identifying the problem and research gaps, this chapter further outlines the research objectives and research questions that need to be answered. The study's significance is also presented in this chapter, emphasizing the importance of this study. The definitions of important terms, study scope and study limitations are also discussed in this chapter. This chapter concludes with a brief chapter summary.

1.2 Introduction

The airline business is widely recognized as one of the most competitive and growing industries in the entire globe. The airline industry is confronted with a number of obstacles, including changing demand, growing costs, stricter rules regarding the environment, and increased competition from low-cost carriers. In order for airlines to not only make it through this climate, but also thrive in it, they will need to build successful branding strategies that will help them establish a unique identity, strengthen customer loyalty, and boost profits (Vander Schee et al., 2020). When discussing about an organization's branding strategy, it refers to the plans and actions that they do to showcase their brand to customers and position themselves within the industry. Customers are looking for quality and value while also contributing to a better world, and a powerful brand may inspire trust, confidence, and preference among these customers (Ghanadiof, 2021).

After the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the airline industry is experiencing a solid financial recovery on a global scale. In 2021, the industry's losses decreased from nearly United States Dollars (USD) 140 billion in net losses in 2020 to approximately USD 40 billion. This recovery continued in 2022, with estimated net losses decreasing to approximately USD 7 billion. By 2023, the industry is anticipated to earn a modest net profit of USD 4.7 billion, which equates to a 0.6% profit margin or just one dollar per customer on total revenues of approximately USD 780 billion. All regions will experience financial growth in 2022 and 2023, headed primarily by North American airlines. In 2022, however, only North American carriers are projected to have generated a net profit. European and Middle Eastern carriers are projected to join North American airlines in attaining a net profit position by 2023. Despite concerns about industry-wide cost pressures, airlines are largely optimistic about their future profits. Sixty percent of airlines have improved their financial performance over the past three months, and a significant 70 percent anticipate that their profitability will increase over the next year. This optimistic outlook is predominantly driven by the passenger segment, where expectations for improved performance in the coming year are significantly higher than in the cargo segment. The recovery of the industry throughout 2022 has bolstered investors' confidence in the sector. Although airline share prices decreased by nearly 12% in 2022, they outperformed the global share price index, which declined by nearly 20% (IATA, 2023a).

The following graph portrays the airline industry's net profit and EBIT margins. It indicates that the industry was profitable from 2010 to 2019, but the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted growth and caused airlines to incur significant losses. The years 2020, 2021, and 2022 were characterized by losses, but the first quarter of 2023 shows signs of profitability.

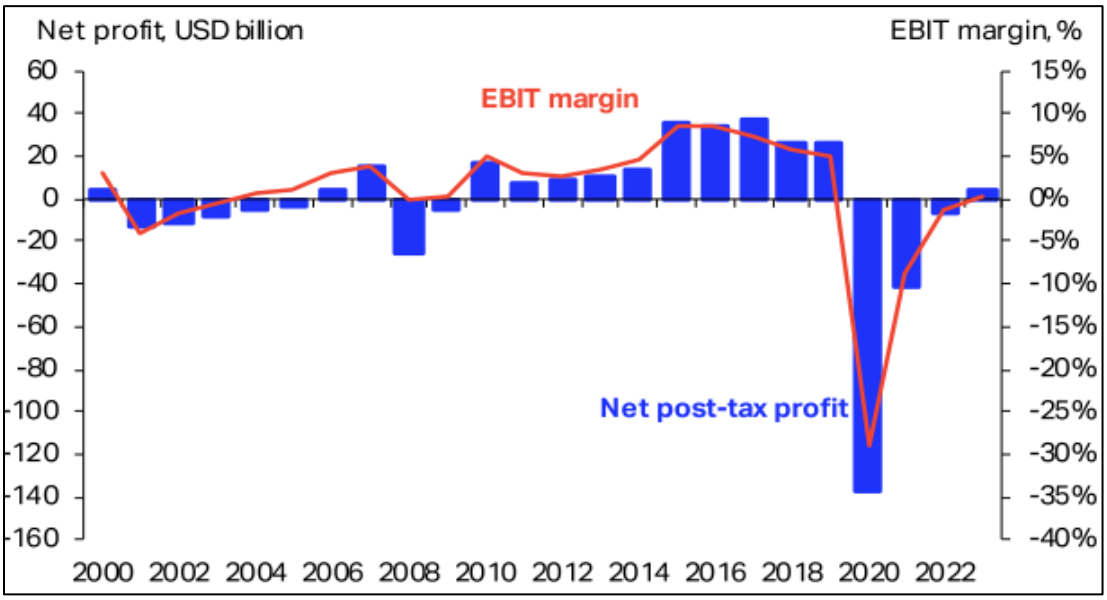

Figure 1.1 Airline Industry Net Profit and EBIT (IATA, 2023a)

Pakistan's economy is significantly impacted by the industry of air transport. Its influence can be measured in a variety of ways, including the number of jobs and dollars spent that are produced by airlines and their supply chain; the flows of trade, tourism, and investment that are the consequence of customers of all airlines that serve the country; and the city pair linkages that makes it possible for these flows to take place. The significance of air travel is brought into sharper focus by each of these factors. The aviation industry in Pakistan is responsible for the maintenance of 500,000 jobs and provides a contribution of USD 3.3 billion to the country's gross domestic product. This represents a total of one percent of the GDP of Pakistan. 500,000 employees in Pakistan are supported by the aviation industry and visitors who arrive there by plane. The region of the Middle East is Pakistan's most lucrative market for the influx of tourists, followed by the Asia-Pacific region and then Europe. Middle Eastern travelers accounted for 6.3 million of the total passengers (70%), while travelers from Europe brought in 1.5 million passengers (17%), and Asia-Pacific travelers brought in 0.6 million (6%) (IATA, 2023b).

Under the "current trends" scenario, it is anticipated that the aviation industry in Pakistan will expand by 184% over the course of the next 20 years. If this were to happen, by the year 2038 there would be an additional 22.8 million customer departures. If this increased demand were to be met, it would contribute around $9.3 billion to the GDP and support approximately 786,300 jobs (IATA, 2019).

There are currently several airlines that operate within Pakistan including Shaheen Air, Airblue, Air Indus, Air Sial, Serene Air, Fly Jinnah, and Pakistan International Airlines (PIA). Among these, Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) is the only airline in Pakistan that is owned by the state and serves as the nation's flagship airline. The airline offers regularly scheduled service in a total of 25 different countries in Asia, the Middle East, Europe, and North America and 24 cities within Pakistan (PIAC, 2023).

PIA has been given a rating of two stars by Skytrax (2023), which is a renowned organization that assesses the quality of airlines based on customer feedback gathered from all around the world (Shah et al., 2020). According to the review conducted by Skytrax (2023), a two-star classification is awarded to airlines that provide a level of service that is both satisfactory and consistent with higher degrees of variability.

This study's objective is to investigate the branding techniques integrated by local airlines in Pakistan, with a particular emphasis on brand experience, brand communication, and brand attachment, to obtain a deeper comprehension of how these factors influence brand consciousness among the customers while also exploring the mediating role of brand knowledge.

1.3 Background of Study

Globalization, liberalization, and rapid developments of technology has brought up multiple challenges in the marketplace eventually changing the landscape of opportunities and challenges for the brands (Saputra et al., 2022). However, in this era of digitization and industrial revolution 4.0, customers are way more conscious than before. The rapid technological advancements have jumbled their choices in marketplaces through the presence of alternatives (Huang & Chen, 2018). The excess of information confuses the customers and provokes a sense of choosing brands consciously (Workman & Lee, 2013). The brand-conscious customers feel it hard to purchase from a particular brand in a split-second as they get hesitant in the pre-purchase process and review the products' attributes (Ghazali, 2010). Though, brand consciousness is crucial for the purchase decisions of customers as it enhances their satisfaction and loyalty. Once customers get loyal, no matter what they are way harder to switch to competitive brands (Nelson & McLeod, 2005).

Customers develop brand consciousness once they get assured that their social status, self-actualization, and stand out are maintained (Sprole & Kendall, 1986). The branding literature documented that brand consciousness exists in almost every product and service sector and the aviation sector is not an exception from it. The aviation sector is one of the top sectors where customers are found to rely highly on their consciousness to choose airline services (Silva et al., 2020).

In a study, Kim et al. (2021) emphasize that brand consciousness is one of the key components of customers' commitment towards airlines. The airline sector is one the transportation sectors where brand consciousness is observed higher than any other means of transportation. In region Asia, the common trends highlighted that airlines are the first choice for travelling for customers based on comfort and safety. An industry report revealed that "Asian airlines and their increasing customer numbers are driving global aviation markets and leisure travel is the main activity for many customers". The underlined phenomena of the inclination of customers towards aviation sector and choosing specific airline exhibit their brand consciousness (Kim & Hwang, 2023). Pakistan is not an exception in the region of Asia as the aviation sector of Pakistan has a competitive advantage over other means of transportation and customers seem to be inclined towards airlines for traveling (Khurshid, 2016).

The aviation sector of Pakistan contributes to more than 1.7% of overall GDP by inputting 5.6 billion USD into economy. The aviation sector employs around 56,700 employees directly and approximately 627,300 indirect jobs through related sectors including tourism and supply chain, which means aviation sector generates aggregately 684,000 jobs directly and indirectly (IATA, 2023b). The aviation sector of Pakistan is emerging and having growth rate of 9.9% that is expected to go higher (Iqbal & Badshah, 2016). The growth of aviation sector highlights the brand consciousness of transportation customers in Pakistan.

Despite the enormous growth of aviation sector, this study found a devastating fact that the aviation customers in Pakistan are inclined to foreign carriers rather than local or Pakistan-owned carriers for international routes. The market share of local airlines has dropped from 57% to 44% from year 2010 to 2015 and that was taken by foreign flyers (Iqbal & Badshah, 2016). This is a clear indication that customers are conscious for air travel, but Pakistan-owned airlines are not chosen by them. There could be a so-called claim that, the 44% chunk of customers that chose local airlines might be brand conscious. In actuality, the 44% of customer share of Pakistani owned

airlines is not just based on brand consciousness of customers as there can be other possible reasons too. As, it is claimed that brand consumption is not essentially brand consciousness. The customers may consume a name-brand services without knowing that brand. The brand consciousness leads to purchases, brand selection and brand choice. When customers are conscious of a particular brand, they show favorable and biased attitudes (Chakraborty & Sheppard, 2016). Moreover, it was further claimed that brand consciousness is customers' preference based on premier and luxury offerings only (Cunningham & Petzer, 2022). Therefore, airlines were suggested to provide premium services to enhance brand consciousness (Sharda & Bhat, 2019). In this perspective, Pakistan's local airlines provide luxury offerings and services for their customers as well. The airline sector of Pakistan has added "premier aircraft" to provide luxury services (Ahmad, 2017).

Brand consciousness is a psychological construct which refers to the biased behavior of customers towards a service that is well-known and highly advertised (Liao & Wang, 2009). The aviation sector of Pakistan is having severe problems due to a lack of customers' consciousness towards local airlines (Iqbal & Badshah, 2016). A report by Nate Silver presented the near-miss data of major airlines worldwide and one of local airlines of Pakistan was top of the list (Haider, 2020). The local airlines are considered unsafe at any altitude, and it makes customers scared. The suspension of flights (Mohammad Asghar, 2024), frequent delays (Siddiqui, 2006), failure of open skies policy (Khan, 2020), more than 52 flight crashes harmed the brand consciousness of customers as such frequent incidents not observed in other airlines (Mangi & Kotoky, 2020). These incidents hit harder the customers' expectations and consciousness and painted an alarming picture of local airlines of Pakistan (Aftab, 2020).

Before the pandemic, the aviation sector of Pakistan was forecasted to grow by 180% but the local airlines of Pakistan impaired by chronic lack of profits, heavy financial losses, decreased customers and lower revenue due to multiple challenges. Due to the large set of challenges, the Pakistan aviation sector is termed as "the large sleeping giant" that needs to wake up to grab future opportunities (Bauer, 2021). Therefore, local airlines called for practitioners and researchers to take progressive initiatives in their favor and come up with probable solutions to revive the aviation industry of Pakistan (Ani, 2025). From theoretical perspective, a dearth of literature about brand consciousness was observed specifically in aviation sector. The literature mentioned that little attention has been paid to brand consciousness of customers and it

is one of the rare phenomena that requires further investigation (Kautish et al., 2020; Sharda & Bhat, 2019). Therefore, this study is incorporating consequences, shortcomings, and predictors of brand consciousness in aviation sector of Pakistan.

The airline industry has usually been a highly competitive sector, with various airlines continuously striving to differentiate themselves within the eyes of customers. In a more and more crowded market, airlines are focusing not only to be the best on carrier pleasant but additionally on the power of branding to maintain a competitive aspect (Amankwah-Amoah, 2021). Brand management plays a critical function in this procedure, because it influences customers' perceptions, choice-making, and loyalty toward specific airlines. As customer preferences evolve and the global financial system shifts, airlines are greater than ever looking for approaches to enhance their brand equity to strengthen customer relationships and make certain sustainable increase (Czerny et al., 2021).

Brand equity, as defined by H. Keller (2022), is the recognition a brand provides to a products or services, encouraged by using the customer's notion of the brand's picture, consciousness, and usual experience. In the context of the airline industry, brand equity may have massive outcomes on customer loyalty, desire, and satisfaction (Koech et al., 2023). A robust brand equity allows airlines to command premium fees, build a loyal customer base, and create positive word-of-mouth communication, in the long run leading to accelerated marketplace percentage and profitability (Santos, 2023). Airline carriers are increasingly focusing on brand knowledge by encompassing each brand awareness and brand image to build an enduring connection with their customers (Agarwal & Gowda, 2021). This expertise of brand knowledge is crucial for the long-time period sustainability and achievement of any airline operating in competitive marketplace.

In current years, airline groups have encompassed extra personalized and emotional varieties of brand communication to construct stronger bonds with customers. Communication techniques, together with celebrity endorsements or direct marketing methods are being followed to seize the eye of potential customers and encourage loyalty (Gilal et al., 2020). These techniques are not only handiest aimed at increasing attention however additionally at evoking nice feelings, in the end shaping customers' perceptions and conduct. Moreover, brand knowledge which is the degree to which customers are aware of and value a brand in their selection-making method, has emerged as a vital component in rising airline brand loyalty (Gowda et al., 2023).

However, despite the developing body of research on brand equity is increasing, there remains a gap within the literature concerning the factors that impact brand loyalty inside the context of the airline industry. Particularly, the function of brand experience, communication, and attachment in shaping brand knowledge and consciousness in the airline quarter has not been appreciably studied (Chen et al., 2019). Although diverse research has addressed individual components including brand experience or communication, there's a need for a more thorough investigation into how these factors have interaction and contribute to building customer-based brand equity inside the airline industry (Pabla & Soch, 2023). This is significant in rising markets, in which customers conduct and perceptions of airlines may also differ from those in evolved economies (Weber, 2003).

In the context of Pakistan's aviation marketplace, the need for knowledge of the relationships between brand experience, communication, attachment, information, and attention is especially crucial (Islam et al., 2023). Yet, Pakistani airlines frequently struggle with establishing robust brand loyalty and customer retention due to the factors like carrier issues, inconsistent brand communication, and a lack of emotional engagement with customers (Akram et al., 2020; Ayyaz, 2023; Raza et al., 2020) By inspecting these variables inside the Pakistani airline industry, this study objectives to fill the space in the present literature and provide actionable insights that could help airline entrepreneurs craft more effective branding strategies tailor-made to the regional market (Shah et al., 2020).

The conceptual framework proposed in this study emphasizes the interaction between diverse dimensions of brand equity, especially how brand knowledge and brand recognition impact the effectiveness of brand communication and the development of brand attachment and experience. By exploring those relationships, this study seeks to extend the current knowledge of how airline brands can enhance their equity and cultivate customer loyalty through strategic branding practices.

1.4 Pakistan Aviation Industry

After Pakistan's independence in 1947, the Civil Aviation Department was established by Air Marshal (retired) Khursheed Anwar Mirza, under the Ministry of Defense, to manage all the aviation activities within Pakistan. Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority (PCAA) was established in 1982 as an autonomous body. The PCAA was

established for the purpose of developing and enhancing civil aviation operations in Pakistan. Since its establishment, PCAA has gone through a lot of improvements under its own and also under the regulations of International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). The PCAA regulates all the airports in Pakistan, including the airspace for local and international airplanes (Shahid & Hafeez, 2016).

The aviation industry in Pakistan plays an important role inside the country's economy by means of facilitating domestic and international trade, tourism, and the movement of human beings. Pakistan's aviation zone has seen constant increase over the past for a long time, even though it faces numerous challenges, such as opposition from international airlines, regulatory issues, and infrastructure obstacles. The industry contains both domestic and global airlines, with the flagship service Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) being the most important airline within the country together with numerous private local airlines, which include Airblue, SereneAir, and others (Shahid, 2022).

The airline industry in Pakistan operates in competitive surroundings, with the increasing presence of global airlines that provide attractive prices, higher services, and more advantageous travel substitutes (Hashar & Alwi, 2024). This has brought about a growing demand for improved service pleasant, better in-flight services, and multiplied frequency of flights. Domestic travel in Pakistan is also on the rise, pushed by elements like increased urbanization, higher disposable earnings, and the increase of the middle class. As the population grows, so does the need for handy and low-priced air travel.

Additionally, Pakistan's geographical location plays a key role inside the worldwide aviation marketplace. The country serves as a transit hub for customers touring between Asia, Europe, and the Middle East. However, notwithstanding these advantages, the arena faces several challenges related to its infrastructure, control, and competition from local players (Mehmood, 2022). The country airports, especially Jinnah International Airport in Karachi and Allama Iqbal International Airport in Lahore, requires giant investments in upgrading facilities to fulfill international requirements (Shahid, 2022).

The Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority (PCAA) regulates the aviation industry, ensuring the safety and security of air travel even as keeping operational requirements for airlines and airports (Arshad et al., 2023). The government has made several attempts to enhance the regulatory environment and expand the aviation sector, including the efforts to privatize PIA and establish extra non-public airlines. In addition,

the government's Vision 2025 plan for aviation targets to improve infrastructure, boom air site visitors, and enhance connectivity to each local and international destinations (Nazeer & Saleem, 2024).

One of the substantial challenges confronted through the Pakistani aviation industry is the control and governance of Pakistan International Airlines (PIA), the national service (Asghar & Mohsin, 2023). Despite its prominent role in the marketplace, PIA has struggled with economic difficulties, mismanagement, and opposition from private airlines. The government has repeatedly proposed reforms, and privatization plans for PIA to enhance its efficiency and reduce its dependence on public finances.

In phrases of opposition, Pakistan's aviation market has turn out to be increasingly open, with a developing number of private airlines operating local and worldwide flights. These private carriers have brought in the competitive pricing strategies, leading to decreased airfares for customers (Nazeer et al., 2024). Airlines like Airblue and SereneAir have focused on presenting customer-pleasant offerings, improving their brand image, and differentiating themselves through better flight schedules and greater comfortable journey reviews (Shahid, 2022).

The entry of foreign airlines into Pakistan has additionally intensified the opposition within the marketplace. Middle Eastern vendors, inclusive of Emirates, Qatar Airways, and Etihad Airways, have accelerated their operations to Pakistan, leveraging their superior carrier offerings and global networks (Muslim et al., 2024). These worldwide airlines have raised the bar for carrier first-rate, prompting Pakistani airlines to undertake similar customer support practices and enhance their branding techniques to compete efficaciously. Despite the challenges, the aviation sector in Pakistan affords numerous opportunities for growth. The increasing wide variety of commercial industry practitioners, vacationers, and migrant workers creates the capability for both domestic and international airlines to amplify their spread (Shahzad et al., 2022). Furthermore, the developing digitalization of the travel industry and the rise of online travel businesses offers airlines with innovative approaches to attain customers, enhance customer experiences, and streamline booking techniques (POPṢA, 2023).

However, the local aviation industry nevertheless faces problems like terrible carrier first-rate, safety concerns, and underdeveloped infrastructure, which needs to be addressed to improve customer pleasure and foster brand loyalty (Akram et al., 2020).

Moreover, the fluctuation of fuel costs and political instability within the region pose dangers to the boom of the aviation quarter. Airlines should additionally navigate challenges associated with environmental guidelines, as the global consciousness on lowering carbon emissions is becoming more reported (Sohail et al., 2021).

The aviation industry in Pakistan has great potential and ability, however, faces a couple of challenges that need to be tackled for sustainable growth (Zakir et al., 2023). The competitive dynamics, coupled with regulatory and control problems, suggest that airlines must strategically manage their brand equity and customer loyalty to face out within the market. As the global aviation landscape maintains to evolve, it is important for the airlines in Pakistan to invest money into branding strategies, improve service pleasant, and adapt to the converting wishes of customers (Gulraiz et al., 2023). The growing position of digital media, customer experience, and brand attachment play a huge role in shaping the destiny of Pakistan's aviation industry.

1.5 Problem Statement

In the highly competitive airline industry, building and sustaining brand consciousness has become an essential challenge, particularly for full-service carriers in developing markets such as Pakistan. The brand-conscious customer prefers the specific brand, makes repeat purchases in presence of alternatives (Bashir & Siddiqui, 2021). Brand consciousness is a customer's tendency to prefer well-known or prestigious brands over lesser-known alternatives. It reflects an individual's inclination to seek out and purchase products from brands that are widely recognized, often due to perceived quality, status, or social value (Jaravaza et al., 2024). While brand awareness refers to the extent to which customers can recognize or recall a brand within a particular category. It encompasses both brand recognition (the ability to identify a brand when exposed to it) and brand recall (the ability to retrieve a brand from memory when prompted by a product category) (Zhang, 2020). However, both concepts pertain to customer perceptions of brands, they differ in scope and influence. Brand awareness is primarily a cognitive construct, focusing on the ability to recognize or recall a brand. It is foundational in the customer’s decision-making process, as a brand must first be known before it can be considered for purchase (Zhang, 2020). On the other hand, brand consciousness**,** is more affective and evaluative. It involves an individual's preference for well-known brands, often driven by desires for status, quality assurance, or social

identity. Customers with high brand consciousness are more likely to choose recognized brands even when alternatives are available (Jaravaza et al., 2024). However, Pakistan's airlines have struggled to establish strong brand consciousness among customers due to persistent issues related to service quality, inconsistent communication, operational inefficiencies, and poor brand image (Ali, Jamil, & Shah, 2020; Aslam, 2021). These challenges have eroded customer trust and diluted the perceived distinctiveness of Pakistan's airline brands, leading to a decline in both brand loyalty and market competitiveness compared to international carriers such as Emirates, Qatar Airways, and Turkish Airlines, which enjoy higher brand consciousness among Pakistani customers (Hasan & Khan, 2019). For example, the assertion that mostly Pakistani owned Airlines are not a "high status" brand, particularly in its Economy class, overlooks the nuanced dynamics of brand consciousness within the airline industry. While PIA primarily serves as a national carrier offering mass-market services, this positioning does not preclude the development of a strong brand consciousness among its customers (Shah et al., 2020). Brand consciousness, as a psychological state, is shaped by customers' perceptions, experiences, and interactions with a brand, rather than being solely a personality trait or a reflection of luxury status. Further, brand experience encompasses the sensory, emotional, and cognitive responses elicited by interactions with an airline (Liu et al., 2025). In Pakistani owned airlines Economy class, factors such as in-flight service quality, comfort, and overall customer experience contribute to customers' perceptions of the brand. Positive experiences can enhance brand awareness and associations, fostering a heightened state of brand consciousness among customers. For instance, studies have shown that brand experience significantly influences brand loyalty and preference, indicating its role in shaping brand consciousness (Santos et al., 2024). Further, a significant factor is that effective brand communication ensures consistent and compelling messages across various channels, reinforcing brand associations and awareness. In the airline context, clear and persuasive communication can elevate customers' brand consciousness by aligning brand messages with their values and expectations. Research indicates that brand communication positively impacts brand perception and loyalty, highlighting its importance in shaping brand consciousness (Aslan et al., 2025). Furthermore, the brand attachment is an important factor that refers to the emotional bond customers form with an airline. This attachment influences their perceptions and behaviors, making them more attuned to the brand's presence and offerings. Emotional connections can lead to

increased brand consciousness, as customers become more aware of and engaged with the brand. Studies have found that brand attachment significantly contributes to brand loyalty and positive word-of-mouth, underscoring its role in fostering brand consciousness (Kim & Hwang, 2023). Along with it, brand knowledge, comprising brand awareness and associations, intervenes the effects of brand experience, communication, and attachment on brand consciousness. Enhanced brand knowledge leads to a more informed and conscious customer, capable of making deliberate brand choices. Research supports the mediating role of brand knowledge in influencing customer behavior and brand perception (Zhao et al., 2022). Further, Sundararaj & Rejeesh, (2021) stated that brand awareness is a mandatory element of the overall knowledge system in the customer's mind how likely the customer is to recognize the brand under different situations, how frequently the brand name comes to mind, and how much they like the brand. However, brand consciousness in Pakistani owned airlines' economy class is not merely a reflection of luxury status but a dynamic psychological state shaped by customers' experiences, communications, attachments, and knowledge. By enhancing these factors, Pakistani owned airlines can foster greater brand consciousness among its customers, leading to increased brand preference and loyalty. This perspective aligns with contemporary branding theories that recognize the multifaceted nature of brand consciousness beyond mere status consumption.

1.6 Conceptual Gap

In the context of the airline industry, the literature fails to adequately investigate the connections between brand experience, brand communication, brand attachment, brand knowledge, and brand consciousness. Prior study provides a broader view and better prediction, future research could examine other variables, such as human values, social axioms, self-efficacy, conspicuous consumption, materialism, as psychological constructs which impacts the formation of customers' brand perceptions. Further studies may also focus on sustainability practices and attitudes of affluent customers in pre-emerging markets. Despite these limitations, the findings of the present research highlights the role of brand consciousness and brand distinctiveness that may help generate a stream of research on customers' multiple consciousness (Jaravaza et al., 2024). Further, the study discovered that future research should focus on the long-term behavior of customers, which is essential to the effectiveness of sustainable

consumption. This study did not consider a variety of exogenous variables, such as self–brand congruity to specify the general importance, relevance, and value of brand names overall (Phua & Kim, 2018). In the study by Kim et al. (2022) brand consciousness was utilized as a moderating construct to examine its influence on the relationship between customers' involvement in cause-related marketing (CRM) and their loyalty to airlines. The study revealed that specifically, customers with higher levels of brand consciousness exhibited stronger positive effects of cause-related marketing (CRM) involvement on brand attitude and, consequently, on loyalty. This underscores the importance of brand consciousness in enhancing the effectiveness of cause-related marketing (CRM) strategies in fostering customer loyalty within the airline industry (Kim et al., 2022). Therefore, the current study fills the gap in measuring brand consciousness in the airline industry by reflecting customers' internalized sensitivity and attachment to brand symbols, which are influenced by prior brand exposure and emotional investment. While existing studies have examined the impact of brand experience on customer-based brand equity (CBBE), there is a lack of research focusing on the specific dimensions of brand experience such as sensory, affective, and behavioral experiences and their distinct influences on brand consciousness in the airline sector (Jeon & Yoo, 2021).

1.7 Brand Consciousness as Outcome-Based

In the airline industry context, brand consciousness can function as an outcome variable because it represents the degree to which customers internalize and prioritize airline brands as a part of their decision-making and loyalty behaviors. While the study by Kim et al. (2022) primarily examined brand consciousness as a moderator between customers' involvement in cause-related marketing (CRM) and loyalty, the underlying conceptual framework implies that brand consciousness itself can be influenced by marketing and service-related factors. For example, frequent exposure to CRM initiatives, promotional campaigns, and brand-related experiences can increase customers' awareness, attachment, and sensitivity toward airline brands, reflecting a rise in brand consciousness.

Similarly, research on customer behavior in airlines suggests that psychological constructs such as materialism, self–brand congruity, and perceived brand distinctiveness can drive the formation of brand consciousness (Jaravaza et al., 2024;

Phua & Kim, 2018). When customers perceive that a brand aligns with their values, social identity, or status aspirations, they develop higher brand consciousness, which can then predict downstream outcomes like brand loyalty, repeat purchase intention, and willingness to pay premium fares. In this context, brand consciousness is treated as an endogenous variable because it reflects customers' internalized sensitivity and attachment to brand symbols, which are influenced by prior brand exposure and emotional investment. The study found that individuals with higher brand consciousness were less open to radical logo changes, indicating that brand consciousness operates as a dependent internal factor that evolves from brand interactions and, in turn, determines customers' evaluative and behavioral responses (van Grinsven & Das, 2015). Therefore, prior literature suggests that brand consciousness can be conceptualized as an endogenous outcome variable that emerges from customers' psychological traits, marketing interventions (CRM), and perceptions of brand distinctiveness. By measuring brand consciousness as a dependent variable, airlines can better understand how marketing strategies, brand positioning, and customer experiences influence the internalization of the brand among customers, ultimately driving loyalty and engagement.

While brand experience is recognized as a critical factor influencing customer perceptions, its direct relationship with brand consciousness remains underexplored in the airline industry. Existing literature primarily focuses on the impact of brand experience on customer satisfaction and loyalty, with limited attention to how it shapes brand consciousness (Kim et al., 2022). Further, brand communication is acknowledged as a key component in shaping brand perceptions, its direct influence on brand knowledge is under-researched. Investigating how various brand communication strategies affect customers' brand knowledge can provide insights into effective marketing practices (Seo et al., 2020). Furthermore, the relationship between brand communication and brand consciousness in the airline industry has not been extensively studied. Understanding how brand communication influences customers' awareness and preference for airline brands is essential for developing targeted marketing strategies (Santos et al., 2024).

The connection between brand attachment and brand knowledge in the airline industry has not been thoroughly examined. Understanding how emotional connections with a brand influence customers' knowledge and perceptions can enlighten branding strategies (Kim et al., 2019). While brand attachment is recognized as a significant

factor in customer behavior, its direct influence on brand consciousness has not been extensively studied in the airline industry. Investigating this relationship can provide insights into how emotional connections with a brand affect customers' awareness and preference (Lee et al., 2024). Moreover, the mediating role of brand knowledge between brand attachment and brand consciousness has not been sufficiently addressed. Understanding how emotional connections with a brand influence brand knowledge, which in turn affects brand consciousness, is crucial for developing comprehensive branding strategies (Kim et al., 2022). Therefore, this study fills the gaps by measuring the direct relationship between brand knowledge and brand consciousness in the airline industry, which has not been extensively studied. Investigating this relationship can provide insights into how customers' knowledge about a brand influences their awareness and preference (Seo et al., 2020).

1.8 Theoretical Gap

From a theoretical perspective, brand consciousness may be understood as a customer's strong affinity for a particular brand. A substantial amount of research has been carried out on topics related to one another, such as customers' preferences for brands, the brands they choose, and their intent to purchase. On the other hand, there aren't many studies that consider brand consciousness, and academics and industry professionals alike have been asked to investigate this issue in greater depth. The study in hand is supported by customer-based brand equity (Keller, 1993) to explain the relationships of variables and the rational to incorporate.

Previous studies have investigated the influence of various factors on customer-based brand equity. According to Cheung et al. (2020) the impact of distribution intensity, firm-created social media brand communication, and product engagement on customer-based brand equity was examined. In addition, Muniz et al. (2019) investigated the immediate effects of brand CSR communications on brand awareness, perceived quality, and brand loyalty. By investigating these factors and incorporating brand communication into the customer-based brand equity model, this study aims to advance the understanding of the dynamics of brand communication and its relationship with customer-based brand equity. This theoretical gap emphasizes the need to include brand communication as a separate variable in the customer-based brand equity model (Arya et al., 2022; Cheung et al., 2020; Muniz et al., 2019).

The theoretical gap in the present literature surrounding brand communication, brand attachment, brand experience, brand knowledge, and brand consciousness within the context of aviation industry is obvious in numerous key areas. Despite the growing frame of studies on these character principles, there remains a considerable loss of included theoretical frameworks that properly capture the interaction and mixed outcomes of these constructs inside the aviation region (Gul & Ilyas, 2022). This theoretical gap affords a possibility for the development of extra comprehensive models which can guide research scholars and practitioners in understanding how these branding elements characteristic collectively to steer customer conduct, loyalty, and brand equity in rising markets particularly, Pakistan (Zarantonello et al., 2020).

Firstly, at the same time as the literature offers significant insights into the character elements of brand knowledge, brand experience, brand communication, and brand attachment, there's restricted theoretical exploration of how those principles have interaction in a cohesive manner inside the airline industry (Sarker et al., 2019). For example, theories associated with customer behavior, together with the Theory of Planned Behavior or the Elaboration Likelihood Model, were applied in numerous contexts to apprehend how brand knowledge or communication influences customer attitudes and purchase intentions (Pillai et al., 2022). However, those models have not been sufficiently adapted or tested to capture the specific dynamics of airline branding, specifically in the growing marketplace. The loss of theoretical integration makes it difficult to recognize the cumulative and interactive outcomes of those constructs, as they do not completely account for the way brand experiences, communications, and attachments are formed by using brand information and recognition (Khurram et al., 2018).

Moreover, current theories often fail to incorporate the role of digital and social media communication in shaping brand perceptions in the airline sector. The rapid rise of digital platforms has dramatically changed how customers interact with brands, yet many of the existing customer behavior models still emphasize traditional forms of communication, such as marketing and word-of-mouth (Chong, 2007). There is a need for a theoretical framework that includes both traditional and digital brand communication as critical components that influence brand knowledge, attachment, and consciousness. As customers increasingly engage with brands through online platforms, a more nuanced theoretical understanding of how social media, digital content, and online reviews affect brand perceptions is required (Ibrahim et al., 2020). This gap

highlights the need for the development of models that integrate both traditional and digital communication elements, allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of their role in shaping brand equity in the airline industry.

Another theoretical gap lies in the limited understanding of how brand knowledge and brand consciousness function as antecedents to brand attachment and brand experience. While brand attachment theories (e.g., Park, MacInnis, and Priester's brand attachment model) emphasize the emotional connection between customers and brands, few studies have examined how brand knowledge specifically brand awareness and brand image might influence or enhance this attachment (Reitsamer & Brunner-Sperdin, 2021). Similarly, the role of brand consciousness in driving customer behavior and brand loyalty are underexplored (Kautish et al., 2021). For example, brand consciousness is often linked to brand choices in studies of customer goods, but its application to the airline industry remains limited. Theoretical models that explore how brand consciousness acts as a mediator or moderator between other brand-related variables such as brand communication and customer loyalty in the context of the airline industry would significantly enhance our understanding of customer behavior in this sector (Kim et al., 2022).

Additionally, there is a lack of theoretical frameworks that explain how brand attachment and brand experience jointly contribute to brand equity, especially in relation to customer retention and loyalty in the airline industry (Ali & Alfayez, 2024). While studies in other sectors have focused on the relationship between customer satisfaction and loyalty, the connection between these two elements in the airline industry, where service quality and emotional connections are paramount (Chand et al., 2024). The absence of a unified model that accounts for how emotional attachment to a brand (brand attachment) and the cumulative experiences with the airline (brand experience) jointly influence customer loyalty presents a significant gap in the literature.

In addition, most of the existing theoretical frameworks in branding focus on measuring the outcomes of brand experiences or communication strengths (e.g., brand loyalty, purchase intention) without providing sufficient insight into the underlying psychological processes that drive these outcomes (Meyer-Waarden et al., 2023). A more robust theoretical approach would involve the integration of psychological theories, such as those related to customer emotions, cognition, and decision-making, to better explain how and why brand communication, attachment, and knowledge

influence customer perceptions and behaviors in the airline industry (Ragab et al., 2023). By increasing the theoretical framework to include these mental aspects, researchers can develop a more nuanced information of customer behavior and the position of branding in shaping customer alternatives. However, the theoretical gap in the current literature on branding in aviation industry highlights the want for incorporated, culturally relevant, and context-unique frameworks which can explain how brand experience, communication, attachment, knowledge, and consciousness have interaction to shape customer behavior (Farooq et al., 2023). Addressing this gap would not only contribute to the educational perspective by means of increasing our information of branding in rising markets but also provide precious insights for airline operators seeking to develop greater effective branding strategies tailored to the unique wishes and options of customers in Pakistan.

Furthermore, literature has frequently regarded brand experience as an unbiased variable, instead of integrating it into the customer based brand equity framework (Catherine et al., 2024). Additionally, Pina & Dias (2021) strain the importance of incorporating brand experience into the customer based brand equity model to advantage an extra comprehensive knowledge of brand that have an impact on perceived value and brand loyalty in specific industries. This research gap implies the need for additional research into the position of brand experience as an antecedent of customer-based brand equity, considering its various dimensions and impact on customer perceptions and behaviors. While there has been significant research on the relationship between brand attachment and customer-based brand equity, the customer-based brand equity paradigm does not incorporate brand attachment. Existing studies has often incorporated brand attachment as a separate construct, instead of integrating it into the model (Guleria et al., 2024). By incorporating brand attachment into the customer-based brand equity model, a more thorough knowledge of the connection among brand attachment and brand equity may be attained. Moreover, there is nonetheless a big knowledge gap regarding how they collectively inform the development of brand consciousness and the way independent variables collectively impact brand consciousness through brand knowledge.

1.9 Purpose of Study

This study intends to contribute to a more comprehensive knowledge of the variables such as brand experience, brand communication and brand attachment influencing brand consciousness. The motive of this study is to contribute to a more complete expertise of those components. By incorporating brand attachment into the customer-based brand equity model, a more thorough understanding of the relationship between brand attachment and overall brand equity can be attained. Moreover, the study intends to contribute to knowledge regarding how they collectively inform the development of brand consciousness and how independent variables collectively impact brand consciousness through brand knowledge. The purpose of this study is to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of these aspects.

1.10 Research Objectives

The study has devised the following research objectives that need to be achieved:

i. To examine the relationship between brand experience and brand knowledge.
ii. To examine the relationship between brand experience and brand consciousness.
iii. To examine the relationship between brand experience and brand consciousness through the mediation of brand knowledge.
iv. To examine the relationship between brand communication and brand knowledge.
v. To examine the relationship between brand communication and brand consciousness.
vi. To examine the relationship between brand communication and brand consciousness through the mediation of brand knowledge.
vii. To examine the relationship between brand attachment and brand knowledge.
viii. To examine the relationship between brand attachment and brand consciousness.
ix. To examine the relationship between brand attachment and brand consciousness through the mediation of brand knowledge.

x. To examine the relationship between brand knowledge and brand consciousness.

1.11 Research Questions

Based on the arguments provided in problem statement, the study purposes following research questions:

i. Does brand experience have a significant relationship with brand knowledge?
ii. Does brand experience have a significant relationship with brand consciousness?
iii. Does brand experience have a significant relationship with brand consciousness through the mediation of brand knowledge?
iv. Does brand communication have a significant relationship with brand knowledge?
v. Does brand communication have a significant relationship with brand consciousness?
vi. Does brand communication have a significant relationship with brand consciousness through the mediation of brand knowledge?
vii. Does brand attachment have a significant relationship with brand knowledge?
viii. Does brand attachment have a significant relationship with brand consciousness?
ix. Does brand attachment have a significant relationship with brand consciousness through the mediation of brand knowledge?
x. Does brand knowledge have a significant relationship with brand consciousness?

1.12 Significance of Study

The multifaceted significance of this study lies in its exploration of the complex relationships between brand experience, brand communication, brand attachment, brand knowledge, and brand consciousness within the context of Pakistani airline industry. The primary objective of this study is to bridge the current conceptual gaps by examining the interdependencies among these variables within a domain that has not been comprehensively investigated. This research endeavor intends to make a

significant contribution to the theoretical framework of branding concepts, with a specific focus on the airline industry. The findings of this study are expected to offer valuable insights to scholars and researchers who are keenly interested in this domain.

The practical implications of the study's findings are of utmost significance for airline industry professionals involved in marketing and brand management. Through a comprehensive analysis of the complex relationship between various branding variables, this research aims to equip practitioners with the necessary insights to devise more efficacious and precisely targeted strategies to augment customer loyalty, satisfaction, and engagement effectively. Implementing these strategies may potentially result in a rise in market share and profitability for airlines currently operating within the Pakistani market.

Moreover, this investigation shall prove advantageous to policymakers and regulators as it will furnish them with empirical data concerning the determinants that conduce to a thriving and enduring airline label. The data presented herein possesses the potential to enlighten policymakers and regulatory bodies in their pursuit of fostering a dynamic and competitive aviation industry within the borders of Pakistan.

Finally, it is worth noting that the wider implications of this investigation transcend the confines of the Pakistani aviation sector. Through a thorough analysis of the interrelationships among these branding variables within a distinct context, this scholarly inquiry shall make a valuable contribution to the broader comprehension of branding tactics and their efficacy across diverse industries and cultural backgrounds. The acquisition of this knowledge can potentially facilitate the formulation of customized branding strategies that are applicable to diverse markets and industries across the globe.

To summarize, this particular study possesses noteworthy potential for advancing theoretical knowledge, informing practical applications in the field of marketing and brand management, influencing policy decisions, and offering insights that can be broadly applied across various contexts and industries.

1.13 Contribution of Study

This study is expected to contribute in multiple ways. First, this study intends to contribute to the theory by using customer-based brand equity by examining the relationships between the study variables of brand experience, brand communication,

brand attachment, brand knowledge, and brand consciousness. The unique contribution in this regard will be with respect to Pakistani owned airlines. This study is also useful for researchers and marketers to understand and extend their knowledge on brand management. This study provides useful suggestions to the policymakers in Pakistan to devise effective strategies to enhance revenues of Pakistani airlines and compete with international airlines.

In addition to contributing to the theoretical knowledge of customer-based brand equity (CBBE) inside the context of the airline industry, this study additionally targets to provide sensible insights that can assist policymakers and marketing professionals in Pakistan (Sezgen et al., 2023). By exploring the tricky relationships between brand experience, brand communication, brand attachment, brand knowledge, and brand consciousness, this study presents a deeper expertise of the way these constructs have interaction and influence customer perceptions of airline operators in Pakistan. This contribution is especially substantial as it fills the understanding gap in the Pakistani aviation sector, wherein research on brand mechanism and customer-based brand equity has been particularly restricted (Raza et al., 2020).

One of the important contributions of this study lies in its potential to offer a comprehensive model that integrates various aspects of branding, providing insights into how they jointly effect customer loyalty, brand desire, and buy intentions (Singh et al., 2022). The findings from present study can help airline operators in figuring out the simplest brand communication techniques and touchpoints that resonate with local customers. By understanding how brand experience, communication, and attachment impact brand knowledge and image, marketers can broaden greater centered and custom designed branding campaigns to foster emotional connections with customers, thereby growing customer retention and improving brand loyalty (Rachmad, 2023).

Furthermore, this study provides treasured implications for airline businesses operating in Pakistan. It highlights the significance of adopting a customer-centric technique to brand mechanism, one that goes past traditional marketing strategies and consists of digital and social media communication (Kushwaha et al., 2020). The increasing use of social media systems among customers makes it essential for airlines to engage in two-manner communication with customers, building believe and enhancing brand image (Seo et al., 2020). The findings of this study can assist airline businesses better understand the dynamics of brand awareness and the way it affects customers' decision-making techniques. By focusing on brand-conscious customers,

airlines can tailor their marketing efforts to emphasize the attributes and values that align with their target audience's preferences and wishes (Kim et al., 2022).

Additionally, the study presents realistic tips to policymakers in Pakistan's aviation industry. As the worldwide airline industry keeps growing in opposition, specifically with the rise of low-cost vendors and global airlines, Pakistani owned airlines ought to discover revolutionary methods to enhance their brand equity and enchantment to both local and global travelers (Ismat et al., 2023). Policymakers can use the insights from this study to enforce techniques that inspire airlines to put money into their brand development and enhance customer service, thereby fostering a competitive edge inside the marketplace. These outcomes facilitating the adoption of superior branding techniques, enhancing the digital presence of Pakistani airlines, and customer loyalty (Khan & Rahman, 2015).

Moreover, this study underscores the importance of knowledge of the cultural and socio-financial factors that influence customer conduct in Pakistan. The findings can help airlines align their brand communication techniques within cultural values and customer expectations, making sure that their messaging resonates with the target market. By tailoring their branding strategies to the options and attitudes of Pakistani customers, airlines can create greater significant and long-lasting relationships with customers.

This study also contributes to the academic literature through addressing the gaps in modern-day branding research in emerging markets (Wang & He, 2023). It provides intensity to the understanding of the way brand experience, brand communication, brand attachment, and brand knowledge together impact customer-based brand equity within the airline industry, mainly inside a South Asian context (Tian & Arif, 2023). The study's effects can serve as a foundation for future research, encouraging further exploration of branding strategies in the aviation industry, especially in international locations like Pakistan that face marketplace challenges and possibilities (Shah et al., 2020).

The contributions of this study providing realistic insights that could enhance brand mechanism in the airline industry in Pakistan. It provides a framework for airline operators to optimize their branding techniques and allows policymakers increase effective regulations to enhance the competitiveness of Pakistani airlines in each the domestic and global market. Through its theoretical and realistic implications, this

research contributes to a more nuanced knowledge of customer-based brand equity and its utility within the context of emerging markets.

1.14 Definitions of Terms

The following section provides the conceptual definition of variables and explains the way of being operationalized in this study.

1.14.1 Brand experience

The brand experience is the inner or subjective response of customers that consists of sensory, affective, behavioral, and intellectual responses due to stimuli provoked by the brand (Brakus et al., 2009). This study defines brand experience as a customer's response towards Pakistani airlines after using them, in the shape of sensory, affective, behavioral, and intellectual experiences.

1.14.2 Brand Communication

Brand communication has been defined as the attitude of a brand towards advertising and the way it communicates with customers to influence their purchase intention (Tsai, 2007). This study defines brand communication as a customer's perception of the brand communication strategy of Pakistani airlines.

1.14.3 Brand Attachment

Brand attachment is defined as customers' strong emotional connection with the brand (Thomson et al., 2005). This study defines brand attachment as a customer's passion and love towards Pakistani airlines.

1.14.4 Brand Knowledge

Brand knowledge has been defined as a combination of brand awareness, positioning in the customer's mind, image, and perception of the brand in memory of

customers (Keller, 1993). This study defines brand knowledge as a customer's brand awareness and brand image relating to the airline brands in Pakistan.

1.14.5 Brand Consciousness

It is defined as an individual traits characterized by the degree to which a customer is oriented towards buying particular brands' products and services (Nan & Heo, 2007). This study defines brand consciousness as the attention the customers pay towards the quality of products and services of Pakistani airlines.

1.15 Scope and Limitations

The scope and limitations of the study are provided below.

1.15.1 Scope

The focus of this research is to examine the effects of brand experience, brand communication, and brand attachment on brand knowledge, which subsequently influences brand consciousness in the specific setting of domestic Pakistani airlines. By concentrating on this particular industry and geographic context, we can achieve a more comprehensive understanding of how these branding factors interplay to influence the perceptions and actions of customers in the fiercely competitive regional airline sector.

The focus of this study is on Pakistan owned airlines that manage international routes and operated within the borders of Pakistan. The aim is to gain a deeper understanding of how their branding strategies and resulting outcomes may vary in a market that is culturally distinct. A comprehensive analysis of these airlines shall facilitate the identification of the determinants that underlie efficacious branding within this sector.

As a quantitative inquiry, the study shall utilize survey-based methodologies to procure empirical data concerning customers' perceptions of diverse airline brands. The proposed methodology shall facilitate the examination of the interdependencies among the branding variables that are currently under scrutiny. This shall yield a more impartial comprehension of the underlying mechanisms that are operative within the domestic aviation industry of Pakistan.

The research primarily centers on Pakistani owned airlines. However, the outcomes of this study may have wider implications for comprehending the interdependence of branding variables across diverse industries and cultural settings. The knowledge acquired from this research has the potential to be utilized in the development of more efficacious branding tactics across diverse industries, while considering the distinctive characteristics of each respective market.

1.15.2 Limitations

It is imperative to acknowledge the limitations of this study to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the research outcomes and to provide guidance for future research endeavors in this area. Several of the principal constraints are as follows:

This study's geographical scope is confined to Pakistan's local airline industry. It is important to note that this specificity may hinder the extent to which the findings can be extrapolated to other industries or nations. The distinctive cultural, economic, and competitive factors inherent to Pakistan have the potential to exert an impact on the interplay between branding variables in a manner that may not be generalizable to other settings.

As a quantitative study, the research employs a cross-sectional design, which is a non-experimental research method that captures data at a single point in time. The approach in question appears to lack consideration for the possibility of alterations in the interrelationships among branding variables as time progresses, and furthermore, it may fail to accurately represent the fluid and evolving nature of the branding process within the airline sector.

The utilization of survey-based methodologies is predicated upon the dependence on self-reported data, which can potentially be influenced by various biases, including but not limited to social desirability or recall bias. It is plausible that participants may furnish responses that they deem to be socially desirable, or they may encounter challenges in accurately recollecting their experiences and perceptions. It is plausible that the sample limitations of this study may have implications for the generalizability of the findings to the broader population of airline customers in Pakistan. It is plausible that the sampling process may contain inherent biases, and as a result, the conclusions drawn from the study may not be applicable to the entire customer population within the market.

The study's scope of variables is limited. Although it delves into the connections between brand experience, brand communication, brand attachment, brand knowledge, and brand consciousness, there may exist additional pertinent variables that influence branding outcomes in the airline sector that are not considered in this investigation. The omission of said variables may potentially compromise the comprehensiveness of the study's findings. Given the limitations, it is imperative for future research endeavors to bridge these gaps through the exploration of alternative industries, broadening the geographical scope, utilizing longitudinal designs, corroborating self-reported data with objective measures, and delving into supplementary variables that may exert an impact on branding outcomes.

1.16 Chapter Summary

This study is divided into five chapters. The first chapter, "Introduction to the Study," begins by providing the study's context and emphasizing the significance of brand awareness. The chapter then describes the problem statement and suggests variables that establish relationships between the independent variable and the dependent variable. It also includes research questions and objectives, the significance of the study, its scope and limitations, and a glossary of key terms.

CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This study investigates the applicability, and complexity to bridge multiple aspects to explain the brand consciousness in the airline sector of Pakistan. Before understanding the dynamic association of the phenomena in Pakistan's circumstances, it is important to explain brand consciousness as a term traced by specific factors such as brand experience, brand communication, brand attachment, and brand knowledge. Thus, the chapter starts with the history of branding and bridges it to modern literature.

2.2 Conceptualization of Term Brand

The meaning of a brand has always been a contentious task. The researchers have tried their best to extract a commonly agreed definition and each time a new concept emerges. The most illustrious definition of a brand has been coined by the American Marketing Association (1960). They define a brand as “a name, term, symbol, design, or logo or a combination of them to identify and differentiate a product or service from the competitor in the marketplace” (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993; Kotler et al., 2003) It means that brand is a term used to give a specific and unique identity to a product that may be a service also, through either its name, appearance, color or any other observable or measurable trait (Aaker, 1991). That particular characteristic becomes the identity of that product and gradually it becomes engraved into people’s minds. The people or customers remember and recognize the product by using that particular brand image (Fournier & Avery, 2011).

According to Ambler (1992), “The attributes that constitute a brand may be real or illusory, rational or emotional, physical or invisible.” Brands even have a personality that bridges the gap between the organization and the buyer who relate themselves with that perceived brand personality (Kapferer, 1992). This allows the customers to feel affiliated and familiarized with the product (Schmitt, 1997). According to Marconi (1993), the brand is not just a name but it is a way to identify the product. It is something

that helps the business to build an image or perhaps a personality and helps the customer build a unique image of the product and also the organization.

Apart from all these extrinsic characteristics, the brand has become of extreme significance intrinsically as well (Garderner & Levy, 1955). In a study Schuiling and Kapferer (2004) argued that a brand is an external image that aids in understanding the unseen characteristics of the product. This reiterates the fact that brand is also a language that gives some explicit as well as some implicit indications to the customers. According to Kapferer (2008), previously the organizations used to market the generic product (beverages), however, from the 1970s onwards focused on marketing a brand (for example Coca-Cola) and not the general product. Initially, the organizations were focused on increasing the overall customer base, later it was shifted to gaining better market share. The study of Kapferer (2008) explored few of the functions of branding. That is identification (customer rapidly identifies the product and its characteristics), practicality (this enables customers to save time and work while being loyal), guarantee (assurance of similar quality, taste, and usage), optimization (assurance of buying the best thing available), continuity (experience created by years of affiliation), characterization (to connect with the brand as per your personality), hedonistic (contentment due to brands logo and name) and ethics (pleasure associated with the perceived ethical behavior of brand) and all these functions combine and create a financial value for the customer. This value is not restricted to the image or quality of the product but also had a financial aspect attached to it. Therefore, organizations focus on developing brand value.

The study of Chernatony and McDonald (1998) distinguishes between a successful and an unsuccessful brand by explaining that “a successful brand is a recognizable product perceived by buyers as relevant, unique and sustainable value addition matching their needs thoroughly.” Further, the study argued that there are two needs of the customer that arise for a brand which are performance and personal needs. In another study, three brand interpretations are mentioned: input-based, time-based, and output-based (McDonald et al., 2001). The input-based perspective encourages organizations to propagate branding as a means of perceived identity that adds value for customers. The output-based perspective tends to focus more on the development of brand loyalty. Lastly, the time-based perspective emphasizes the development of brands as entities over a longer timeframe and not just products. The more powerful a brand is, the more the organization is perceived to be successful (Peng et al., 2023). Millions of

dollars are spent to create the brand, and the brands are not limited to the organizations. Its impact and scope have even been noticed in society. Branding has become quite significant in the economy of countries as it creates socio-political significance. Some brands envisage religious spheres while some are associated with entertainment values (Schuiling & Kapferer, 2004).

Levine (2003) argued that a brand is not the name of the organization or the product, neither advertising nor a slogan. It is more of a longer-term experience a customer has with the firm or the product. This paves way for the new concept of corporate branding (Clow & Baack, 2004). Over the years, organizations have shifted their focus to corporate branding rather than product branding. This enabled them to reach greater target audiences for their products simultaneously. However, if any product branding campaign backfires, the whole corporate image was in jeopardy (Haig, 2005). According to Keller and Lehmann (2006), the brand doesn't only represent the product but the firm as a whole. Therefore, it identifies not only the product but also acts as a representative of the whole firm. The organization-level features of quality, pricing, and goodwill attached to the brand become a corporate identity. Nowadays, the brand is not only a part of the process. It is the foremost object and the whole marketing campaign revolves around it. Other marketing objectives now complement the brand which stands as the brightest star (Goldfarb et al., 2009). Branding is a key strategic component of the product and helps to give all other features of the product a collective image (Kotler et al., 2014).

2.3 History of Branding

The concept of branding comes up with a peculiar and amusing tale. In ancient Egypt, around 2500 BC, the Egyptians used to rear livestock and were really bothered by the continual theft of their animals (Haring, 2018). This compelled them to think out of the box, and they came up with this strange idea of using firebrands and marking their animals using heated iron of specific shape and design. This iron branding would engrave a specific image onto the skins of the animal and would give them identification as to their ownership. Once stolen or lost, they could be found easily using the imagery (Khan & Mufti, 2007). It was soon realized by the merchants that this sort of branding creates a pool of information regarding ownership, quality and prices. Later, such

images were used around the world by different civilizations such as the Qi Dynasty, and Harappa Civilization followed by the Greeks and the Romans (Starcevic, 2015).

A study by Twede (2016) mentions the informational fragment for the imaging was deliberately used in the Mediterranean trade around 1500 BC. The Greek pottery traded during this era had specific markings on them that provides the buyer with an idea of its manufacturer, region, and quality. A similar practice was also done in India during the 1200 BC period where a herbal paste "Chawanprash" was named after its creator, a rishi named Chawyan (Khan & Mufti, 2007). During the Mesopotamian revolution of the 4th century, a similar practice was done with various products, and this became an integral part of large-scale manufacturing too. The giant organizations formally introduced the system of brand classification to the customer market (Wengrow, 2008). Then in Rome, the term "pictus titulus" was coined for such inscriptions on various products (Moore & Reid, 2008).

Such raw forms of branding continued to evolve throughout the world among different civilizations. However, it was only in the English middle ages that with the advent of Heraldry (the language of visuals), branding became more meaningful, and diverse sorts of brand markings were used during this period (McQuarrie & Phillips, 2016). These included hallmarks, stamps, and silver marks. After that, the organizations started adopting brand marks as their official identities in the 18th and 19th centuries, and in 1855, Bass & Company, a British brewery company became the first ever to register its infamous red triangle trademark with the British government. A few years later, the Tate & Lyle Company registered the first-ever trademark packaging which is almost unchanged to date (Hibbert, 2008).

Moving on to the industrial revolution, organizations started to produce goods at much faster rates and in bigger quantities in the 19th century (Jones & Tedlow, 1993). This created a need for more sales and to achieve this feat, the organizations started mass marketing for the first time. The major tools they used were these brand logos or names (Schwarzkopf, 2008). With the advent of packaging, this became more evident as these logos were printed on fancy packaging, and to distinguish their products from the local substitutes, the organizations emphasized more and more on using and creating a brand (Arnould & Thompson, 2005).

Around 1900, James Walter Thompson, a renowned advertiser, created a housing ad where he explained the concepts underlying trademark advertising and it is believed to be the start of brand management. Henceforth, branding became a reality

and all giant organizations such as Coca-Cola, Kellogg's, Pepsi, and Quakers started creating their own brands (Petty, 2016). These organizations didn't restrict themselves to images or packaging only, other techniques such as slogans, mascots, and jingles also started to appear in the media (Copeland, 1991). By the 1930s, people had already started associating themselves psychologically and socially with organizations, and this paved way for these brands to develop more brand characteristics such as brand loyalty, awareness, experience etc.

2.4 Brand Management Concepts

With the evolution of branding, researchers began to study it thoroughly. New theories were being generated, and various variables were identified as a result. All these variables combined to help organizations to manage their brands more effectively and the concept of brand management ascended. Brand management consists of various brand characteristics which are also being used as variables of different studies (Ghodeswar, 2008).

One of the most significant concepts of branding is brand equity also known as customer-based brand equity (CBBE). It has become the most exciting idea of marketing since the late 20th century (Kotler et al., 2014). It is simply known as the total or overall value of a brand. It is the compilation of all the brand characteristics (Kaplan, 2007). Highly valuable brands are the ones that have been successful in managing their desired brand perception and are able to attract the anticipated response from customers (Ambler, 1992). therefore, it can be said that higher brand equity denotes more effective marketing of a brand (Clark & McNeilly, 2004).

Over the last couple of decades, brand equity has been the prime focus of researchers and marketing gurus who have tried to study it thoroughly so that brand value may be created. The notion has been immensely popular and thus, many models have been created both empirically and theoretically. For instance, Atilgan et al. (2009) and Yoo et al. (2000) tried to explain the concept experimentally, Aaker (1991) and Keller (1993a) explained same philosophically. The past studies have explained the branding concept differently & no singular connotation can be derived (Capon et al., 2001). Brand equity has been broken down into various perspectives by Chernatony and McDonald (1998). According to them, brand equity can be viewed from multifarious perspectives which may be mainly either the firm's perspective or the customers'

perspective, which may also include the financial market, employees, and communications perspectives.

Brand management has advanced over the years into a pivotal component of contemporary marketing strategies. Initially, branding was considered ordinarily as a device for distinguishing products or services within the market. However, as opposition multiplied and customers became more state-of-the-art, brand management started out to embody a wide variety of techniques aimed toward building and maintaining brand value through the years. This shift resulted inside the emergence of branding as a comprehensive subject, with researchers developing various theories and frameworks to better recognize how brands may be managed correctly. In essence, brand management includes growing, developing, and maintaining a brand's identity, market position, and perceived value.

A key aspect of brand management is understanding the brand characteristics that contribute to a brand's notion in the market. These traits encompass brand persona, brand loyalty, brand awareness, and brand institutions, among others. By figuring out and understanding these components, organizations are better ready to control their manufacturers and make certain that their message resonates with the target market. As the branding field evolved, researchers started out to apprehend that powerful brand management no longer calls for merely growing a compelling brand identification however also fostering an emotional connection with customers that drives loyalty and brand desire.

Among the most important and tremendous standards in brand management is brand equity, which refers to the entire value that a brand adds to a services or products based on customer perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors. Brand equity is taken into consideration as a vital measure of a brand's power in the marketplace, because it at once reflects how well a brand plays in terms of customer trust, loyalty, and normal market role. A brand with high fairness can command premium prices, maintain customer loyalty, and differentiate itself efficaciously from competitors (Kotler & Amstrong, 2014).

Rather than being a simple sum of a brand's tangible property, brand equity encompasses the intangible value created by a brand's picture, reputation, and customer relationships. Brands with high fairness are capable of generate nice associations with customers, main to customer loyalty, accelerated lifetime subscription, and a more resilient market presence. For organizations, brand equity signifies that they've

efficiently communicated their value proposition and established a sturdy emotional and cognitive reference to their audience (Romanello et al., 2020). When organizations manage their fairness properly, they experience advantages inclusive of better marketplace percentage, reduced fee sensitivity, and expanded customer lifetime subscription (Gligor & Bozkurt, 2022). To apprehend and degree brand equity, researchers have evolved numerous models and frameworks over time. Some of the most influential models include the Aaker (1991) Model and the Keller Model (1993), each of that have been broadly adopted within the discipline of marketing.

Aaker's Brand Equity Model (1991) identifies 5 key dimensions that contribute to brand equity: brand loyalty, brand focus, perceived quality, brand associations, and other proprietary brand property. This model emphasizes that brand equity is a protracted-term asset that can provide a competitive gain for organizations that manipulate it effectively. Aaker's framework indicates that a brand's value isn't entirely derived from its economic performance however also from its potential to foster tremendous associations and loyalty amongst customers.

Keller's Customer-Based Brand Equity Model (1993) builds upon Aaker's model by focusing on the customer's attitude. According to Keller, brand equity is pushed by using the improvement of brand knowledge, which includes two additives: brand awareness and brand image. Brand awareness refers to the customer's ability to apprehend or consider the brand, while brand image refers to the institutions that customers keep approximately the brand. Keller's model suggests that strong brand equity arises while a brand achieves both excessive consciousness and superb brand institutions.

In addition to those models, empirical research with the aid of Ayoubi et al. (2024) and Ordun (2015) have sought to measure brand equity through experimental studies, inspecting the various factors that influence customer behavior and brand preference. These studies have been instrumental in supporting organizations apprehend how exclusive brand traits affect their market performance and provide actionable insights into how they could enhance their brand equity.

Brand equity can be regarded from multiple perspectives, as noted by (De Chernatony & McDonald, 1998). Each attitude gives valuable insights into how brand equity is created and sustained. These perspectives include:

Firm's Perspective: From the organization's perspective, brand equity is seen as an economic asset that complements profitability, market position, and revenue

technology. Brands with excessive fairness are capable of gain better financial results, inclusive of top rate pricing and customer retention.

Customer's Perspective: From the customer's point of view, brand equity is built upon trust, perceived best, and emotional connection. Customers generally tend to select brands that they feel an advantageous association with, which drives loyalty and brand preference.

Financial Perspective: Brand equity additionally has a measurable impact on an industry's economic overall performance. Brands with sturdy equity tend to experience extra sales increase, profitability, and customer acquisition at decrease prices.

Employee Perspective: Employees also play an important function in shaping brand equity. Brands with high equity generally tend to attract and hold personnel who're aligned with the brand's values and mission, which in turn helps foster wonderful customer reports and build brand loyalty.

Communications Perspective: Effective brand communique, through marketing, public relations, and different forms of marketing, performs a tremendous position in shaping brand equity. Consistent messaging and reinforcing brand institutions help to bolster brand image and build customer loyalty.

Brand management has become a critical characteristic for organizations striving to differentiate themselves in an increasing number of competitive markets. Central to effective brand management is the idea of brand equity, which represents the general value a brand provides to its services and products primarily based on customer perceptions. By leveraging numerous models and frameworks to apprehend and measure brand equity, organizations can broaden strategies that foster long-term brand loyalty, drive customer choice, and maximize marketplace price. The potential to manage brand equity successfully is important for building sturdy, resilient brands which can thrive in nowadays dynamic commercial industry environment.

2.5 Description of Variables of Study

After a thorough review of the literature and identifying gaps as mentioned in chapter 1, this study includes brand experience, brand communication, and brand attachment as the independent variables. Their effects will be measured on brand knowledge which happens to be the mediating variable of this research. Finally, the

relationship between the mediating variable and the dependent variable i.e. brand consciousness will be examined.

2.6 Theoretical Underpinning

2.6.1 Customer-Based Brand Equity

A name, symbol, design, or logo that adds value to a product by going beyond the practical purpose of the product itself is referred to as a brand. Depending on one's point of view, the extent to which brands add value to the organization, the industry, or the customer can vary (Bapat & Hollebeek, 2023). Brand equity refers to the added value that a product receives because of being associated with a particular brand. This increased value can be investigated from several different perspectives, such as those of the organization, the industry, and the customer (Chi et al., 2024).

Depending on the perspectives, a brand can have added valuations for the firm, the trade, and the customer (Farquhar, 1989). From the perspective of the business, a brand adds value to a product by providing a platform for the introduction of new products and licensing opportunities. In the field of trade, a strong brand provides an advantage by facilitating the acceptance and distribution of products. From the perspective of an individual customer, brand equity is demonstrated by a more positive attitude towards a product associated with the brand. The intensity of this attitude significantly influences the purchasing behavior of customers. There are three elements of a strong brand: positive brand evaluations, accessible brand attitudes, and consistent brand image (Farquhar, 1989).

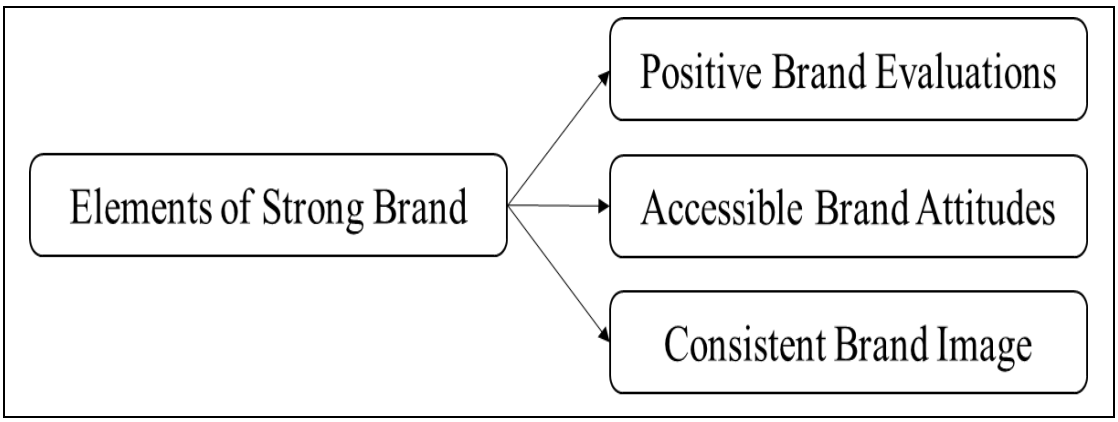

Figure 2.1 Elements of a Strong Brand (Farquhar, 1989)

Aaker (1991) first proposed the brand equity model. Aaker's model of brand equity was a framework for comprehending and administering a brand's value. Five essential components of brand equity had been identified by the model: brand awareness, brand loyalty, perceived quality, brand associations, and proprietary assets. Brand awareness is the degree to which customers recognize a brand and what it represents. Surveys, focus groups, and market research can be utilized to measure brand awareness. Brand loyalty is the extent to which customers are devoted to purchasing and utilizing a particular brand. Measures of brand loyalty include the number of repeat purchases, the willingness to pay a premium price, and the propensity to recommend the brand to others.

Perceived quality is the perceived worth that customers attribute to a brand. Surveys, focus groups, and market research can be used to measure perceived quality. Customers' brand associations consist of their beliefs and attitudes regarding a brand. Positive, negative, or neutral brand associations exist. Proprietary assets are the intangible assets owned or possessed by a brand. Patents, trademarks, copyrights, and intellectual property rights are examples of assets that can be classified as proprietary.

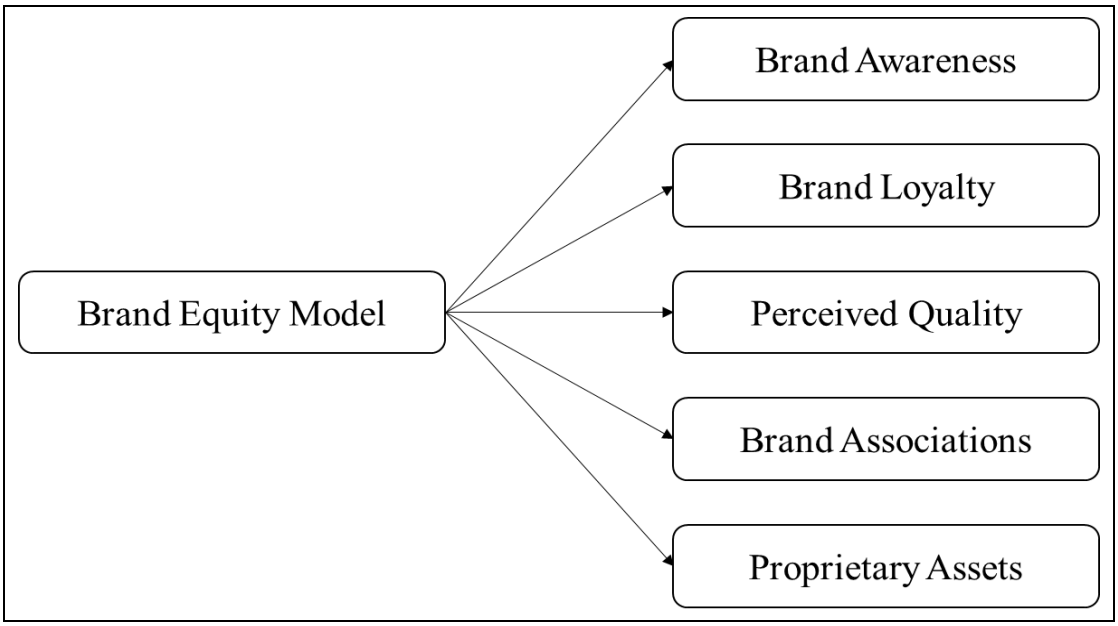

Figure 2.2 Aaker's Brand Equity Model

The term "brand equity" refers to the positive associations that customers have with a product or service because of the name of that brand, rather than any other factor. If the same product or service didn't have that distinct brand identification, these results wouldn't be achieved (Keller, 1993). The study of brand equity has been motivated

primarily by two factors. First, there is a financial incentive to obtain from a more precise valuation of a brand's worth, especially for accounting purposes. This objective originates from the desire to determine the exact value of a brand through financial statements. The second strategic reason for analyzing brand equity is to increase marketing efficiency. Organizations are compelled to optimize the efficacy of their marketing expenditures due to rising costs, intensified competition, and stagnant demand in a variety of markets for which marketers need a thorough understanding of customer behavior (Keller, 1993).

Establishing a powerful brand with substantial brand equity provides businesses with an abundance of benefits. A thorough understanding of the causes and effects of brand equity provides managers with valuable insights into the mechanisms and domains by which brands generate value. By delving into the causes and effects of brand equity, managers can identify how brands contribute to overall business performance and optimize their strategic decisions (Keller & Brexendorf, 2019).

Moreover, brand equity is acknowledged as the key driver of customer loyalty in competitive businesses facing an ever-changing business environment. An organization's ability to enhance the value of its products to exceed customer expectations determines its ability to acquire and retain customers. As a result, brand equity is recognized as a multidimensional concept comprising essential components such as brand loyalty, brand awareness, brand associations, perceived quality, and proprietary assets. Together, these factors contribute to the establishment and reinforcement of a powerful brand that fosters customer loyalty in a dynamic market (Kegoro & Justus, 2020).

In 2001, Keller explained the customer-based brand equity model. According to Keller (2001), four primary steps must be taken to build a powerful brand. The first step is to create a solid brand identity, which includes raising wide and deep awareness of the brand. Second, it requires making positive, memorable, and compelling brand meaning through associations between the brand and its target audience. Third, it calls for people responses to feel good about and interact with the brand. Finally, it entails relationships to foster profound and proactive customer loyalty to the brand.

Six crucial brand-building blocks must be in place before these four processes can be completed successfully. Brand salience, or the degree to which a certain brand stands out in the minds of customers. The brand performance also includes the brand's practical benefits and the degree to which they are met by the customers. The

personality, values, and positioning of a brand are just a few examples of the intangibles that can be captured by a brand's imagery. Customers' judgments of a brand include their thoughts on the brand's credibility, quality, and relative superiority over alternatives. Customers' emotional reactions and attachments to a brand are also included. Finally, brand resonance is the pinnacle of customer involvement and dedication, representing a lifelong commitment and loyalty to the brand (Keller, 2001).

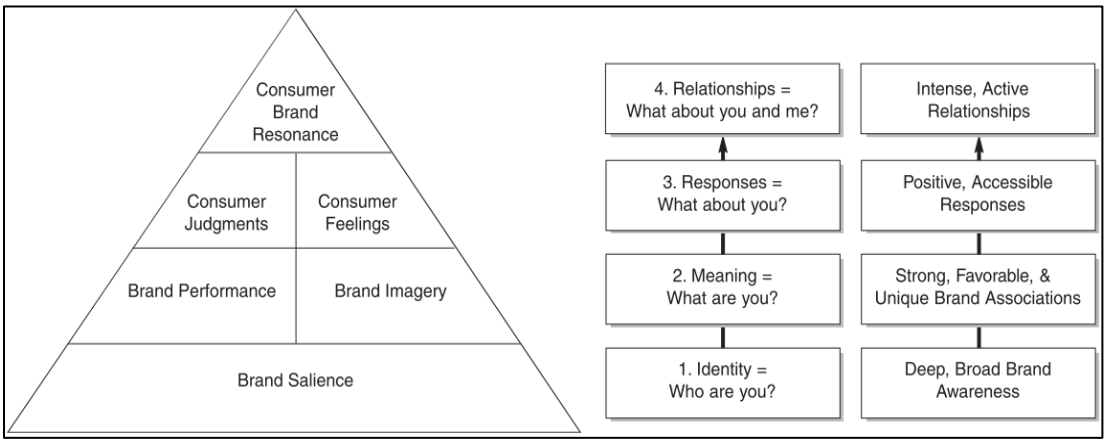

Figure 2.3 Customer-Based Brand Equity Pyramid (Keller, 2001)

In the context of the airline industry, this framework provides a comprehensive lens through which the roles of brand experience, brand communication, brand attachment, brand knowledge, and brand consciousness can be understood and strategically leveraged. The study's conceptual model is supported by the customer-based brand equity. The customer-based brand equity (CBBE) model provides a comprehensive theoretical foundation for understanding how brand-related factors shape customer perceptions and behaviors in the airline industry. According to Keller (1993) brand equity is built through customers' knowledge of a brand, encompassing awareness and the strength, favorability, and uniqueness of brand associations. Brand consciousness reflects the degree to which customers are aware of and prioritize a particular brand in their decision-making processes. In the airline industry, customers with high brand consciousness are more likely to choose airlines based on brand attributes and are less price sensitive. The CBBE model suggests that brand knowledge influences brand consciousness, as customers' perceptions and associations with a brand determine their awareness and preference (Keller, 1993). The CBBE model provides a robust framework for understanding how brand experience, brand communication, and brand attachment influence brand knowledge, which in turn affects brand consciousness

in the airline industry. By strategically managing these variables, airlines can enhance their brand equity, leading to increased customer loyalty and competitive advantage.

In this context, brand experience, which includes sensory, emotional, and behavioral interactions with an airline, serves as a critical driver of brand knowledge by creating memorable and positive associations (Farhat et al., 2021). Similarly, brand communication through marketing messages, advertisements, and integrated communication strategies enhances customers' understanding and perception of the airline, reinforcing existing brand knowledge and associations (Arya et al., 2022). Brand attachment, reflecting the emotional bond customers form with an airline, further strengthens these associations, promoting favorable attitudes and loyalty (Singh & Dall'Olmo Riley, 2022). Together, these independent variables influence brand knowledge, which acts as a mediating construct by translating experiences, communications, and attachment into meaningful customer cognitions about the brand. Ultimately, this enhanced brand knowledge fosters brand consciousness, wherein customers prioritize, recognize, and value the airline brand in their decision-making processes (Lee et al., 2024). Therefore, the CBBE model not only explains how independent brand factors interact but also illustrates the central role of brand knowledge in converting these inputs into brand-conscious customer behavior, providing actionable insights for airline marketing and strategic brand management.

In the airline industry, brand knowledge serves as a critical mediator between brand experience, communication, attachment, and brand consciousness, influencing customers' awareness and preference for specific airlines. Brand knowledge comprises two key components: brand awareness and brand associations. Brand awareness refers to the ability of customers to recognize or recall a brand, while brand associations encompass the attributes, benefits, and attitudes linked to the brand in customers' minds. Empirical studies have demonstrated that brand awareness significantly impacts customer-based brand equity (CBBE) in the aviation sector. For instance, research indicates that brand awareness positively and significantly affects CBBE, which in turn influences customers' willingness to pay a premium for airline services. This suggests that higher brand awareness can lead to greater brand consciousness, as customers are more likely to prioritize and recognize the brand in their decision-making processes (Santos et al., 2024). Eliminating the inclusion of brand awareness and brand image within the concept of brand knowledge would undermine the theoretical coherence of the CBBE framework, as both are necessary to explain how customers cognitively

represent and interpret brands. The CBBE model posits that customer-based brand equity arises when customers possess favorable, strong, and unique brand associations in memory conditions that cannot exist without both awareness and image (Keller, 2016). In other words, awareness provides brand accessibility, while image provides brand meaning, and together they constitute brand knowledge that drives customer preferences and behavioral intentions (Anselmsson et al., 2017). Within the airline industry, for example, awareness ensures that customers can recognize brands such as PIA, Emirates, or Qatar Airways, while image reflects their perceptions of service quality, safety, or national identity. This dual structure of brand knowledge helps predict brand consciousness, loyalty, and purchasing decisions (Dwivedi et al., 2021; Rather, 2021).

Furthermore, brand associations play a pivotal role in shaping customers' perceptions and attitudes toward airlines. Positive brand associations, such as perceptions of quality service, reliability, and customer care, enhance brand image and contribute to the development of brand consciousness. When customers associate an airline with favorable attributes, they are more likely to be conscious of the brand and consider it in their travel choices. In summary, brand knowledge, encompassing both brand awareness and brand image, mediates the effects of brand experience, communication, and attachment on brand consciousness. By enhancing brand knowledge, airlines can foster greater brand consciousness among customers, leading to increased brand preference and loyalty.

2.6.2 Brand Knowledge

The term of "customer-based brand equity" is also described as “the differential effect of brand knowledge on customer response to the marketing of the brand” (Keller, 1993). Included in this definition are the ideas of "differential effect," "brand knowledge," and "customer response to marketing." A brand's "differential effect" can be measured by comparing customers' reactions to the brand's marketing with those of the same marketing activities used for a generic version of the product or service. Moreover, "brand knowledge" is determined by brand awareness and brand image (Jaufenthaler, 2023). It entails everything that goes into making up the customer's mental image of the brand, including the traits and associations that customers have formed. The term "customer response to marketing" describes how customers feel and

act as a direct result of the marketing mix's efforts. This includes how they feel, what they like, and how they act as a direct result of the marketing tactics used (Keller, 1993).

Brand knowledge further has two dimensions namely brand awareness and brand image. These two dimensions have their multiple components which are presented in the figure below (Keller, 1993). Brand awareness is the extent to which a customer can quickly and accurately recall a brand name. It's a measurement of how well-known and respected a brand is among customers. Brand image is customers' conceptions of a brand that are formed by their interactions with the brand and other people as well as the information they learn about the brand (Fetais et al., 2023). To be precise, customers' purchase behavior and brand knowledge in their minds are the source of brand equity's foundation (Lee et al., 2023).

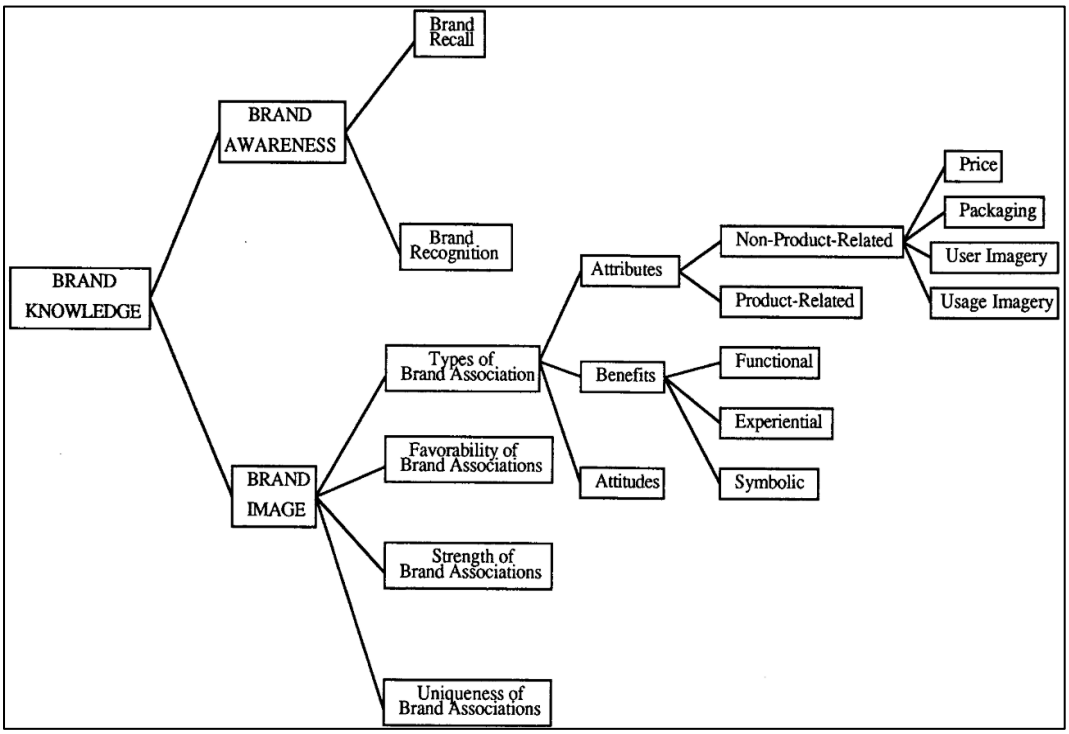

Figure 2.4 Dimensions of Brand Knowledge (Keller, 1993)

Brand knowledge is a pivotal idea in knowledge customer-based brand equity (CBBE), as it immediately impacts how customers perceive and reply to a brand's marketing efforts. According to Keller (1993), brand knowledge is an essential determinant of brand equity and consists of each brand awareness and brand image, which together shape the intellectual institutions and perceptions customers shape about a brand. This phase expands on the importance and intricacies of brand expertise by

inspecting its dimensions of brand awareness and brand image and their relevance in the context of brand equity development.

Brand Awareness: Brand awareness refers to the potential of customers to apprehend or do not forget a brand call when presented with a product category or situation. It is the muse of brand knowledge and the first step in building sturdy brand equity. The brand consciousness can positively affect customer perceptions and drive choice, because it ensures that a brand is top-of-mind whilst customers are making purchase choices (Keller, 1993). Brand consciousness isn't limited to mere recognition; it also includes recall, which is the potential of customers to not to forget the brand call without being triggered by means of specific cues (Aaker, 1991).

Brand awareness can be enhanced by various marketing strategies such as marketing, promotions, and public relations, all of which work to increase the probability that customers will think of a selected brand while thinking about a purchase (Keller, 2003). For example, airlines regularly use brand recognition methods to increase visibility and popularity by marketing, sponsorships, and partnerships, making sure that their brand is effortlessly identifiable to target customers. Furthermore, brand knowledge can be linked to brand loyalty, as customers are much more likely to pick acquainted organizations, which reduces choice-making uncertainty (Rhazaoui et al., 2024).

Brand Image: Brand image, on the other hand, represents the customer’s basic perception of the brand, shaped by their experiences, interactions, and the institutions they link to the brand. Brand image goes past popularity to mirror the attributes, values, and character that customers attribute to a brand, often based totally at the brand’s positioning and marketing messages. This intellectual illustration of a brand is constructed through the years by repeated exposure to brand communication, product experience, and word-of-mouth (Keller, 1993).

A solid brand image is essential for developing emotional connections with customers, that can result in elevated brand loyalty and advocacy. For airlines, brand image may be inspired by factors which include customer support satisfaction, data privacy, in-flight experiences, and the perceived value in their services. A high-quality brand image can differentiate an airline in a competitive market, in which customers may have comparable choices based totally on fee, routes, and amenities (Shamsudin et al., 2020). In the case of quality airlines, as an instance, the brand image may

additionally emphasize luxury, comfort, and exclusivity, whilst budget airlines can also focus on affordability and comfort.

Brand image is likewise shaped by the interplay between a brand's promise and its real performance. If customers' experiences align with the brand's promises, their image of the brand will become extra positive. On the alternative hand, terrible experiences can lead to the formation of a damaging brand image. This underscores the significance of consistency in turning in on brand promises, especially for industries like aviation, in which customer satisfaction is vital to maintaining wonderful brand perceptions (Agarwal & Gowda, 2021).

Brand knowledge performs a primary role in customer-based brand equity (CBBE) by using performance as a key motive force of customer conduct. As defined by Keller (1993), brand knowledge impacts how customers reply to a brand's marketing efforts, shaping their attitudes, purchase intentions, and brand loyalty. Strong brand knowledge, encompassing both brand awareness and brand image, enables to construct favorable customer attitudes and complements brand equity. Customers with high brand knowledge are more likely to have effective associations, which increases their chance of creating repeat purchases and recommending the brand to others (Liu et al., 2020).

The relationship among brand knowledge and brand equity is especially relevant in industries like airlines, in which customer loyalty and retention are important for long-term success. When customers possess sturdy brand knowledge, they are much more likely to remain loyal to a brand, even in the face of competitive pressures. For instance, unswerving customers of a particular airline may additionally forget low-priced competitors due to high quality associations with the airline's brand image, consisting of trustworthiness, reliability, or extraordinary customer service (Keller, 2003).

A well-set up brand with excessive brand consciousness and a strong brand image has a competitive advantage inside the marketplace, as customers are more likely to pick out a familiar brand over an unknown one. This is proper in the airline industry, in which customers tend to be danger-averse and prefer organizations that they consider delivering regular service quality (Kim et al., 2022).

Brand knowledge is a foundational element of customer-based brand equity, encompassing each brand awareness and brand image. Together, these dimensions of brand knowledge form customer perceptions, guide purchasing choices, and in the end power brand equity. For airlines, brand knowledge plays a critical position in

differentiating them in a competitive marketplace, influencing customer loyalty and retention. As such, it is essential for airlines to invest in strategies that decorate both brand awareness and brand image, ensuring that their brand is identified, relied on, and positively perceived through customers. This in flip enables them build sturdy, sustainable brand equity that contributes to long-time period industry achievement.

2.6.3 Brand Experience

According to Pine and Gilmore (1998), a change in customer behavior occurs as a direct result of the growing trend towards the commoditization of goods and services. Customers today place a higher value on the experiences that businesses can provide for them than they do on just acquiring goods or services. This viewpoint sheds light on the growing significance of the customer experience in the process of influencing customer choices (Morrison & Crane, 2007). Because of this, topics in marketing literature such as "customer experience" and "brand experience" have received a substantial amount of attention in recent years (Skard et al., 2011).

According to Brakus et al. (2009) brand experience incorporates the sensory, affective, behavioral, and intellectual responses elicited by brand-related stimuli, including design, packaging, communication, and environments. Authors have established the reliability, validity, and uniqueness of the brand experience scale through six studies, distinguishing it from other brand measures such as evaluations, involvement, attachment, and delight. Their research demonstrates that brand experience has a direct influence on customer satisfaction and loyalty, with brand personality associations serving as a mediator. This highlights the significance of brand experience in influencing customer perceptions and behaviors within the broader branding context.

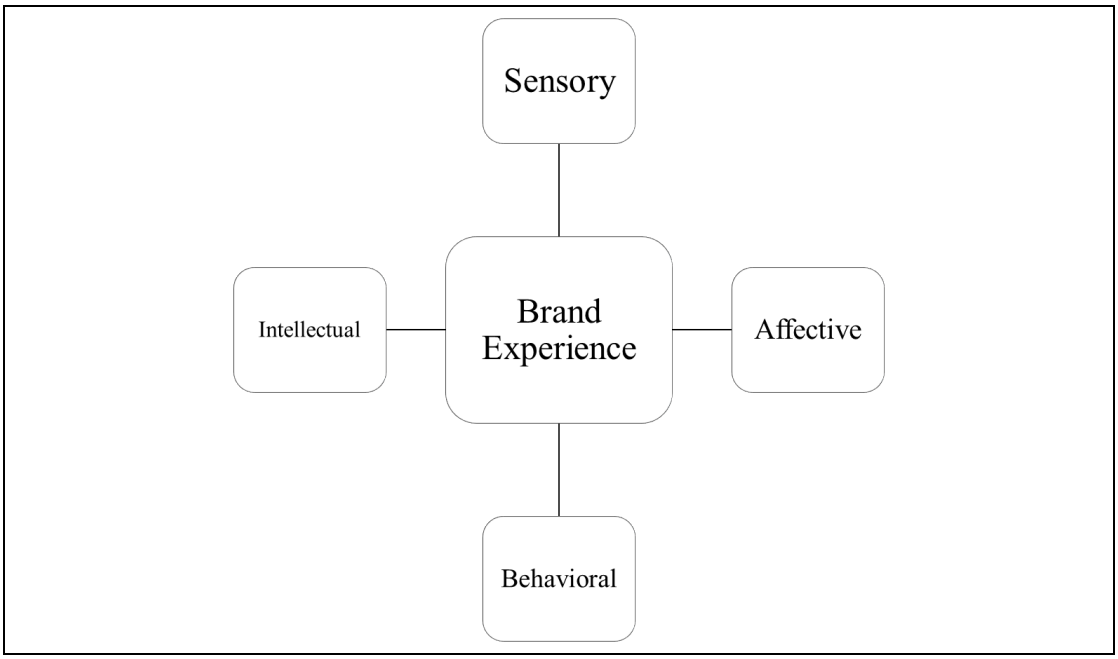

Figure 2.5 Dimensions of Brand Experience (Brakus et al., 2009)

Despite the significance of customer-brand engagement and experience, empirical research on their relationship with customer value co-creation, emotional attachment, and customer-based brand equity in the aviation industry is limited. The study of Satar et al. (2023) intended to address this gap in the literature by proposing and testing a model that investigates how customer brand engagement and value co-creation influence customer brand experience, which in turn influences emotional attachment and customer-based brand equity with aviation service brands. The results indicated that customer brand experience influences emotional attachment and customer-based brand equity positively (Satar et al., 2023).

In markets with comparable products and services, experiences have surpassed functional differences as the key differentiator for organizations. Brands play a crucial role in this differentiation, as they represent a compilation of experiences as opposed to merely a set of attributes. The effect of brand experiences on customer-based brand equity has been investigated by Pina and Dias (2021) as well. The results indicated that brand experience had a positive effect on brand equity, with sensory and emotive experiences having a significant impact on all brand equity dimensions (Pina & Dias, 2021).

In the context of a retail fashion brand, Ferreira et al. (2022) investigated the relationship between brand experience and brand equity, as mediated by brand love. The study highlighted the importance of emotional signals, meaning formation, and

strategic planning in nurturing strong customer relationships. The findings emphasized the role of various brand experience dimensions in eliciting emotional responses such as brand love, which ultimately contributes to brand equity. By integrating customer-brand relationship theory, brand experience, and brand love, this study contributed to the understanding of customer-based brand equity in the retail sector. Examining the sensory, cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions of brand experience has implications for both theory and practice.

Brand experience is influenced by a variety of offline and online context-specific factors. Offline, elements like event marketing, brand contacts, and brand-related stimuli play significant roles in shaping the overall brand experience. Moreover, the art of storytelling enriches the brand experience. Trust and perceived usefulness are key antecedents that substantially influence the brand experience in the online environment. It has been noticed that brand experience has a direct influence on customer satisfaction, brand loyalty, and brand attitude. Additionally, brand credibility and brand equity are impacted by the overall brand experience. Ultimately, a positive brand experience fosters a stronger emotional connection and affinity with the brand, which increases customers' purchase intent (Khan & Rahman, 2015). Khan and Rahman (2015) additionally said that there is a need of research on the relationship of brand experience and brand equity especially in the services sector.

Jeon and Yoo (2021) present a novel model that investigated the relationship between brand experience, customer-based brand equity (CBBE), and brand loyalty in the swiftly expanding food service sector known as "grocerants." The authors empirically analyzed the factors influencing brand loyalty by surveying 384 foodservice customers who have shopped at seven South Korean grocery stores. The study emphasizes the importance of brand experience in influencing perceived value and brand loyalty, as mediated by key variables such as brand awareness, brand association/image, and perceived quality. The findings highlighted the significance of developing a comprehensive CBBE framework that incorporates sensory, affective, cognitive, and behavioral elements of experience in order to foster and increase customer brand loyalty in the grocery retailing sector.

Brand experience is a quite current and evolving idea in brand management, emphasizing the customer's sensory, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral responses to brand-associated stimuli (Schmitt, 1999). It represents a comprehensive approach to knowledge how customers interact with a brand across multiple touchpoints and the

way those interactions shape their perceptions and attitudes. Scholars and practitioners alike have diagnosed the developing significance of brand experience in improving customer loyalty, using brand equity, and in the long run fostering brand advocacy. This literature assessment explores the theoretical foundations, key additives, and importance of brand experience in present day marketing practices.

Brand experience is regularly defined as the sum of all sensations, emotions, cognitions, and behavioral responses evoked with the aid of brand-related stimuli (Brakus et al., 2009). These stimuli may be encountered by diverse channels, which include commercials, retail environments, packaging, social media, and customer support interactions. The concept of brand experience developed from earlier branding theories, inclusive of brand identity and brand image, which primarily focused on the notion of a brand within the minds of customers. While brand identity refers to the way an organization wishes its brand to be perceived, brand experience centers at the real interplay among the customer and the brand.

Schmitt (1999) added the idea of experiential marketing, which counseled that customers does not view brands merely as functional products however alternatively as resources of experience that engage their emotions and senses. This marked a shift from conventional product-centric marketing to a greater holistic, customer-targeted methods, where brands are perceived as a way of pleasant deeper psychological desires. Brakus et al. (2009) proposed that brand experience comprises four key dimensions:

Sensory Experience: This measurement refers to how the brand stimulates the customer's senses, along with sight, sound, touch, flavor, and smell. Sensory experiences are especially influential in industries like retail, hospitality, and food, where customers' sensory perceptions play a significant function in shaping their experience and reminiscence of the brand.

Affective Experience: This concept entails the emotional response that a brand elicits from the customers. Positive emotional experiences can cause stronger brand attachment, loyalty, and advocacy. Brands that evoke robust emotions, including joy, pleasure, or nostalgia, are more likely to form lasting relationships with their customers.

Cognitive Experience: The cognitive dimension encompasses the intellectual engagement that customers have with the brand. It relates to how well the brand communicates its price proposition, its potential to offer novel or insightful information, and the customer's overall knowledge of the brand. Cognitive experiences are frequently fostered through informative marketing, content marketing, or brand storytelling.

Behavioral Experience: Behavioral dimensions refer the actions and behaviors that customers exhibit in reaction to their interactions with the brand. These movements encompass purchases, word-of-mouth suggestions, social media engagement, and participation in brand-associated sports. A sturdy behavioral experience frequently interprets into brand loyalty and customer advocacy.

These four dimensions of brand experience paintings together to form a unified, multidimensional interplay among the customer and the brand, resulting in a deeper connection and more potent brand equity (Brakus et al., 2009).

A key area of interest inside the study of brand experience is its relation with brand loyalty. Research has proven that brand experience performs an essential function in fostering customer loyalty. Customers who have positive brand experiences are more likely to broaden strong emotional bonds with the brand, which increases their chance of repeat purchases and long-term brand loyalty (Thomson et al., 2005). When customers have consistent and favorable experiences with a brand, they are much more likely to agree with the brand and end up being loyal advocates (Nayeem et al., 2019).

For instance, within the context of retail, an immersive purchasing experience that engages customers emotionally and intellectually can result in extended customer delight and, in the long run, loyalty (Shahid et al., 2022). Similarly, in the hospitality industry, offering memorable experiences that stimulate customers' senses and feelings can lead to excessive levels of customer pride and repeat visits (Pine & Gilmore, 1998).

Brand experience has been recognized as an enormous motive force of brand equity, the overall value that a brand holds inside the market. According to Aaker (1991), brand equity is built upon four key components: brand loyalty, brand knowledge, perceived high-quality, and brand associations. Brand experience directly impacts a lot of these additives through creating sturdy emotional connections, fostering nice brand associations, and improving brand recognition.

Brakus et al. (2009) argue that brand experience contributes to brand equity by means of offering customers with a consistent and advantageous interplay with the brand throughout multiple touchpoints. This non-stop engagement allows to construct a robust brand identification that is recognized and valued by customers, which in flip will increase the brand’s standard impartiality. Furthermore, as brand experience contributes to brand loyalty and advocacy, it creates a virtuous cycle of customer engagement, leading to more brand popularity and long-term profitability.

The upward thrust of digital era and social media have notably transformed how organizations engage with customers and deliver brand experiences. Social media platforms, websites, and cellular applications have become key channels for developing and improving brand experience, permitting organizations to interact immediately with customers in real-time. Customers these days assume personalized and interactive experiences, and brands which can efficiently deliver these experiences often garner a competitive advantage (Volchek et al., 2021).

For example, social media allows brands to engage with customers emotionally and create a sense of network, that can fortify brand loyalty. User-generated content material, influencer partnerships, and brand storytelling on social media platforms are powerful methods to foster advantageous brand experience and enhance brand trust. While brand experience offers big benefits in phrases of constructing customer loyalty and brand equity, handling it efficaciously presents challenges. One of the important challenging things is ensuring consistency throughout all touchpoints. Customers interact with organizations by multiple channels, consisting of physical locations, online systems, customer support interactions, and marketing campaigns. Each of these touchpoints contributes to the overall brand experience, and any inconsistency can result in confusion or dissatisfaction (Sicilia & Palazón, 2023).

Another challenge is the complexity of measuring brand experience. While a few dimensions, along with sensory experiences, are relatively easy to assess, while others, like affective and cognitive stories, require greater subjective evaluation. Brands need to employ comprehensive dimension gear to recognize how customers perceive and engage with their brand at different ranges (Schmitt, 1999).

Brand experience has emerged as an important concept in brand management, offering new possibilities for organizations to create deeper connections with their customers. Through sensory, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral interactions, organizations can shape customer perceptions, foster loyalty, and garnish brand equity. As the digital landscape maintains to adapt, dealing with brand experience consistency throughout multiple touchpoints has come to be increasingly crucial. Organizations that efficiently create positive and consistent brand experiences are well situated to build robust, resilient brand that strengthen long-term achievement. However, managing these experiences calls for a comprehensive understanding of customer desires and expectancies, as well as effective measurement gear to assess the impact of brand interactions.

2.6.4 Brand Communication

Researchers in Egypt's fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) sector looked at how firm and user-generated social media brand communication affected five aspects of customer-based brand equity (CBBE) on Facebook. Four components of customer brand equity (CBBE) which are brand awareness, brand perceived quality, brand associations, and brand trust were found to be significantly and positively impacted by firm-created social media brand communication (Sadek et al., 2018).

In recent years, the importance of brand equity has come to be recognized as an essential intangible asset for organizations, regardless of the industry or field in which they operate. The importance of effective brand communication in developing an organization's positive brand equity has been emphasized by a great number of industry professionals (De & Verma, 2021). In a study regarding the impact of social media brand communication on customer-based brand equity characteristics as part of their research project, brand communication played major roles in shaping customer-based brand equity (Cheung et al., 2020).

Brand communication is a multifaceted manner that includes all the methods through which a brand conveys its values, persona, and identification to its customers. It is an essential detail of brand management, playing a vital position in shaping customer perceptions, constructing brand equity, and influencing customer conduct (Yu et al., 2023). According to Aaker (1991), brand communication is a vital tool for creating and reinforcing brand awareness, which serves as the foundation of brand equity. Brand communication involves each intentional strategies, inclusive of marketing, and accidental mechanism, like customer word-of-mouth and product experiences. These efforts integrate to shape the way customers perceive and relate to a brand, influencing their loyalty and shopping selections.

One of the center targets of brand communication is to impact brand awareness and brand image, two key components of customer-based brand equity (CBBE). Keller (1993) defines brand awareness as the potential of customers to understand or bear in mind a brand, that is often executed by consistent and repeated communication efforts throughout more than one platform. This is intently tied to brand image, which refers to the associations that customers shape with a brand. According to Aaker (1996), a robust brand image is constructed through clear and consistent messaging that highlights the brand's particular attributes. Effective brand communication complements brand image

through aligning the brand's communication with customer values and emotional needs, fostering nice associations that cross beyond useful benefits.

The role of brand attachment as the emotional connection between customers and brands is also vital in brand communication. Ghorbanzadeh & Rahehagh (2020) assert that emotional branding plays a relevant position in customer loyalty, emphasizing that organizations that effectively connect to customers on an emotional stage tend to have a more potent marketplace position. Through strategic brand communication, organizations can create narratives that resonate with customers' feelings, which fosters deeper loyalty. This emotional engagement makes customers more likely to propose the brand to others, which increases brand awareness and reinforces brand attachment.

In phrases of communication channels, brand communication today incorporates a big range of conventional and digital platforms. Traditional channels like tv, radio, print media, and outdoor marketing remain powerful for mass communication, growing brand visibility and awareness (Arya et al., 2022). However, digital channels, especially social media, have revolutionized brand communication with the aid of permitting organizations to have interaction in two-way communication with customers. Social media permits brands to engage with customers in real time, growing possibilities for customized communication and immediate comments (Oncioiu et al., 2021). This direct interaction strengthens brand-customer relationships, making brand communication more dynamic and customer-centric.

Moreover, the rise of influencer marketing and content marketing has surfaced as a vital a part of brand communique strategies. Influencers, who're relied on by their followers, provide organizations the opportunity to reach quite engaged audiences. By collaborating with influencers, brands can amplify their messages and create authentic connections with customers (Leung et al., 2022). Similarly, content material marketing along with blogs, films, and podcasts offers smooth communication that nurtures long-term customer relationships whilst subtly reinforcing the brand's identity (Terho et al., 2022). Brands with the use of these strategies can enhance both the cognitive and affective dimensions of customer perceptions, leading to stronger brand loyalty.

Despite its vast capacity, brand communication faces several challenges. In the contemporary media panorama, customers are bombarded with a consistent float of messages, making it difficult for organizations to face out. The cluttered media surroundings call for brands to be more innovative in their communication efforts

(Villarroel Ordenes et al., 2019). Furthermore, cultural sensitivity is important when organizations spread into international markets. Brand messages that paint properly in a single cultural context might not resonate in another. As a result, brands ought to adapt their communication techniques to mirror the values and preferences of various audiences, ensuring their messages are culturally suitable (Chatzipanagiotou et al., 2019).

Finally, the growing importance of sustainability and social responsibility is shaping the future of brand communication. Brands now are expected to speak their dedication to environmental and social causes, reflecting customer worries about organization responsibility. According to Gürhan-Canli & Fries (2023), organizations that engage in cause-driven communication are more likely to construct link with their customers, which in turn complements brand loyalty and fairness. This approach is becoming increasingly vast as younger generations call for extra transparency and authenticity from the brands they support.

In conclusion, brand communication is an essential tool for handling customer-based brand equity. Through strategic messaging throughout diverse channels, organizations can impact customer perceptions, enhance brand image, and foster emotional attachment. The evolving panorama of digital and social media, along the growing demand for authenticity and sustainability, keeps forming how brands communicate with their audiences. Brands that adapt to these changes and communicate successfully will possibly build more potent, more dependable customer bases.

2.6.5 Brand Attachment

Attachment, as proposed by Bowlby (1969), refers to the persistent feeling of psychological connectivity that can be felt between a person and an object. According to Collins and Read (1990), a profound emotional relationship has a significant influence on the formation of an individual's self-concept as well as their perspective on the social world. Within the field of research pertaining to brands, a sizeable proportion of the studies that investigated brand attachment are firmly based on the conceptual framework of attachment theory that was developed by Bowlby in 1969. Researchers want to understand the complexity and ramifications of customers' profound emotional connections with organizations; thus, they are investigating the subtle dynamics of attachment in an effort to do so. There is no question that brand

attachment, when integrated with other psychological theories, has the potential to contribute to additional clarification and advancement in the understanding of the concept (Bagozzi et al., 2021).

Although brand attachment is seen in the literature as a separate concept, it is used under the theory of CBBE in this study. As brand attachment sits on top of the CBBE pyramid proposed by Keller (1993). As Keller (1993) put it, “to create resonance, a strong personal attachment is necessary”. Lassar et al. (1995) also examined the relationship of attachment with CBBE with a different angle. They measured the feeling as a component of brand equity. They further included the feeling component under the domain of brand attachment. They defined attachment as “the relative strength of a customer’s positive feelings toward the brand”. Therefore, this study will use brand attachment as a component of the customer-based brand equity model.

Likewise, Arya et al. (2022) investigated the effect of brand communication on customer-based brand equity, concentrating on the mediating role of brand attachment. The study investigated numerous customer-based brand equity outcomes, including customers' willingness to pay, brand loyalty, and positive word-of-mouth. The researchers employed a hybrid methodology that incorporated Smart-PLS, Process-macro, and artificial neural network modelling to obtain data from 498 participants. The analysis demonstrated that positive brand communication on social media platforms increases brand equity among customers. In addition, the study confirms that brand attachment plays a significant mediating role in this relationship. This study offers valuable insights into the influence of brand communication on customer-based brand equity, with a focus on the mediating effects of brand attachment.

Brand attachment is a psychological and emotional bond among customers and a brand that is going beyond easy preference or loyalty. It reflects the intensity of the customer's relationship with a brand and is considered a crucial motive force of brand loyalty and customer behavior. The concept of brand attachment has garnered widespread attention in recent years because of its powerful influence on customer retention, brand advocacy, and basic brand equity (Shimul, 2022). Brand attachment can be described as the emotional connection that customers develop with brands, which ends up in an extended commitment to the brand, repeated buy behavior, and a stronger willingness to recommend the brand to others (Hemsley-Brown, 2023).

The theoretical foundation for brand attachment stems from attachment concept, firstly developed in the context of interpersonal relationships (Bowlby, 1969). In this

context, attachment refers to the emotional bonds formed among individuals and significant others, consisting of caregivers. Researchers have prolonged this principle to the customer-brand relationship, suggesting that customers can shape emotional attachments to organizations in a similar manner to how people shape attachments to people (Ghorbanzadeh & Rahehagh, 2021). The improvement of brand attachment is encouraged through various factors, along with the customer's past stories, the brand's ability to satisfy emotional and functional desires, and the values the brand represents (Thomson et al., 2005).

Brand attachment is usually conceptualized as a multi-dimensional construct, comprising emotional and cognitive components. The emotional measurement refers to the feelings of love, accept as true with, and closeness that customers develop towards a brand. Cognitive attachment, however, involves the customer's perceptions of the brand's uniqueness and importance of their lives (Sharif & Sidi Lemine, 2024). Brand attachment is frequently measured using indicators such as brand affection, brand trust, and brand commitment. High degrees of brand attachment usually cause improved customer loyalty, brand advocacy, and resistance to competitive organizations (Hemsley-Brown, 2023).

One of the key drivers of brand attachment is the brand experience. Brand experience refers to the sum of all interactions and encounters a customer has with a brand, starting from sensory experience to emotional, intellectual, and behavioral responses (Schmitt, 1999). Positive and noteworthy brand experiences contribute to forming stronger emotional connections, which foster brand attachment. Brands that deliver steady and significant experience are more likely to create lasting bonds with customers, as those experiences shape the customer's belief of the brand as a sincere and reliable entity. Affective experiences, specifically, play a substantial function in nurturing brand attachment, as emotional engagement with the brand deepens the customer’s feelings of attachment (Hwang et al., 2021).

Brand attachment also includes an experience of brand self-concept connection, in which the brand is seen as a part of the customer's identification (Shimul, 2022). This connection is robust for organizations that align with the customer’s personal values and self-image. For instance, customers might also sense that a luxurious brand reflects their status or lifestyle, whilst an environmentally aware brand may resonate with customers who prioritize sustainability. Brands that efficaciously align with customers’ self-idea are more likely to elicit more potent attachment, as the brand turns into a

symbol of the customer's identification and values. This is frequently called the idea of "self-brand connection," in which the brand becomes an extension of the customer's self (Li et al., 2022).

The position of brand attachment extends past repeat purchasing behavior to persuade other key customer behaviors consisting of brand advocacy and word-of-mouth (Gilal et al., 2021). Customers who're strongly connected to a brand are much more likely to suggest the brand to others and to shield the brand against terrible comments or competition' movements. This kind of advantageous word-of-mouth (WOM) behavior is specially treasured for organizations, as it leads to elevated brand visibility, believe, and credibility, all of which make contributions to the brand's normal equity (Khan & Fatma, 2023). Strong brand attachment leads to extra customer forgiveness, making customers much less probable to replace to competing organizations whilst confronted with transient dissatisfaction.

Brand attachment is likewise motivated by brand consistency and brand credibility. Customers are more likely to shape emotional bonds with organizations that continuously deliver on their promises and maintain a coherent brand image through the years (Yuanita & Marsasi, 2022). Brand credibility, which incorporates perceptions of the brand's trustworthiness, knowledge, and reliability, contributes to the improvement of attachment through reinforcing the customer's belief that the brand is worth of their emotional investment (Aaker, 1991).

However, now not all customers form brand attachment in the identical way. Research shows that the power of brand attachment can range depending on person characteristics, which includes personality trends and earlier stories with the brand (Davis & Dacin, 2022). For example, customers who rate excessive on traits like openness to experience or emotional stability may be much more likely to form sturdy emotional attachments to organizations than folks who rate lower on these trends. Additionally, cultural differences can play a significant role in shaping brand attachment, as customers from different cultures may also have specific values and emotional desires that influence how they interact with brands (Madadi et al., 2021).

In conclusion, brand attachment is a vital concept within the discipline of brand management and customer conduct. It represents the emotional bond that customers shape with brands, which notably impacts loyalty, brand advocacy, and standard brand equity. Strong brand attachment is nurtured by high-quality brand experiences, alignment with customers' values and self-idea, and regular, credible brand

communication. Understanding the drivers and consequences of brand attachment can assist brands create greater meaningful and lasting relationships with their customers, in the long run strengthening their marketplace function and riding long-time period success.

2.6.6 Brand Consciousness

Prior studies examining the relationship between brand consciousness, and customer-based brand equity predominantly viewed brand consciousness as a separate construct from the customer-based brand equity model. However, there is a significant literature gap on the integration of brand consciousness with the customer-based brand equity framework. This study adopts a novel approach by incorporating brand consciousness as dependent variable in order to address this gap within the theoretical underpinning of CBBE. This study explains the brand identity step and brand salience components of Keller's CBBE as closely related constructs to brand consciousness. Therefore, this study uses brand consciousness to describe brand salience as the independent variable. This study seeks to provide a deeper understanding of the connection between brand communication, brand experience, brand attachment, brand knowledge, and brand consciousness.

The following table presents the theoretical support for the variables in this study. The variable of brand knowledge is supported by brand equity and customer-based brand equity (CBBE) theories directly and through the awareness and image dimensions of brand knowledge. Brand knowledge is an important component of CBBE, as said by Lee et al. (2023), "Customers' purchase behavior and brand knowledge in their minds are the source of brand equity's foundation". Brand experience incorporates the sensory, affective, behavioral, and intellectual responses elicited by brand-related stimuli, including design, packaging, communication, and environments (Brakus et al., 2009). Catherine et al. (2024) further elaborated that it is significant to develop a CBBE framework that incorporates sensory, affective, intellectual, and behavioral dimensions of brand experience. Cheung et al. (2020) emphasized that brand communication plays a major role in shaping customer-based brand equity. The importance of brand communication for brand equity was further highlighted by Arya et al. (2022), who said that positive brand communication increases brand equity among customers. Brand attachment is also supported by brand equity and

CBBE theories. Aaker (1991) described brand associations as an important component of brand equity. Brand association has been defined as brand attachment in this study. Furthermore, according to the Keller (1993) CBBE model, brand attachment sits on top of the pyramid as he described it as a strong personal attachment to create resonance between brand and customer. Keller (1993) defined brand salience as the degree to which a certain brand stands out in the minds of customers. Therefore, it is used to explain the brand consciousness variable of the current study.

Table 2.1
Theoretical Support for Variable from Different Studies

No.	Authors	Variables	Focus of the research
1	Yoel et al. (2021)	Brand Consciousness	The study models brand consciousness as an endogenous construct that is explained by perceived social media marketing activities and, in turn, influences brand loyalty. The authors argue that customers' conscious awareness and sensitivity to brand messaging emerge from their engagement with social media marketing activities, justifying the treatment of brand consciousness as an internal attitudinal response within the structural model.
2	Hosain & Mamun (2023)	Brand Consciousness	In the study, brand consciousness was conceptualized and tested as an endogenous mediating construct. Drawing on the Stimulus Organism Response (S-O-R) framework, the authors positioned social media advertising as the external stimulus that influences customers' internal psychological state brand consciousness which in turn affects their purchase intention. In this model, brand consciousness functions as an internal cognitive-affective response formed through exposure to persuasive, informative, and entertaining social media content. Since brand consciousness is caused by social media advertising and influences behavioral outcomes, it operates as an endogenous latent variable, reflecting a mediating mechanism through which external marketing stimuli translate into customer behavioral intentions.

Brand consciousness refers to a customer's focus and popularity of a brand's characteristics, image, and reputation within the marketplace. It includes a heightened sensitivity to organizations, in which customers are not best acquainted with but

additionally actively consider brand attributes whilst making purchase selections. Brand recognition can have an impact on various customer behaviors such as brand desire, loyalty, and shopping decisions, and plays an essential position in shaping ordinary brand equity (Supiyandi et al., 2022). This idea emphasizes how customers' perceptions of brands can impact their buying selections, with a special attention on how distinguished organizations are included into social identities and cultural contexts.

Brand consciousness may be described as a multidimensional assemble that involves each cognitive and emotional dimension. From a cognitive angle, it includes the expertise and reputation of a brand's attributes, quality, and overall performance (Husain et al., 2022). On the emotional aspect, brand consciousness is regularly tied to social impacts, where customers view brands as a method of conveying fame or belonging to sure organizations. A customer's degree of brand consciousness can vary relying on elements together with product type, social context, and individual motivations, with luxurious goods or high give up brands frequently serving as markers of popularity and exclusivity (Kaur & Anand, 2021).

Brand consciousness is strongly associated with customer alternatives and purchase conduct. Customers who are exceedingly brand aware tend to prioritize properly established and identified organizations whilst making purchasing decisions (Hsin Chang & Wen Chen, 2008). Such customers aren't simplest concerned with the useful benefits of a product but also with the social status that incorporates owning or using a specific brand. This sort of customer often values the symbolic meanings attached to brands, that could lead to a desire for top rate or luxurious brands. These customers trust that purchasing well-known brands complements their self-image and positions them within a desired social circle (Kim et al., 2022).

A vital aspect of brand consciousness is its position in brand loyalty. Highly brand-conscious customers are much more likely to showcase strong loyalty towards unique organizations because of their deeper emotional attachment and recognition of brand equity (Kim et al., 2022). These customers often engage in repeat purchases and are much less possibly to replace to competing brands, even when confronted with charge fluctuations or product availability problems. Brand awareness also impacts customers' perceptions of brand equity, which includes each brand understanding (consciousness and image) and attitudes towards the brand (Gowda et al., 2023). Customers who're brand-conscious can also see organizations as symbols of accept as

true with, exceptional, and status, thereby growing their chance of sticking with a brand over the years.

Brand consciousness is specially stated in certain product categories, which includes luxury items, cosmetics, fashion, and technology. For example, customers in the luxury items market tend to be extra brand-aware because of the symbolic fee of high-end brands. These customers frequently seek to deliver wealth, flavor, or sophistication through their preference of organizations (Janpors et al., 2023). In the fashion industry, brand awareness is driven by customers' desire to stay on fashion and be diagnosed by their friends as style-ahead (Dewi et al., 2022). In assessment, for everyday merchandise including household goods, brand consciousness may not be as big, as the point of interest is extra on value and convenience in preference to prestige or social signaling (Sarin & Sharma, 2023).

Culture performs an enormous role in shaping customers' stages of brand consciousness. Cultural factors decide how brand-conscious customers behave, as organizations convey distinctive meanings in diverse cultural contexts. For example, in collectivist societies, customers may show brand awareness as a manner to reflect group identification or align with societal norms (Mishra & Maity, 2021). On the other hand, in individualistic societies, customers would possibly consciousness on organizations that emphasize private fulfilment, joy, or area of expertise (Aaker, 1996). Cultural variations also influence how customers interpret brand messages and the significance of brand picture, making it crucial for groups to conform their branding techniques to in shape the cultural values of the goal marketplace (Klein & Sharma, 2022).

One of the important thing drivers of brand consciousness is social identification theory, which suggests that customers perceive with organizations that mirror their desired self-image and group affiliations (Rather et al., 2021). Through brand selections, customers speak their social identity and differentiate themselves from others. Brands that resonate with certain social or cultural associations grow to be symbols of shared values, status, and lifestyle. For example, customers can also pick organizations that align with their political beliefs, environmental worries, or way of life selections, which reflects their social standing and organization identity. The ability of a brand to connect to customers' feel of identification is essential for fostering brand consciousness, because it strengthens the emotional attachment among the customer and the brand (Shimul & Phau, 2022).

In this context, brands that could effectively position themselves as representatives of unique identities or subcultures have the capability to cultivate high ranges of brand consciousness. For example, organizations like Apple have cultivated a devoted customer base with the aid of positioning themselves as symbols of innovation, creativity, and individuality (Klabi & Meshari, 2023). This brand positioning resonates with customers who want to differentiate themselves from the mainstream and align with a unique, contemporary identity.

Effective brand communication plays an important role in constructing and preserving brand awareness. Through centered marketing, storytelling, and brand messaging, groups can have an impact on customer perceptions and enhance brand awareness. Consistent and coherent brand communication helps customers form a clear knowledge of a brand's attributes, values, and positioning. Brands that efficiently speak their precise selling propositions (USPs) and engage in applicable communicate with customers are much more likely to create an enduring impact and foster higher ranges of brand consciousness (Keller, 2008). In today’s competitive market, brands that fail to address their value propositions digitally may also conflict to construct brand consciousness and reputation.

In the digital age, social media has grown to be an effective device for increasing brand consciousness. Platforms which include Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter offer organizations with direct access to customers, permitting them to have interaction in real time communications, respond to customer feedback, and have an impact on brand perceptions. Through influencer marketing and social media campaigns, brands can enhance their visibility and role themselves as relevant to customer segments (Salem & Salem, 2021). The upward push of social media has amplified the significance of brand consciousness, as customers now have more possibilities to interact with brands and share their critiques inside their social networks. Brand conscious customers frequently are looking for validation from their peers and online groups, making social media a vital platform for building brand equity. Therefore, brand consciousness is an essential component in shaping customer behavior and brand equity. It is a multidimensional construct that affects customer choices, loyalty, and brand advocacy. Highly brand-aware customers prioritize well established and prestigious organizations, often using brands to explicit social identity and status. Cultural context, brand communication, and customer self-concept all play huge roles in determining the extent of brand awareness.

By information and leveraging those elements, brands can enhance their position in the market and foster long-time period relationships with customers.

2.6.7 Integration of Brand Equity and Brand Consciousness within the Study Model

It is crucial to clarify that while brand equity and brand consciousness are related constructs within marketing and customer psychology, they represent distinct theoretical domains. Brand equity is an organizational or marketing asset reflecting the value a brand adds to products or services in the minds of customers (Keller, 1993; Aaker, 1996). It is rooted in the customer-based brand equity (CBBE) model, which emphasizes that brand value is created through customer learning processes involving brand awareness, associations, perceived quality, and loyalty (Keller, 2016). In contrast, brand consciousness reflects an individual-level psychological state or orientation, describing the extent to which customers are aware of, responsive to, and influenced by brand names, reputations, and symbolic meanings when making purchase decisions (Sproles & Kendall, 1986; Sharda & Bhat, 2018). Therefore, brand equity is an organizational-level brand performance construct, while brand consciousness captures the customer's perceptual and behavioral response to brand stimuli making it a natural outcome of brand equity building activities.

Within the present study, the customer-based brand equity model (Keller, 1993) provides the theoretical foundation linking brand experience, brand communication, and brand attachment (as antecedents) to brand consciousness (as an outcome), mediated through brand knowledge. In this framework, brand knowledge a key dimension of brand equity serves as the cognitive structure that stores and organizes brand-related information (awareness, image, and associations). These knowledge structures are activated by experiential and emotional factors (such as attachment and communication) and, in turn, shape the customer's conscious evaluation of brand prestige, relevance, and desirability (Yoo & Donthu, 2001; Dwivedi et al., 2021). Thus, brand consciousness represents the psychological manifestation or outcome of the brand equity-building process at the individual level.

This integration ensures that brand equity functions as the theoretical umbrella, explaining how customers acquire, interpret, and internalize brand meanings, whereas brand consciousness operationalizes the perceptual and behavioral impact of these

meanings. Specifically, when customers experience positive airline services, effective communication, and emotional attachment, they develop stronger brand knowledge (a cognitive component of brand equity). This enhanced knowledge then elevates their brand consciousness, reflected in higher attention to brand cues, sensitivity to reputation, and preference for established carriers over generic alternatives (Rahman & Mannan, 2018; Han, 2021). In the context of Pakistan's airline industry, where customers often rely on brand image and trust as heuristics for service quality, the transformation of brand equity elements into brand consciousness becomes particularly salient for understanding customers' behavioral intentions toward Pakistani carriers.

Hence, this study does not conflate the two constructs but instead positions brand consciousness as a customer-level outcome of the brand equity development process. While brand equity explains why brand-related stimuli (experience, communication, attachment) matter, brand consciousness explains how customers respond psychologically and behaviorally to those stimuli. This approach aligns with prior research that conceptualizes brand consciousness as an outcome of cumulative brand knowledge and affective experience, rather than a static personality trait (Kim, Jang, & Kim, 2021; Hosain & Mamun, 2022). Therefore, the proposed framework extends the CBBE theory by linking its cognitive foundation (brand knowledge) to a higher-order customer state (brand consciousness), offering a more nuanced understanding of how airlines can cultivate psychologically conscious and brand-responsive customers in emerging markets like Pakistan.

2.7 Brand Experience

2.7.1 Definition

Experience is termed as a 'private event' that occurs after interacting with any entity (Schmitt & Rogers, 2008). According to psychologists, experiences are always a response to a stimulus and have intentions involved. All experiences are also unique, and neither can they overlap with each other, nor do they exist simultaneously. All experiences are discrete, have intentions involved, and are reactions to particular stimuli (Vrij & Holland, 1998). In a study Brakus et al. (2009) defined the brand experience as an amalgamation of both concealed (sensory, cognitive) as well as apparent (physical,

behavioral) interactions of the customer with the brand. This was also called enhancing customer experience (Bagdare & Jain, 2013).

With the advent of modern marketing techniques, all brands have focused on creating a particular position of not only products but also of the whole firm or brand in the minds of customers (Brakus et al., 2009). By doing this, the organizations helped their customers to create a relationship with the brands and resultantly, the customers started having an overall experience with the firms. These particular collections of their emotions and physical encounters with the brand were soon to become an integral part of the brands known as the brand experience (Godovykh & Tasci, 2020).

2.7.2 Conceptualization of Brand Experience

Over the past few decades, scholars have tried to come up with ways that enhance customer experience with the brands. This would not only improve customer experience but also help build bigger and better brands (Morrison & Crane, 2007). The term brand experience was first conceptualized by the study of Brakus et al. (2009). The term experience comprises two connotations that are knowledge and time spent. Firstly, when someone gains knowledge about particular thing due to its exposure over a span of time and secondly, the resultant feelings or images one creates for that thing because of the exposure. When it comes to experience in the marketing terminology, Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) are considered to be the pioneers. They were the first ones to coin the name customer experience. They linked it closely with the definition of experience in psychology and philosophy. According to Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) 'Consumption has begun to be seen as involving a steady flow of fantasies, feeling and fun encompassed by what we call the "experience view." The concept of brand experience was further paved by the study of Schmitt (2010). Though, initially regarded as different concepts, customer experience and brand experience eventually became interchangeable.

Brand experience represents a degree of familiarity of the customer with the brand. This familiarity may be sensory, physical, or emotional. The interactions of customers may be direct or indirect. Though brand experience incorporates all aspects of interaction, it was mostly the emotional and sensory perspectives that gained more consideration during the initial stages of its theoretic development (Braunsberger & Munch, 1998). Most of the focus remained on the product related experience until the

influential works of Schmitt (1999). It was Schmitt (1999) who for the first time introduced other apparent concepts of brand experience.

In the past, most of the research was carried out to identify the true meaning of brand experience and more importantly, how to actually measure brand experience (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; Schmitt, 1999). Nevertheless, recent studies regarding brand experience have shifted their focus from the defining of brand experience to a more pragmatic, implementation perspective (Arnould & Thompson, 2005; Brakus et al., 2009). The studies now focus on the problems and solutions regarding brand experience and guide the organizations in creating a better brand experience for the customers.

Similarly, brand experience is also a response to the environment or a set of features that are provided by the organization through its products and to its customers. These can be positive or negative experiences, depending on the particular stimuli given by the brand and also about the perceptions of the customers (Rusticus et al., 2023). Moreover, brand experience includes the combination of cognitive, physical, spiritual and behavioral associations of brands with their customers (Brakus et al., 2009). This also includes emotions, feelings, memories, analysis, perceptions, etc. (Chiara & Spena, 2011).

2.7.3 Experience Economy View and Experiential Marketing

Though different models have been used by various scholars to define customer experience, but Pine and Gilmore (1998) is considered to be the most influential one. They stated that after goods, services and commodities, memorable events or experiences associated with them are also a business product. The experience economy view was further elaborated by Schmitt (1999) in which he enhanced the experiential point of view of a brand and introduced the concept of experiential marketing. According to this viewpoint, customers were considered to have emotions. They don't always use rationality and wisdom in their purchase decisions, rather most of the time, it is their emotional side that overpowers rationality. The brands shall now search customer value in their emotional experience and also try to market the products in such a way that emotional responses are triggered. Due to this, from the 1990s onwards, most of the marketing campaigns started hitting the emotional strings of the customers rather

than presenting to them a list of benefits of the products in a formal way (Nysveen et al., 2013). Schmitt (1999) classified these experiences into 5 types or modules:

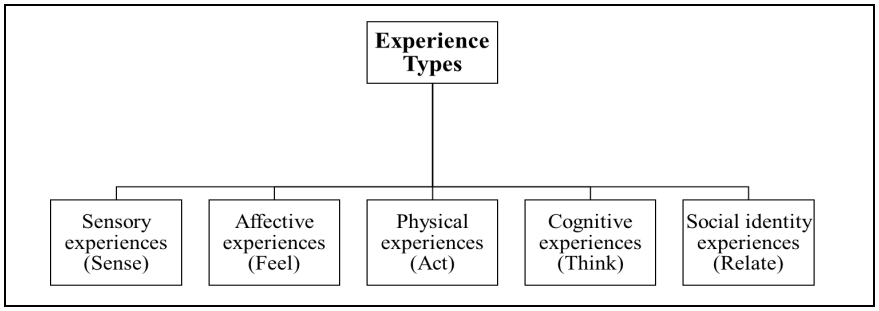

Figure 2.6 Experience Types according to Schmitt (1999)

Furthermore, Brakus et al. (2009), inspired from the works of Schmitt (1999), presented four dimensions on brand experience as sensory, intellectual, affective and behavioral. They defined brand experience as "inner subjective response of customers that consists of perception, sensation, physical and emotional responses from the customers in response to a stimulus provoked by the brand".

2.7.4 Brand Experience and Airline Industry

During the last couple of decades, a great focus has been shifted by the airlines on developing better brand experiences for the customers. A prime example of this is the case of United Arab Emirates' national flag carrier, The Emirates Airline. In a span of only a few years, Emirate was able to become the best-performing airline in the world (Chang and Chen, 2008). It has been recognized as the biggest airline brand and has a net worth of more than 50 billion USD. A similar airline that focuses on brand experience is the Singapore International Airline (Lindstrom, 2006). Both have one of the world's largest aircraft fleets and are on constant rise. These airlines were the first ones which focused more on the customer experience rather than focusing on the traditional variables of cost management, route management and higher number of customers or flights. The Emirates was the first airline to introduce Spas for business class customers. The Singapore International Airline immensely focused on training their flight attendants and tried to make better customer brand experience through their attendants. This can also be seen on their famous Girl icon. Both the Emirates and the Singapore International Airline have the youngest crew in the world. The figures for

latest technology and lowest average age of plane also stand with the Emirates (Endrizalová et al., 2018). These airlines focused on brand experience and as a result, the emirates and Singapore International Airline have grown into the largest and best performing airlines.

In literature, brand experience for airlines is mostly measured through product consumption. This may arise during or after the use of the product. The experience is not limited to the flight only but also includes other places such as ticket counters, online bookings, helpline services, boarding facilities etc. (Lishan et al., 2014). The airline experience for the customer starts from the purchase of the ticket or even when calling for information. If this experience is not as expected by the customer, they might not give the airline a second chance, however, it can be vice versa if the expectations are met or exceeded (Park & Mcmillan, 2015).

The Singapore International Airline and Thai Airways have prominently used the sensory and affective traits of brand experience to enhance customer benefits (Tungtakanpoung & Wyatt, 2013). The Singapore International Airline welcomes customers with a distinct fragrance that has become its trademark. Similarly, the orchid flower (the national flower of Thailand) used by Thai Airways marks it as a symbol of Thai culture. It is for this reason that Thai Airways is also among the best rated airline services.

The study by Prentice et al. (2019) focused on the influence of brand experience and service quality on customer engagement. The responses were collected from the Lisbon Airport in Portugal and a segregation between Portuguese and non-Portuguese customers was kept. The respondents were asked various questions regarding their brand experiences with expensive as well as low-cost airlines. It was concluded that brand experience had a very significant relationship with customer engagement and this was true for both types of customers and airlines. However, it was also noted that the service by attendants was a key factor in brand experience. The inflight experience was, however, of lesser concern to the customers. The study was limited to only one airport i.e. the Lisbon airport and focused on European customers only.

One of the earliest studies to incorporate the airline brand experience was by Lin (2015). In this study, Lin coined the term innovative brand experience for the first time for the airline industry. Innovative brand experience was taken as the independent variable and its impact on band equity and brand satisfaction was measured. Data was collected from the famous Taoyuan International Airport in Taiwan. Using multiple

regression analysis, the study revealed that innovative brand experience of customers of airline industry significantly and directly influenced the brand equity and brand satisfaction of those airline customers.

A recent famous study in this regard comes from Udchachone (2020). The author aimed to observe the customer perceptions of brand experience regarding the big 3 airlines of the USA. The respondents, Americans mainly, were frequent customers of these airlines. They were asked various questions via interviews regarding their experiences with the 3 big American airlines namely Delta Airlines, American Airlines and United Airlines. It was found that firstly, Airlines brand experience plays a decisive role on the customer's perceptions. Positive brand experience results in improved customer satisfaction and conversely, an adverse experience would result in the opposite. Secondly, rewards for frequent flyers enhance the airline brand experience, thus also customer satisfaction. Finally, it was observed that positive brand experiences result in retention of airline customers.

Çakiroğlu et al. (2020) extensively included branding factors such as brand experience, brand love, brand loyalty and customer satisfaction. Relationship among all variables was determined using descriptive statistics and path analysis. The study which was limited to 18 years and above respondents living in the capital of Turkey, Ankara, concluded that brand experience has positive and significant relationship with brand love and brand loyalty. This meant that by enhancing the brand experience of airline customers, the organizations could build brand love and loyalty of the brand. It was also seen that this resulted in increased customer satisfaction.

Alamoudi and Alharthi (2021) used brand experience and brand love as independent variables for customer engagement. Using the SEM, they too concluded that with the help of brand experience and brand love, the customer engagement of Saudi Airlines can be vastly improved. This meant that improved service quality of airlines can also be beneficial in improving customer's behavioral intentions for the brand.

Lastly, only one study was found that used brand experience as a variable for the Pakistani airline industry. The study aimed at investigating the factors of brand experience and brand image and their expected impact on the brand loyalty. The study conducted by Raza et al. (2020) studied the Pakistani airline industry to develop a relationship between above mentioned variables. The results of the study determined

appositive relationship between brand experience and brand loyalty. Similar results were also observed between brand image and brand loyalty.

Brand experience refers to the multifaceted interactions and engagements that customers have with a brand, which collectively shape their perceptions and emotional responses to the brand over time (B. Schmitt, 1999). In the context of the airline industry, brand experience encompasses the full range of encounters that customers have with an airline, including pre-flight, in-flight, and post-flight interactions. These experiences, which can range from the booking process to customer service, inflight entertainment, seat comfort, and baggage handling, play a crucial role in shaping customers' overall impressions of the airline and their loyalty towards it (Leon & Dixon, 2023). Given the high level of competition within the airline industry, creating a positive and memorable brand experience is essential for airlines to differentiate themselves and build strong customer relationships.

Brand experience is often described as a multi-dimensional construct, encompassing various types of interactions that engage different senses, emotions, and cognitive processes. Schmitt (1999) identifies four key dimensions of brand experience: sensory, affective, behavioral, and intellectual. These dimensions can be directly applied to the airline industry to understand how airlines engage their customers and create lasting impressions.

Sensory Experience: Sensory experiences refer to the physical aspects of an airline's brand that appeal to the senses, such as the comfort of the seating, the quality of food and beverages, the cleanliness of the cabin, the appearance of the flight attendants, and the overall aesthetic of the aircraft. In the airline industry, sensory experiences are a vital component of brand perception, as customers are often confined to the airplane for extended periods of time. The comfort of the environment, including factors like seat ergonomics, cabin temperature, lighting, and the design of the aircraft, can significantly influence the overall brand experience (Pabla & Soch, 2023).

Affective Experience: Affective experiences are emotional responses that customers have during their interactions with the airline. These responses can range from excitement and joy to frustration and anxiety. For example, a customer may feel delighted by a personalized greeting or a surprise upgrade to first class, while negative emotions may arise from delayed flights, poor customer service, or uncomfortable seating. According to R. Shahid et al. (2024), emotional experiences are particularly important in the airline industry, as they have a direct impact on customers' loyalty and

their likelihood of recommending the airline to others. Positive emotional experiences can lead to higher levels of customer satisfaction and trust, fostering long-term relationships with the airline.

Behavioral Experience: Behavioral experiences are the actions or behaviors that customers engage in as part of their interaction with the airline. In the airline industry, this dimension is reflected in actions such as the ease of booking tickets, checking in online, and the efficiency of boarding and deplaning processes. Additionally, behavioral experiences extend to customers' post-flight behaviors, such as their likelihood of using the airline's loyalty program or recommending the airline to others. Airlines that provide a smooth, seamless, and hassle-free experience at every stage of the journey are more likely to retain loyal customers (Heiets et al., 2022).

Intellectual Experience: Intellectual experiences refer to the cognitive aspects of brand interactions that engage customers' thoughts and perceptions. In the airline industry, intellectual experiences may involve customers' thoughts on the airline's reputation, safety standards, or innovation. For example, an airline that emphasizes its commitment to sustainability or cutting-edge technology (such as eco-friendly fuel or in-flight Wi-Fi) can enhance customers' intellectual experience by appealing to their sense of responsibility or intellectual curiosity (Bamidele et al., 2023). Additionally, intellectual experiences may involve how customers perceive the airline's branding and marketing messages, and how these align with their values and expectations.

Brand experience plays a pivotal role in the airline industry by influencing customer loyalty and repeat purchase behavior. According to (Siqueira et al., 2023), a positive brand experience is one of the key drivers of customer loyalty, as it creates strong emotional connections and associations with the brand. Airlines that provide consistently high-quality experiences across all touchpoints whether online, at the airport, or on the flight itself are more likely to cultivate loyal customers who are less likely to switch to competitors.

The relationship between brand experience and loyalty can be further enhanced when airlines actively engage with customers beyond the transactional level. For instance, personalizing interactions, offering tailored services (such as frequent flyer benefits or customized in-flight entertainment), and ensuring consistent service quality can create a sense of exclusivity and satisfaction, encouraging customers to return to the airline for future flights (Keller, 2008). Furthermore, airlines that listen to customer

feedback and continuously improve their brand experience can strengthen customer satisfaction and long-term loyalty.

Brand experience significantly influences customers' perceptions of brand equity, which is defined as the value that a brand adds to a product or service through customer awareness, associations, and loyalty (Aaker, 1991). In the airline industry, brand equity is critical for success, as it determines not only customer loyalty but also the ability to charge premium prices and maintain a competitive edge. A positive brand experience directly contributes to the creation of strong brand associations, which in turn enhances brand awareness and loyalty (Keller, 2001).

For example, a customer who has a memorable in-flight experience with exceptional customer service may develop a stronger emotional attachment to the airline, increasing their perception of the airline's quality and value. Over time, these positive experiences build a favorable brand image, which strengthens the airline's market position. Conversely, negative brand experiences, such as poor service, delays, or uncomfortable seating, can damage the brand's equity by fostering negative associations and diminishing customer loyalty (Keller, 2008).

Technology plays an increasingly important role in shaping brand experiences within the airline industry. Innovations such as online check-in, mobile apps for managing bookings, in-flight entertainment systems, and digital customer service channels have transformed the way airlines interact with customers. For example, mobile apps allow customers to manage their flight details, select seats, and even track baggage in real-time, providing a seamless experience that enhances convenience and satisfaction (Kıyıklık et al., 2022). In-flight Wi-Fi and entertainment options also contribute to positive intellectual experiences by allowing customers to remain productive or entertained during their journey.

Moreover, airlines that integrate innovative technologies into their operations such as biometric boarding, AI-driven customer service, and data analytics to personalize services, are better equipped to offer highly customized and memorable experiences that resonate with customers (Gupta et al., 2023). These technological advancements contribute to brand experience by improving efficiency, convenience, and personalization, all of which are essential to creating loyal and satisfied customers.

In conclusion, brand experience is a crucial element in shaping customer perceptions and behavior in the airline industry. By focusing on the sensory, affective, behavioral, and intellectual dimensions of brand experience, airlines can create a

holistic and engaging experience that resonates with customers at every touchpoint. The brand experience not only enhances customer satisfaction but also contributes to long-term brand loyalty and increased brand equity. As the airline industry becomes more competitive, understanding and optimizing brand experience will be key for airlines seeking to differentiate themselves and build strong, lasting relationships with their customers. Through personalized service, efficient processes, and technological innovations, airlines can craft memorable experiences that leave a lasting impression on customers and foster a strong sense of brand loyalty.

2.8 Brand Communication

2.8.1 Definition

As discussed above, brand experience is a key factor for improved brand management. However, it should be considered that before experiencing the brand itself, the customers first need to be communicated about it. Brand communication refers to the activities that a brand undertakes to promote or propagate the overall brand. It is considered to be the most important element while creating and managing customer relationships with the brand (Duncan & Moriarty, 1998). The term brand communication has been defined as the influence of advertising on customers' attitudes toward a brand and their purchase intentions (Tsai, 2007). The purpose of brand communication is not only to create a relationship with the customer but also to make it a prolonged one by creating favorably positive attitudes towards the brand and increasing customer satisfaction and trust (Chopdar & Paul, 2023).

2.8.2 Conceptualization of Brand Communication

Communication is the use of different tools and mediums to provide information to the users. It involves a process in which the sender of the information is aware of the receiver and also expects a particular outcome. The process has three steps, the First one being the coding of the information. The code, which is information packed in a particular way is then sent to the intended receiver through a communication channel that might be physical, verbal, or visual. Finally, the receiver, after receiving the information, interprets the code through decoding (Belch & Belch, 2013). In the end,

feedback from the receiver would determine whether the communication was successful in achieving the results or not. In the past, this process was a slow one; however, with the advent of technology, it has become very swift. Previously an after sales communication was sought by the brand usually and not the customer but now both parties engage in a pre-purchase communication process (Edelman & Singer, 2015). Though communication has many different types, however, according to Doyle (2011), the most widely accepted and fundamental types are:

One-to-one	There is one sender and one receiver of information. The most interactive method of communication. The example includes a direct phone call between two people
One-to-many	One sender and many receivers are involved. Usually a single message in spread through many channels. Example is a television add by a company.
Many-to-one	One person is approached through different sources. The message Manv-to-one delivered is usually one, however, there can be more than one message as well. Example includes a person being wished birthday by many people.
Many-to-many	Both the receiver and sender are more than one. Message may be the same or different as well. Example would more than one companies using different marketing tools to attract various customers.

Figure 2.7 Communication Types according to Doyle (2011)

The research of Gómez-Rico et al. (2022) studied the roles of advertising, social media, public relations and corporate social responsibility in brand communication. Wine industry of Spain was chosen and a sample of around 500 visitors to different wineries was analyzed using different questions. The study concluded that brand communication had a positive impact on brand preference. Moreover, a mediation of brand image was also observed between brand communication and brand preference. The customers preferred visiting wineries which they perceived had better brand communication practices.

In another study, Roozitalab (2022) also investigated the customer base of Samsung electronics in Tehran (Iran) to investigate the impact of brand awareness on brand loyalty using mediation of brand quality and brand communication. It was observed that the mediation of brand communication results in a positive relationship

between brand awareness and loyalty. Budiono et al. (2021) used brand communication as an independent variable and tried to establish a relationship with brand loyalty. Customers of the famous Indonesian bank, Bank Central Asia (BCA) were approached. The results showed that brand communication had a direct relationship with brand loyalty. The more effective the bank communicated with the customers, the more loyal they were with the bank.

Furthermore, Arya et al. (2022) tried to measure the impact of brand communication on a much broader brand characteristic of brand equity. Brand attachment was used as a mediator. The study was limited to the impact of communication through social media only. Almost 500 respondents who were mainly millennials, were asked various questions and after carrying empirical techniques using Smart-PLS, it was observed that brand communication through social media positively and significantly affected the brand equity.

In addition, Agung et al. (2019), using customers of cellular phones in Indonesia, tried to investigate the effect of brand communication, brand trust and brand image on brand loyalty. The results showed that brand communication directly influences brand loyalty of these customers. Moreover, brand communication was also found to have a positive impact on other variables i.e. brand trust and brand image.

Another similar Indonesian study by Putri et al. (2019) studied brand communication, brand image, brand satisfaction and brand trust on customer's brand royalty. Respondents were the residents of the city of Surabaya and customers of famous local beverage 'Teh Pucuk haram'. Using structural equation modeling, the researchers concluded that all independent variables including brand communication had a positive relationship with brand loyalty.

In his research on brand communication, Chinomona (2016) used independent variables brand communication, brand image and brand trust in his study. These variables were tested against the dependent variable of brand loyalty. It was concluded that brand communication with the mediation of brand image, has a positive influence on brand loyalty as well as brand trust. They concluded that brands who communicated more had greater reputational values, thus gaining more customer trust and loyalty. A limitation of this study was being confined to only the Gauteng province of South Africa.

Moreover, Schivinski and Dabrowski (2015) took responses from customers of three industries i.e. alcoholic beverages, network providers and apparel. These

responses were aimed at developing a relationship between social media brand communication, brand awareness, quality perception and brand loyalty. Using structural equation modelling, the results obtained determined a positive significant association between brand communication and other variables of brand awareness, brand quality perceptions and brand loyalty. It was also discovered that the results varied for different industries. This implies that brand communication's impact is dissimilar for diverse industries.

A very unusual and interesting study regarding branding of places was conducted by Braun et al. (2014). With the mediation of brand image, the study aimed at investigating the role of brand communication on attracting visitors to a place. The results showed that brand communication was much more efficient than traditional marketing tools and number of visitors increase at a place if it is effectively communicated as a brand. These results regarding place branding were later confirmed by Mansur et al. (2021) who took similar data for Indonesian tourism. They too confirmed that brand communication had a positive relationship on brand equity of maritime tourism in Indonesia.

2.8.3 Barnlund's Transactional Model of Communication

In the past, many scholars and researchers have tried to explain the process of communication but no one has been more successful and famous in doing so than Barnlund (1970). He argued that having a common platform for both sender and receiver of information would result in better communication. For this purpose, he defined the whole process with the help of few elements or components. The model also emphasizes on a better choice of the source if the communication is to be effective.

Barnlund's Transactional Model of Communication, introduced in 1970, remains one of the most influential models for understanding communication processes. Unlike traditional linear models, which treat communication as a one-way flow, Barnlund proposed a more dynamic and reciprocal approach where both the sender and receiver simultaneously play active roles in encoding and decoding messages. This model consists of several key components, such as the sender and receiver, message, feedback, noise, context, and the processes of encoding and decoding.

In this model, both the sender and receiver are considered active participants in communication. Rather than a simple transmission of messages from sender to receiver,

Barnlund emphasized that communication is a continuous and interactive process, where both parties encode and decode messages at the same time. Feedback plays a crucial role in this process, as it allows the sender to understand whether the message has been received and interpreted correctly, providing a mechanism for adjustment and refinement. Noise, which refers to any barriers that can distort or interfere with communication, is another critical element in Barnlund's model. This could include physical noise like background sounds, psychological noise such as emotional barriers, or semantic noise arising from misunderstandings or ambiguous language.

Context is also an essential factor in Barnlund's model, as it includes the physical, social, and psychological environment in which communication takes place. The context influences how both parties encode and decode messages, shaping their understanding and interpretation of the information exchanged. In addition to this, encoding and decoding are seen as simultaneous processes that rely on both the sender's ability to convey a message effectively and the receiver's capacity to interpret it correctly. This highlights the interdependent nature of communication and the importance of both parties being equally engaged in the process.

Barnlund's model has wide applications, especially in modern communication settings, such as the airline industry. Airlines rely heavily on effective communication to ensure customer satisfaction, brand loyalty, and operational efficiency. In the context of customer service, feedback is vital for assessing customer satisfaction and making necessary adjustments to services. Through various channels like social media, customer surveys, and direct interactions, airlines can continuously improve their offerings based on real-time feedback (Ugalde et al., 2023). Additionally, the model underscores the importance of clear and consistent brand communication. Airlines need to ensure that their messaging aligns across multiple touchpoints, maintaining a coherent brand image that resonates with customers. Furthermore, in situations involving delays or disruptions, effective communication is crucial for conflict resolution. Airlines must ensure that both staff and customers have a clear understanding of the situation, and that immediate feedback is provided to resolve issues promptly (Afonso et al., 2023).

Overall, Barnlund's Transactional Model of Communication provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the complexities of human communication. It emphasizes the reciprocal nature of communication, where both senders and receivers are actively involved in creating meaning through continuous

encoding, decoding, and feedback. In industries like aviation, where effective communication is essential for customer relations, brand management, and operational success, this model offers valuable insights into how communication can be enhanced for better outcomes. By understanding the transactional nature of communication, airlines can improve customer experiences, build stronger brand relationships, and adapt quickly to changing customer needs.

The transactional model of communication has following components:

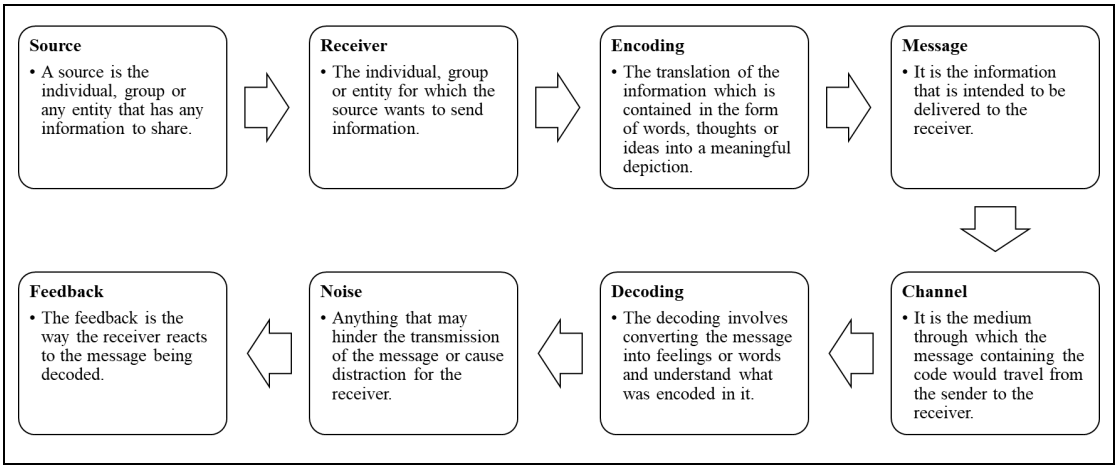

Figure 2.8 Barnlund's Transactional Model of Communication

2.8.4 Marketing Communication

According to Kotler and Keller (2009) “Marketing communications are the means by which firms attempt to inform, persuade, and remind customers directly, or indirectly about the products and brands that they sell”. These activities may include advertising, promotion, selling, public relations, and more recently digital marketing (Tomse & Snoj, 2014). The most important concepts of marketing communication are the 7ps of marketing which is an extension of the previously used 4 ps. These include Price, Place, Promotion, Product, People, Physical evidence and Process. The additional 3 Ps are associated with the service industry. For manufacturing concerns, the old schools 4 Ps are still used (Jannah et al., 2014).

Communication is an integral part of branding (Doyle, 2011) and marketing communication has the lion’s share of the organization’s whole communication network. There exist two primary objectives of marketing communication. Firstly, it is aimed at creating a demand for the product. Not only demand is to be created, but it

should also be long term and sustainable. Secondly, creating a demand should result in sales. Better the marketing communication, lesser would be the average tie for a sale. Therefore, marketing communication (MC) is entrusted to shorten the sales cycle as well (Moore & Wiefels, 2002). In order to achieve these primary objectives, marketing communication can have various modes or channels. These are explained following:

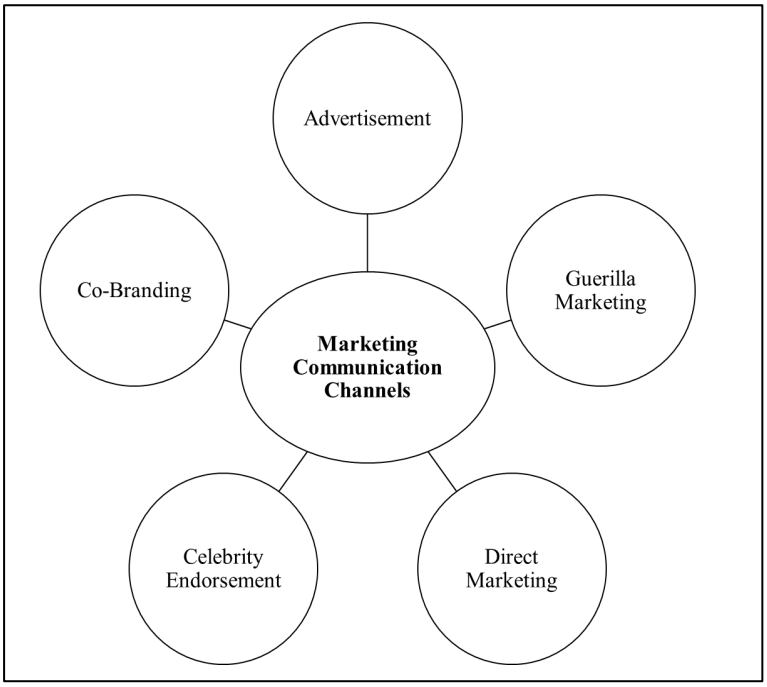

Figure 2.9 Marketing Communication Channels

2.8.5 Advertisement

Perhaps the most important element of marketing communication is advertising. According to Childers et al. (1980) "advertising serves to promote the product and the organization, directly stimulate the demand for consumption, make more effective sales personnel, promote the various ways to use the product, remind and reinforce the brand image, in the minds of customers and reduce demand fluctuations". Advertising involves displaying of organization products or policies through different mediums and to make the public and stakeholders aware of them (Moore & Wiefels, 2002). In order to supplement the businesses, scholars and researchers along with scientists have discovered and invented various advertising channels. The concept of mass media has also evolved where the same message is communicated to a larger number of customers in lesser time.

2.8.6 Direct Marketing Method

Direct marketing or sometimes called direct sales is a method where no intermediary is used to reach out the customers (McCorkell, 1997). A direct approach is made by the sender of communication to the receiver. It may be a direct phone call or a direct face to face meeting. The only parties involved are the user and the organization itself. A call centre is a classic example of such a marketing technique. It involves an additional concept of customer relation management (CRM) and focuses on maintaining a constant close interactive relationship with the customer. CRM is a whole new branch of marketing that focuses on such ways. The advantages of direct marketing include a very close interaction with the customer which has very high conversion rates for sales. Moreover, the brand gets to convey tailor made communication to the customer again resulting in better response from them. As for the disadvantages, lower reach and higher cost are also associated with direct marketing. Other examples of direct marketing may also include direct mails, letters or emails to the customers.

Direct marketing, also known as direct sales, is a strategy where businesses reach out directly to potential customers without using intermediaries, such as wholesalers or retailers (McCorkell, 1997). This approach facilitates a direct connection between the organization and the customer, bypassing the traditional distribution channels. It is commonly used for personalized, targeted marketing efforts and includes methods such as phone calls, face-to-face meetings, direct mail, and email campaigns. In contrast to mass marketing strategies, which aim to reach a broad audience, direct marketing focuses on a more selective and tailored approach to engage individual customers directly.

One of the most common forms of direct marketing is the call centre, where organizations use telemarketing to communicate with customers (Japutra et al., 2023). Through call centers, businesses can offer personalized offers, gather customer feedback, and resolve customer issues in real-time. Call centers are also integral to customer relationship management (CRM), which is a specialized marketing branch focusing on developing and maintaining close, long-term relationships with customers (Sharda & Bhat, 2018). CRM strategies are designed to understand customer behavior and preferences, ultimately leading to personalized communication that increases customer loyalty and lifetime value.

The advantages of direct marketing are significant. First, it provides a highly interactive platform that allows businesses to communicate directly with customers. This interaction increases the likelihood of a positive response, leading to higher conversion rates, as customers feel that the message is specifically tailored to them. Personalized communication fosters a sense of connection with the brand, which can enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty (Zha et al., 2022). Furthermore, direct marketing enables businesses to gather valuable customer insights, which can be used to refine their strategies and offer more targeted promotions in the future.

Additionally, direct marketing allows businesses to track customer responses more accurately. This can help in measuring the effectiveness of marketing campaigns, identifying which methods work best, and fine-tuning strategies for improved results (Husain et al., 2022). For example, email marketing campaigns can be tracked through open rates, click-through rates, and conversion rates, giving marketers concrete data to optimize future outreach efforts.

However, despite its advantages, direct marketing also presents some challenges. One of the most significant drawbacks is its limited reach compared to mass marketing techniques. Since direct marketing targets specific customers or groups, it may not reach as broad an audience as traditional media channels like TV, radio, or social media. As a result, organizations must carefully select their target audience to ensure the strategy is effective and cost-efficient (Blakeman, 2023).

The costs associated with direct marketing are another disadvantage. While direct marketing may lead to higher conversion rates, the per-contact cost can be higher than other marketing strategies. For instance, telemarketing and face-to-face meetings involve substantial labor costs, and producing and sending personalized direct mail can be expensive in terms of printing, postage, and labor (Nesterenko et al., 2023). These higher operational costs must be weighed against the potential return on investment to determine the strategy's overall effectiveness.

Despite these disadvantages, direct marketing continues to be a valuable tool for businesses, especially when customer relationships are a top priority. It is particularly effective for industries where personalized communication and customer loyalty are crucial, such as retail, banking, and the airline industry (Petty, 2016). For instance, airlines can use direct marketing to offer personalized promotions, loyalty program updates, and exclusive deals to frequent flyers. This approach not only strengthens the

brand's relationship with customers but also boosts sales and customer retention in a highly competitive market.

In conclusion, direct marketing provides businesses with the ability to connect with their customers in a highly personalized and interactive manner. Its advantages, including higher conversion rates and tailored communication, make it a valuable tool for building customer relationships and driving sales. However, its limited reach and higher costs require careful planning and targeted execution. When used effectively, direct marketing can enhance brand loyalty, increase customer satisfaction, and ultimately contribute to an organization's long-term success.

2.8.7 Co-branding

Another recent upheaving marketing communication concept is co-branding. "The pairing of two or more brands together makes a new product or brand" (Park et al., 1996). When two or more brands combine for a common venture, this creates synergy which can be beneficial for both. Moreover, customers of both brands are compelled to like the other brand as well as they are perceived to be the same. A new brand or product formed may also be perceived as third brand which might have its own separate base as well. Costs of marketing are distributed among the brands making it lesser for the individual brand. Moreover, market share of a combined brand just add ups with each other and in some cases even increases than the individual customer bases (Okonkwo, 2009). On the contrary, it may backfire also if the brands combining have a past rivalry which the customers might get involved. In such cases, this might be seen as treason by the organization in the eyes of the customers. Moreover, in case of disputes, it becomes very difficult to get out of the agreement, and both brands get stuck in a hostile association that ultimately has to face losses.

Co-branding is a strategic marketing communication method in which two or extra existing brands collaborate to create a new product or brand, leveraging the strengths of every party involved. According to Park et al. (1996), co-branding refers to the pairing of organizations together to supply a blended product or brand identification. The synergy generated from this collaboration can offer sizable blessings to each brand, as each contributes its brand equity and customer loyalty to the partnership. By becoming a member of forces, the organizations can create an extra effective and

attractive offering for customers, which might also cause elevated market penetration and customer agree with (Kotler et al., 2014).

One of the main benefits of co-branding is the shared marketing prices. Instead of each brand individually bearing the value of marketing, promotions, and distribution, these prices are divided between the organizations, decreasing the financial burden on each. This is mainly beneficial for smaller brands that may not have the resources to independently market their merchandise on a big scale (Paydas Turan, 2021). Co-branding additionally permits organizations to amplify their reach by attracting customers from every other's present customer bases. The combined customer base can cause better marketplace proportion and even more sales than if the organizations operated separately.

Furthermore, co-branding can offer new opportunities for product differentiation. The aggregate of two brands can bring about a product with a unique enchantment, attracting customers who value the attributes of each organization (Sarasvuo et al., 2022). This also can create a sense of innovation within the market, making the co-branded product stand out as a unique offering. For example, a co-branded product may be perceived as more proper as it combines the strengths of each brand, together with satisfactory, reputation, or capability, that may positively influence customer purchasing decisions.

In some cases, a brand new co-branded product might also even expand its own identity, creating a "1/3 brand" with a distinct recognition and constant customer base. This occurs while the 2 collaborating brands are so a success of their partnership that the new presenting will become a standalone brand in its personal proper (Kotler et al., 2014).

A fundamental drawback is the opportunity of conflicts among the brands involved. If the two brands have specific values, goal markets, or corporate cultures, the partnership may additionally result in a mismatch, that may confuse or alienate customers. Additionally, if the two organizations have a record of rivalry, customers may additionally view the collaboration as a betrayal or a misstep (Tian et al., 2022). For example, if organizations with opposing reputations crew up, dependable customers might sense that the partnership compromises their loyalty to one brand. This ought to result in terrible exposure and a decline in customer trust for each brand.

Another task is the problem in dissolving the partnership if disputes arise or the co-branded product fails to satisfy expectancies, it could be hard to sever the settlement,

specifically if there are contractual obligations (Kautish et al., 2020). In such instances, the brands worried might also face reputational damage, economic losses, and a prolonged poor association that is tough to opposite. Moreover, in the event of a failure, both brands may additionally discover themselves stuck in an adverse partnership that could result in dwindled brand equity and customer loyalty.

In conclusion, co-branding can be an especially powerful marketing approach when done well. By leveraging the mixed brand equity, customer loyalty, and sources of the partnering brands, co-branding can increase marketplace percentage, create new customer bases, and decrease marketing expenses (Sharda & Bhat, 2019). However, it also comes with great risks, together with potential conflicts, customer alienation, and the complexities of dissolving a partnership. To make sure the success of co-branding efforts, cautious brand alignment, clean communication, and shared targets among the organizations are crucial. Brands must weigh the advantages and dangers carefully earlier than entering such collaborations to make certain that the partnership strengthens both organizations rather than undermining them.

2.8.8 Brand Communication and Airline Industry

Brand communication plays a critical function in shaping customer perceptions, loyalty, and believe in the airline industry. As opposition intensifies, airlines more and more rely upon each conventional and modern-day communication exchange channels to bolster their brand image, enhance customer engagement, and pressure customer choice-making (Kim & Kusakci, 2023). Although brand communication has been studied significantly in numerous industries, its application within the airline industry remains tremendously underexplored, with only a few studies without linking brand communication to key customer effects like accept as true with, loyalty, and brand equity. Below, extending to the prevailing literature on this place, focusing on the consequences of various communication strategies on customer perceptions and airline brand overall performance.

Tümer et al. (2019) carried out one of the few studies to analyze the effect of traditional as opposed to social media brand communication on Turkish Airlines' customer behaviors. Their findings recommended that each communication strategies undoubtedly impacted brand accept as true with and buy intentions, however social media communication emerged as the greater influential thing. This aligns with the

growing body of studies suggesting that digital communication channels, specifically social media, have come to be an effective tool for brands to hook up with customers in actual-time and construct a greater personal courting. Social media platforms which include Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube permit airlines to engage at once with customers, offer updates, manage lawsuits, and percentage brand tales in a fascinating way (Karşıgil & Sak, 2023).

In assessment, traditional techniques, such as print classified ads, TV classified ads, and outdoor marketing, whilst nevertheless vital, can also lack the interactive and instant characteristics that present day digital structures provide (Tümer et al., 2019). The capacity to target precise demographics and facilitate two-way communication makes social media an appealing device for airlines looking to build brand loyalty and consciousness.

Seo & Park (2018) investigated the role of social media communication in shaping brand equity and customer commitment within the airline industry, studying statistics from 302 respondents throughout various airlines. The study determined that social media verbal exchange had a significant wonderful effect on brand equity and customer commitment, though certain social media factors, including frequency of engagement and the relevance of content material, have been more influential than others. Social media platforms no longer best enhance visibility however additionally create a platform for brand advocates to voice their critiques, proportion studies, and interact with other customers, therefore growing brand loyalty (Budiman, 2021). When airlines effectively make use of social media communication strategies, they can foster surroundings of trust, satisfaction, and emotional reference to customers, all of which are crucial drivers of brand equity and customer dedication.

Additionally, studies have shown that organizations that actively interact in authentic, transparent, and customer-centered social media communication can thrive customer pleasure, build more potent emotional bonds, and benefit competitive benefits in phrases of brand differentiation (Gupta et al., 2021). This is mainly critical inside the airline industry, in which customer choice is often encouraged through past reports, online experiences, and peer guidelines, all of that are heavily stimulated by using social media hobby.

The study by means of Ceil (2019) on Emirates Airlines found out how social media communication has significantly contributed to the airline's brand image and brand consciousness. Emirates has been mainly adept at leveraging digital platforms to

place itself as a luxury airline with a strong customer recognition. Through steady branding on platforms like Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook, the airline has constructed a loyal online community and strengthened its brand identification as an extremely good, customer-oriented service provider. By sharing visually charming content material, inclusive of at the back of-the-scenes glimpses, customer testimonials, and influencer collaborations, Emirates has been capable of create a robust emotional reference to its target audience, in the end increasing brand recognition and effective brand associations (Ceil, 2019).

Moreover, the ability to target unique customer segments by social media lets in airlines like Emirates to tailor their messaging to precise audiences, from business travelers to experience travelers. Personalized communication and the introduction of enticing digital reports are important for building lasting customer relationships. The research on Emirates helps the notion that an effective social media approach may be a game-changer for airlines, amplifying their brand image and contributing to long-term customer loyalty.

Brand communication is a vital motive force of customer trust, which is mainly essential in the airline industry in which customers must depend upon airlines for their safety, consolation, and timely transport of offerings. Research suggests that customers are much more likely to believe airlines that communicate openly and authentically throughout extraordinary channels (Alharasees et al., 2023). This consists of everyday updates concerning flight schedules, real-time customer service responses, and transparent communication in instances of flight delays or cancellations. When organizations are perceived as transparent and responsive, they cultivate stronger believe, which at once impacts customer loyalty and retention (Leon & Dixon, 2023).

A key thing of brand communication is how airlines handle customer complaints and inquiries on social media. Brands that offer timely, empathetic responses to customer concerns are much more likely to generate tremendous word-of-mouth and foster loyalty. On the opposite, poor communication or loss of responsiveness can cause customer dissatisfaction, negatively affecting each brand image and customer believe (Baker et al., 2024).

Brand communication also plays a massive position in shaping customer behavior within the airline industry. Several research advise that customers are much more likely to engage with airlines that preserve steady and compelling messaging across multiple touchpoints (Oliver, 1999). For instance, if a customer encounters a

commercial for an extremely low-price flight on social media, then stories a continuing booking procedure on the airline's website, accompanied by means of green and customer-focused carrier throughout the flight, they are more likely to form an effective belief of the airline's brand. Consistency across communication channels reinforces brand trust and will increase the probability of repeat bookings.

Research also indicates that airlines that actively speak their promoting propositions, including comfort, reliability, cost, and comfort, are better positioned to steer customer buying selections (Moslehpour et al., 2021). For example, low-cost providers along with Ryanair and EasyJet have differentiated themselves with the aid of communicating cost and price effectiveness, at the same time as best airlines like Singapore Airlines and Qatar Airways focuses awareness on highlighting luxurious, service high-quality, and customer enjoy.

Brand communication performs a pivotal role within the airline industry, influencing customer perceptions, brand equity, accept as true with, and loyalty. The upward push of digital systems, specifically social media, has transformed how airlines talk with customers, presenting new possibilities for engagement and brand building (Haider, 2020). The studies reviewed endorse that while both conventional and social media channels have their location in brand communication, the interactive and actual-time nature of social media communique tends to have an extra widespread effect on customer attitudes and behaviors (Mangi & Kotoky, 2020). Airlines that efficaciously leverage brand communication techniques can build strong customer relationships, enhance brand equity, and advantage a competitive aspect in an enormously saturated and competitive marketplace.

2.9 Brand Attachment

2.9.1 Definition

According to Whan et al. (2006), brand attachment is "the strength of the cognitive and the emotional bond connecting the brand with the self". Brand attachment refers to the concept of customers getting affiliated with the brands with emotional feelings of affection, connection, companionship or bonding. Another aspect of brand attachment is the brand prominence. Prominence is described as having favorable thoughts about the brand. These thoughts turn into positive memories. Chun (2009)

came up with another definition of brand attachment having three elements. These elements were self-connectedness, affection and trust. Being connected with a brand is denoted with the degree of relevancy a brand brings for the customer. Affection is described as the dependency of the customer on the product or brand and finally, trust refers to the belief of the customer in the brand upholding its promises and having faith in the quality of the product. Another very famous explanation of brand attachment comes from the study of Fournier (1998), the study explains brand attachment as an amalgamation of three psychological concepts: self-brand connection, linking and warm feelings. A person having these three impressions for a brand is deemed to be attached to it.

The organizations while managing their brands focus on building a longer-term relationship with the customers. Not only the relation should be a long term, rather it should be a pleasant one too. It is considered that the experience of customer with the brand should be such that it triggers feelings of love and attachment for the brand (Huang et al., 2017). They should be considering the brand like a member of their family or friends circle. The feeling of attachment should be similar to the one that the customer has for the human beings they are attached with. The term emotional branding is being used for such a brand building (VanMeter et al., 2018).

Brand attachment creates human feelings such as happiness, sadness, anger, pride etc. for the brand. It's about capturing the heart of the customers through brand communications (Ding & Tseng, 2015). Though it is quite understandable that the magnitude of brand attachment might not be the same as that for a human being, the fundamental feelings and behavioral aspects are quite similar (Kleine & Baker, 2004).

Additionally, Thomson et al. (2005) defined brand attachment as the bond that connects the customer with the brand. The characteristics of such attachment are connection, passion and affection. Affection is further characterized by feelings of love, peace and friendliness (Bagozzi et al., 2017). Connection is defined by feelings of bonding and being related to another (Gharib et al., 2017). Finally passion is depicted by delight and fascination associated with a brand (Mummalaneni, 2005).

2.9.2 Conceptualization of Brand Attachment

Brands are considered to be the primary marketing tools for the organizations (Portal et al., 2018). People connect with the brand and develop affections. It is

somewhat similar to their behavior with the human beings (Hemsley-Brown, 2023). It is for this reason that organizations have developed the concept of brand anthropomorphism i.e. giving brand a human characteristics, emotions and motivations. Through humanization of brands, the marketing experts can better perceive their customer needs and wants and develop strategies that be more effective (Rauschnabel & Ahuvia, 2014). This concept is also known as reverse dehumanization and has its roots in ancient history where non-human things were associated with humanly characteristics. It is from brand anthropomorphism that the foundations of brand attachment were laid (Epley et al., 2007).

The pioneer contribution towards brand attachment is explained by Bowlby (1979), according to this study, attachment is the emotional bond between any person and an object. The attachment, which may be strong or weak depends on the feelings of affection, connection and passion (Fournier, 1998). Developing emotional relationships is identified to be a basic human instinctive need. Starting from the bond between the newly born child and his mother, this feeling of affection is transferred to other beings like family, friends, spouses etc. (Ainsworth, 1978; Bowlby, 1979; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006). A similar view can also be taken for other non-human objects as well. A stronger attachment would mean greater immediacy. In case of difficulty and hazard, people will tend to seek comfort and empathy from the objects they love. For example, a crying kid would be soothed either by their mother or perhaps a favorite toy of theirs (Bowlby, 1979; Portal et al., 2018).

Moreover, many studies have suggested that a person may also be attached with an object as well which may be a gift, a favorite place, a collectible item or even a product or brand. This theoretical implication of attachment can also be seen in customer behaviors. People tend to develop a bond with the products they consume. Slater (2000) recorded such emotional feelings with collectors of Coke and hallmark brands. Other studies on customer behavior also suggest that people develop emotional feelings for specific consumable objects (Hazan & Zeifman, 1999). Karjaluoto et al. (2016) emphasized that the manner in which the brands interact with the public also affects the level of attachment. Though such bond is a time talking process, however, with the passage of time, the customer's consciousness for the brand is created in such a way that it translates into brand trust and equity.

Emotional attachments with a person predict one's behaviors with them. Similarly, such attachment would also help in analyzing the commitment of the

customer with the product or brand they are using (Shimp & Madden, 1988). More attached someone is with a person or a brand, the longer would they want to be associated with them (Schultz et al., 1989). This would hold true even in times of worries and problems. Commitment has also been viewed as a measure of marketing effectiveness in previous studies (Dwyer et al., 1987). This means that a measure of emotional attachment be the commitment the customer shows with a brand over a longer time (Garbarino & Johnson, 1999).

Later studies on brand attachment reveal that customers can associate themselves with brand the way they can with humans and similarly, emotionally get attached to them like they attach with human (Park & Mcmillan, 2015b). Such an attachment between a customer and a brand is called brand attachment (Bagozzi et al., 2017). In the past, researchers have tried to translate numerous relationship theories to customer brand relationships (Belk, 1989). These studies are divided into two basic perspectives. The first one focuses on the application of anthropology on products and brand, whereas, the second perspective aims at identifying the factors that help build a better brand attachment (Shimp & Madden, 1988).

In literature on brand attachment, some of the scholars have viewed the relation between brand and customer as a method of self-extension for the customer. Belk (1989) argued that materialistic possessions have always been desirable by humans. Throughout their life, human beings strive to express themselves as a combination of extraordinary experiences, people they are related to and their achievements (Ball & Tasaki, 1992). They intend to create an immortal image of theirs. Similarly, the brands or products they use are also considered to be an art of their materialistic self. For example, a customer of Rolex watch would like to be remembered as a Rolex user as this would introduce his wealthy side to the world. People buy cars which justify their personalities. Likewise, all brands that people use ultimately become a part of their own selves. Whatever brand describes their aspirations, they get attached to it as getting attached to their own selves. Another aspect of brand attachment considers self-connection to be an important consideration of it (Whan et al., 2006).

The customers view the brand as a collection of thoughts, memories and feelings they stimulate. The brands may contain memories regarding any person, place or event. Customers who have such memories with brands tend to feel more attached with them. The stronger the link, stronger would be the brand attachment (Skowronski & Carlston, 1992). One more notion of brand attachment focuses on the customer's cognitive

affiliation associated with the brand. The customer would tend to feel unity and oneness with the brand (Thomson et al., 2005). The more characteristically same they are, greater would be the attachment between them (Whan et al., 2006).

A customer considering a brand to be associated with a particular characteristic would then compare their own personality with it and hence, feel attached (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). For example, a product or brand that depicts bravery, would be perceived as representing their own self by a customer who considers themselves as being brave. Some scholars have considered interaction frequency and magnitude as a metric of brand attachment (Thomson et al., 2005). This viewpoint is a physical explanation of attachment which is unlike other aspects which focus mainly on the cognitive perspective. The more a customer consumes a product, the more they will be attached to it (Malär et al., 2011).

Encompassing Bowlby (1979) explained the attachment concept in to customer relationship, it was observed that brand attachment is established on the foundations of brand trust, loyalty and reliability. A person seeks getting involved or attached with people, places, products and brands. Further, Chen et al. (2013) states that the key motivation for a customer to interact with the brand is information. From thereon, the informational need converts into a cognitive conception, and the customer starts developing a sense of emotional attachment with the brand.

2.9.3 Brand Attachment and Other Brand Constructs

Brand satisfaction is the starting point and the very first instance where a customer starts feeling positive for a brand (Thomson et al., 2005). The consumption is a key factor for brand satisfaction and the ability of the brand to meet the psychological, physical and any other needs of the customer determines whether they are satisfied with brand or not (Oliver, 1999). Constant satisfaction with repeated use of a brand leads to the customer returning for it again and again. When the customer returns for the same brand repeatedly in order to satisfy the same cognitive or physical feelings, brand trust is established. At this stage the customer has a considerable confidence in the quality of the brand and also in its ability of satisfying their needs. They are not looking for any alternatives now and almost all of the times are buying the same brand even recommending to others. However, until now, the connection between the two involved i.e. the brand and the customer is dependent on the consumption of the product. The use

and the desired result are what drives brand trust. A few bad instances might also break this trust. The brands must ensure here that the trust is not broken and if they are successful in doing so, they take the relationship between them and the customers to the nest stage that is called brand loyalty (Bahri-Ammari et al., 2016).

The customer at this stage does not feel like switching at all even with a few bad experiences. They feel like a moral obligation to buy this brand and any other option would be considered to be treason (Oliver, 1999). This is a higher level of trust which has been established of years of positive brand experience and satisfaction. Brand loyalty would then be converted into brand love or brand attachment and the difference now would be that the customer feels an emotional bonding with the brand even without consumption. They are proactively advocating the brand and a deprivation of the brand products or brand existence would result in dire emotional and cognitive responses for them (Bowlby, 1979).

This shift towards emotional connectedness is either brand love or brand attachment. Out of all the constructs, these two are the most contentious ones. The literature is highly divided in the opinion of the difference between these two variables. Many studies claim them to be similar and have used them interchangeably (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006), whereas, other find them identical (Kim et al., 2019). The intensity of brand attachment is lower than that of brand love (Schlobohm et al., 2016). The studies suggest that emotional attachment is one of the three aspects of brand love. The other two elements of brand love are passion and self-integration.

According to Shimul et al. (2019), there are three differences between brand love and brand attachment. Firstly, brand attachment is derived from the attachment theories of psychology (Ainsworth, 1978; Bowlby, 1979) and contrarily, brand love is based on inter-personal-love theories (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006). Secondly, brand attachment is more inclined towards psychological aspects of relationship-like connection, affection etc. whereas, brand love also involves physical traits of relationship e.g. passion and enthusiasm. Thirdly, brand attachment once develops, does not depend on consumption or satisfaction. This might not be case for brand love.

In the study of Li et al. (2020), customer engagement in the Taiwanese hospitality industry was investigated as an influencer on brand loyalty. Brand attachment and brand trust were mediating the relationship between customer engagement and brand loyalty. With a sample size of around 300 respondents, all of them Taiwanese, no significant relation was established between brand loyalty and

engagement, however, the study did find a significant relationship between brand attachment and brand loyalty.

Rajaobelina et al. (2021) investigated the mobile banking service for the role of brand attachment and service quality on positive word of mouth. 750+ Canadian mobile banking app users were invited to respond to the survey questions. These responses were measured using a causal model through SEM. It was revealed that brand attachment was directly associated with positive word of mouth. This meant that the more the customers are attached with a brand, the more will they speak positively about it. Moreover, the study also concluded that a positive relation existed between brand attachment and three mobile service quality dimensions. These were value addition, privacy/security and interaction.

Rabbanee et al. (2020) verified the self-congruency concept with its actual, ideal and social self-orientation being tested separately against brand attachment and from there being translated into social media reactions of the customer such as liking, sharing or commenting about a brand. Using responses from 500+ Australian respondents, it was concluded that 2/3 of the self-congruency aspects did affect brand attachment which further had a direct impact on the user's inclination to like, share or comment on social media platforms.

The impact of brand experience on word of mouth (WOM) recommendations by the customers was studied by Gómez-Suárez and Veloso (2020) using brand emotional attachment as the mediator. 416 hotel customers recorded their responses for the survey and results were obtained using SEM. The findings confirmed the mediation of emotional attachment between brand experience and WOM Brand attachment individually also showed a positive effect on WOM recommendations, however, this effect was less than that of brand experience.

Lim et al. (2020) attempted to find determinants of impulsive and compulsive buying behavior with a mediating role of brand attachment. 600 Malaysian youth was surveyed and partial least square SEM was applied. It was found that brand attachment had a positive impact on both impulsive as well as compulsive buying behavior. Additionally, brand attachment also showed a mediation between compulsive buying and determinants of materialism and utilitarian value.

Kaushal and Ali (2020) came up with interesting research where they considered the universities as brands and students as customers, University reputation, brand personality and brand attachment were studied as antecedents of student loyalty.

Control variables of age, gender, seniority and scholarship were also tested for mediation. The empirical results suggested that reputation, age, seniority, scholarship and university brand attachment, all had effect of various degrees on student loyalty. Brand attachment was seen to have a positive effect on student loyalty.

Huaman-Ramirez and Merunka (2019) studied responses from a sample of 334 Peruvian people using various brands in an attempt to establish the impact of brand experience on brand attachment. A mediating role of brand trust, customer's age and income was also taken into consideration. Using SEM and PLS methods, they concluded that brand experience had a significant positive relationship with brand attachment and that experiential marketing was key in boosting emotional bind between the customer and the brand.

Dwivedi et al. (2019) attempted to find the relationship between brand attachment and brand equity for social media brands. Using a sample size of 340 Australian respondent, empirical analysis was used to derive results. The results suggested the presence of a strong positive relationship between brand attachment and brand equity of social media brands. It was implied that even social media brand should focus on enhancing brand attachment in order to gain competitive brand advantage over their competitors.

Finally Vredeveld (2018) examined the two aspects of brand attachment: emotional connection and emotional intelligence separately and their effect on brand attachment was measured. Using n=419 and applying SEM, results suggested a positive relation between brand emotional intelligence and external emotional connections of the brand. This also connoted a positive relation between brand attachment and its two antecedents. Furthermore, brand attachment was also found to be positively related with brand attitude and brand purchase intentions.

2.9.4 Brand Attachment and Airline Industry

The studies involving brand attachment in the context of airline industry were very hard to find. However, few studies exist on the said domain. A very famous Korean study by Kim et al. (2019) attempted to find a relationship between self enhancement behaviors with a moderation of third party certification. The case was presented as a study of 200 Korean first class customers. Self enhancement variables of power and achievement were used to determine the relationship between self enhancement and

well-being perception. Furthermore, well-being perception was tested for an influence on brand attachment and word of mouth through the mediation of third-party certification. The results gathered through SEM and multi group analysis revealed that both the drivers of self enhancement improved the well-being perception which positively influenced brand attachment and positive word of mouth in the mediation of third-party certification.

A recent study by Mekebbaty (2021) investigated the impact of brand authenticity of brand attachment of airline customers in the moderation of brand image. Control variables of income and education were also used in the research. A total of 320 Egyptian airline customers were reached out for responses through a self-structured questionnaire. These answers were analyzed using SEM method. The findings showed a positive relationship between all brand authenticity variables and brand attachment. However, the moderation of brand image was rejected in this case.

A study by Hwang and Lyu (2018) explored the luxury value perceptions of first class American customers in the US airlines. Different luxury value indicators were tested for a relationship with price premium willingness and positive word of mouth. The first-class brand attachment played a mediating role. The findings from a sample of 201 respondents suggested a positive association between brand value perceptions and emotional attachment. This further had a direct impact on price premium willingness and word of mouth.

Brand attachment refers to the emotional bond and psychological connection that customers shape with a brand. It has received tremendous interest in marketing research because of its impact on customer loyalty, brand preference, and long-time period relationships with the brand (Thomson et al., 2005). In the context of the airline industry, brand attachment is a crucial factor influencing customer loyalty, repeat purchases, and customer advocacy, because the emotional bond between customers and airlines can notably affect their choices and behaviors. This literature evaluation explores the concept of brand attachment and its function in the airline industry, highlighting its impact on customer behavior, brand loyalty, and competitive benefit (Kim & Hwang, 2023).

Brand attachment is rooted within the emotional connection between customers and brands, where customers expand sturdy feelings of love, accept as true with, and attachment (Davis & Dacin, 2022). It is regularly conceptualized as a multidimensional construct regarding both cognitive and emotional additives, which together make

contributions to a man or woman's attachment to the brand (Centeno & Mandagi, 2022). Customers with excessive brand attachment tend to exhibit more loyalty, a more potent willingness to propose the brand to others, and a greater favorable notion of the brand's offerings (Madadi et al., 2021). This emotional connection can be prompted by different factors, inclusive of brand reports, brand personality, and brand communication.

In the airline industry, in which customers often make choices based totally on subjective experiences, brand attachment becomes even more vital. Airlines that create emotional connections with their customers by memorable reports, regular fine of carrier, and brand storytelling, can expand sturdy brand attachment, which in turn fosters customer loyalty (Ragab et al., 2024). Customers who experience emotionally attached to an airline are more likely to exhibit repeat behavior, even inside the presence of fee-primarily based opposition or alternatives.

One of the most significant consequences of brand attachment within the airline industry is customer loyalty. Loyalty in this context refers not best to repeat purchases however additionally to the willingness of customers to interact in positive behaviors which include recommending the airline to others or selecting the airline even at a higher price factor (Khurshid, 2016).

A key study by using Shahid et al. (2024) observed that emotional attachment notably predicts customer loyalty inside the airline industry. Their research emphasized the importance of making fantastic brand experiences that foster an emotional bond, which includes providing high-quality customer service, personalizing journey reports, and preserving a strong brand identity. Loyal customers now not only give most effective return however additionally contributes to a brand's popularity through high-quality word-of-mouth and brand advocacy, which is critical in an industry in which popularity performs a pivotal position in attracting new customers (Iqbal & Badshah, 2016).

Furthermore, airlines that prioritize brand attachment regularly have interaction in loyalty programs designed to deepen the emotional bond with common flyers. Programs consisting of miles accumulation, VIP perks, and personalized communications can enhance attachment by making customers experience valued and preferred (Iqbal & Badshah, 2016). These programs strengthen the customer's connection to the brand, growing the likelihood of repeat business and fostering a sense of belonging inside the brand network.

Brand experiences are critical in shaping brand attachment. For airlines, this consists of every touchpoint a customer encounters, from reserving a flight to the in-flight experience and submit-flight carrier (Keller, 2013). A nice and steady experience at every stage of the customer journey contributes to a more potent emotional reference to the airline, ensuing in greater brand attachment (Iqbal & Badshah, 2016).

For instance, a continuing booking system, pleasant and attentive customer support, and an in-flight experience can all make contributions to a stronger emotional bond. customers who experience these high-contact, fine interactions are more likely to sense an attachment to the airline, particularly if the experiences align with the brand's values and guarantees (Herjanto et al., 2022). On the opposite hand, poor experiences such as delays, terrible customer service, or uncomfortable seating can erode brand attachment and set off customers to recall competitors.

Emotional experiences, which include surprise offers, customized greetings, and popularity for loyal customers, additionally enhance brand attachment. Airlines together with Emirates, Singapore Airlines, and Qatar Airways are recognized for creating luxurious, customized experiences that now not best cater to customers' purposeful desires however also deal with their emotional goals (Ragbir et al., 2021). These high-give up, customer-centric experiences make stronger the emotional bond between the airline and its customers, main to multiplied brand attachment and loyalty.

Brand attachment is going beyond customer loyalty to force brand advocacy, that's essential in industries like airlines, in which hints and on-line critiques can heavily influence new customer acquisition (Sezgen et al., 2023). Customers who are emotionally connected to an airline are more likely to suggest the airline to others, share their superb stories on social media, and write favorable critiques. This shape of natural marketing is surprisingly valuable, because it builds the brand's credibility and attracts new customers without the need for highly priced marketing campaigns.

A study with the aid of Radiah et al. (2021) determined that customers who shape a robust emotional attachment to a brand are much more likely to interact in word-of-mouth marketing and percentage their experiences with pals and circle of relatives. In the airline industry, this can translate to tremendous brand benefits, as capacity customers frequently rely on personal suggestions when selecting among airlines. Brand attachment hence serves as an effective mechanism for reinforcing brand visibility and increasing the airline's customer base (Iqbal & Badshah, 2016).

In a notably competitive market like the airline industry, in which price wars and carrier excellent are regularly the focus of customer decision-making, brand attachment can provide a sustainable competitive benefit (Cunningham & Petzer, 2022). Airlines that succeed in fostering sturdy brand attachment are better positioned to resist price competition and financial downturns. While low-cost vendors may additionally enchantment to customers based on price, airlines that create a deeper emotional reference to their customers can differentiate themselves in a way that extends beyond value concerns (Ahmad, 2017).

For instance, top rate airlines like Emirates and Singapore Airlines have cultivated a sturdy brand attachment by imparting extremely good service, luxurious amenities, and precise brand experiences that resonate emotionally with their customers. This attachment no longer only facilitates those airlines maintain current customers however also allows them to command better costs without dropping market proportion (Rodrigues et al., 2024).

Brand attachment performs a pivotal function in the airline industry, influencing customer loyalty, brand advocacy, and the overall competitive benefit of airlines. The emotional bonds formed through nice brand experiences, customer-centric service, and powerful communication techniques result in stronger customer loyalty and better tiers of brand advocacy. For airlines, specializing in growing memorable, personalized experiences and fostering emotional connections with customers is essential for long-time period fulfilment in a competitive and price-sensitive market. As the industry keeps evolving, knowledge the elements that contribute to brand attachment might be key to preserving customer loyalty and maintaining a sturdy marketplace position.

2.10 Brand Consciousness

2.10.1 Definition

This brings now to the sole dependent variable of the study in hand that is brand consciousness. It is the mental state of the customer while selecting products or brands for use, that compels them to choose between brands that are famous and highly marketed (Nelson & McLeod, 2005; Sprotles & Kendall, 1986). Another definition of brand consciousness is suggested by Lemon et al. (2002). According to them, brand

consciousness is "the personal and intangible evaluation of the customer's product over and above its objective significance".

Brand consciousness allows the customers to perceive prestige and a sense of status while using a particular brand. Brands have various implications for the customers. They enable the customers to identify themselves with a particular group of people who use it, therefore give them a sense of self identification. Like this, they are able to enhance their self-image and develop a sense of belonging towards a particular social group (Ismail, 2017). Together all these implications create a product/brand image in the minds of the customer.

Customers having high brand consciousness also consider the fact that the strong brand name and brand image represent high quality and because of this, they are also willing to pay price premiums (Shim & Kotsiopulos, 1992). They seek to relate with such brands personally as well. Customers choose brand which they consider to be representatives of higher status. Customers build their self-identities with the use of brands and feel proud in using such brands. This can also be termed as a cult following. In a nutshell, it is not only brand knowledge or awareness that makes up brand consciousness, but also a belief of the customer that the image of the brand is unique, of greater quality and is a representation of their own identities. They want to be recognized through the brands they use (Phau & Teah, 2009).

2.10.2 Conceptualization of Brand Consciousness

Before having a look at brand consciousness, one must be able to understand the concept of self-consciousness in general. Self-consciousness is the recognition of one's own self and acknowledgment or awareness of someone's existence in the time-space continuum (Kapoor & Munjal, 2019). It is made up of the interactions of oneself with the environment and other people. For example, a man is self-conscious about him being a father, a husband and a professional. The combination of all these roles combine make up for the self-image that man has for himself. Unlike just awareness, self-consciousness might be positive as well as negative (Crozier, 2004).

This consciousness does not only allow us to acknowledge our existence but also enables us to differentiate from others. Self-consciousness is linked with self-identity (Campbell, 1995). It is an important reason in determining people's thoughts and behaviors. A person who would think of himself as being confident would be able

to talk smoothly with others and would be somewhat an extrovert. It is because that person was conscious about him being confident (Simon et al., 2004).

Moving on to branding, contemporary literature in the realm of customer behavior has given considerable attention to the concept of brand consciousness more recently. The general perception of customers that buying expensive products is directly related to higher quality is the antecedent of brand consciousness (Kavkani et al., 2011). Customers being inclined toward such famous products and brand names with having a psychological connection is translated to brand consciousness (B. Zhang & Kim, 2013). In line with this, Nelson and McLeod (2005), also explained that brand consciousness is a personality trait in which customers are after more popular and well-reputed brands and tend to buy those products that are aggressively marketed. Present literature stresses the importance of the construct of brand consciousness in customer decision making particularly for luxury and high-priced products (Sharda & Bhat, 2019; Sprotles & Kendall, 1986).

There are several reasons why brand consciousness is so prevalent in present-day customers and plays an important role decision-making process. For instance, it is used as a tool to strengthen social presence and acceptance (Kautish et al., 2020). Brand consciousness helps customers to be associated with a particular social group and have a social identity that they strive for. This identity is gained through owning products that are of higher value, rare, and not within the reach of any ordinary customer (Kapferer & Valette-Florence, 2016). It is also argued that self-confidence and unique identity are additional takeaways of brand consciousness where customers are found to have a feeling of pride after owning expensive and luxury brand products (Phau & Teah, 2009).

Customers who are more serious about their social status tend to be more brand conscious as they represent themselves through expensive brands in their social circle and the society (Ahmed et al., 2018). In regards to the involvement of social and cultural norms, Hofstede (1980) presented six different dimensions of culture and explained that each society or nation has a particular dimension of culture. However, in his recent work, he argued that on individual-level human actions and behavior is based on five patterns and among those is Self-orientation versus collectivity-orientation (Hofstede, 2011).

Brand consciousness is variable for different groups of customers. These customers are differentiated on different demographic factors such as age, gender and

cultures. The meanings are extracted from the different symbols embedded in the brands. These meanings are interpreted and according to them, the customer makes the choice which suits his own self or his expectation realms regarding status and class of the product. Though price is an influential thing for brand conscious customers, they might be also willing to pay some extra dollars if it satisfies their identity instincts. The brand conscious customers rely more on brands and always consider them while making purchase decisions, thus giving brand managers a dimension to work upon (Ismail, 2017).

2.10.3 Brand Consciousness and Relevant Concepts

The two very similar terms in the world of brand that are related to brand consciousness, are brand loyalty and brand awareness. Starting with brand awareness, it is the merely the knowledge of the existence of a brand for a customer (Aaker, 1999). The customer is aware of the fact that a particular brand is existent and that they have the knowledge of its features and characteristics (Adiyati et al., 2022). Brand loyalty on the other hand is a long-term relationship of the customer with the brand. It is achieved through persistent recognition and recall leading to purchase. The purchase is then regular and the customer starts thinking of the brand as a higher quality product and there comes a stage when the price doesn't matter as perceived quality and benefits of the product outweigh the price consciousness (Dick & Basu, 1994).

In other words, brand awareness starts with recognizing the name and function of the product. This recognition if repeated several times would result in brand recall. The brand when consistently is recalled by the customer, becomes their purchase (Kotler et al., 2014). The continuous awareness leads to continuous purchases by the customer who then becomes fond of the brand and would perceive it to be of a higher quality and buy it almost every time (Campbell, 2002).

Brand consciousness has been studied fewer number of times as compared to brand loyalty and brand awareness. Kautish et al. (2020) investigated the effect of terminal and instrumental values on brand consciousness and behavioral intentions of the customers. Applying PLS-SEM on the responses collected through self-structured questionnaire, they concluded that values had a direct relationship with brand consciousness and also behavioral intentions of the customer. Moreover, brand

consciousness also mediated the relationship between values and behavioral intentions of customers of apparel industry.

Another recent study regarding brand consciousness encompassing the fashion industry was by Soesanto and Halim (2022). They attempted to discover the relationship of social media activities on brand loyalty through the mediation of brand consciousness. Using responses from an online survey and applying the structural equation modeling, the results depicted a negative relationship between perceived social media activities and brand loyalty in the mediation of brand consciousness.

The study of Yee et al. (2022) investigated the association between social media marketing and brand loyalty with the identification of relevant mediators which included brand consciousness, value consciousness and brand satisfaction. Data was collected from 270 Malaysian pupils who were regular cinema visitors and also users of social media. The results derived from PLS-SEM suggested that in presence of all mediating variables including brand consciousness, social media marketing had a significant relationship with brand loyalty.

An extensive study regarding various product characteristics was conducted by Walia et al. (2020) who attempted to discover the impact of brand consciousness, perceived quality, price sensitivity and product availability on purchase intention. Green products were only tested for above variables. A total of 500 respondents mainly from Uttarakhand, India, who were also customers of 4 big retail outlets selling only green products were questioned and the results were analyzed using factor analysis and regression analysis. These findings suggested that all independent variables significantly affected the purchase intentions of the customers of green products.

Similarly, Khan (2019) investigated the relationship between perceived social media activities and brand loyalty, brand consciousness, value consciousness and purchase intentions. The results which were gained by using PLS-SEM with Chi-square test were gathered from 241 Saudi nationals. They also suggested no mediation of brand consciousness between brand loyalty and perceived social media activities.

Sharda and Bhat (2019) explored the relationship between customer vanity and luxury consumption in the mediation of brand consciousness. Responses from 343 luxury goods customers were collected and analyzed through SEM. The results supported the hypothesis that brand consciousness mediated the relationship between customer vanity and luxury consumption. This implied that wealthier customers who belonged to a higher social class bought expensive luxury goods pertaining to the fact

that this allowed them to perceive themselves as successful and superior than those who couldn't buy such brands.

Another study measuring social media marketing's impact on brand loyalty is of Hermanus et al. (2016). The impact of such activities on brand loyalty of the Adidas brand Indonesia was measured with the mediation of value consciousness and brand consciousness. The results suggested that the social media activities did affect the brand loyalty of Adidas in Indonesia and that the value and brand consciousness did mediate this relationship.

Bajaj (2018) studied the soap brands in Nagpur city of India to determine the relationship of customer satisfaction on brand consciousness and brand loyalty. Different soap characteristics such as fragrance, packaging, price etc. were used as determinants of customer satisfaction. Using empirical analysis on data collected through self-structured questionnaire, it was concluded that customer satisfaction positively affected brand consciousness and brand loyalty which meant that the more satisfied the customers were from the soap, the more were they loyal and conscious towards them.

2.10.4 Brand Consciousness and Airline industry

Brand consciousness in the airline industry has not been extensively studied, but there is growing recognition of its influence on customer behavior, loyalty, and brand equity. Brand consciousness refers to the degree of awareness and importance that customers attach to brands in their decision-making process (Nelson & McLeod, 2005). It is particularly relevant in sectors like aviation, where the choices available to customers are often numerous, and factors such as quality, reputation, and brand image play a significant role in shaping purchasing decisions.

Kim et al. (2022) conducted one of the few studies exploring the role of brand consciousness in the airline industry. Their research investigated the relationship between cause-related marketing (CRM) activities and airline brand loyalty, with a particular focus on brand consciousness as a mediating factor (De Silva et al., 2020). Data was gathered from over 440 U.S. airline customers who had participated in charity-related initiatives associated with their preferred airlines. The study found that brand consciousness moderated the relationship between CRM activities and brand loyalty, highlighting that customers who are more brand-conscious are more likely to engage in

loyalty behaviors when the airline's marketing aligns with their personal values and social consciousness.

While this study provides valuable insights into the role of brand consciousness in fostering customer loyalty, the broader literature on the topic in the airline industry remains sparse. However, insights from related research in other sectors can help further explain the role of brand consciousness (Kim & Hwang, 2023). For instance, in customer goods and luxury sectors, brand-conscious customers are known to prioritize brands that align with their values, social status, or self-identity (Aljumah et al., 2023). This can be applied to the airline industry as well, where customers may choose airlines not only based on the quality of services but also because of their perception of the airline's brand as a symbol of prestige or societal responsibility.

For airlines, understanding brand consciousness can help to differentiate brands in a competitive market. In the airline industry, customers often make decisions based on perceived brand value, with established airlines being associated with higher levels of trust, safety, and luxury. A study by Hossain et al. (2024) indicated that customers who are highly brand-conscious are more likely to prefer premium, well-known airlines over low-cost carriers, even when cost is not the deciding factor. These customers often seek out airlines that reflect their status or lifestyle, suggesting that brand consciousness has a direct influence on customer preferences and, ultimately, loyalty.

Furthermore, brand-conscious customers are likely to be more receptive to communication strategies that emphasize brand values, such as sustainability or corporate social responsibility (CSR). In the case of the airline industry, brands that promote eco-friendly initiatives, such as carbon-neutral flights or sustainable fuel use, can attract more brand-conscious customers who prioritize environmental concerns. This insight is in line with findings from a study by Gowda et al. (2023), who found that customers who are conscious of a brand's values are more inclined to remain loyal to the brand, especially when they perceive the airline's initiatives to align with their personal ethical values.

Brand consciousness is also important when considering customer satisfaction and post-purchase behavior. According to a study by Sahin et al. (2021), brand-conscious customers are more likely to participate in frequent flyer programs and engage in repeat purchases. Their loyalty is not solely based on functional service attributes but is enhanced by their perception of the airline's image and their personal

affinity with the brand. This further emphasizes the need for airlines to cultivate a strong brand identity that resonates with these customers' values and aspirations.

Although studies on brand consciousness in the airline industry are limited, the existing literature underscores its importance in shaping customer behavior. Airlines that can successfully tap into brand consciousness will be better positioned to foster customer loyalty, differentiate themselves in the competitive market, and strengthen their brand equity. Future research should explore the specific dimensions of brand consciousness in the airline industry, especially in the context of diverse cultural and geographical markets, to further understand its impact on brand loyalty and customer engagement.

Brand consciousness plays a pivotal role in customer behavior, and this is especially true in the airline industry where customers often face a multitude of choices, making brand perception a decisive factor in their selection of services (Zha et al., 2022). Customers with high brand consciousness tend to focus on distinguishing features such as service quality, reputation, status, and brand image when making travel decisions. These factors are particularly influential in premium and international travel markets, where brand equity often correlates with the perceived value of services, the status the brand imparts, and the overall customer experience.

A critical aspect of brand consciousness in the airline sector is the customer's awareness of the airline's position in the marketplace (Irwin & Kelly, 2021). Airlines with high brand awareness often hold a competitive advantage, as customers are more likely to choose a brand they recognize, especially when making long-term or high-value purchases like international flights. This is evident in the findings of Tam et al. (2022), who suggested that high levels of brand awareness contribute significantly to customer decision-making, as it fosters trust and reliability. In the airline industry, this can translate into customers' preference for well-established carriers over newer, lesser-known organizations.

Furthermore, brand-conscious customers are generally more attentive to the ways in which airlines communicate their messages. They are particularly drawn to brands that convey a clear, consistent, and attractive identity through marketing channels such as marketing, social media, and in-flight experiences (Thongkruer & Wanarat, 2021). A study by Aaker (1997) suggested that brand-conscious customers are more likely to align themselves with brands that project a premium, high-quality image. This is of particular importance in the airline industry, where customers often seek a

brand that resonates with their lifestyle choices, whether it's associated with luxury, eco-friendliness, or social responsibility.

In addition to brand recognition and perceived value, brand consciousness in the airline industry is also linked to the role of emotional attachment to the brand. Airline customers who exhibit a high degree of brand consciousness are more likely to form an emotional connection with their chosen carrier, which can drive loyalty and repeat business. According to Han et al. (2021), emotional attachment plays a critical role in fostering brand loyalty, especially when customers feel personally invested in the airline's values and brand identity. Airlines that successfully build this emotional connection with their customers can cultivate a strong brand following, encouraging brand advocacy and increasing customer retention.

Brand-conscious customers also tend to place significant value on an airline's reputation for quality, safety, and customer service. As seen in studies by Nousiainen (2023), customers who are highly conscious of a brand's reputation are more likely to pay a premium for perceived superior services. This is crucial for airlines, as maintaining a positive brand image is often associated with customer satisfaction and trust. In a market with significant competition, airline brands that ensure consistent, high-quality service across all touchpoints from booking to in-flight experience are more likely to attract and retain brand-conscious customers (Marvi et al., 2024).

Another important factor contributing to brand consciousness in the airline industry is the role of corporate social responsibility (CSR). In recent years, there has been a growing trend for customers to consider the ethical and environmental practices of organizations before making purchasing decisions (Nelson & McLeod, 2005). In this context, airlines that emphasize sustainability, charitable initiatives, and ethical business practices can capture the attention of brand-conscious customers who align their values with the brands they support. A study by Gilal et al. (2023) found that customers who are highly conscious of a brand's CSR activities are more likely to develop positive attitudes towards the brand and exhibit loyalty behaviors. Airlines such as Delta and Lufthansa have increasingly highlighted their CSR initiatives, such as reducing carbon emissions and supporting community projects, to appeal to this growing customer segment.

The concept of brand consciousness is also intricately linked to the evolution of loyalty programs in the airline industry. Customers who exhibit high brand consciousness are more likely to engage in frequent flyer programs and develop strong

brand loyalty over time. These customers are often motivated by the perceived benefits, status, and rewards that come with membership in such programs. Airlines that effectively integrate brand consciousness into their loyalty initiatives can enhance customer retention and foster long-term relationships with their customers. A study by Limberger et al. (2021) emphasized that loyalty programs not only reward customers for their repeated business but also strengthen their emotional connection with the airline's brand, contributing to sustained loyalty.

While there has been limited research specifically focused on brand consciousness in the airline industry, the available literature underscores its importance in shaping customer preferences, loyalty, and overall brand equity. As the airline industry continues to evolve, particularly in response to global competition, shifting customer expectations, and technological advancements, understanding the factors that influence brand consciousness will be essential for airlines aiming to build strong, enduring customer relationships.

Future research in this area should explore the specific cultural, psychological, and demographic factors that influence brand consciousness in different airline markets. Given the global nature of the airline industry, it is important to understand how brand consciousness varies across different regions and how it impacts customer loyalty in both emerging and mature markets. Additionally, with the rise of digital platforms and online reviews, the role of online brand consciousness shaped by social media interactions, user-generated content, and online reviews, should be explored to gain deeper insights into the evolving nature of customer behavior in the airline industry.

2.11 Brand Knowledge

2.11.1 Definition

After explaining the independent variables of brand experience, brand communication, brand attachment and the dependent variable of brand consciousness, the mediating variable of the study i.e. brand knowledge is being described now. Though the scholars have not agreed on a particular definition for brand knowledge, it can be defined as descriptive or evaluative information regarding a brand that has been stored in the minds of the customers (Gummesson et al., 2014). It contains brand related concepts, feelings, thoughts, attitudes, brand image and brand awareness (Keller, 1993).

Brand knowledge is considered to be the bridge between customer and brand and considered to be one of the most important constructs of branding (Park & Mcmillan, 2015). It is the first target achieved by the firm while establishing a stronger brand. The ultimate response of the customer regarding the brand would be based on the knowledge they get about it. This means that brand knowledge is a significant determinant of brand equity (Keller, 2003). Out of the factors that influence the buying decisions of the customers, brand knowledge is one of the most important ones. Brand knowledge is the structure of the brand or product that the customer has in their mind either by using the brand themselves or just by hearing it. The structure may include the brand logo, design, packaging, product features, tag lines or anything related to the brand (Keller, 2003).

Brand knowledge is a combination of feelings, thoughts and experiences related to a brand that effect the customer responses. Brand knowledge is the result of a consistent communication with the customer which has been described previously. The brand knowledge doesn't only encompass the explicit information given by the brand itself; it also contains any implied information that the brand intentionally or unintentionally might transmit through its marketing activities. Most of this tacit knowledge is based on the personal experience of the customer with the brand. In some cases the brands don't even need to market or communicate to create brand knowledge (Richards et al., 1998).

2.11.2 Conceptualization of Brand knowledge

Knowledge is the complete embodiment of understandings, thoughts and experiences which people use to solve their problems. These problems may be of cognitive, physical, or even of spiritual nature. For example, if we feel a headache, the thought of using an aspirin would immediately pop up in one's mind and with an understanding that it is a drug that helps regulate our body chemical levels so that we don't feel pain. Moreover, an experience with aspirin would also have indicated that it is a good option to cure a headache. This process of thinking, understanding, and experiencing the aspirin is based on our knowledge that was used to treat the problem of a headache. Moving on to brand knowledge, it was argued by Keller (2003) that a combination of related information including brand image, awareness, attitudes,

benefits and brand experience make up brand knowledge. He explained it as a unique information stored in the minds of customers regarding a brand.

All above aspects of brand knowledge may vary in magnitude and individuality, however, all of them combine to become a part of customer memory and influence the customer response to brand marketing. The ability of brand knowledge to impact the decision making of the customer by creating a differential perception is considered to be an integral part of branding (Keller, 1993, 2009). There have been some research in the past on the construct of brand knowledge, however, there is a gap in understanding the creation of such knowledge structures that help to influence customer decisions Aaker (1991).

With the study of various brand knowledge aspects, it would be easier to predict the customer actions towards different marketing activities (Ross, 2006). This would help the firms to create robust marketing strategies as well. There remains no doubt regarding the importance of the mediation of brand knowledge on other constructs as it is this knowledge and its related components that represent the brand to the customer world and influences their decision making (Elliott et al., 2015).

Apart from the apparent aspects of brand knowledge, scholars have recently tried to explore the intangible side of brand knowledge. An example of it would be the discovery of the famous 5 aspects of brand personality. Another attempt at defining the hidden side of brand knowledge was the use of Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique (ZMET) by Zaltman and Coulter (1995). Through the ZMET, they measured the sensational and pictorial responses of the customers. A similar method was used by Fournier (1998) who used his own Interpersonal Relationship Metaphor for the same purpose.

A new concept of brand communities was suggested by O'Guinn and Muniz (2000). These communities were based on customers having similar brand knowledge. Coming on to the methodological point of view of experience, Janiszewski and Osselaer (2000) proposed a connectionist model to ensure the degree of brand knowledge. This model allowed the scholars to mentally map the customers. These studies are considered to be the pioneers in studying brand knowledge dimensions. The results of these studies helped the scholars to better understand the abstract and subjective features of brand knowledge.

2.11.3 Keller's Mapping of Brand Knowledge

The most famous and extensive work done on brand knowledge is perhaps by Keller (1993). According to Keller, brand knowledge is divided into two basic components. These two components are brand awareness and brand image. Brand awareness is further segregated into 2 components which are brand recognition and brand recall (Macdonald & Sharp, 2003). On the other hand, brand image is concerned with the memorial or pictorial representation of the brand in the form of associations. It is the brand associations arising from brand image which further create memories with the brand. Brand image is further classified into brand attitudes, brand benefits and brand attributes. The brand benefits extracted from brand image can either be functional, financial, symbolic, or even experiential. On the other hand, the brand attributes are further into two categories. The attributes are either product related or non-product related. Product related attributes include the size of the product, quality, color etc., whereas the non-product related attributes can be price, usage, user, or packaging.

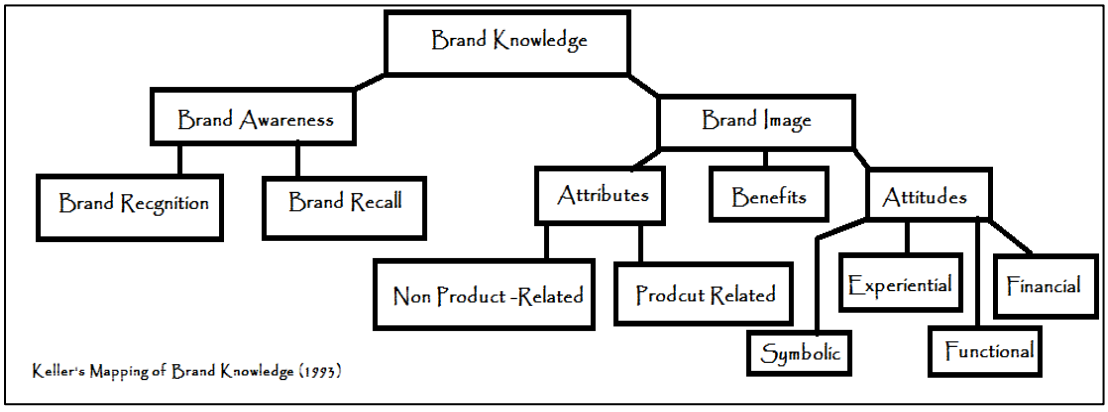

Figure 2.10 Brand Knowledge

To understand brand knowledge better we must also explain the concept of brand awareness. It is known as the extent to which a customer can recognize or recall the brand in various environments (Keller, 2003). It is also defined as customers' ability to confirm previous encounters with the brand if any related indication is given (Rossiter, 1987). Being one of the sub types of brand knowledge, it is considered to be an integral part of customer behavior and hence, very vital for brand management (Baldauf et al., 2003). The whole concept of brand management basically starts from

brand awareness because the customer would only be making the purchase decision if they are aware of the brand in first place. The awareness of brand doesn't and shouldn't only include the recall or recognition of their name or logo but also the product and its features. These brand features or characteristics should also be portrayed in such a way that they distinguish the brand from others (Cleveland & Laroche, 2007).

Keller's (1993) conceptualization of brand knowledge plays a crucial role in understanding how customers perceive and connect with brands. Brand knowledge, as proposed by Keller, is a collection of associations and perceptions that individuals hold about a brand. These associations form the basis of a brand's equity and shape customer attitudes, preferences, and behavior (Fetais et al., 2023). Keller's framework of brand knowledge is fundamental to brand management, especially in competitive industries like the airline sector, where brand perception significantly influences customer choice and loyalty.

Keller (1993) divides brand knowledge into two key components: brand awareness and brand image. Brand awareness refers to the ability of customers to recognize or recall a brand in each context. It is a foundational element in building strong brand equity, as it is the first step toward creating customer associations with a brand. Brand awareness can be categorized into two types: brand recognition and brand recall (Wu et al., 2022). Brand recognition is the ability to recognize a brand when exposed to it, while brand recall is the ability to remember the brand when given a specific product category or need (Keller, 1993).

Brand image, on the other hand, refers to the associations and perceptions that customers hold about a brand. These associations can include attributes, benefits, and overall brand impressions. Keller (1993) emphasizes that brand image is shaped by both functional and emotional associations, which determine the perceived value of the brand. For example, in the airline industry, functional associations might include on-time performance, flight comfort, and safety, while emotional associations could be linked to the sense of trust, luxury, or customer service that an airline provides (Prentice et al., 2023).

Keller's brand knowledge framework is closely related to the concept of brand equity, which is the value a brand adds to a product or service based on the customer's perception of the brand. A strong brand equity results from positive brand knowledge, which leads to favorable customer attitudes and behavior. Brand equity is built upon customer recognition, recall, and associations that positively influence brand

preference, loyalty, and willingness to pay a premium for a brand's products or services (Keller, 2003). For instance, in the airline industry, customers are more likely to choose an airline they recognize, trust, and associate with positive attributes such as safety, comfort, and customer care (Keller, 2003).

Keller (2001) Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) model specifically highlights the importance of brand knowledge in the creation of strong brand equity. This model argues that brand knowledge is the key driver of brand equity, with the goal being to create brand resonance. Brand resonance is the deep connection that customers feel with a brand, marked by loyalty, emotional attachment, and active engagement. This resonates particularly well in industries like airlines, where emotional and trust-based connections are crucial to retaining customers (Liu et al., 2020). For example, airlines like Emirates and Singapore Airlines have developed strong brand resonance through their consistent delivery of exceptional service and superior brand experiences.

Brand awareness is often the starting point in building brand equity. According to Keller (1993), building brand awareness is a critical first step in the customer decision-making process, particularly in highly competitive industries like airlines. The more aware customers are of a brand, the more likely they are to consider it when making purchasing decisions (Sarker et al., 2021). This is particularly important for new entrants or emerging brands in the airline industry, where building awareness is essential for capturing market share. For instance, low-cost carriers like Ryanair and Southwest Airlines have successfully built brand awareness through consistent marketing and promotional efforts, enabling them to challenge established airlines (Shen & Yahya, 2021).

In the airline industry, brand awareness also plays a critical role in the purchase funnel. Once customers are aware of an airline, their next step is to evaluate the airline’s offerings, including flight routes, pricing, and customer service. Airlines invest heavily in marketing, social media marketing, and sponsorships to ensure that their brand is top-of-mind for customers (Prasetio et al., 2022). Moreover, brand awareness can directly influence brand preference, as customers are more likely to opt for airlines that they recognize and trust, especially when it comes to international travel (Sezgen et al., 2023).

Brand image, as proposed by Keller, consists of associations that customers make with a brand. These associations are shaped by the customer’s experiences, perceptions, and interactions with the brand, and they influence how the brand is

perceived relative to competitors. In the airline industry, brand image is often tied to perceptions of service quality, comfort, reliability, and luxury (Mauroner et al., 2016). Airlines that can create a positive brand image often capitalize on these associations to differentiate themselves from competitors. For example, airlines like Qatar Airways and Lufthansa are known for their high-end service offerings, which are strongly associated with their brand images.

Keller (2001) concept of brand image also highlights the importance of differentiation. Airlines that can differentiate themselves through unique features (e.g., premium lounges, in-flight entertainment, eco-friendly initiatives) are better able to carve out a strong brand image in the minds of customers. For instance, Virgin Atlantic has built a unique brand image around its focus on customer service and innovation, which has contributed to its appeal among premium customers.

In the airline industry, Keller's brand knowledge framework provides a comprehensive tool for understanding how airlines can cultivate brand equity. Through targeted marketing efforts, airlines can increase brand awareness by ensuring that their brands are visible and recognizable (Sarker et al., 2021). Once awareness is established, airlines must focus on cultivating a positive brand image by reinforcing desirable associations related to service quality, reliability, and customer experience. This can be achieved through marketing, customer service training, and innovative product offerings.

A case study in the airline industry that exemplifies Keller’s brand knowledge mapping is Singapore Airlines. This airline has managed to build both high levels of brand awareness and a positive brand image (Sezgen et al., 2023). Through strategic marketing campaigns, such as its "Singapore Girl" advertisements, Singapore Airlines has consistently communicated a brand image centered on luxury, service excellence, and comfort. This has translated into strong brand loyalty and a highly differentiated brand in the competitive airline market (Khandelwal, 2015).

Keller’s mapping of brand knowledge provides a valuable framework for understanding how brand awareness and brand image shape customer perceptions and influence brand equity. For airlines, building strong brand knowledge is essential for gaining customer loyalty, differentiation, and long-term success (Lin et al., 2021). By leveraging Keller’s brand knowledge model, airlines can effectively manage their brand strategies, create positive customer associations, and foster deep emotional connections with customers. Future research could further explore how specific brand knowledge

dimensions (e.g., brand awareness, image) impact customer behavior in different regions or markets, helping airlines tailor their strategies for different customer segments.

Brand awareness is further divided into two parts: brand recognition and brand recall. Though they may sound similar, they actually are quite unique and different from each other. Brand recall is the spontaneous memory of a brand that immediately comes in customers mind when they refer to a particular product category (Aaker & Biel, 2013). Usually whenever a product type is put up for consideration, very few brands pop up in our minds. They may be three to five most of the times. For example, if you have to think about a beverage, the names of Pepsi and Coca-Cola are instantaneously recalled or remembered (Belch & Belch, 2013). According to research, the total number of brands that a customer can recall for a product category is directly influenced by brand knowledge, brand loyalty and other contextual reasons. Brand recognition is the ability of the customer to identify the brand when they are presented with the product, name or even just the logo (Percy & Rossiter, 1992).

Brand awareness is at the top of the hierarchy of effects which is a linear model that refers to the movement of customers across a linear process of branding cognitively and emotionally (Lavidge & Steiner, 1961). This hierarchy starts with brand awareness and ultimately ends up at the customer buying the product of that particular brand. The models start with awareness where the customer becomes aware of the existence of the brand. This is usually achieved through advertising (Vakratsas & Ambler, 1999). Moving on, further and consistent awareness of a brand or product would enhance the knowledge of the customer through constant learning. This knowledge can be about quality, prices, sizes etc. The knowledge gained by the customer would then start to influence their feelings for the brand and they would either start liking or disliking it. A thorough analysis of the pros and cons of a brand are essence of this stage.

Furthermore, the analysis would become comparative when the customer starts analyzing more brands and rates them separately (Barry, 1993). From here on, brand preference would be created. After preference is established for a particular brand, The customer would be convinced to buy it. Finally, the customer would buy the product or the brand. This purchase can be a direct purchase or may be after a minor inspection or trial.

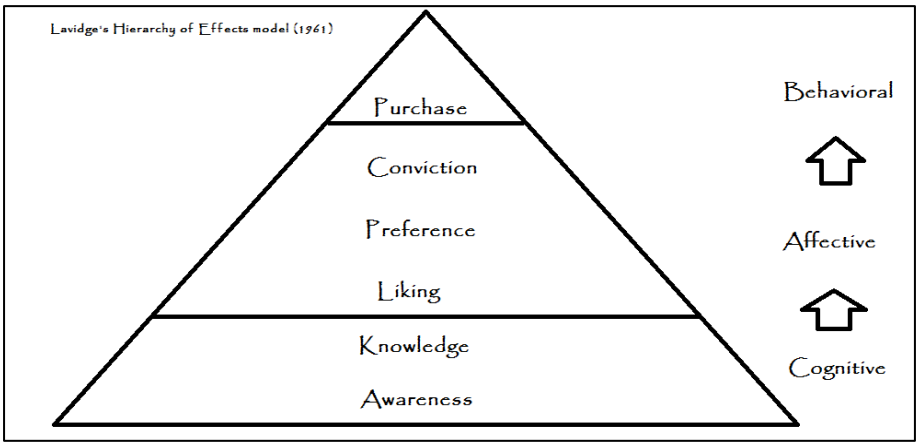

Figure 2.11 Lavidge and Steiner (1961) Hierarchy of Effects Model

2.11.4 Previous Studies on Brand Knowledge

Lately, brand knowledge has become the focus of many researchers who intend to study brand management. In this section, few of the recent studies and their findings regarding brand knowledge will be highlighted. Some of these studies have incorporated brand knowledge as a whole concept while others have included one or few of the aspects of brand knowledge. Starting with the latest study, Liu (2022) attempted to investigate the relationship of brand knowledge and organizational loyalty on employee based brand equity. Organizational culture acted as a moderating variable of the study. A total of 306 responses from hospitality sector customers were finalized for analysis. Using structural equation modeling, it was concluded that brand knowledge and organizational loyalty both had a positive impact on employee-based customer equity. The mediation of organizational culture was also accepted by the model.

Another study regarding brand knowledge in the hospitality sector was conducted by Lee et al. (2022). The research aimed at establishing an association between brand love and brand knowledge with brand relationship and extra role behavior. The extra role here was meant by the customer acting in a way that is not a generic response of branding. Examples include proving feedback, referring other customers etc. Empirical results concluded that brand love had strong relationship with brand relationships and extra role behaviors were also triggered because of it. However, the impact brand knowledge on brand relationship though existed, was minimal.

The relationship of in-role and extra-role behaviors of value co-creation such as Customer engagement behavior (CEB) and customer citizenship behavior (CCB) respectively, with social media brand community variables of motivations, social media

presence and brand knowledge was explored by Song et al. (2022). The survey was conducted regarding the effectiveness of social media brand pages of restaurants and how the brand community variables affected the role behaviors. Using structural equation modeling, it was revealed that all variables including motivations, social presence and brand knowledge positively affected the CEB which further influenced the CCB.

The mediating role of green brand knowledge (GBK) on the relationship between green brand positioning (GBP), environmental concern (EC), attitudes towards green brands (ATGB) and green purchase intention (GPI) was examined by Siyal et al. (2021). The study used PLS-SEM to extract and analyze results which showed a positive significant relationship of GPI with other variables (GBP, EC, and ATGB). The findings also validated a strong influence of GBK on the relationship among other variables. This implied that the relationship of other variables on GPI enhances for the customers who have a stronger knowledge of the green brand.

In addition, Zhou et al. (2021) intended to examine the impact of green brand knowledge, environmental consciousness and Eudaimonia wellbeing on brand purchase intention. The structural equation modeling method was used to test the responses from 530 Chinese respondents who were customers of various green brands. According to the findings, green brand knowledge exerted a positive influence on brand purchase intention of these green brands. Furthermore, it was also observed that environmental consciousness moderated the relationship of green brand knowledge and social contribution expectations.

In another study, Cheung et al. (2020) explored the impact of various social media marketing elements on brand engagement and brand knowledge. Collecting data from 214 respondents via self-structured questionnaires, who were mainly Hong Kong social media users, PLS-SEM technique was used to derive results. The findings indicated the presence of a significant direct relationship of the social media elements of trendiness, WOM and interaction with brand engagement and brand knowledge. Contrarily, the elements of customization and entertainment showed less significant association with brand engagement and brand knowledge.

A study by Yamin (2020) investigated the Bangladeshi customer product industry in order to establish the relationship of brand knowledge on brand equity. The results accepted the hypothesis that brand knowledge significantly and positively affected brand equity. It was further seen that the most preferred source of brand

awareness for Bangladeshi customers was television followed by digital marketing activities. Moreover, functional benefit was seen as the most compelling aspect of brand knowledge.

A comprehensive research to study the effect of brand knowledge and hedonic shopping value on impulsive buying behavior of Indonesian customers with regards to the famous Miniso brand was conducted by Putri (2020). 272 questionnaires were finalized for data extraction and descriptive statistics were used to explain the results. It was established that brand knowledge positively influenced the impulsive buying behavior of the customers, whereas hedonic value of shopping showed no impact on impulsive buying. The moderation of positive emotions was also accepted between brand knowledge and impulsive buying.

Moreover, Moradi et al. (2020) also examined the role of brand communications on brand equity of online stores using the mediation of brand knowledge and word of mouth ads. Using responses from 380 collected questionnaires and applying SEM, the results indicated the presence of positive relationship among brand communication and brand equity using mediation of brand knowledge as well as word of mouth advertising. Brand communications also showed a direct relationship with brand knowledge. Osei-Frimpong et al. (2019) also investigated the impact of brand knowledge, social relatedness, social pressure and brand trust on social media brand engagements. The results were similar and showed an influence of brand knowledge on social media brand engagement.

Hence, brand awareness, and brand image the dimensions of brand knowledge, therefore, both can be used for examining the relationship of brand knowledge with other variables. Brand awareness and brand image can successfully mediate the relationship between advertisement awareness and brand equity (Almasi et al., 2020). The mediating role of brand awareness and brand image approves the mediating role of brand knowledge because Keller (1993) explained brand awareness and brand image as dimensions of brand knowledge.

Brand knowledge plays a mediating role between the relationship of brand oriented leadership and brand commitment as well (Terglav et al., 2016). Although the study focuses employee brand knowledge it's still brand knowledge which is a crucial construct of the current study. Moreover, brand knowledge also mediates the relationship between online communities' characteristics and resilience to negative

information (Elsharnouby et al., 2021). All these studies proves that brand knowledge can work as a mediator between different variables.

Brand knowledge is a critical element of brand equity, encompassing all the cognitive and affective associations that customers have with a brand. It is typically divided into two main dimensions: brand awareness and brand image (Keller, 1993). In the context of the airline industry, brand knowledge plays an important role in shaping customers' perceptions, purchasing decisions, and loyalty behaviors. Understanding how brand knowledge influences airline customers' choices can provide valuable insights into how airlines can build and maintain strong brands in a competitive market. This literature review examines the concept of brand knowledge and its relevance to the airline industry, discussing its components, implications for customer behavior, and strategic importance for airlines (Ahmadi & Ataei, 2024).

Brand knowledge consists of two core dimensions: brand awareness and brand image. Brand awareness refers to the extent to which customers are familiar with a brand and can recognize it when encountered (Keller, 1993). In the airline industry, brand awareness is particularly important because it is often the first step in a customer's decision-making process. Customers are more likely to choose an airline they recognize and trust over a lesser-known alternative, especially in cases where price and service offerings are similar (Tarabieh, 2022). High brand awareness can significantly enhance an airline's competitive edge, as it increases the likelihood that customers will select the airline when making booking decisions (Tam et al., 2022).

Brand image, on the other hand, refers to the associations and perceptions that customers have about a brand. These associations can be related to various attributes, such as the quality of service, customer experience, safety standards, and even the reputation of the airline (Aaker, 1991). In the airline industry, a positive brand image is critical, as customers often perceive air travel as a service-intensive industry where trust and comfort are paramount. Airlines that consistently deliver high-quality services and maintain a positive reputation can build a strong brand image that differentiates them from competitors and fosters customer loyalty (Arya et al., 2022).

Brand knowledge plays an integral role in customer decision-making, particularly in industries where service quality and customer experience are key differentiators. In the airline industry, customers are often faced with multiple options when booking flights, and brand knowledge can significantly influence their choice of airline. As customers, customers frequently rely on brand knowledge to guide their

decisions in the absence of direct experience or detailed information (Bagozzi et al., 2021; Xu et al., 2021). This is especially true in situations where customers are booking flights based on limited information, such as when purchasing tickets through online travel agencies or third-party platforms.

According to Aaker (1991), brand knowledge helps to reduce uncertainty and perceived risk, as customers feel more confident in choosing a brand they are familiar with. This is particularly important in the airline industry, where customers may experience concerns about issues like flight delays, cancellations, and customer service. A well-established brand with high brand awareness and a positive brand image can alleviate some of these concerns by conveying reliability and quality. For example, established international airlines such as Emirates, Qatar Airways, and Singapore Airlines benefit from strong brand knowledge, which influences customer preferences and reduces the likelihood that customers will switch to competitors (Pabla & Soch, 2023).

Moreover, brand knowledge influences the perceived value of the airline's offerings. When customers have strong brand knowledge and positive associations with a particular airline, they are often willing to pay a premium for the airline's services, even in the presence of lower-cost alternatives. This willingness to pay a premium is driven by the confidence customers place in the brand’s ability to deliver a high-quality experience.

Brand knowledge is closely linked to customer loyalty in the airline industry. When customers have a high level of awareness and positive associations with an airline, they are more likely to engage in repeat purchases and become loyal customers (Baumeister et al., 2022). Loyalty in the airline industry goes beyond repeat bookings to include advocacy behaviors, such as recommending the airline to others, writing positive reviews, and sharing their experiences on social media (Limberger et al., 2021).

The relationship between brand knowledge and loyalty has been emphasized in several studies. A study by Keller (2003) suggested that the more customers know about a brand and the more positive their perceptions are, the more likely they are to stay loyal to that brand over time. For airlines, loyalty programs are often used to enhance brand knowledge and reinforce positive associations. By offering rewards, incentives, and personalized services to loyal customers, airlines can strengthen brand knowledge and foster long-term loyalty (Sahin et al., 2021). For instance, frequent flyer programs such as those offered by Delta SkyMiles and American Airlines AAdvantage provide

customers with exclusive benefits, increasing brand attachment and reinforcing positive brand knowledge.

Brand knowledge also plays a critical role in fostering brand advocacy. Customers who have strong brand knowledge and positive emotional connections with an airline are more likely to recommend the brand to others and share their experiences, whether through word-of-mouth or social media platforms (Chi et al., 2024). This organic form of marketing is valuable in the airline industry, where customer experiences and recommendations heavily influence potential customers' choices.

Building and managing brand knowledge in the airline industry requires consistent efforts across various marketing channels. Airlines must focus on creating memorable experiences that reinforce positive brand associations while also ensuring that their communication strategies align with the brand's image (Keller & Brexendorf, 2019). A key strategy for managing brand knowledge is through integrated marketing communication (IMC), which ensures that all messaging, whether through marketing, social media, public relations, or direct marketing, consistently reflects the brand's core values and promises.

For instance, Qatar Airways and Emirates Airlines have successfully built strong brand knowledge by consistently delivering high-quality services and maintaining a consistent brand image across all touchpoints, from marketing to in-flight experiences (Kegoro & Justus, 2020). By ensuring a positive and seamless customer experience at each stage of the customer journey, these airlines have built a strong brand reputation that reinforces positive associations and fosters customer loyalty.

Additionally, airlines can use branding strategies such as sponsorships, collaborations, and partnerships to increase their visibility and reinforce brand awareness. For example, an airline partnering with a popular sporting event or cultural institution can leverage the visibility of that event to increase brand awareness and create positive associations among potential customers (Kim et al., 2022).

Brand knowledge plays a vital role in shaping customer behavior and decision-making in the airline industry. It influences customers' choices by reducing uncertainty, increasing trust, and conveying the value of the airline's services. Airlines with strong brand awareness and a positive brand image are better positioned to attract and retain customers, build loyalty, and enhance customer advocacy (Keller, 2001). As the airline industry continues to evolve, managing and building brand knowledge will remain a critical component of successful branding strategies. Airlines that invest in

strengthening their brand knowledge through consistent communication, quality service, and positive customer experiences will be well-positioned to maintain a competitive edge and cultivate long-term customer relationships.

2.12 Hypotheses Development of Study

After describing all the variables of this study and other branding notions, in this section, the basis for conceptual relationships among them will be developed. As described above, the relationship of brand experience, brand attachment and communication are supported by the customer-based brand equity model.

2.12.1 Brand Experience

Brand knowledge can be affected by many brand constructs. The independent variable of brand experience can directly influence brand knowledge (Cleff & Walter, 2014). As brand experience is the combination of cognitive and physical interactions of the customer with the brand, it is these interactions that help the customer develop basic knowledge about the brand. The more the customers experience a brand, the more would they be aware about it and can easily recognize or recall the brand (Xixiang et al., 2016). While recognizing a brand, the customer would immediately identify a brand with which they had an experience. Similarly, whenever a product category would be given, the customer would again instantly recall the particular brand they had the best or most experience with. For example, if a person has driven a BMW car that belongs to their friends, they remember how a BMW car looks or even what the logo of BMW is (brand recognition). Also, whenever they would be buying a car, they would again recall the experience which they had on a BMW (brand recall). Apart from brand awareness, the customer would also be able to draw a brand image regarding that particular brand (Eslami, 2020).

The study of Cleff and Walter (2014) also measured the impact of brand experience on brand awareness components and brand image. Their study also concluded that brand experience significantly affects brand awareness and brand image, the two components of brand knowledge. Xixiang et al. (2016) aimed to investigate the impact of brand experience on brand equity. Brand equity was represented by brand awareness, brand loyalty, perceived quality and brand association. Out of these

components of brand equity, brand awareness and brand association are constituents of brand knowledge as well. The results suggested a strong positive impact of brand experience on all other variables including brand awareness and brand association.

Eslami (2020) conducted similar research to investigate the effect of brand experience on brand loyalty in the mediation of brand equity. Again, brand equity was measured through brand awareness, brand image, and perceived quality components. The results confirmed the findings of Xixiang et al. (2016) that brand experience greatly affected the brand knowledge components of brand awareness and brand image. Furthermore, both brand image and brand awareness also positively and significantly influenced brand loyalty. Both of the studies: Xixiang et al. (2016) and Eslami (2020) were further validated by Jeon and Yoo (2021). In an attempt to discover the relationship between brand experience and brand equity with mediation of brand knowledge, it is concluded that brand experience affected the components of brand knowledge i.e. brand awareness and brand image positively. Thus, it can be inferred that brand experience does affect the brand knowledge.

The factors that affect brand consciousness are multifarious; however, the ones that have been identified in this study are perhaps the most influencing ones. Moreover, the relationship of brand consciousness with the variables such as brand experience is scarcely studied. Brand experience is the set emotional and physical interactions of the customer with the brands (Keller, 2003). It is on the basis of these interactions that customers develop an opinion about a brand. This opinion is further transformed into a sense of belonging for the customer with the brand. They start associating their own selves with the brands and find similarities between them and brand personality characteristics. Once they have self-connected with the brands, they begin to feel a sense of pride and prestige in this relationship. Moreover, there would be a sense of belonging for the customer that they belong to a particular group or class of people, all of whom are using the brand. It implies that better the experience of the customer with the brand, more would they be conscious about it. To the best of knowledge, there is not a single study that investigates the effect of brand experience on brand consciousness. The brand experience of a customer also enhances their knowledge about the product features, the attributes and attitudes of the brands and other brand associations. This means that brand experience would enhance brand knowledge (Cleff & Walter, 2014). To explore this, it is aimed to discover the relationship between brand experience and brand consciousness in the mediation of brand knowledge.

i. **H1a:** Brand experience has a significant impact on brand knowledge.
ii. **H1b:** Brand experience has a significant impact on brand consciousness.
iii. **H1c:** Brand knowledge significantly mediates the relationship between brand experience and brand consciousness.

2.12.2 Brand Communication

Brand communication includes all the marketing activities that a brand undertakes to reach out the customers (Belch & Belch, 2013). The brands need to provide information to the customers through effective messages via impactful channels (Kempf & Smith, 1998). Once the customer is able to gather the necessary information it needs about a product or brand, they can make their decisions on the basis of it (Tsai, 2007). Brand communication is the first step of brand knowledge (Mauroner et al., 2016).

It is argued that customers would only be aware of the brand and build a brand image if they have the necessary information about it. If the brands are not able to portray themselves to the customers, they wouldn't be able to develop any brand knowledge. Once the customers get to know about different features of the product, the brand values, uses of the product etc. They would be able to easily recall and recognize the brand (Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2015). For example, if a customer would constantly see an eye-catching advertisement of a new restaurant in town, next time when they would think of dining out, they will immediately recall that particular restaurant. Or whenever they will drive pass the restaurant, they will recognize it from the advertisement.

Mauroner et al. (2016) studied the role of effective brand communication on brand knowledge. They studied the effect of augmented reality used in brand communication and its effect on brand knowledge. For their study, they differentiated the brand communication variable into augmented and traditional one. The results showed that brand knowledge was affected by both of the forms of brand communication; however, the use of augmented reality enhanced the brand knowledge more than the traditional methods.

A study in Pakistani context by Shoaib et al. (2019) investigated the relationship between brand communication and brand commitment used the mediation of brand knowledge. They found that brand communication affected brand knowledge and

partially also accepted the mediation of brand knowledge in deterring brand commitment. Lee and Hsu (2010) while studying the effect of brand knowledge and brand communication on brand loyalty also tested the effect of brand communication on brand knowledge. The results acknowledged the mediation of brand knowledge which meant that brand communication affected brand knowledge which affected brand loyalty.

Schivinski and Dabrowski (2015) also investigated the effect of social media brand communication on brand awareness and brand image: the two components of brand knowledge. The findings established a positive relationship between social media brand communication and brand knowledge components. Bhatti et al. (2018), another study in Pakistani context measured the impact of social media brand communication on brand knowledge. The outcome of the research advocated the existence of a strong positive impact of brand communication on brand knowledge. Above discussion connotes that brand communication would definitely affect brand knowledge.

The second independent variable of this study is brand communication. As defined earlier, brand communication includes all the activities an organization undertakes to introduce and position their brand in the minds and behaviors of the customers (Belch & Belch, 2013). It has been observed that the better the communication channels and messages are, the better would be the relationship of brand and customers (Kempf & Smith, 1998). The information is the key in customer decision making. If the brand can provide the desired message through a favorable medium to the customer, their sense of relatedness with brand enhances (Ismail, 2017). The clearer and more desirable the message is more would the customer feel associated with the brand, hence, increasing brand consciousness (Ahmed et al., 2018; Lee & Hsu, 2010). The more efficient the channels of communication will be, the more aware would be the customer and clearer would be the image of the brand. This can also be interpreted that brand communication would determine the brand knowledge of the customer which consequently would also enhance customer's brand consciousness. This brings up another objective of the study i.e. to investigate the relationship between brand communication and brand consciousness in the mediation of brand knowledge.

i. **H2a:** Brand communication has a significant impact on brand knowledge.
ii. **H2b:** Brand communication has a significant impact on brand consciousness.
iii. **H2c:** Brand knowledge significantly mediates the relationship between brand communication and brand consciousness.

2.12.3 Brand Attachment

Brand attachment refers to the self-connection, affiliation and emotional bonding of a customer with the brand (Whan et al., 2006). Brand attachment is the way a customer associates themselves with a particular product or brand (Fournier, 1998). The more a person is attached with a brand, the more are they intrigued to know about it. For example, if we are attached with a person, we would like to know more about them (Dwivedi et al., 2019). What do they do? What is their age? Who else is their family? Where do they live etc. Similarly, a customer who is attached with a brand would try to gather as much information about it as possible. The more attached they would be with brand, more would they be able to recognize it, recall it and clearer would be the brand image. E.g. if a customer is attached to the fashion brand Gucci, they will be able to recognize it immediately if someone is wearing it. Moreover, whenever they will be given a fashion option, they might not think anything else other than Gucci products.

Lin et al. (2011) investigated the effect of brand equity, brand attachment and product involvement on repurchase decision of the bicycle users in China. Brand equity was represented by knowledge components of brand awareness and brand image. It was revealed that brand equity via brand knowledge had relationship with brand attachment. Dwivedi et al. (2019) in their study, made an attempt to determine the association between brand attachment and CBBE. Brand equity was represented by brand awareness and brand image. The research which was focused on social media brands established that brand attachment positively influenced the brand equity variables of brand awareness and brand image.

Ugalde et al. (2023) tried to probe into the factors that affected brand attachment. One of the factors that they identified was brand awareness. On analyzing the results of the study, they concluded that a relationship does exist between brand awareness and brand attachment. A Pakistani study by Rafi et al. (2011) explored the relationship of knowledge metrics of brand equity i.e. brand awareness and brand associations with brand attachment and brand attitude strength. The results indicated an existence of relationship between brand knowledge and brand attachment. This implies that more the customer is attached with a brand more would they be knowledgeable about it, thus, referring to the fact that a relationship does exist between brand attachment and brand knowledge.

Now the third independent variable of the study will be discussed in relation with brand knowledge and brand consciousness. Often interchanged with brand love, brand attachment is the combination of affection, self-connection and emotional bonding of a customer with a brand (Thomson et al., 2005). Brand attachment can vary because of different factors. Age, income, gender, usage, importance of the product etc. all impact the level of attachment of the customer with the brand. Once the customer feels attached with the brand such that they feel emotionally connected to it, they start relating the product with themselves. The customers then feel a sense of belonging with the brands to which they are attached. Therefore, it can be inferred that the more attached the customer is with a brand, the more they will be conscious about it. Moreover, as discussed above, the more they are attached to a brand, the more would they want to know about the product or brand and in this quest for knowing more, they will end up increasing their brand awareness and brand image, thus brand knowledge. This ultimately would also lead to an increased brand consciousness. This argument provides the basis for one of the objectives which is to investigate the relationship between brand attachment and brand consciousness in the mediation of brand knowledge.

i. **H3a:** Brand attachment has a significant impact on brand knowledge.
ii. **H3b:** Brand attachment has a significant impact on brand consciousness.
iii. **H3c:** Brand knowledge significantly mediates the relationship between brand attachment and brand consciousness.

2.12.4 Brand Knowledge and Brand Consciousness

In the preceding discussion, the effects of the independent variables on the mediating variable, brand knowledge, were examined. The following section analyzes the relationship between brand knowledge and the dependent variable, brand consciousness. Brand Consciousness refers to the mental state of the customer while choosing the product and the sense of belonging and prestige that is triggered by the brand (Sprole & Kendall, 1986). It is argued that the more a customer is aware about the brand, and better the brand awareness and brand image are, more would be they brand consciousness (Khandelwal, 2015; Nelson & McLeod, 2005). If the customer is able to easily recall or recognize the brand, this implies that they feel more conscious

about it. If a customer is not conscious about a brand, they may not be able to recognize or recall it at time of buying.

Brand knowledge and brand consciousness are critical components of brand equity that shape customer perceptions, preferences, and behaviors. Although these two concepts are closely related, they represent distinct elements of customer-brand relationships. While brand knowledge refers to the information and associations that customers have about a brand, brand consciousness relates to the degree to which customers are aware of and concerned about a brand's presence in their lives and in the market (Iqbal & Badshah, 2016). This literature review explores the conceptualization of brand knowledge and brand consciousness, their roles in shaping customer behavior, and their significance in various industries, including the airline industry (Iqbal & Badshah, 2016).

Brand knowledge, as conceptualized by (K. L. Keller, 1993), is a key determinant of customer-based brand equity. It is composed of two primary components: brand awareness and brand image. Brand awareness refers to the ability of customers to recognize or recall a brand in different contexts (Aaker, 1991). It reflects the likelihood that a customer will choose a brand when making decisions. In contrast, brand image represents the perceptions and associations customers hold about a brand (Cunningham & Petzer, 2022). These associations could range from attributes (such as the quality of service or product features) to more abstract dimensions such as emotions, values, or lifestyle.

In the context of the airline industry, brand knowledge is critical because customers often rely on their knowledge of an airline’s reputation, reliability, and service quality when making decisions (Mangi & Kotoky, 2020). A strong brand with high levels of brand awareness and a positive brand image is more likely to be chosen by customers, particularly in a competitive market like airlines where service quality can be a major differentiator (Iqbal & Badshah, 2016). Airlines that successfully build strong brand knowledge can create a competitive advantage, as they will be top-of-mind for customers during the decision-making process.

Brand consciousness refers to the level of awareness and concern customers have about brands in general or specific brands (Aftab, 2020). It is a concept that emphasizes the role of customer perceptions of brand significance in their daily lives and purchasing behaviors. Brand consciousness is often associated with customer behavior theories, such as those focusing on brand loyalty, prestige-seeking, or status

consumption. Customers who are highly brand-conscious are more likely to consider brand names and reputations when making purchasing decisions (Bauer, 2021). Brand consciousness also involves an active awareness of the social and cultural meanings attached to certain brands.

Customers with high brand consciousness tend to perceive brands as symbols of quality, status, and identity. These customers value branded products and services not only for their functional benefits but also for their symbolic meaning. For instance, high brand consciousness in the context of the airline industry can manifest in customers' preferences for premium, internationally recognized airlines like Emirates, British Airways, or Qatar Airways, which they perceive as symbols of luxury, comfort, and reliability (Kautish et al., 2020; Sharda & Bhat, 2019). Brand-conscious customers are more likely to seek out brands that align with their values or social image and to show preference for well-established brands over lesser-known or budget alternatives.

Although brand knowledge and brand consciousness are distinct concepts, they often operate together to influence customer behavior. In particular, brand knowledge can shape brand consciousness by providing customers with the information they need to form opinions about a brand (Marvi et al., 2024). For example, when customers are familiar with a brand and hold positive associations about it, they are more likely to develop a heightened awareness of that brand and become more brand conscious. This can create a feedback loop where strong brand knowledge leads to greater brand consciousness, which, in turn, reinforces customers' decision-making based on the brand (Petty, 2016).

The interplay between brand knowledge and brand consciousness is particularly relevant in industries like airlines, where customers often have limited interaction with airlines prior to purchasing tickets (N. C. Nawi et al., 2023). For example, a customer might not have direct experience with a particular airline but might choose it because they have strong brand knowledge of the airline's reputation for safety, reliability, and luxury. This awareness can elevate their brand consciousness, making them more sensitive to the airline's branding messages, marketing, and other communications (Nawi et al., 2020).

In the airline industry, brand knowledge and brand consciousness can directly influence customer loyalty and advocacy. Customers with high levels of brand knowledge are more likely to develop a sense of connection to the airline, which can lead to stronger brand consciousness (Liu et al., 2024). For example, frequent flyers of

a particular airline might identify themselves as loyal customers, viewing the airline not just as a service provider but as a part of their lifestyle. This connection fosters a sense of belonging and brand attachment, which further intensifies their brand consciousness and loyalty (Ismail, 2017).

From a marketing perspective, both brand knowledge and brand consciousness are essential for building a strong brand presence. Airlines can leverage these concepts in their marketing strategies to attract and retain customer (Marvi et al., 2024). For instance, marketing campaigns that focus on building brand knowledge (such as emphasizing the airline's safety record, quality of service, or environmental sustainability efforts) can help raise awareness and create positive associations among customers. This, in turn, increases brand consciousness, particularly among customers who prioritize these attributes when choosing an airline.

Brand conscious customers often seek products and services that represent their values and status. Airlines can capitalize on this by highlighting unique features or services that align with the desires of brand-conscious customers. This could include showcasing premium class offerings, exclusive amenities, loyalty programs, or socially responsible initiatives (Japutra et al., 2023). By emphasizing the symbolic value of their brand, airlines can appeal to customers who are not only concerned about functional attributes (such as price and schedule) but also the emotional and social meanings attached to the airline's brand (Purohit et al., 2024).

Moreover, airlines can use brand knowledge and brand consciousness as tools to differentiate themselves in a highly competitive market (Bontemps et al., 2023). While low-cost carriers may rely on price sensitivity to attract customers, full-service airlines can focus on building brand knowledge and consciousness around luxury, comfort, and a superior flying experience. By targeting customers who are less price-sensitive and more concerned with brand prestige, airlines can create a distinct brand identity that resonates with brand-conscious customers (Sharda & Bhat, 2018).

Both brand knowledge and brand consciousness are closely linked to customer loyalty, a key objective for many airlines. Loyalty programs, frequent flyer initiatives, and personalized services are some of the ways airlines attempt to leverage these factors. As customers become more familiar with an airline's brand (brand knowledge) and become more conscious of the airline's status, quality, and reputation (brand consciousness), they are more likely to develop a sense of attachment and loyalty (L. Wu et al., 2023).

Research has shown that loyal customers with high levels of brand knowledge and consciousness are more likely to engage in positive word-of-mouth, repeat purchases, and resistance to competitive offerings (Moharana et al., 2023). For airlines, fostering brand loyalty through brand knowledge and consciousness can reduce customer churn and ensure long-term profitability.

Brand knowledge and brand consciousness are crucial components of the brand equity framework, particularly in the airline industry (Ugalde et al., 2023). Brand knowledge, with its two dimensions of brand awareness and brand image, serves as a foundation for building brand consciousness, which reflects customers' active awareness and concern for brands. In the airline industry, where customers make decisions based on trust, reputation, and perceptions of quality, these two concepts work together to shape customer behavior, loyalty, and advocacy.

Airlines that successfully manage their brand knowledge through consistent marketing efforts and strong customer experiences can create a positive brand image that enhances brand consciousness among customers. This, in turn, fosters loyalty and strengthens competitive advantage (Tran & Chang, 2022). As the airline industry continues to evolve, the importance of understanding the relationship between brand knowledge and brand consciousness will remain vital for airlines aiming to build lasting relationships with their customers.

Nelson and McLeod (2005) presented their research on brand consciousness of children being influenced by brand consciousness of their parents and friends. The results which confirmed the positive influence of parent and friend consciousness on child's brand consciousness also confirmed that the adolescents who were more conscious were the ones who were more aware too about the brand. This proves that an implied relationship exists between brand consciousness and brand awareness. Khandelwal (2015) chose the private label brands in India to determine the correlation between customer's brand awareness and their consciousness while choosing private label bands. The study that was based in India only revealed a very strong positive correlation between the two variables. As per above discussion, it can be inferred that brand knowledge does impact brand consciousness.

i. **H4:** Brand knowledge has a significant impact on brand consciousness.

2.13 Conceptual Model

The brand attachment, brand communication, and brand consciousness are single layer constructs. They do not have dimensions that can be used to measure these variables. On the other hand, brand experience and brand knowledge are higher order constructs. Both these constructs have their dimensions that are used to measure these variables. The testing of higher order constructs involve testing of higher order structures that contains two layers of constructs (Hair et al., 2017). Brand experience is a reflective-reflective construct (Brakus et al., 2009). Brakus et al. (2009) used brand experience as a reflective-reflective higher order construct which means that if one dimension is removed from the construct, other dimensions can still be used for measuring the brand experience variable. Brand experience has four dimensions (sensory, affective, behavioral, and intellectual experiences) that are reflectively linked to brand experience as shown in the below figure. For brand knowledge, Liu et al. (2020) used both dimensions as separate constructs. They used brand awareness as construct one and brand image as construct two. They also formed two different hypotheses. Whereas, Chen and He (2003) reflectively used all the indicators of brand awareness and brand image to measure brand knowledge which also makes it a reflective-reflective higher order construct., In this study along with brand experience, brand knowledge will also be used as a reflective-reflective higher order construct as it can be seen from the below figure.

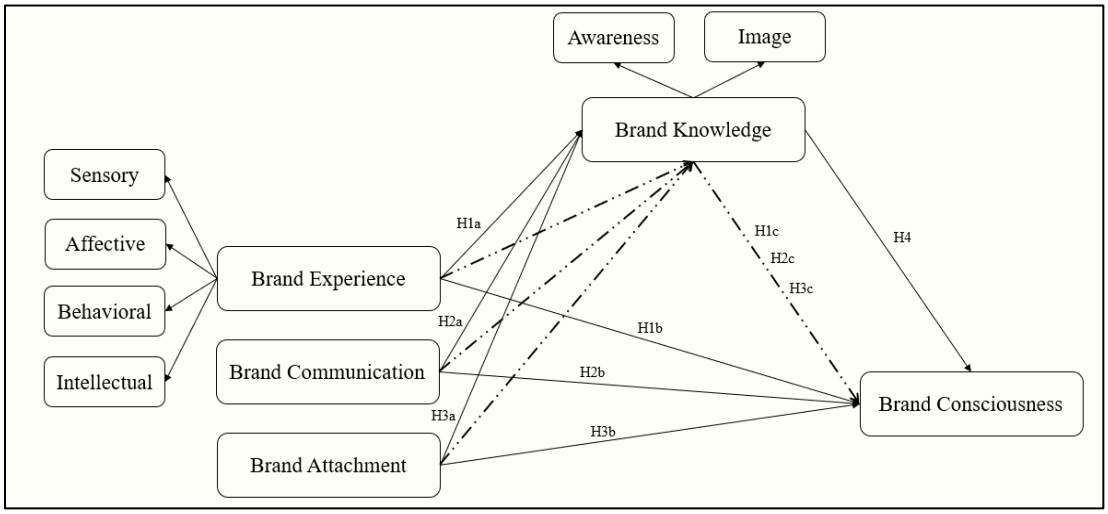

Figure 2.12 Conceptual Model

2.14 Chapter Summary

This study succeeds the different elements that affected the brand consciousness and past studies, how it represents that problem in the context of airline sector in Pakistan. These studies help to identify the significant elements such as brand experience, brand communication and brand attachment and brand knowledge that affect the brand consciousness in Pakistan. This study emphasized the importance of mediating role of brand knowledge in term of brand consciousness particularly in airline industry. In comparison, brand knowledge is not identified through literature in the context of airline industry of Pakistan.

CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This research is predominantly explanatory in nature, with the goal of gaining a deeper understanding of the factors that influence Pakistani airline brand consciousness. This chapter describes the steps taken to answer the research questions. In addition, the methods of data collection are discussed, followed by a description of the data analysis procedures employed. This study aims to examine the influence of brand experience, brand communication, and brand attachment on brand consciousness through the mediating function of brand knowledge, utilizing customer-based brand equity as its underlying theory. Thus, an attempt has been made to investigate the factors that contribute to the development of customer-based brand equity capable of examining brand consciousness.

3.2 Objective of Research Methodology

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the methodology for sampling, data acquisition, and data analysis employed in this study. This section of the study outlines the strategy that is employed to answer the research questions and attain the research objectives. Customers on commercial airlines were aimed to provide the data for this investigation. Quantitative data is gathered using a survey questionnaire to examine the influence of exogenous variables on endogenous variables.

This chapter explains the data collection process's timeframe, location, and potential financial limitations. This chapter also presents and discusses the research philosophy and the most appropriate research strategies for the chosen philosophy. This chapter provides clear instructions and explanations on how this study is conducted to answer the research questions and attain the research objectives. Using the research onion technique, which is described in the section that follows, the research methodology is further described and implemented (Orth & Maçada, 2021).

3.3 Layers of Research Onion

To address the research problem, it is up to the researcher's understanding and the needs of the study whether data collection should be done by using questionnaires or by interviewing respondents. The most essential to follow is the research onion, which illustrates the processes underpinning the data collection method, techniques, and analysis, as well as how to solve these problems to achieve the best results. It is also essential to explain why you made the decisions you made in your investigation and it is important to elucidate each layer of the research onion (Saunders et al., 2007).

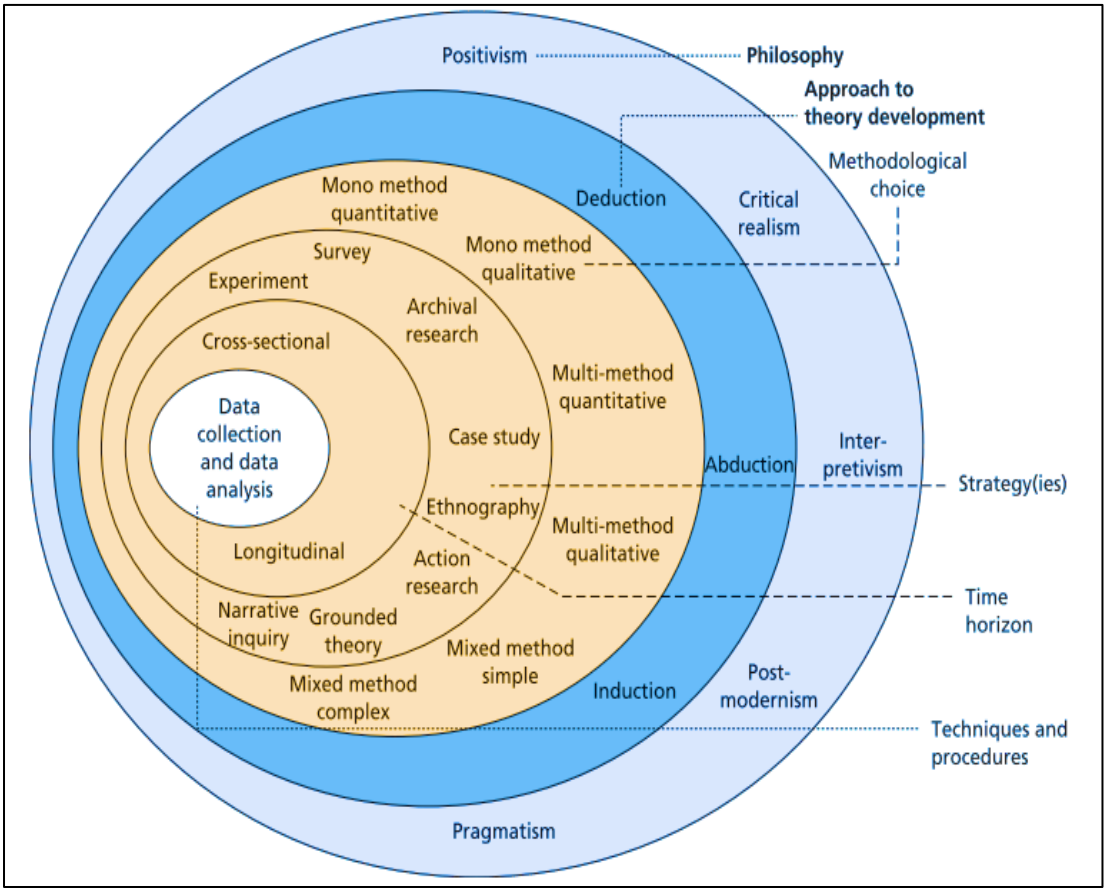

Figure 3.1 Research Onion

3.4 Philosophical Underpinnings

Research philosophy is a system of beliefs and assumptions regarding the development of knowledge, i.e., developing knowledge in a specific field or solving a specific organizational problem. At each stage of the research process, philosophical assumptions must be accommodated, whether knowingly or unknowingly (Saliya,

2023). These assumptions influence the research queries, methods, and interpretation of the results. Ontology, epistemology, and axiology are the three philosophical assumptions that distinguish distinct research philosophies. Ontology refers to the essence of reality and the world (Leavy et al., 2014; White, 2011) or as reality is perceived (Baldwin, 2014).

Epistemology refers to the acceptability, validity, and legitimacy of the knowledge (i.e. numerical, visual, and textual data, facts, and narratives) and how that knowledge is communicated to the public (Steup et al., 2024). The study by White (2011) defines axiology assumption as the influence of a researcher's values, assumptions, and ethics on the scientific research process. It is crucial to account for the researcher's bias, which can be caused by the researcher's influence on the research process and the respondents, as the researcher's influence can alter the research outcomes (Gupta et al., 2022).

3.5 Research Philosophies

Research philosophy must be recognized in practice, even though it is still commonly obscured in the scientific community. When writing a research proposal or project, it is vital to discuss significant philosophical concepts comprehensively. The researchers' understanding of philosophical assumptions helps in the selection of an appropriate research method and assists the reader in comprehending why the researcher selected qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods research (Tamminen & Poucher, 2020). Philosophy is known by a variety of names, including worldviews (Creswell, 2014), paradigms (Mertons, 2015), epistemologies and ontologies (Crotty, 1998), research philosophies (Mbanaso et al., 2023), and broadly conceptualized research methodologies (Neuman, 2014).

3.5.1 Positivism

Researchers use the positivist research philosophy to produce law-like generalizations of the existent reality by generating clear and accurate knowledge. The positivist research philosophy emphasizes the use of scientific methods for data collection and interpretation to produce accurate results. The emphasis is on identifying the measurable facts that will lead to credible and meaningful data by identifying causal

relationships in the quantifiable data (Mbanaso et al., 2023). Using predefined principles and methodologies, it is possible to predict future events using existing theory to develop hypotheses. According to the positivist worldview, quantitative observations lead to statistical data analysis and accurate research results. The entirety of the research procedure is independent of the researcher's personal values and interpretations (Headley et al., 2023).

The purpose of this study is to examine the effect of brand attachment, brand experience, and brand communication on brand consciousness using brand knowledge of Pakistani airlines as a mediator. Consequently, a quantitative research methodology necessitates an objective worldview. Therefore, the use of pragmatism, interpretivism, and transformative research philosophies is unjustifiable. Positivism is the most appropriate research philosophy for the current study. This philosophy adheres to previously established theories and attempts to make sense of new realities based on these theories.

3.6 Research Approach

Research approaches consist of research planning and procedures that range from generalized observations to comprehensive data collection, analysis, and evaluation procedures. This strategy necessitates numerous decisions that do not always follow a logical pattern. Considering the research problem, a final determination is made as to which method to use when analyzing a subject. This decision is based on philosophical assumptions, research designs (specific procedures for conducting the research), and methods for data acquisition, analysis, and interpretation. The methodology employed in conducting research is frequently influenced by the nature of the research problem, the investigators' personal views, and the study's stakeholders (Phillips, 2023).

3.6.1 Research Approach Types

The study by Janiszewski and Van Osselaer, (2022) describe three distinct research approaches: a) inductive (qualitative), b) deductive (quantitative), and c) abductive (mixed methods). The three approaches are not nearly as distinct as they initially appear. Qualitative and quantitative methods should not be viewed as static,

distinct, binary, or dichotomous categories. A study can be more quantitative instead of qualitative, or vice versa. Qualitative and quantitative research methods are more like two ends of the same wire (Brannen, 2017). In the middle of this line is mixed methods research, which combines qualitative and quantitative approaches to research.

3.6.2 Deductive Approach

Deduction is a technique for evaluating objective theories by analyzing the interplay of variables. These variables can be calculated, typically with the support of instruments, allowing numerical results to be evaluated using computational methods. The final report is composed of an introduction, a literary and theoretical body, methods, findings, and a discussion (Hall et al., 2023). Those who conduct this type of research presume that theories are testable. An essential aspect of the deductive method is its generalization of the findings and adequate sample from an appropriate population is required (Pacheco-Romero et al., 2021). A handful of studies have been conducted on the topic, which could aid in deciding whether to employ a deductive research strategy. This study follows pre-existing theories and examines the relationship between variables, so the deductive method is most appropriate for this research. Quantitative research is conducted using the survey method to generalize the results to a larger population.

3.7 Research Design

The research design is a plan for answering research questions and attaining research objectives by maintaining coherence throughout the research (Huntington-Klein, 2021). Designing a study is analogous to planning a trip, selecting the best routes, mode of transportation, and budget to reach the desired destination. The research design consists of the following three layers: methodological selection, research strategies, and time horizon. These three levels pertain to the research design, which assists in answering research queries. The research design follows a pattern beginning with methodological selection (quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods), the nature of the project (exploratory, explanatory, descriptive, or evaluative), research strategies (survey, experiment, grounded theory, etc.), and the time horizon within which the research will be conducted (Myers et al., 2013).

3.8 Research Methodologies

The research methodology lies between quantitative and qualitative extremes. The nature of research may be quantitative, qualitative, or a combination of both. Differentiating quantitative and qualitative research can take the form of numerical or nonnumerical data. Both approaches are frequently defined as synonyms for their respective data collection and analysis techniques. For example, a questionnaire or secondary numeric data that generates numeric meanings through statistical analysis is best described as quantitative research, whereas interview data that generates non-numerical meanings through thematic analysis is best described as qualitative research. It is essential to note that research does not have to be exclusively quantitative or qualitative. It can also be mixed-methods research when both approaches are employed. In mixed-methods research, the qualitative methodology can be employed first, followed by the quantitative methodology, or vice versa, or both methodologies can be employed simultaneously (Lê & Schmid, 2022).

3.8.1 Quantitative Research Design

Quantitative research designs were prevalent in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It employs non-experimental designs, one of which is the causal-comparative design, in which the researcher compares the causal and relational aspects of two groups. Quantitative research investigates the relationship between variables that can be numerically quantified and analyzed using a variety of statistical tools and procedures. The alternative is the correlational design, which tests the correlation between exogenous and endogenous constructs (Hodge, 2020). Complex data are analyzed using structural equation modeling, linear regression, and logistic regression techniques. Quantitative research directs the techniques used to capture primary data, i.e., numerical data (survey questionnaire). Survey research that receives responses from a sample over a cross-sectional or longitudinal time horizon is a common method for collecting data in quantitative designs. The analysis of data and generalization of the results to the entire population. A substantial amount of research has been done on all the variables of the study using quantitative methodology. Variables in this study are already known through literature review, and their relationships are underpinned by the customer-based brand equity. Therefore, this study used deductive approach which

means this study used quantitative methodology because this study intends to examine the impact of brand experience, brand communication, and brand attachment on brand consciousness through the mediating role of brand knowledge.

3.9 Research Strategy

A research strategy is the researcher's general plan of action for answering research queries. The research strategy relates gathering and analyzing data to the research philosophy. Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-method studies are associated with numerous research approaches. The research strategies may or may not be associated with a specific research design, and a single design may employ multiple strategies (Denzin & Yvonna, 2013). There may be many research strategies, but only a few are discussed in this study, and the most appropriate ones will be employed for data acquisition and analysis.

A survey strategy is utilized in deductive research. This research strategy is utilized most frequently in business and management studies, and descriptive and explanatory studies. Popular survey strategies utilize questionnaires to capture data from a large population in a cost-effective manner, allowing for straightforward comparison. Moreover, the general public perceives the survey strategy as credible and can easily explain and comprehend it (Braun et al., 2021). In the survey strategy, quantitative data are gathered with a questionnaire and analyzed quantitatively using descriptive and inferential statistics. Using a survey strategy provides the researcher with more control over the research process, and probability sampling can be used to generalize the results (Wankhade et al., 2022). It takes time to correctly select the sample population and to design and administer a pilot test. Processing and analyzing the data is also time-intensive, but it depends on the researcher's productivity. In addition to the questionnaire, structured interviews can be used as a technique for survey design (Wu et al., 2022). This study is a quantitative study that follows the deductive approach. The data for this study was collected using a survey questionnaire technique. A survey containing 7-point Likert scale questions is shared among the respondents to collect the data.

3.10 Time Horizon

This survey has a cross-sectional time frame because all data is collected at one point in time from all respondents. When data are collected from a singular point in time, the study is referred to as cross-sectional. Due to time constraints, a phenomenon is studied at a specific time in cross-sectional research. A cross-sectional study may involve qualitative, quantitative, or blended methods (Coe et al., 2021). In this study, the cross-sectional time horizon applies because quantitative data are collected only once at a single point in time and no data are collected twice after a certain amount of time has passed.

3.11 Population and Sampling

It is sometimes possible to collect and analyze data from every single group member or respondent, known as a census. For many research studies, it is impossible to capture data from every respondent; therefore, a small proportion of respondents is chosen from a larger group, and the results are extrapolated to the larger group. Population refers to the vast group being studied from which a sample is drawn (Baltes & Ralph, 2022). A sample can also provide reliable data for analysis and generalization, so capturing information from every respondent is unnecessary. A sample is used when it is impossible to reach out to the whole population, when there is not enough time to collect data from every single member of the population, and when there are financial constraints that create hurdles in the way of data collection from an entire population (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022). These are the reasons why a researcher must select a sample to investigate the entire population. Due to the number of the population, it can be challenging to select an adequate sample size with the same characteristics. The concept of the target population is applied when a larger population is reduced and specified based on the characteristics of its constituent elements.

In this study, all the people who travel through Pakistan-owned airlines are a population of the study and a sample is selected from this population. For this survey, the population consists of all international-flying customers of Pakistan's aviation industry. According to the Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority (2023), 3,580,665 international customers are flying on Pakistani-owned airlines. The details of customers of all the Pakistani airlines that conduct international flights are given in below table:

Table 3.1
Customers using Pakistani Airlines for International Travel in 2023

Airline	Passengers
Air Blue	946,469
Pakistan International Airline	2,292,537
Serene Air	341,502
Air Sial	157
Total	3,580,665

3.11.1 Sampling Techniques

Probability sampling and non-probability sampling are the two categories of sampling methods. Every element of the population has an equal chance of being selected using probability sampling. For probability sampling, a complete list of population elements is required. In non-probability sampling, all elements of the target population cannot have an equal chance of being selected for data collection (Vehovar et al., 2016). A sampling frame is a comprehensive list of all population elements from which a sample is drawn. Probability sampling necessitates the use of a sampling frame. If a sampling frame is available, then probability sampling can be used (Berndt, 2020). This research cannot utilize probability sampling due to the lack of data on the target population from which the sample is derived. It is almost impossible to collect individual-level data regarding the customers of Pakistani airlines.

3.11.2 Non-Probability Sampling

In probability sampling, a sampling frame and a list of the sampling frame's elements are required, but for many enterprises and market surveys, it may not be possible to obtain a list of the sampling frame's elements. Non-probability sampling provides alternative sampling techniques when it is impossible to create a sample frame. In non-probability sampling, the odds of selecting every member of the target population for the study are unequal (Tutz, 2023). Due to the inaccessibility of the sampling frame, non-probability sampling is most appropriate for this investigation. Therefore, it has been determined that non-probability sampling can be utilized for this investigation (Lehdonvirta et al., 2021).

3.11.3 Purposive Sampling

Purposive sampling is sampling in which respondents are selected based on their suitability for the study to answer research questions and attain research objectives. Inclusion or exclusion of cases from the study is, therefore, a crucial decision. Different varieties of purposive sampling exist. Extreme case sampling is utilized when respondents are chosen based on their unusual characteristics and their ability to provide the best answers to research inquiries (Campbell et al., 2020). Heterogeneous or maximum variation is used when participants with disparate characteristics are selected to provide maximum data variation. The themes or patterns that emerge as a result of employing this method may be particularly useful in resolving the research problem (Conlon et al., 2020). Heterogeneous sampling is opposed to homogenous sampling. In homogenous sampling, the emphasis is placed on a small group whose members share similar characteristics. Important critical cases are selected for research in the critical case sampling method. Focus is placed on comprehending what is occurring in each critical instance, and generalizations are drawn from individual cases (Guarte & Barrios, 2006).

Due to the lack of available data regarding the intended population, probability sampling is impossible. Therefore, it has been decided to employ the technique of non-probability sampling. The techniques for non-probability sampling have been elaborated upon in order to determine which technique best suited for this study. Purposive sampling is the optimal method for this investigation. In purposive sampling, heterogenous sampling is used because the data will be collected from airline customers at different airports.

3.11.4 Rationale for Purposive Sampling

Given the lack of a comprehensive list of all customers, a purposive sampling method was deemed appropriate. This technique allows researchers to use their judgment to select participants who are most likely to provide valuable information, compensating for the absence of a complete sampling frame. While purposive sampling inherently carries the risk of selection bias, several strategies were employed to mitigate this. First, a clear and consistent criterion for participant selection was established, focusing on customers who had flown with Pakistani airlines within the past month.

Second, efforts were made to include customers from various demographics, including different age groups, genders, and travel purposes, to capture a broad spectrum of experiences. The use of purposive sampling in this study was a methodologically sound decision, tailored to the specific context of Pakistan's airline industry. By carefully selecting participants with relevant experiences, the research aimed to gather meaningful insights that can contribute to enhancing service quality and customer satisfaction in the sector. In this study, there are filtered questions to ensure the right population. Therefore, the detailed list of potential filter asking questions was related to airline usage, type of service experienced, frequency of airline travel, awareness of Pakistani airline's brand communication, age and demographics, personal decision-making, and involvement in flight booking.

3.12 Study Population and Sample Size

The sample size is determined by the objectives and queries of the research. What must be discovered, what is useful, what is credible, and what can be accomplished with the resources available. The validity and comprehension of the data depends more on the method of data collection than on the magnitude of the sample (Patton, 2014). The selection of a population is contingent on the exclusion and inclusion of particular characteristics (Robinson, 2014). The total population is the population of interest to the researcher, while the target population is a subset of this population (Abt et al., 2020). The inclusion and exclusion criteria for the population for this study are presented in the below figure:

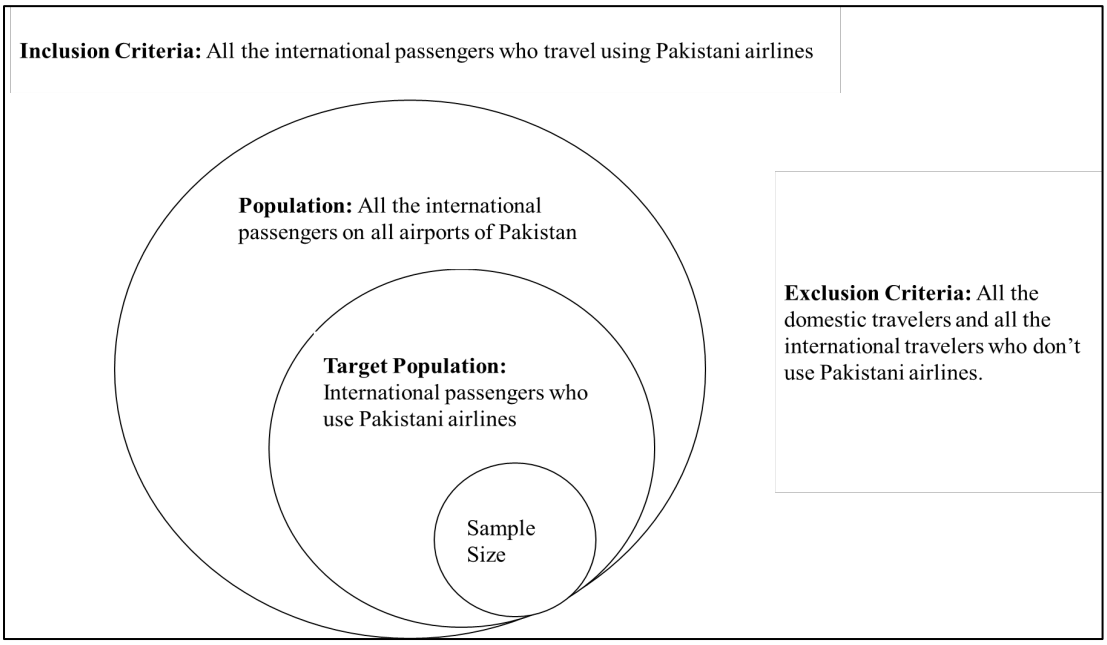

Figure 3.2 Study population Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Pakistan consists of one capital city, Islamabad, and four provinces, Punjab, Sindh, KPK, and Baluchistan, as well as airports in each province and in Islamabad, the capital city. According to the Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority (2023), in the 2021-2022 year, there were a total of 9,281,591 international passengers using Pakistani airports, out of which 2,640,171 customers travelled from Allama Iqbal International Airport Lahore. Jinnah International Airport Karachi accommodated a total of 2,356,336 international travelers. Provincial KP Bacha Khan International Airport Peshawar accommodated 914,395 international passengers. A total of 315,866 passengers embarked on international visits from Quetta International Airport. A total of 3,054,823 passengers used Islamabad International Airport for international travels. These five airports have been selected for this study because majority of the passengers used these airports and these airports also represent all the provinces and the capital. Out of 9,281,591 target population is 3,580,665 who used Pakistani airlines for international travel.

3.12.1 Sample Size

There is a total of 3,580,665 customers who used Pakistani airlines for international travels. For this size of population, Tabachnick et al. (2013) proposed a

rule of thumb formula for calculating the sample size. They said that sample size (N) should be equal to or greater than 50 + 8m, where m is the number of predictors.

N = 50 + 8m

N = 50 + 8x4

N = 50 + 32

N = 82

As per Tabachnick et al. (2013), the sample size for 4 predictors should be 82. However, G Power software is also used for sample size measurement, which was proposed by Faul et al. (2009). Kang (2021) also recommended the use of G*Power because it can calculate sample size for t-test analysis and because it's easy to use as well. To use G Power for calculating sample size, some parameters need to be adjusted such as test family, statistical test, type of power analysis, one tail or two tail, effect size f^2, significance level, confidence level, and number of predictors. In this research, t-test is the test family in which linear multiple regression analysis will be used and this G power analysis is for calculating the sample size. Further parameters are two tail tests because we are looking for significance of the relationships either positive or negative, 0.15 effect size which is a moderate effect size, 0.05 level significance and 0.95 level of confidence, and there is a total of 4 predictors including 3 independent variables and 1 mediator variable. In fact, the number of predictors does not change the results due to other parameters. The sample size required for this study by using G Power is 89 respondents. The following figure shows the result of G Power:

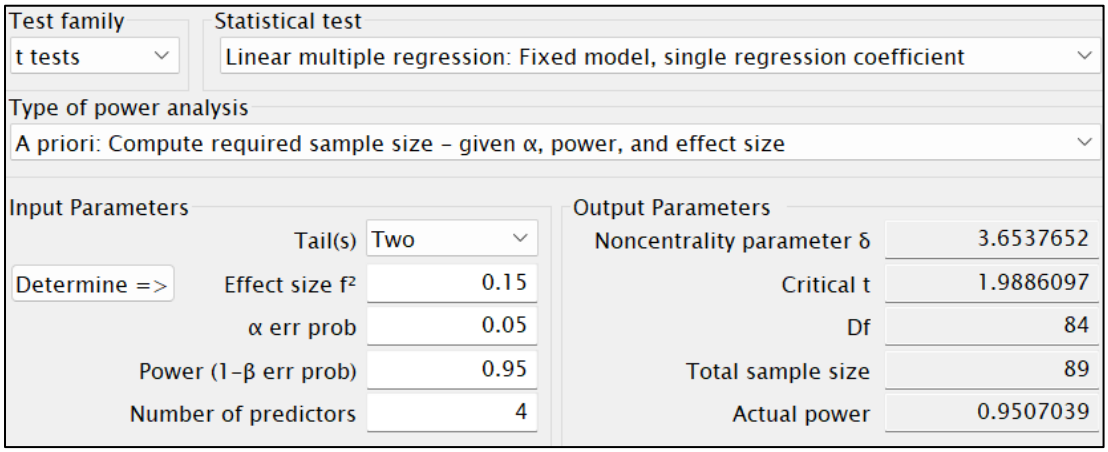

Figure 3.3 Sample Size Calculation Using G Power

In survey research, the response rate is crucial because a low response rate precludes drawing conclusions that accurately represent the target population. Before sending out the questionnaire, the non-response rate should be considered, and it should also be reported in the project. There are four levels of non-responsiveness: complete refusal (all questions unanswered), break off (less than fifty per cent of questions answered), partial response (fifty to eighty per cent of questions answered), and complete response (. Respondent refusal to answer all inquiries is the most frequently cited reason for non-responsiveness (Faul et al., 2009). The G power can be used to maintain the minimum sample size. However, there is another technique proposed by Krejcie & Morgan, (1970). As per the proposed formula, if the population is more than one million, a sample of 384 is recommended. Therefore, the study intends to follow Krejcie & Morgan, (1970) table to distribute the questionnaire, bearing in mind that the minimum response should not be below 89 responses.

Saunders et al. (2016) justify the number of questionnaires that ought to be distributed for a given sample size. According to the study, researchers should anticipate an 80 per cent response rate. Saleem et al. (2017) reported a response rate of 74.8 percent in their research on aviation sector of Pakistan. Assuming that this study will also receive 74.8 percent response, 481 questionnaires should be distributed. Now it is important to distribute the sample size to individual airports. Following table shows the sample size groups for all the five airports:

Table 3.2
Distribution of Sample Size as per Airports

Airports	**Passengers**	**Percentage**	**Target Population per Airport**	**Percentage**	**Sample Size (% * 481 / 100)**
Islamabad International Airports	3,054,823	32.91	1,178,494	32.91	158
Jinnah International Airport Karachi	2,356,336	25.39	909,031	25.39	122
Allama Iqbal International Airports Lahore	2,640,171	28.45	1,018,529	28.45	137

Airports	Passengers	Percentage	Target Population per Airport	Percentage	Sample Size (% * 481 / 100)
Bacha Khan International Airport Peshawar	914,395	9.85	352,757	9.85	47
Quetta International Airport	315,866	3.40	121,855	3.40	17
Total	9,281,591	100	3,580,665	100.00	481

3.13 Data Collection Instruments

This is a cross-sectional study, and the research instruments were chosen to reflect this. The study's data collection occurred in two stages. First, a pilot questionnaire study is conducted on 10 to 20 percent of the original sample size as recommended by Baker (1994). The pilot test is to ensure that all queries on the survey questionnaire are understood by the participants. Second, extensive data collection for descriptive and inferential statistics is conducted (Levine et al., 2022).

3.13.1 Questionnaire

The most effective survey strategy utilizes questionnaires. Every respondent is asked to answer a predetermined list of questions in a particular order (Vaus, 2014). The data is aimed to be collected either with or without the researcher's presence, such as in face-to-face data collection or telephone questionnaires, or online surveys (Folstad & Brandtzaeg, 2020). In this technique, each respondent is asked to answer the same number of questions, making it the most popular method for data collection following the survey strategy. However, data collection should be conducted with caution because it is highly improbable that the researcher will have a second opportunity to collect data from the same respondents (Sekhon et al., 2022).

3.13.1.1 Questionnaire Types

Multiple methods exist for distributing, collecting, and analyzing survey questionnaires. Several are described below:

3.13.1.2 Self-Completed Questionnaire

Self-completed surveys are those in which respondents receive questionnaires from the researcher, answer all questions, and then return them to the researcher. It is the most common questionnaire format. There are various distribution and collection methods for these questionnaires. They are distributed via the internet, web browsers, mobile phones, and can also be delivered by hand to each respondent and subsequently collected. In each of these instances, respondents independently complete the questionnaire and submit it to the researcher (Aldhahi et al., 2022).

3.13.2 Interviewer-Completed Questionnaire

They are filled out by the interviewer himself during data collection. Using the telephone or establishing face-to-face communication, the interviewer poses mostly closed-ended questions (Garbarski et al., 2020).

Data collection for this study is conducted at five different airports. Data collection is done by the researcher himself using the interviewer-completed questionnaire technique. The reason for using this technique is logical because most people are in a hurry at the airports. It is assumed that they may travel and may not return the filled questionnaire. The researcher preferred to talk to the people and collected the data by face-to-face communication.

3.14 Questionnaire Form

This study's questionnaire has two parts. First, the demographics part to collect the information like gender, age, marital status, income level, education level, frequency of travel, airport and airline. Then the next part to collect the information about variables. Seven-point Likert scale is used for response collection (Likert, 1932). Respondents chose the most appropriate option between 1 to 7, expressing their

response. 1 means strongly disagree, 2 means disagree, 3 mean slightly disagree, 4 means neutral, 5 means slightly agree, 6 means agree, and 7 means strongly agree.

The questionnaire form is presented in the table below:

3.14.1 Demographics

Table 3.3
Questionnaire Form

General Data: Please tick (/) the best box according to your information.		
Email/mobile (optional)		
Gender	a) Male	☐
	b) Female	☐
Age	18 years to 25 years	☐
	26 years to 35 years	☐
	36 years to 45 years	☐
	Above 45 years	☐
Marital Status	Married	☐
	Unmarried	☐
	Widowed	☐
Income Level	Less than Rs 100,000	☐
	Rs 100,001 to 200,000	☐
	More than Rs 200,000	☐
Education Level	Below Matric	☐
	Intermediate	☐
	Bachelors	☐
	Masters or above	☐
Frequency of Travel	Once a Week	☐
	Once a Month	☐
	Once a Year	☐
	Twice a Year	☐
Airport	Islamabad	☐
	Punjab	☐
	Sindh	☐
	KPK	☐

General Data: Please tick (/) the best box according to your information.		
	Baluchistan	☐
Airline	Pakistan International Airlines	☐
	Air Blue Airlines	☐
	Others	☐

Please answer the all the questions based on the airline brand you use and tick (/) on the number that best reflects your opinion.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

3.14.2 Brand Attachment

The scale of brand attachment is adapted from the study of Thomson et al. (2005) and it is a unidimensional scale consisting of 10 items. It is further used for quantitative analysis by Saavedra Torres et al. (2021) in a study as well.

Brand Attachment Measurements
This airline brand is affectionate based on what it offers
This airline brand seems friendly to me
This airline brand is loveable due to its offerings
This airline brand provides peace of mind
This airline brand is passionate in serving its customer
This airline brand makes me delighted
The services of this airline brand captivated
This airline brand keep me connected
This airline brand is well bonded with me
I feel myself attached with this airline brand

3.14.3 Brand Experience

The brand experience scale was adapted from Brakus et al. (2009) and has four dimensions that are sensory, affective, behavioral and intellectual. The scale consists of 12 items.

Brand Experience Measurements
Sensory Dimension
This airline brand makes strong positive impression on my senses (e.g. comfort and over all pleasant journey).
This airline brand is interesting in sensory way (e.g. pleasant on board environment).
This airline brand is appealing to my senses.
Affective Dimension
This airline brand creates positive feelings.
I have positive feelings for this airline brand.
This airline brand focuses creating positive emotions.
Behavioural Dimension
I get engage in physical actions while using this airline brand.
This airline brand encourages me to think about lifestyle. (e.g., exploring new places).
This airline brand focuses on experiences through activities.
Intellectual Dimension
I engage in a lot of positive thinking when I encounter this airline brand. (e.g., easy check-in, on-board food, entertainment).
I always have positive thinking about this airline brand.
This airline brand stimulates my curiosity. (e.g., reward points).

3.14.4 Brand Communication

The brand communication scale is adapted from study of Azize et al. (2012) and scale is unidimensional and having 13 items.

Brand Communication Measurements
I react favourably to the advertising and promotions of this airline brand
I feel positive toward the advertising and promotions of this airline brand
The advertising and promotions of this airline brand are convincing
The communication through advertising and promotions of this airline brand is up to the mark
I am happy with the advertising and promotions of this airline brand
This airline brand spend time to understand preferences of its regular customer
This airline brand creates a dialogue with its customers regularly
This airline brand asks information from its regular customers about their satisfaction
This airline brand evaluates happiness of customers with the offered services
This airline brand informs the offerings to its customers by email
This airline brand informs its customers nicely in case of ambiguity
This airline brand advertises its services through broachers
This airline brand informs its key services to customers by SMS

3.14.5 Brand Knowledge

The scale of brand knowledge is adapted from study Liu et al., (2020) and The number of total items are 11. The construct brand knowledge is having two dimension that are brand awareness and brand image.

Brand Knowledge Measurements
Brand Awareness Dimension
This airline is very famous
This airline is well rated by fellow customers
Among the several brands airline, this airline is different
I have heard a lot of positive about this airline

Brand Knowledge Measurements
I know that the services of this airline meet the international standards
Brand Image Dimension
This airline focuses on environmental aspect that differentiate it from another airline.
The brand of local airline is famous in the country
This airline attracts customers who have environmental concerns
The journey with this airline makes me feel special.
I know very well that those customers who travel along by this airline.
This airline matches with my self-image

3.14.6 Brand Consciousness

The scale of brand consciousness is unidimensional and having 5 items. The five items of the brand consciousness is adapted from the study of Sprotles & Kendall (1986).

Brand Consciousness Measurements
This well-known national airline brand suits me.
The higher the price of the airline, the better the quality.
Nice crew members and premium services offer me the best journey ever.
I only prefer to take service of this airline
The local airlines brands are usually very good choices.

3.15 Quantitative Validity and Reliability

The questionnaire's design and structure influences the internal validity and dependability of the data collected for analysis. A valid questionnaire permits the collection of precise data that measures what is intended to be measured. It denotes that the items adapted for the questionnaire under a particular variable accurately measure that variable, and that the responses are collected consistently (Ryser, 2021). The queries and responses impact the reliability of the data. The respondent must understand the query as the researcher intended, and the researcher must understand the respondent's response as the respondent intended. This implies that the four steps must

be followed to guarantee the validity and dependability of a questionnaire. The researcher is clear on the data requirements and designs the question; the respondent decodes the question as intended by the researcher; the respondent answers the question; and the researcher decodes the respondent's response as intended by the respondent (Foddy, 1993). The validity and reliability of the questionnaire is measured first after collecting the pilot data to refine the survey instrument. Validity and reliability are again be conducted after collecting the data on a larger scale.

3.16 Data Analysis Tools/Methods

A combination of SPSS and Smart PLS is used for data analysis. In the first phase, preliminary data analysis is performed using the statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS) (Abu-Bader, 2021). Through the SPSS, the study ensured the common method bias, multicollinearity issues, missing values and outliers' detection. In the second phase, Smart PLS software is used for testing hypotheses for which Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) is employed. Measurement model evaluation is also performed using Smart PLS. The measurement model assessed outer loadings, internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity (Ramayah et al., 2018). The structural model assessment ensures the either hypotheses are rejected or accepted. The PLS Predict feature is required to ensure the predictive relevance of model.

3.17 Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed the research methodology that is employed for this study. First, an appropriate philosophy (positivism) has been selected and adequately justified. The most appropriate research method (deductive) has then been identified and chosen with justification. The selection of the research design (quantitative methodology) and research strategy (survey) has also been adequately justified. The cross-sectional time horizon has been identified. After that, the data capture instruments were thoroughly discussed, and the most appropriate (questionnaire) was chosen. Moreover, validity and dependability were discussed by the study.

CHAPTER 4
DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

This study examines the impact of brand attachment, brand communication, and brand experience on the brand consciousness of international travelers in Pakistan who use local airlines through the mediating role of brand knowledge. The first chapter presented the background of the study along with the problem statement, study objectives and questions. The second chapter presented the literature review, theoretical background and hypotheses of the study. The third chapter presented the research methodology along with the study questionnaire. Now the fourth chapter presents data analysis using the SPSS and the Smart PLS software. The descriptive analysis is performed using SPSS software, and the measurement and structural analysis is performed using Smart PLS software.

4.2 Pilot Test

The pilot test was conducted with 50 respondents to make sure that they understood the questionnaire well. The outer loadings, reliability and validity have been examined to make sure that the questionnaire items used in this study are valid and can be replicated in different contexts. Values for outer loadings, Cronbach alpha, composite reliability, and average variance extracted have been examined. The minimum threshold for outer loadings is 0.50 is acceptable as per study of Byrne, (2010). The threshold for Cronbach alpha is 0.70, for composite reliability is between 0.60 and 0.95, and the minimum threshold for average variance extracted is 0.50 (Hair *et al.*, 2017). The pilot study results showed that all the above-mentioned thresholds have been met for outer loadings and reliability and validity. Therefore, the questionnaire is proceeded for further data collection.

4.3 Demographics

After successfully conducting the pilot test, main data collection is conducted to examine the impact of independent variables on the dependent variable. Therefore, the

data regarding the demographics of the respondents is also gathered to better understand the profiles of the respondents. A total of 800 customers were contacted for data collection, out of whom 415 provided responses. However, all 415 responses could not be used because of the missing values and incomplete forms. A total of 350 responses were without missing values, and outliers were considered for data analysis. Moreover, the data regarding respondents' gender, age, marital status, monthly income in Pakistani currency, education level, travel frequency, traveling airport, and airline has been collected.

The data for demographic variables is collected on a nominal scale. For gender, 1 represented male and 2 represented female. The mean value for gender is 1.36, which means most of the respondents are males. A mean value of 1.36 also means that the median value is 1. However, the standard deviation for gender data is 0.516, which shows some variation in responses but not at extreme levels. The data for age is also collected on a nominal scale where 1 represents the age group between 18 and 25 years, 2 represents the age group between 26 and 35 years, 3 represents the age group between 36 and 45 years, and 4 represents the age group above 45 years. The results show a mean value of 1.9 which means that most of the respondents are young people and are between the ages of 18 to 35 years. Median value of 2 also represents that most of the respondents are from the second age group i.e., between the ages of 26 and 35 years. However, this data accounts for all the values, so the exact number of age groups can be understood by using frequencies that are presented later. Moreover, the standard deviation value of 0.969 represents moderate variability in the data for the age factor.

The marital status is coded as 1 for married, 2 for unmarried and 3 for widowed/separated. The mean value for marital status is 1.71, which shows that most of the customers who travel abroad aboard Pakistani airlines are unmarried/single. This is also evidenced by the median value of 2, which represents unmarried people. Moreover, the standard deviation value of 0.611 represents some variability in the responses. Additionally, the data for monthly income is coded as 1 for less than 100,000 rupees, 2 for 100,001 and 200,000 rupees, and 3 for more than 200,000 rupees. The mean value for monthly income is 2.2, which indicates that most of the customers earn more than 100,000 rupees and around 200,000 rupees. The median value of 2 also indicates that the monthly income of the respondents is mostly between 100,001 to 200,000 rupees. The standard deviation of 0.729 in the responses regarding monthly income indicates moderate deviation in responses. When it comes to the education level

of the study respondents, 1 represents matric level education or below matric, 2 represents intermediate level education, 3 represents bachelor level education, and 4 represents master level or above education. The mean value for education is 2.71 which indicates that most of the respondents have bachelor level education. The median value of 3 also indicates that most bachelor-level customers are traveling abroad. This might be because many Pakistani students prefer studying abroad, where they can obtain quality education along with great financial prospects. However, the standard deviation of more than 1 indicates that there are some notable variations in the education levels of the study respondents.

Regarding the travel frequency, 1 represents once a week, 2 represents once in a month, 3 represents once in a year, 4 represents twice in a year. The results provide a mean value of 3.79 which indicates that most of the study respondents travel once a year. This result is also evident from the median value of 4. The standard deviation of 1.066 indicates some level of variability in the responses, which is because many respondents still travel after a year or within six months.

When it comes to the most preferable airport or the busiest airport for international travelers, 1 represents the Islamabad airport, 2 represents the Lahore Punjab airport, 3 represents the Karachi Sindh airport, 4 represents the Peshawar KPK airport, and 5 represents the Baluchistan Quetta airport. The mean value of 2.21 highlights their frequency of choice and is also evident with the median value of 2. However, the standard deviation of 1.187 indicates that study respondents in significant numbers opt to travel from various airports in Pakistan. This result can also be attributed to the distribution of questionnaires for data collection because the questionnaires were distributed with respect to the number of customers traveling from these airports. This means that more questionnaires were distributed at Lahore airport because most Pakistani international travelers use Lahore airport for travel as per available data.

When it comes to airlines make international travel from which airports. With respect to coding the airline-related data, 1 represents Pakistan International Airline (PIA), 2 represents Airblue Airline, and 3 represents all other Pakistani airlines that make international travel. The mean value of 1.93 represents that most of the customers use PIA, which is also evident from the median value of 1. This median value indicates that most customers prefer using PIA for international travel. It can be caused by the time of airline departure and arrival and the time of data collection. The airline departure and arrival times might have correlated with the time when the data was collected.

Moreover, the standard deviation value of 1.131 indicates customers' varying choices in using different airlines for international travel.

The below table shows the demographic data of the study respondents.

Table 4.1
Demographics Data of Study Respondents

	G	A	MS	MI	E	TF	AP	AL
Valid Responses	350	350	350	350	350	350	350	350
Missing Values	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean	1.36	1.9	1.71	2.2	2.71	3.79	2.21	1.93
Median	1	2	2	2	3	4	2	1
Standard Deviation	0.516	0.969	0.611	0.729	1.021	1.066	1.187	1.131

*Note: G means Gender, A means Age, MS means Marital Status, MI means Monthly Income, E means Education, TF means Travel Frequency, AP means Airport, AL means Airline.

The table below presents the frequencies of the demographic variables. There are 65.43 percent male and 32.86 percent female respondents in the data, but 1.71 percent did not disclose. Regarding age, 46.86 percent of respondents are between 18 to 25 years of age, 21.71 percent of respondents are between 26 to 35 years of age, 26 percent of respondents are between 36 to 45 years of age, and 5.43 percent of respondents are above 45 years of age. Moreover, 54.29 percent of respondents are unmarried, 37.42 percent are married, and 8.29 percent of the respondents are widowed. When it comes to the monthly income of the study respondents, 18.57 percent of the respondents earn less than 100,000 rupees, 43.14 percent earn between 100,001 and 200,000 rupees, while 38.29 percent of the respondents earn more than 200,000 rupees per month. The education data shows that 14 percent of respondents have education equal to or less than matriculation, 28.58 percent of the respondents have intermediate level education, 29.71 percent of respondents have bachelor level education, and 27.71 percent of study respondents have master level or higher than master level education.

The data for travel frequency also varied as 7.14 percent travel once a week, 16.29 percent of the respondents travel once a month, 36.57 percent of respondents travel once every six months, 40 percent travel once a year. For airports, 5.14 percent of respondents travel from Quetta airport, 10.29 percent of respondents travel from Peshawar airport, 21.14 percent of respondents travel from Karachi airport, 27.14

percent of respondents travel from Lahore airport, and 36.29 percent of respondents travel from Islamabad airport. Moreover, 50.57 percent of respondents prefer Pakistan International Airline for international travel, 19.14 percent of respondents prefer Airblue, whereas 30.29 percent of respondents prefer other airlines (Serene Air or Air Sial etc.) for international travel.

Table 4.2
Frequencies of Demographic Variables

Variables	**Responses**	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Gender	Male	229	65.43
	Female	115	32.86
	Did not disclose (Left unticked)	6	1.71
	Total	350	100
Age	18 to 25 years	164	46.86
	26 to 35 years	76	21.71
	36 to 45 years	91	26.00
	Above 45 years	19	5.43
	Total	350	100
Marital Status	Married	131	37.42
	Unmarried/Singles	190	54.29
	Widowed	29	8.29
	Total	350	100
Monthly Income	Less than Rs. 100,000	65	18.57
	Rs. 100,001 to Rs. 200,000	151	43.14
	More than Rs. 200,000	134	38.29
	Total	350	100
Education	Matric or below matric	49	14.00
	Intermediate	100	28.58
	Bachelors	104	29.71
	Master or above	97	27.71
	Total	350	100
Travel Frequency	Once a week	25	7.14
	Once a month	57	16.29

Variables	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
	Once a year	140	40.00
	Twice a year	128	36.57
	Total	350	100
	Islamabad	127	36.29
Airport	Lahore	95	27.14
	Karachi	74	21.14
	Peshawar	36	10.29
	Quetta	18	5.14
	Total	350	100
	Pakistan International Airlines	177	50.57
Airline	Air Blue	67	19.14
	Others	106	30.29
	Total	350	100

4.4 Measurement Model Assessment

After evaluating the descriptive statistics, the next step is to assess the reliability and validity of the data. Reliability refers to the internal consistency of the construct items. It is measured using Cronbach's Alpha and composite reliability techniques. Construct validity refers to the accuracy of the items used to measure a construct (Kline, 2016). There are two types of validities, convergent validity and discriminant validity. Convergent validity examines how many correlations exist between items of same constructs, and discriminant validity examines that correlation should not exist between items of different constructs. Convergent validity is examined using the outer loadings and average variance extracted techniques, and discriminant validity is examined using the heterotrait-monotrait and Fornell-Larcker techniques (Hair *et al.*, 2017).

4.4.1 Outer Loadings

Outer loadings of construct items indicate the similarities between an item with other items of the same construct (Hair *et al.*, 2017). It shows how closely the items of a construct are related to each other. Assumptions are that the items of a construct should

be related to each other, but they should not be overlapped. In this study, all the outer loading values for the brand experience sensory dimension, brand experience affective dimension, brand experience behavioral dimension, brand experience intellectual dimension, brand attachment, brand knowledge awareness dimension, and dimension are above 0.7. Therefore, these outer loadings are acceptable. Item 6 of brand image is removed dure to lower loading issue (Hair *et al.*, 2017). Outer loadings for six items of brand communication and one item of brand consciousness are below 0.7, but they are above 0.50, so they are also acceptable, and none of the items were deleted. In conclusion, the outer loadings for all the items of the study are acceptable, and the data is ready for further measurement model assessment.

Table 4.3
Outer Loadings

Variables	**Item Codes**	**Outer Loadings**
Brand Experience Sensory	BE Sensory 1	0.902
	BE Sensory 2	0.895
	BE Sensory 3	0.892
Brand Experience Affective	BE Affective 1	0.867
	BE Affective 2	0.9
	BE Affective 3	0.866
Brand Experience Behavioral	BE Behavioral 1	0.822
	BE Behavioral 2	0.848
	BE Behavioral 3	0.87
Brand Experience Intellectual	BE Intellectual 1	0.864
	BE Intellectual 2	0.871
	BE Intellectual 3	0.861
Brand Attachment	B Attachment 1	0.799
	B Attachment 2	0.826
	B Attachment 3	0.807
	B Attachment 4	0.783
	B Attachment 5	0.801
	B Attachment 6	0.803
	B Attachment 7	0.848
	B Attachment 8	0.854

Variables	Item Codes	Outer Loadings
	B Attachment 9	0.792
	B Attachment 10	0.727
Brand Communication	B Communication 1	0.753
	B Communication 2	0.711
	B Communication 3	0.772
	B Communication 4	0.795
	B Communication 5	0.655
	B Communication 6	0.795
	B Communication 7	0.719
	B Communication 8	0.738
	B Communication 9	0.605
	B Communication 10	0.645
	B Communication 11	0.637
	B Communication 12	0.556
	B Communication 13	0.618
Brand Knowledge Awareness	BK Awareness 1	0.837
	BK Awareness 2	0.882
	BK Awareness 3	0.881
	BK Awareness 4	0.877
	BK Awareness 5	0.819
Brand Knowledge Image	BK Image 1	0.766
	BK Image 2	0.792
	BK Image 3	0.776
	BK Image 4	0.805
	BK Image 5	0.808
Brand Consciousness	B Consciousness 1	0.791
	B Consciousness 2	0.784
	B Consciousness 3	0.665
	B Consciousness 4	0.839
	B Consciousness 5	0.834

4.4.2 Internal Consistency Reliability

Internal consistency reliability examines how reliable the data is for repeatability, for which Cronbach alpha measurement is used to examine whether the data is reliable or not (Cronbach, 1971). However, in PLS-SEM, Cronbach alpha assumes all the indicators of an item are identical to each other, and somehow, this measurement parameter is not followed by most scholars. In comparison to Cronbach alpha, the composite reliability assumes that items of an indicator might be different from each other. Therefore, composite reliability is a more reliable measure of internal consistency reliability (McNeish, 2017).

However, in this study, both parameters are examined. The minimum threshold for Cronbach alpha is 0.70, and the minimum threshold for composite reliability is also 0.70, but the values should not be greater than 0.95 (Ramayah et al., 2018). All the values for Cronbach alpha and composite reliability are above 0.70 and below 0.95. Therefore, all the values are within the acceptable range. These results show that the construct items used in this study are reliable for repeatability.

Table 4.4
Construct Reliability

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
Brand Attachment	0.939	0.941
Brand Communication	0.918	0.937
Brand Consciousness	0.846	0.87
Brand Experience	0.942	0.944
Brand Knowledge	0.902	0.91

4.4.3 Average Variance Extracted for Convergent Validity

Internal consistency reliability examines the similarities between items of the constructs, whereas convergent validity examines the dissimilarities or variance between the items of constructs. For examining convergent validity, average variance extracted (AVE) measurement is used which examines to what extent the items of a construct vary from each other (Hair et al., 2019). The minimum threshold for the average variance extracted is 0.50. The AVE for all the constructs should be greater

than 0.50 (Hair *et al.*, 2017). However, AVE below 0.50 is also acceptable if composite reliability is greater than 0.60 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). In this study, all the values of AVE are above 0.50 except brand communication. The AVE value of brand communication is below 0.50, but its composite reliability is greater than 0.60. Therefore, the AVE of brand communication is also acceptable.

Table 4.5
Average Variance Extracted

Variables	(AVE)
Brand Attachment	0.648
Brand Communication	0.485
Brand Consciousness	0.616
Brand Experience	0.613
Brand Knowledge	0.536

4.4.4 Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity explains how much the items of one construct are different from the items of other constructs to make sure that a construct's items are different from others and that there are no significant similar items in different constructs (Ramayah et al., 2018). There are two assessment criteria to examine the discriminant validity which is fornell-larcker criterion and heterotrait-monotrait criterion.

4.4.5 Fornell-Larcker Criterion

The Fornell-Larcker criterion compares the square root of the AVE of a construct with its correlation with other constructs to examine the variance between the two variables. The threshold is that the square root of the AVE of a construct should be greater than its correlations with other constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The below table presents the Fornell-Larcker values for all the constructs. The results show that the square roots of all the constructs are greater than their correlations with other constructs. Therefore, it can be said that the Fornell-Larcker criterion has been fulfilled, and there is no discriminant validity. The results conclude that the items used to measure one construct are significantly different from the items used to measure other constructs.

Table 4.6
Fornell-Larcker Criterion for Discriminant Validity

Variables	Brand Attachment	Brand Communication	Brand Consciousness	Brand Experience	Brand Knowledge
Brand Attachment	0.805				
Brand Communication	-0.075	0.696			
Brand Consciousness	0.651	-0.082	0.785		
Brand Experience	0.895	-0.08	0.674	0.783	
Brand Knowledge	0.807	-0.089	0.79	0.836	0.732

4.4.6 Cross-Loadings

Cross loadings are reported in table below. The items are loaded maximum on their own construct as highlighted.

Table 4.7
Cross-loadings

	BE	BEA	BEB	BEI	BES	BK	BKA	BKI	BA	B.com	BC
BEA 1	0.77	0.867	0.56	0.59	0.72	0.64	0.635	0.48	0.678	0.015	0.565
BEA 2	0.81	0.9	0.61	0.66	0.72	0.66	0.647	0.52	0.702	-0.039	0.602
BEA 3	0.79	0.866	0.64	0.65	0.68	0.67	0.659	0.52	0.716	-0.099	0.56
BEB 1	0.70	0.573	0.82	0.57	0.58	0.57	0.578	0.43	0.622	-0.057	0.413
BEB 2	0.75	0.607	0.84	0.65	0.63	0.61	0.622	0.45	0.668	-0.073	0.464
BEB 3	0.75	0.577	0.87	0.66	0.61	0.60	0.614	0.43	0.656	-0.085	0.397
BEI 1	0.77	0.603	0.67	0.86	0.65	0.64	0.659	0.46	0.703	-0.072	0.513
BEI 2	0.79	0.682	0.62	0.87	0.68	0.67	0.675	0.49	0.705	-0.088	0.573
BEI 3	0.74	0.606	0.64	0.86	0.58	0.58	0.612	0.39	0.713	-0.097	0.447
BES 1	0.79	0.685	0.59	0.64	0.90	0.70	0.698	0.53	0.735	-0.002	0.576
BES 2	0.83	0.754	0.66	0.66	0.89	0.74	0.741	0.56	0.753	-0.074	0.636
BES 3	0.83	0.73	0.67	0.69	0.89	0.70	0.712	0.51	0.745	-0.083	0.547
BKA 1	0.69	0.628	0.56	0.59	0.70	0.77	0.837	0.49	0.703	-0.038	0.673
BKA 2	0.77	0.697	0.64	0.69	0.73	0.80	0.882	0.50	0.771	-0.046	0.612
BKA 3	0.71	0.634	0.61	0.63	0.67	0.80	0.881	0.51	0.73	-0.061	0.585
BKA 4	0.73	0.64	0.62	0.67	0.69	0.80	0.877	0.51	0.752	-0.041	0.562

	BE	BEA	BEB	BEI	BES	BK	BKA	BKI	BA	B.com	BC
BKA 5	0.68	0.564	0.63	0.62	0.63	0.74	0.819	0.45	0.691	-0.08	0.477
BKI 1	0.67	0.626	0.56	0.58	0.64	0.80	0.676	0.76	0.643	-0.02	0.736
BKI 2	0.39	0.386	0.32	0.31	0.39	0.61	0.363	0.79	0.351	-0.075	0.524
BKI 3	0.40	0.398	0.32	0.34	0.38	0.60	0.366	0.77	0.343	-0.079	0.533
BKI 4	0.42	0.393	0.35	0.35	0.41	0.64	0.396	0.80	0.346	-0.126	0.517
BKI 5	0.49	0.45	0.43	0.41	0.48	0.66	0.425	0.80	0.421	-0.126	0.544
BA 1	0.69	0.617	0.53	0.65	0.68	0.64	0.69	0.41	0.799	-0.033	0.58
BA 2	0.73	0.667	0.61	0.68	0.68	0.64	0.684	0.43	0.826	-0.02	0.528
BA 3	0.72	0.648	0.59	0.69	0.67	0.65	0.687	0.45	0.807	-0.073	0.55
BA 4	0.67	0.608	0.54	0.62	0.64	0.63	0.684	0.41	0.783	-0.058	0.519
BA 5	0.73	0.637	0.68	0.69	0.63	0.63	0.666	0.44	0.801	-0.056	0.487
BA 6	0.72	0.636	0.62	0.65	0.67	0.62	0.643	0.44	0.803	-0.059	0.554
BA 7	0.75	0.674	0.68	0.65	0.71	0.70	0.743	0.47	0.848	-0.07	0.541
BA 8	0.77	0.711	0.68	0.68	0.71	0.71	0.745	0.50	0.854	-0.082	0.568
BA 9	0.69	0.614	0.59	0.63	0.63	0.59	0.662	0.36	0.792	-0.062	0.436
BA 10	0.66	0.588	0.59	0.59	0.61	0.61	0.615	0.45	0.727	-0.088	0.454
B.com 1	-	0.008	-	-	0.01	-	-	-	-	0.753	0.009
B.com 2	-	0.04	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.711	-
B.com 3	-	0.013	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.772	-
B.com 4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.795	-
B.com 5	0.02	0.073	0.00	0.00	0.00	-	-	-	0.01	0.655	0.023
B.com 6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.795	-
B.com 7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.719	-
B.com 8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.738	-
B.com 9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.605	-0.02
B.com	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.00	-	0.645	-
B.com	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-0.05	0.636	-
B.com	-	0.006	-	-	0.00	0.00	0.031	-	-	0.556	-
B.com	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.008	-	-	0.618	-
BC 1	0.49	0.445	0.38	0.43	0.49	0.59	0.512	0.55	0.502	-0.1	0.791
BC 2	0.47	0.459	0.35	0.42	0.44	0.54	0.431	0.54	0.405	-0.114	0.784
BC 3	0.32	0.335	0.22	0.27	0.31	0.40	0.283	0.45	0.289	-0.096	0.665
BC 4	0.60	0.589	0.43	0.55	0.57	0.71	0.626	0.64	0.61	-0.048	0.839
BC 5	0.66	0.662	0.50	0.56	0.65	0.75	0.691	0.64	0.644	-0.002	0.834

*Note: BE means Brand Experience, BEA means Brand Experience Affective, BEB means Brand Experience Behavioral, BEI means Brand Experience Intellectual, BES means Brand Experience Sensory, BK means Brand Knowledge, BKA means Brand Awareness, BKI means Brand Image, BA means Brand Attachment, B.com means Brand Communication, BC means Brand Consciousness.

4.4.7 Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) Ratio for Correlations

Fornell-Larcker criterion examines the discriminant validity. The discriminant validity if the outer loadings of the items of the two constructs are significantly different (Henseler et al., 2015). HTMT compares the average of correlations among the items of two different constructs and the average of the correlations among the items of the same construct. For the sake of more clarity, HTMT first takes the average of the inter-correlations between items of two constructs to use as the numerator. Then, it takes the square root of the multiplication of the average of intra-correlations of the items of the same two constructs to use as the denominator. The threshold for HTMT is that the values should be below 0.90 (Hair et al., 2017).

The following table presents the HTMT values for all the constructs. The HTMT values for all the constructs are within acceptable range except for the relationships between brand experience sensory and brand experience affective dimensions. The HTMT correlation between these constructs is above 0.90. The HTMT correlation between brand experience sensory and brand attachment, the HTMT correlation between brand experience behavioral and brand experience intellectual, and the HTMT correlation between brand experience intellectual and brand attachment are also above the 0.90 threshold value. The problem might be because brand experience construct has four indicators which might have similar items. However, the discriminant validity is still established using the Fornell-Larcker criterion.

Table 4.8
HTMT for Discriminant Validity

	Brand Attachment	**Brand Communication**	**Brand Consciousness**	**Brand Experience**	**Brand Knowledge**
Brand Attachment					
Brand Communication	0.077				
Brand Consciousness	0.696	0.095			
Brand Experience	0.951	0.091	0.724		

	Brand Attachment	Brand Communication	Brand Consciousness	Brand Experience	Brand Knowledge
Brand Knowledge	0.855	0.092	0.877	0.89	

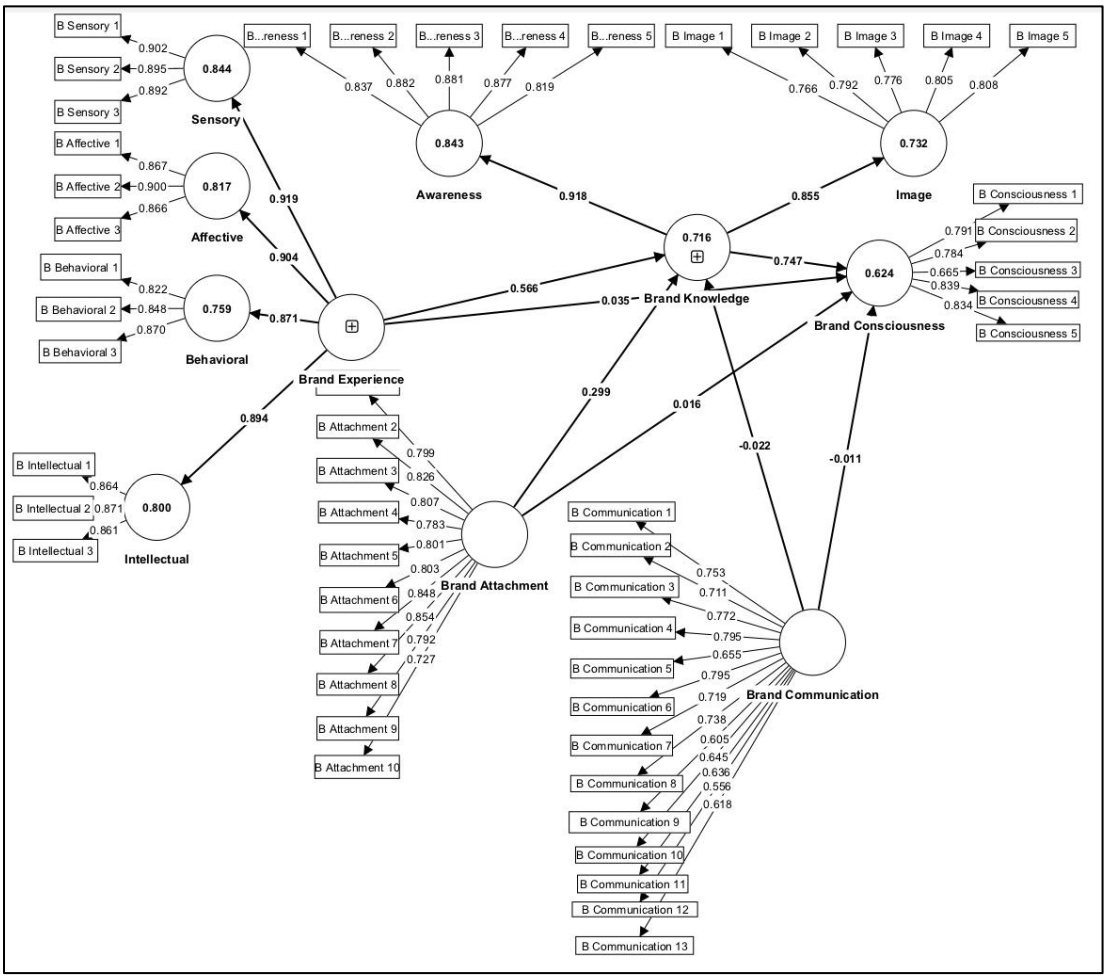

Figure 4.1 Graphical Presentation of Measurement Model Assessment

4.5 Structural Model Assessment

In the previous steps, the constructs' reliability and validity have been established. Now, the relationships between the constructs are examined in this section. There are different types of approaches for estimating the higher order constructs, including the repeated indicators approach and the two-stage approach (Sarstedt et al., 2019). The repeated indicator approach assigns all the indicators (or items) of dimensions (or lower order constructs) of a higher order construct to the actual higher order construct. The indicators that are used to measure the lower order constructs are

used to measure the higher order construct. This approach is good for a reflective-formative model where higher order constructs are not dependent variables (Sarstedt et al., 2019). The collinearity between the items, path coefficients, coefficient of determination, level of effect, and the relationships are tested in the below sections.

4.5.1 Collinearity Assessment

The first step in assessing the structural model is to examine the collinearity among the constructs. Collinearity occurs when two indicators examine the same thing. The variance inflation factor (VIF) is used to measure the collinearity, and the threshold is that the value of VIF should be less than 5. If the value of VIF is greater than 5 that means the issue of collinearity exists (Hair et al., 2014). The below table presents the values of VIF for all the indicators. It shows that the values are below the threshold of 5, which means there is no collinearity among the indicators.

Table 4.9
Collinearity Assessment

		VIF
Brand Experience		
	Sensory	
	B Sensory 1	2.584
	B Sensory 2	2.378
	B Sensory 3	2.3
	Affective	
	B Affective 1	2.581
	B Affective 2	2.391
	B Affective 3	1.963
	Intellectual	
	B Intellectual 1	1.905
	B Intellectual 2	1.929
	B Intellectual 3	1.92
	Behavioral	
	B Behavioral 1	1.952
	B Behavioral 2	2.2
	B Behavioral 3	1.907
Brand Attachment		
	B Attachment 1	2.676
	B Attachment 2	3.076
	B Attachment 3	2.586
	B Attachment 4	2.26
	B Attachment 5	2.367

		VIF
	B Attachment 6	2.417
	B Attachment 7	3.193
	B Attachment 8	3.197
	B Attachment 9	2.522
	B Attachment 10	1.97
Brand Communication		
	B Communication 1	2.812
	B Communication 2	2.283
	B Communication 3	2.547
	B Communication 4	2.785
	B Communication 5	2.066
	B Communication 6	2.219
	B Communication 7	1.923
	B Communication 8	1.664
	B Communication 9	1.665
	B Communication 10	1.874
	B Communication 11	2.079
	B Communication 12	1.998
	B Communication 13	2.226
Brand Knowledge		
	Brand Image	
	B Image 1	2.263
	B Image 2	1.963
	B Image 3	1.889
	B Image 4	2.007
	B Image 5	2.067
	Brand Awareness	
	B Awareness 1	2.488
	B Awareness 2	3.004
	B Awareness 3	2.857
	B Awareness 4	2.89
	B Awareness 4	2.334
	B Awareness 5	2.488
Brand Consciousness		
	B Consciousness 1	1.905
	B Consciousness 2	2.05
	B Consciousness 3	1.637
	B Consciousness 4	2.348
	B Consciousness 5	2.328

4.5.2 Path Coefficients

Path coefficients represent the strength and direction of the relationships between independent variables and the dependent variable. They are commonly known as beta values. The values of path coefficients stay within the range of -1 to +1. Path

coefficients show the change in the dependent variable because of a one-unit change in the independent variable when everything else stays constant (Hair et al., 1998).

The table below presents the path coefficient values. The strongest relationship is between brand knowledge and brand consciousness, with a value of 0.747. It means that a 1 unit change in brand knowledge will bring a positive change of 0.747 units in brand consciousness. The weakest relationship is between brand communication and brand consciousness with a value of -0.011. It means that one unit change in brand communication will bring a negative change of only -0.011 in brand communication.

Table 4.10
Path Coefficient (Beta)

Relationships	**Beta**
Brand Attachment -> Brand Consciousness	0.016
Brand Attachment -> Brand Knowledge	0.299
Brand Communication -> Brand Consciousness	-0.011
Brand Communication -> Brand Knowledge	-0.022
Brand Experience -> Brand Consciousness	0.035
Brand Experience -> Brand Knowledge	0.566
Brand Knowledge -> Brand Consciousness	0.747
Brand Experience -> Brand Knowledge -> Brand Consciousness	0.423
Brand Communication -> Brand Knowledge -> Brand Consciousness	-0.016
Brand Attachment -> Brand Knowledge -> Brand Consciousness	0.223

4.5.3 Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

The coefficient of determination (R square) examines the cumulative impact of independent variables on the dependent variables. The value for r square stays between 0 and 1, representing the percentage change in dependent variables due to the combined effect of independent variables (Ramayah et al., 2018). R square always increases with the addition of new variables, whereas the adjusted r square only increases if the addition of new variables improves the model. Therefore, adjusted R square is a more balanced approach.

The following table presents the values of R square and adjusted R square for the mediating and the dependent variables. The adjusted R square value of brand knowledge, the mediator in the study, is 0.714, which means that 71.4 per cent variance in brand knowledge is because of its independent (predictor) variables. The adjusted R square value of 0.62 for brand consciousness shows that 62 percent variance in brand consciousness is because of its predictors. Both values of brand knowledge and brand consciousness show a substantial impact of independent variables on the dependent variables. Therefore, showing that the model is strong.

Table 4.11
Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

Variables	R-square	R-square Adjusted
Brand Consciousness	0.624	0.62
Brand Knowledge	0.716	0.714

4.5.4 Effect Size (f^2)

R square explains the cumulative impact of independent variables on the dependent variables, whereas f square explains the individual impact of independent variables on dependent variables. In other words, f square shows the variance in dependent variables because of the independent variables. The value of 0.02 show a weak effect, the value of 0.15 show a medium effect and the value of 0.35 show a large effect (Cohen, 1988). The below table shows the effect size of independent variables on the dependent variables. Brand experience shows the weakest impact on brand consciousness with a value of 0.001, and brand knowledge shows the strongest impact on brand consciousness with a value of 0.42. Whereas brand communication shows the weakest impact on brand knowledge with a value of 0.002, and brand experience shows the strongest impact with a value of 0.225.

Table 4.12
Level of Effect (f square)

Variables	Brand Consciousness	Brand Knowledge
Brand Attachment	0	0.063
Brand Communication	0	0.002

Variables	Brand Consciousness	Brand Knowledge
Brand Consciousness		
Brand Experience	0.001	0.225
Brand Knowledge	0.42	

4.6 Relationship Testing

This study uses the SmartPLS software for relationship testing through the bootstrapping method. The relationships are tested, and decisions are made based on t values and p values. If the t-value is greater than 1.96 and the p-value is equal to or lesser than 0.05, then there exists a significant relationship between independent and dependent variables. The relationships are separated into direct and indirect categories and presented in the sections below.

4.6.1 Direct Relationships

Brand consciousness is the dependent variable, brand knowledge is the mediating variable, and brand attachment, brand communication, and brand experience are the independent variables. The table below presents the direct relationships between independent variables and mediating variables and between independent variables and dependent variables. The p values are below 0.05 for the relationship between brand attachment and brand knowledge, brand experience and brand knowledge, brand knowledge and brand consciousness. It means that only these three relationships are significant and the remaining relationships are insignificant. It is worth noticing that no independent variables have a direct impact on the independent variable.

Table 4.13
Relationships Testing for Direct Relationships

Relationships	Original sample (O)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P values
Brand Attachment -> Brand Consciousness	0.016	0.082	0.194	0.846
Brand Attachment -> Brand Knowledge	0.299	0.071	4.187	0

Relationships	Original sample (O)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P values
Brand Communication -> Brand Consciousness	-0.011	0.042	0.263	0.793
Brand Communication -> Brand Knowledge	-0.022	0.044	0.497	0.62
Brand Experience -> Brand Consciousness	0.035	0.105	0.334	0.738
Brand Experience -> Brand Knowledge	0.566	0.069	8.16	0
Brand Knowledge -> Brand Consciousness	0.747	0.066	11.393	0

4.6.2 Indirect Relationships

When it comes to indirect relationships, the data analysis shows that brand knowledge has a mediating effect on the relationship between brand experience and brand consciousness and brand attachment and brand consciousness. The results also show that brand knowledge does not mediate the relationship between brand communication and brand consciousness. Therefore, the significance of the mediating variable cannot be found for the relationship between brand communication and brand consciousness. The results of the below table also show that brand knowledge has full mediation between brand experience and brand consciousness and between brand attachment and brand consciousness.

Table 4.14
Relationships Testing for Indirect Relationships

Relationships	Original Sample (O)	Standard Deviation	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P values
Brand Experience -> Brand Knowledge -> Brand Consciousness	0.423	0.068	6.24	0
Brand Communication -> Brand Knowledge -> Brand Consciousness	-0.016	0.033	0.494	0.621
Brand Attachment -> Brand Knowledge -> Brand Consciousness	0.223	0.053	4.195	0

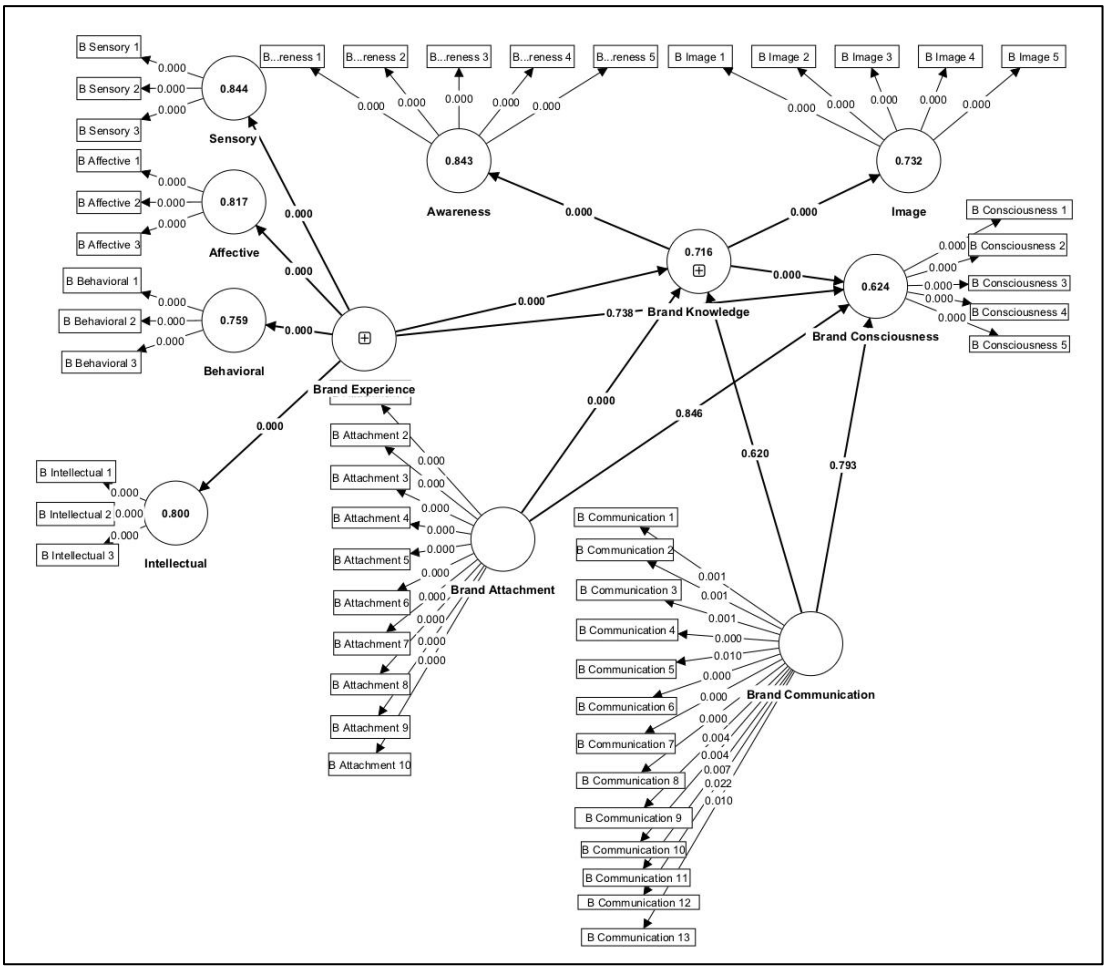

Figure 4.2 Graphical Presentation of Structural Model Assessment

4.7 Addressing Research Hypotheses

This study has a total of 10 hypotheses. Three for each independent variable, including the mediating effect, and one for the relationship between mediating and the dependent variable. The results discussed in the above section present that five hypotheses show significant relationships whereas the remaining five show insignificant relationships. Brand experience and brand knowledge, brand attachment and brand knowledge, and brand knowledge and brand consciousness show significant relationships. Therefore, these hypotheses have been accepted out of all the direct relationships. Brand knowledge mediates the relationship between brand experience and brand consciousness, and between brand attachment and brand consciousness. Therefore, the study hypotheses for these two relationships have also been accepted. It should be noted that normally the null hypothesis is accepted or rejected. But in this

study, there are no null hypotheses, so the acceptance of rejection is for the main study hypotheses.

Table 4.15
Hypotheses Results

Hypotheses	Result
Brand experience has a significant impact on brand knowledge.	Significant
Brand experience has a significant impact on brand consciousness.	Insignificant
Brand knowledge significantly mediates the relationship between brand experience and brand consciousness.	Significant
Brand communication has a significant impact on brand knowledge.	Insignificant
Brand communication has a significant impact on brand consciousness.	Insignificant
Brand knowledge significantly mediates the relationship between brand communication and brand consciousness.	Insignificant
Brand attachment has a significant impact on brand knowledge.	Significant
Brand attachment has a significant impact on brand consciousness.	Insignificant
Brand knowledge significantly mediates the relationship between brand attachment and brand consciousness.	Significant
Brand knowledge has a significant impact on brand consciousness.	Significant

The results show that brand experience and brand attachment of local airlines help in enhancing brand knowledge, but they do not impact brand consciousness of local airlines in Pakistan. However, brand knowledge does help in increasing the brand consciousness of local airlines in Pakistan. Moreover, brand experience and brand attachment only increase the brand consciousness of local airlines with the existence of brand knowledge. Meaning that brand experience and brand attachment have no impact on brand consciousness without the involvement of brand knowledge. Therefore, local airlines in Pakistan should focus on brand knowledge because it increases the brand consciousness of air travelers regarding local airlines.

4.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter performed and presented the analysis. The results show that half of the study hypotheses have been accepted, and the other half have been rejected. Brand

experience and brand attachment significantly impact brand knowledge, and brand knowledge has a significant impact on brand consciousness. Moreover, brand knowledge fully mediates the relationships between brand attachment and brand consciousness and brand experience and brand consciousness. These results show that no independent variable has a direct impact on the dependent variable.

CHAPTER 5
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

Chapter one of this thesis presented the introduction to the study, problem statement, research objectives, and research questions. The chapter also presented the research gaps including the contextual, conceptual and theoretical gaps. The study's significance, scope and limitations have also been presented in the first chapter. The second chapter presented the literature review including the theoretical background, hypotheses development and conceptual framework. After that, the third chapter presented the methodology used in detail. This study used the quantitative methodology. The research philosophy, study population and sampling, and study questionnaire have also been presented in the third chapter. The fourth chapter comprised of the data analysis using SmartPLS software. The data analysis included testing of the reliability and validity of the data and relationship testing.

This chapter presents a discussion of the results in relation to the research objectives. The study research objectives have been addressed in this part. The discussion part explains which objectives have been achieved and which objectives have not been achieved. After discussing the research objectives. The next step is to address the research problem. In this section of the chapter, the research problem has been discussed and it has been evaluated whether the research problem has been addressed or not. After addressing the research problem, the outcome of the study, contributions of the study, limitations, recommendations, and the conclusion have been presented.

5.2 Addressing Research Objectives

This study examined the impact of branding strategies on the brand consciousness of Pakistan's local airlines with the mediating role of brand knowledge. The branding strategies included brand experience, brand attachment, and brand communication. This study examined the impact of brand experience on brand knowledge and brand consciousness. This study also examined the impact of brand

attachment on brand knowledge and brand consciousness. This study also examined the impact of brand communication on brand knowledge and brand consciousness. Lastly, this study examined the mediating role of brand knowledge between independent and dependent variables. The specific research objectives are as follows: to examine the relationship between brand experience and brand knowledge, to examine the relationship between brand experience and brand consciousness, to examine the relationship between brand experience and brand consciousness through the mediation of brand knowledge, to examine the relationship between brand communication and brand knowledge, to examine the relationship between brand communication and brand consciousness, to examine the relationship between brand communication and brand consciousness through the mediation of brand knowledge, to examine the relationship between brand attachment and brand knowledge, to examine the relationship between brand attachment and brand consciousness, to examine the relationship between brand attachment and brand consciousness through the mediation of brand knowledge, to examine the relationship between brand knowledge and brand consciousness.

The relationships between independent and dependent variables have been examined with the help of SmartPLS software. First, the measurement assessment model has been evaluated, which includes content reliability and validity. After making sure that the data is reliable and valid, then the structural model has been assessed. The assessment of the structural model included the examination of determination of coefficient, and the level of effect. Finally, the decision regarding the impacts of independent variables on the dependent variable has been made with the help of t-values and p-values. Relationships having a t-value greater than 1.96 and a p-value less than 0.05 have been decided as significant relationships.

5.2.1 Brand Experience, and Brand Knowledge and Brand Consciousness

This study's first and foremost objective is to examine the relationship between brand experience and brand knowledge, along with the impact of brand experience on brand consciousness and the mediating role of brand knowledge between brand experience and brand consciousness. Brand knowledge can be affected by various brand constructs including brand experience (Cleff & Walter, 2014). As brand experience helps the customer develop basic knowledge about the brand. The more the customers experience a brand, the more they become knowledgeable about it and can easily

recognize or recall the brand (Xixiang et al., 2016). Brand knowledge consists of two dimensions, brand awareness and brand image, which are both affected by brand experience (Eslami, 2020). Brand experience does affect brand knowledge (Jeon & Yoo, 2021).

The brand experience consists of four dimensions including sensory, affective, behavioral, and intellectual dimensions. The sensory dimension focuses on the positive impression of the airline including the comfort, pleasure, onboarding environment, and the appeal of the brand. The affective dimension focuses on the creation of positive feelings and emotions. The behavioral dimension focuses on physical actions, lifestyle, exploring new places, and activities. Whereas the intellectual dimension focuses on positive thinking, including easy check-in, onboarding, food, entertainment, and rewards of using the airline (Brakus et al., 2009). The brand knowledge variable consists of two dimensions as well including the brand awareness and brand image dimensions. The brand awareness dimension focuses on how famous the brand is, how different the brand is, positive feedback about the airline and the application of international standards. The brand image dimensions focus on the environmental aspect, the traveler's lifestyle, and the overall brand image of the airline (Liu et al., 2020).

This study presents that brand experience significantly impacts brand knowledge regarding the Pakistan local airlines that operate internationally. This result indicates how customers' interactions with the Pakistani airlines shape their overall understating of the brand. Pakistani airlines need to provide consistent services to ensure a high standard, reliable experience. The connection of airline branding with cultural values would also enhance brand experience which would improve brand knowledge of the customers. Furthermore, environmental protection efforts and the use of technology also encourage customers to use the airlines. The customers' interactions with the airlines greatly impact their perception and overall experience regarding that airline. Greater experience would help in building better brand knowledge. The findings of this study are in line with Souka *et al.* (2023) and Legendre et al. (2019) who also stressed the importance of brand experience for better brand knowledge. This study highlights the role of brand experience in shaping better brand knowledge. By focusing on brand experience, Pakistani airlines can enhance brand knowledge, which can ultimately help in gaining more customers and compete with international airlines.

Brand consciousness refers to how an airline suits a customer or how customers are conscious about their services. Airlines' brand consciousness also means the

decisions of the customer based on crew members' behaviors and premium services (Kumar, 2019). Another crucial finding of this study is that brand experience does not significantly impact brand consciousness. Brand experience may impact brand knowledge, but it does not impact brand consciousness in the context for Pakistani international airlines. It shows that brand experience does not impact the consciousness of the customers in decision-making and choosing an airline for international travel. Brand experience may improve brand knowledge, but it does not necessarily improve brand consciousness. The literature is scarce in examining the impact of brand experience on brand consciousness. However, it can be concluded in the relationship between brand experience and brand consciousness that this relationship does not exist in the Pakistani airline industry, that too for the Pakistani local airlines that make international travels. An attempt was made to find out the impact of brand experience on brand consciousness, but the study results indicate that this relationship is rarely discussed.

The insignificance of the result may be because of other more important factors such as pricing, word-of-mouth, social influences, convenience, etc. The brand consciousness mostly focuses on the prestigious feeling offered by the airlines, but Pakistani customers may not give much importance to prestige but to the functionality of the services. Another factor could be that most of the travelers are going abroad for studies or work, mainly labor work. The findings are supported by prior literature that brand experience primarily enhances customers' cognitive understanding of the airline including service quality, reliability, and safety rather than shaping their psychological orientation toward brand prestige or symbolic value (Brakus et al., 2009; Iglesias et al., 2011). In emerging economies, the airline selection process is largely utilitarian and functional in nature, where customers prioritize affordability, schedule convenience, and safety over symbolic or status-driven factors associated with brand consciousness (Shahid & Azhar, 2023; Han, 2021). Therefore, in the Pakistani context, brand experience enhances customers' cognitive schema (brand knowledge) but does not necessarily cultivate affective or symbolic brand consciousness, as airline services are perceived through a pragmatic consumption lens rather than as a representation of status or social identity (Han, 2021; Shahid & Azhar, 2023). This contextual understanding suggests that brand experience alone is insufficient to drive brand consciousness in mainstream airlines instead, symbolic communication, emotional branding, and cultural identity strategies may be required to elevate customers' psychological engagement

with the airline brand. Therefore, they only want affordable airlines to travel with instead of wanting luxury. In conclusion, better brand experience may help in improving brand knowledge but not brand consciousness.

However, brand knowledge may mediate the relationship between brand experience and brand consciousness. There exists a full mediation between brand experience and brand consciousness. This study finds out that brand experience may not directly impact brand consciousness, but it impacts brand consciousness through the mediating role of brand knowledge. It means that to improve brand consciousness by using brand experience, Pakistani international airlines first need to enhance brand knowledge. The airlines that want to enhance brand consciousness need to work on the relationship between brand experience and brand knowledge, which can enhance brand consciousness. These results help answer the research questions related to brand experience, brand knowledge, and brand consciousness.

The findings indicated that brand knowledge fully mediates the relationship between brand experience and brand consciousness in the Pakistani airline industry. This suggests that customers' experiences with an airline such as service quality, staff behavior, flight punctuality, and in-flight comfort do not directly generate brand consciousness; instead, these experiences contribute to customers' brand knowledge, which subsequently shapes their awareness and psychological attachment to the brand (Keller, 2016; Iglesias & Ind, 2020). Brand experience, as defined by Brakus et al. (2009), creates sensory, emotional, and behavioral responses, yet these responses become meaningful only when customers integrate them into their mental frameworks as brand knowledge, encompassing brand awareness and brand image (Keller, 1993). Once these knowledge structures are formed, customers begin to perceive the airline brand not only as a service provider but as a symbol of reliability, identity, and social representation thereby leading to higher brand consciousness (Lee & Kim, 2020; Sharda & Bhat, 2019).

5.2.2 Brand Communication, and Brand Knowledge and Brand Consciousness

After examining the relationships between brand experience, brand knowledge, and brand consciousness, this study also aims to examine the objectives to examine the relationships between brand communication, brand knowledge, and brand consciousness. Customers develop strong brand knowledge only once they have

successfully received the necessary brand information. Therefore, brand communication is an important factor. Once customers are successfully communicated about a brand, only then can they make the informed and right decisions. Brands need to communicate their product features, values, and usefulness of the product to make it easily recognizable by the customers (Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2015). The effective use of brand communication strategies helps in enhancing the brand knowledge of the customers (Mauroner et al., 2016; Shoaib Muhammad et al., 2019). Dissemination of brand information through various channels can help enhance brand knowledge (Ismail, 2017). Different methods used for brand communication can also help, e.g., the effective use of social media branding strategies can be useful in enhancing the brand knowledge of customers (Bhatti et al., 2018; Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2015). The clearer the message, the more knowledgeable the customer, and the better the brand consciousness (Ahmed et al., 2018). Brand communication means the advertisements and promotions used by the airlines and customers' attraction to those advertisements and promotions. In brand communication, customers also give importance to whether the information is up-to-date, customer contentment with advertisements, consistency of dissemination of information, advertisement strategies, including brochures and online marketing, etc. (Azize et al., 2012).

This study examined the impact of brand communication on brand knowledge and brand consciousness. The findings indicate that brand communication has an insignificant relationship with brand knowledge and brand consciousness. The results also show that brand knowledge does not mediate the relationship between brand communication and brand consciousness. Brand communication has no significant relationship with either brand knowledge or brand consciousness. These findings indicate that irrespective of the importance of brand communication's importance for marketing strategies, it has no significant impact on brand knowledge or brand consciousness in the Pakistani international airlines' context and the reason can be contextual. The results of this study are against the findings of Ruzzier et al. (2021) and Shoaib Muhammad et al. (2019), and there can be multiple reasons for this, including brand message saturation, relevance, and trust. Pakistani customers may prefer travelling using the airlines that their friends and family are already using. Therefore, brand communication strategies will have no impact on their decisions. Airlines may have not communicated their message properly which can be a cause of customers' not giving much importance to the airlines' messages. Moreover, customers might see

direct messages from the airlines are unauthentic but opinions of their friends or family as more valuable.

Another reason can be that the content of the brand communication is not relevant to the customers. Therefore, the customers do not give much importance to it. This leads to no significant impact of brand communication on brand knowledge and brand consciousness. Moreover, customers may give more importance to the opinions of their family and friends rather than to the airline itself. There can be multiple reasons for the insignificant impact of brand communication on brand knowledge and brand consciousness. Another reason can be that people usually try to find cheaper airlines so brand communication regarding comfort or other facilities may not be as important as the cost of travel. In Pakistan, most of the travelers are students or laborers who buy tickets from agents. The travel agency system in Pakistan is strong, and people mostly prefer to buy tickets from travel agents. Therefore, brand communication or other marketing strategies may not have a direct impact on the customers' brand knowledge and brand consciousness.

Brand communication includes all the marketing activities that a brand undertakes to reach out to the customers, and it is the first step of brand knowledge (Mauroner et al., 2016). But if travel agents can find cheaper ticket customers, then they may not put any effort into finding a ticket by themselves. therefore, brand communication strategies plausibly have no impact on their decisions. In conclusion, the customers may not see an eye-catching ad or any other marketing communication methods when their agent doing the work for them. However, there can be other airlines branding strategies impacting their decisions like brand experience and brand attachment etc. There can also be other factors that might play the mediating role between brand communication and brand consciousness, but brand knowledge does not play that role in the context of this study. These results helped answer the research questions relating to brand communication. The results indicate that brand communication has no significant impact on either brand knowledge or brand consciousness. The study also indicates that brand knowledge does not mediate the relationship between brand communication and brand consciousness.

In such contexts, airline customers tend to prioritize price sensitivity, route availability, and service reliability over brand-promoted symbolic or experiential attributes (Han, 2021; Shahid & Azhar, 2023). Consequently, even when airlines invest in promotional campaigns emphasizing comfort, in-flight entertainment, or corporate

image, these messages may not significantly influence customers' brand knowledge or elevate their brand consciousness, as the perceived utility and affordability of air travel dominate their decision-making criteria (Rahman & Mannan, 2018; Rather, 2021). This disconnect between brand communication and customer priorities reduces message relevance, resulting in cognitive disengagement with brand messaging and a limited transfer of information into meaningful brand associations (Keller, 2016; Iglesias & Ind, 2020).

5.2.3 Brand Attachment, and Brand Knowledge and Brand Consciousness

This study established the research objectives that brand attachment significantly impacts brand knowledge. The study also established the objective that brand knowledge significantly mediates the relationship between brand attachment and brand consciousness. Brand attachment is the way a customer feels self-connection, affiliation and emotional bonding with a brand (Whan et al., 2006). A customer who is more attached to a brand is more likely to be intrigued to make a purchase from that brand. Therefore, brand knowledge is positively impacted by brand attachment (Dwivedi et al., 2019). An association between brand attachment and brand knowledge implies that the more a customer is attached to a brand the more his brand knowledge increases and the more he is likely to buy from that brand (Rafi et al., 2011). Brand attachment is measured on the basis of a customer's affection and love towards a brand's offers, how delighted the airline brand makes its customers, and the bond and connection of the brand with its customers (Chan & Ilicic, 2019).

The findings of this study indicate that brand attachment has a significant impact on brand knowledge. It can be because of the emotional attachment of a customer to the brand. When customers hear about an airline brand like the local airlines of Pakistan, then they may get emotional and may want to get more information about it. A customer's interest in local airlines can help in getting more brand knowledge. Moreover, most travelers in Pakistan use Pakistan International Airlines (PIA), which holds a distinctive position as the country's national flag carrier. This symbolic identity evokes a sense of national pride and emotional belonging, contributing to customers' affective attachment and heightened brand consciousness. This attachment also improves brand knowledge because when someone is attached to a brand he would want to know more about it. The same goes for local airlines in Pakistan. People who travel

using an airline may develop an emotional attachment to that airline. Therefore, they would want to travel using that airline more frequently.

Moreover, the findings are supported by previous literature which suggests that in collectivist cultures such as Pakistan's, interpersonal sources of information, including family, friends, and peer networks, exert a stronger influence on customer evaluations than brand-generated communications (Ahmad et al., 2021; Hussain & Rahman, 2022). Customers are more likely to rely on word-of-mouth recommendations and social endorsements when choosing airlines, viewing such information as more credible and trustworthy than corporate advertising (Han & Hyun, 2018; Rather & Hollebeek, 2021). As a result, formal brand communication efforts may have a diminished impact on customers' brand knowledge formation and brand consciousness. Additionally, for many Pakistani travelers, air travel especially international flights are perceived as a functional necessity rather than a lifestyle or status-driven choice, which weakens the symbolic significance of brand messages designed to stimulate consciousness or emotional engagement (Sharda & Bhat, 2019; Rashid & Malik, 2018).

The study also indicates that brand attachment has no significant impact on brand consciousness. Brand attachment may develop emotional attachments with brands which may enhance brand knowledge, but brand attachment does not necessarily impact the brand consciousness. Customers may have personal attachments with airline brands, but they do not care much about social status, prestige or social visibility for travelling on a specific airline. This can be because of a deep personal connection to a brand without feeling the need to express it publicly. Therefore, customers do not need to be conscious about the specific airlines, but they focus on other factors like emotional attachment and personal experience.

Interestingly, the results indicate that brand knowledge mediates the relationship between brand attachment and brand consciousness. The results indicate that there exists a full mediation between brand attachment and brand consciousness through the mediating role of brand knowledge. As discussed earlier, people's emotional attachment to an airline, such as PIA, can enhance their brand knowledge. The increased brand knowledge can, in turn, enhance and strengthen brand consciousness. Brand attachment to a brand motivates customers to gather more data and information regarding that airline, which makes people brand conscious and focuses on social visibility and social

status. Therefore, brand knowledge acts as a bridge between brand attachment and brand consciousness.

In conclusion, brand attachment can vary because of different factors such as age, income, gender, usage, importance of the product or service etc. All these factors impact the level of attachment of the customer to the brand. Once the customer feels attached to the brand such that they feel emotionally connected to it, they start relating the product or service with themselves. The customers then feel a sense of belonging to the brands to which they are attached. Therefore, it can be inferred that the more attached the customer is with a brand, the more their brand knowledge will enhance, and the more they will become brand conscious. The above discussions helped answer the research questions relating to brand attachment. The results concluded that brand attachment has a significant relationship with brand knowledge but no significant relationship with brand consciousness. Moreover, the results indicate that brand knowledge mediates the relationship between brand knowledge and brand consciousness.

The results are supported by previous literature that customers' emotional connection and sense of national pride with the flag carrier may drive them to engage more deeply with the brand, seeking information about its services, history, and identity. This process fosters brand knowledge, which subsequently transforms into heightened brand consciousness, reflecting the customer's awareness of the airline's symbolic and social value (Japutra et al., 2018; Thomson et al., 2005). Prior research emphasizes that brand attachment defined as an emotional bond between customers and brands encourages individuals to actively process brand-related information and strengthen their mental representations of the brand (Park et al., 2010; Schmalz & Orth, 2012). This expanded knowledge base enhances the salience of the brand in customers' self-concept and influences their tendency to express brand-conscious behavior (Dwivedi et al., 2021).

5.2.4 Brand Knowledge and Brand Consciousness

Lastly, the study established the objective that brand knowledge significantly impacts brand consciousness. If a customer can easily recall or recognize the brand, this implies that the customer feels more conscious about it. If a customer is not conscious of a brand, he may not be able to recognize or recall it at the time of purchase. The better

the brand awareness and brand image are, the more would be the brand consciousness (Khandelwal, 2015). Brand knowledge is measured using two dimensions, namely brand awareness and brand image. Brand awareness focuses on how famous the brand is, how one airline is different from the other, positive word of mouth and the services of international standards. The brand image focuses on the environmental aspect, the special feelings of traveling with one airline, and matches the airline's image with the self-image of a customer.

The results of this study indicate that the higher the brand knowledge, the higher the brand consciousness. This means a customer who has more knowledge of a specific airline is more likely to travel on that airline. It means that airlines should educate and inform their customers to make them conscious about making travel decisions. Brand knowledge consists of awareness of a brand and the brand image which are developed with experience, attachment and with time. People with high brand awareness are more knowledgeable about that brand and this brand knowledge motivates customers to choose that specific airline for travel.

With increased brand knowledge, customers focus more on the brand's travel quality, value and uniqueness. All these factors combine together to motivate the customer to make the decision. Moreover, customer tend to gather information from their social circles about which brands are better than the others. The knowledge gained through social factors can also enhance brand knowledge which can ultimately impact brand consciousness.

The results are supported by brand knowledge comprising brand awareness and brand image forms the cognitive foundation of brand consciousness, influencing how customers evaluate service quality, reliability, and brand reputation (Keller, 2016; Dwivedi et al., 2021). When customers are well-informed about an airline's offerings, such as safety standards, service consistency, and customer care initiatives, they develop stronger cognitive and emotional associations, leading to heightened brand consciousness and a greater likelihood of brand preference (Han & Hyun, 2018; Iglesias et al., 2011). This relationship underscores the role of brand knowledge and effective communication in shaping customer decision-making. Airlines that proactively inform and educate customers about their unique brand value, heritage, and safety performance help build brand-informed consciousness, where customers consciously perceive and value the brand beyond price and convenience considerations (Rather & Hollebeek, 2021; Bairrada et al., 2018).

In conclusion, both dimensions of brand knowledge (awareness and image) are important for the airlines to work on to make sure that the customers are well knowledgeable about their brand. When people are more knowledgeable about one specific brand, then they are more likely to travel on that airline. These results help in answering the research question that brand knowledge does significantly impact brand consciousness.

5.3 Addressing Research Problem

This study addresses important issues identified in the problem statement, including the importance of brand consciousness while customers make repeated purchases from a particular brand (Bashir & Siddiqui, 2021). However, the airline customers in Pakistan have a biased behavior leaning towards the use of foreign airlines for international travel. Therefore, the literature identified the need to understand the brand consciousness of airline customers in Pakistan (Nawi et al., 2023). The fact that airline customers are more conscious towards foreign airlines, Pakistani airlines need to develop effective branding strategies to attract customers (Raza et al., 2020). Therefore, this study aimed to fill this gap by streamlining customer and brand relationships to help local airlines (Liu et al., 2024).

The problem statement highlights that Pakistani airline customers who travel abroad lack brand knowledge of Pakistani airlines, that's why they chose foreign airlines and not Pakistani. Therefore, local airlines need to improve brand knowledge (Raza et al., 2020; Tahir, 2015). To deal with this issue, this study investigated the impact of brand experience, brand attachment and brand communication on brand knowledge and found that brand experience and brand attachment significantly impact brand knowledge. Identification of these relationships provides recommendations to local airlines to work on their branding efforts to enhance the brand knowledge of local customers towards using Pakistani airlines.

Brand experience is also an important factor that creates memorable experiences and lasting impressions (Zha et al., 2022). This study finds out that brand experience significantly impacts brand knowledge, but it does not directly impact brand consciousness. Therefore, local airlines need to work on creating a positive brand experience to enhance customer awareness of the local airlines. Along with brand experience, brand attachment also significantly impacts brand knowledge. Brand

attachment is an important factor in enhancing customer loyalty towards a particular brand (Moharana et al., 2023; Tran & Chang, 2022). This study identifies that brand attachment also significantly impacts brand knowledge, but the direct relationship between brand attachment and brand consciousness cannot be identified. The identification of this relationship signifies that local airlines can work better on brand attachment to generate relations and links with their customers. Moreover, the problem of the study identified that brand communication also has an impact on brand knowledge, but the results of this study concluded that brand communication does not significantly impact brand knowledge or brand consciousness. Therefore, further research may be required to better understand the relationship between brand communication and brand knowledge.

Lastly, the problem statement identified that brand knowledge plays a mediating role between independent variables such as brand attachment, brand experience and brand communication, and the dependent variable of brand consciousness. However, the study finds that brand knowledge significantly mediates the relationship between brand experience, brand attachment, and brand consciousness. However, no significant relationship is found between brand communication and brand consciousness under the mediating role of brand knowledge. These findings suggest that local airlines need to enhance brand knowledge to enhance the impact of brand experience and brand attachment on brand consciousness. Therefore, this study recommends that the local airlines should work on brand experience, brand attachment, and brand knowledge to compete with foreign airlines.

5.4 Theoretical Implications

The findings of this study contribute several significant theoretical implications, particularly in the context of airline brand management. While previous literature has largely treated constructs such as brand experience, brand communication, brand attachment, brand knowledge, and brand consciousness in isolation or within luxury and high-status contexts, the current study offers insights into their interplay within a mainstream, economy-focused airline setting. The unexpected or irregular findings observed in this research provide an opportunity to refine, extend, and even challenge the prevailing theoretical frameworks, particularly the Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) model.

First, the study highlights the critical role of brand knowledge as a mediating construct**,** which bridges the effects of brand experience, communication, and attachment on brand consciousness. Theoretically, this extends the traditional understanding of the CBBE framework, emphasizing that customer knowledge does not simply form a static background for brand evaluation but actively shapes psychological engagement with the brand. Whereas much of the extant literature conceptualizes brand consciousness as a stable personality trait or a disposition akin to materialism, this study demonstrates that it can emerge dynamically from experiential and informational interactions with the airline. This insight challenges the conventional assumption that brand consciousness is solely relevant in prestige-driven contexts, suggesting that even economy or mainstream carriers can cultivate brand consciousness through effective management of customer experiences, communications, and emotional connections.

Second, the findings indicate that brand experience may not always uniformly enhance brand consciousness**.** Certain service touchpoints or communication channels were found to be more influential than others, implying that not all interactions contribute equally to shaping customer awareness and prioritization of the brand. This nuance refines theoretical models by advocating for a more granular approach, wherein the qualitative aspects of brand experience such as emotional resonance, consistency, and perceived value need to be explicitly integrated into frameworks predicting brand consciousness. It suggests that theoretical models which assume a direct, linear relationship between experience and brand consciousness may need modification to account for moderating factors such as service expectations, prior brand perceptions, or the socio-cultural context of the customer.

Third, brand attachment as an affective driver of brand consciousness emerged as more complex than anticipated. While the literature has consistently demonstrated a positive relationship between attachment and loyalty, this study reveals that emotional bonds can be mediated or moderated by prior brand knowledge. This indicates that attachment alone is insufficient to cultivate brand-conscious behavior; customers must first possess a certain level of knowledge about the airline's attributes, reputation, and offerings. This finding theoretically extends attachment-based models by integrating the cognitive dimension of brand knowledge, highlighting the importance of considering both affective and cognitive pathways when evaluating brand equity.

Fourth, the study contributes to theoretical discussions on brand communication in service industries**.** Traditionally, brand communication has been conceptualized as a

tool to create awareness or shape brand image. However, the irregularities observed in this research suggest that the efficacy of communication strategies is contingent upon their ability to enhance both knowledge and emotional engagement. In airline contexts, where tangible experiences coexist with informational and promotional stimuli, brand communication must be conceptualized as a dual-pathway driver: cognitive (enhancing knowledge) and affective (enhancing attachment). This insight refines the theoretical understanding of how communication interacts with other brand constructs to influence brand consciousness, extending CBBE-based models to service contexts.

Finally, this study contributes to the literature by emphasizing the contextual contingency of brand equity constructs**.** While much of the existing research has focused on high-status or luxury brands, the present findings underscore the relevance of these constructs in mainstream, economy-class airlines.

The outcome of the study offers a comprehensive understanding of the relationships between brand experience, brand attachment, brand communication, brand knowledge, and brand consciousness in the context of local airlines in Pakistan that make international travel. This study contributes to the existing body of knowledge by concluding that brand experience and brand attachment significantly impact brand knowledge, and these variables impact brand consciousness through the mediating role of brand knowledge. The study also concludes that brand communication does not impact brand knowledge and brand consciousness either directly or indirectly. The brand knowledge also turned out to significantly impact brand consciousness. The study also makes significant contributions to the customer-based brand equity theory by adding the factor of brand attachment to the CBBE theory. From a theoretical perspective, the results suggest that brand communication alone may not directly enhance brand consciousness unless it is supported by brand knowledge, trust, and emotional experience acting as mediating and moderating factors. This challenges the linear assumption that communication automatically leads to awareness and loyalty, emphasizing instead the interactive and experience-dependent nature of customer brand formation in service contexts. Practically, this finding serves as a diagnostic signal for airline marketers, the problem is not communication, but how and what is being communicated. Airlines must transition from “telling” to “engaging,” moving from static message dissemination to dynamic, co-created brand experiences.

5.5 Practical Implications

The study's findings, as discussed above, provide multiple practical implications for the local airlines in Pakistan. These implications include branding, competitive market positioning, and customer loyalty.

The findings of the study concluded that brand experience directly impacts brand knowledge. Brand knowledge also plays a mediating role between brand experience and brand consciousness. Therefore, Pakistan's local airlines need to create impactful and positive experiences for their customers. Airlines must ensure that their interactions with customers are of utmost importance and of high quality. Staff professionalism, flight services, comforting seats, and a peaceful environment are all important to enhance the brand experience. Airlines can create positive experiences for customers so that the customers can remember and choose that specific airline every time they need to travel.

Customized services for customers can also help in enhancing brand experience. The best example of customization we see in flights is the entertainment system where customers can watch the movies of their liking. Airlines can work more on customized services to create the best brand experiences. These types of initiatives must also be consistent with other regular services. Consistency in services is important for customers. Customers must feel the same level of experience everywhere every time when they use specific airline. Sometimes, small things can have big impacts. If a customer needs to change his seat and a seat is also available, then the airline staff should allow him to change his seat. Customers can stay where they feel comfortable. These small initiatives can enhance brand experience which can impact brand knowledge directly and brand consciousness indirectly. These steps are important for the airlines to follow to improve the brand experience. Because when a customer is brand knowledgeable and brand conscious, he is more likely to use that brand.

The findings of the study also show that brand attachment has a direct and significant impact on brand knowledge. Brand attachment also has an indirect impact on brand consciousness through the mediating role of brand knowledge. Therefore, the local airlines in Pakistan need to build strong emotional attachments with their customers. There can be many ways to enhance the brand attachment of customers with airlines Emotional attachment can also be created with customers who are environment

and safety conscious. Moreover, Pakistani customers have a national attachment to the PIA as well because it's the only national flag carrier of Pakistan.

The findings of the study also motivate the initiative of loyalty programs for enhancing brand attachment of customers with the airlines. These loyalty programs can help the customers in getting free flight upgrades and business class discounts etc., to develop s sense of loyalty in customers for the airlines. Moreover, customer engagement for enhancing customer attachment through various channels such as social media and emails can also be helpful for the airlines. The findings of this research can further be applied to the practical activities of the airlines in that the airlines can create communities to further enhance brand attachment. Qatar Airways, Singapore Airlines and Emirates are all the world's top airlines that give great value to the brand attachment. This study's findings motivate Pakistani airlines to work on brand attachment so that they can be competitive in the international market.

Brand knowledge is also an important variable of the study, which not only directly impacts the brand consciousness, but it also mediates the relationships between brand attachment and brand consciousness, and brand experience and brand consciousness. Therefore, it is of utmost importance for the local airlines in Pakistan to work on enhancing customers' brand knowledge. Brand knowledge can be enhanced through various marketing strategies, including educational marketing campaigns, informative commercials, and engaging social media advertisements to increase customers' knowledge about the services and experiences of the airline.

Airlines can also use proper content marketing, including videos and blogs, to enhance customer knowledge about their brand. Digital platforms like mobile apps and the training of airline representatives are also important factors in enhancing brand knowledge for customers. In conclusion, the findings of this study stress the importance of brand knowledge. Therefore, the findings can be applicable to Pakistani airlines in multiple ways to enhance brand knowledge. Moreover, brand knowledge is important not only for the airlines in its own capacity but also to enhance customer brand consciousness, which can be transferred into decision-making.

When it comes to the brand communication variable of the study, it does not impact either brand knowledge or brand consciousness significantly. It doesn't also impact brand consciousness through the mediating role of brand knowledge. Therefore, airline brands in Pakistan need to improve their branding strategies so that they can motivate customers to choose their brand through brand communications. Branding

strategies can be visual communication on TV or social media, storytelling through videos, direct marketing, and public relations. Airlines must therefore realign their communication strategies toward authentic digital experiences, influencer partnerships, and real-time responsiveness on online platforms. More, modern customers often form brand consciousness through experience-based touchpoints (flight comfort, staff courtesy, punctuality, etc.) rather than explicit marketing. Therefore, airlines must treat every customer interaction as part of their communication strategy turning the service experience into a living message of brand values. Further, PIA and other local airlines must tailor their communication to appeal to collective pride, cultural relevance, and trustworthiness, rather than relying solely on western-style prestige advertising. Airlines should interpret this finding as a need to build emotional and relational connections with their customers rather than pushing purely informational content. Relationship marketing focusing on long-term engagement, loyalty programs, and personalized communication may have a stronger cumulative effect on brand consciousness and future decision-making.

Although brand communication does not impact brand knowledge or brand consciousness, it can still be important for Pakistani airlines when combined with other factors. Further, instead of relying on one-way communication, airlines should prioritize dialogue-based communication, encouraging customer participation, feedback, and co-creation of brand narratives. For instance, customers' post-travel experiences shared on social media may have a greater influence on potential customers than official advertisements. The absence of impact could also indicate a trust deficit when customers perceive a gap between communication and actual service delivery. Pakistani airlines should focus on consistent messaging that reflects authentic service quality. Communicating operational transparency, punctuality, and customer service improvement efforts could rebuild trust and credibility.

5.6 Recommendations of Study

This section provides recommendations for local Pakistani airlines and policymakers based on the study's findings. The recommendations are categorized according to the study's variables. Airlines can develop a customer feedback system to regularly gather feedback data to understand the experience of the customers. Understanding the experience through feedback responses will help the airlines to

improve their services accordingly. Many airlines ask for a short survey when the flights end. They ask a few simple, relevant questions that help the airlines gather feedback responses from the customers regarding the quality of travel. These types of initiatives are important and can provide real and accurate information. To enhance customer experience, airlines should offer personalized services based on customers' travel history, information and preferences. These small effort by airlines makes the customers feel valued which is a good thing for the airlines.

Sometimes, customers cannot find the entertainment content of their liking. Therefore, airlines should provide high speed Wi-Fi services as well so that the customers can watch whatever they want online. These services by the airlines would attract more customers. Apart from watching entertainment content, some customers may just want to work on their mobiles or laptops. Therefore, they would need a stable internet connection and airline WIFI can be useful for such customers. Providing WIFI during flights can also enhance customer experience. Moreover, the range of in-flight magazines and articles should also be increased so that the customers never get bored during the flight.

The use of technology at airports can also enhance customer experience. Airlines can set up special check-in booths where customers can check in without any hurdles or queuing. This practice is being commonly adopted by many airports and airlines worldwide. Pakistani airlines also need to install check-in booths. They can also allow check-in from their apps to make the check-in process convenient for customers. Staff training is another important factor to enhance customer experience. Once the staff is fully trained to talk to and handle customers' queries, the customers will feel more comfortable talking to them. When the customers are comfortable in sharing their queries, they are more likely to feel a better experience with the airline staff. If the airline staff is not welcoming, then the customers will notice it which will impact customers' experience with the airline. The best way to know whether the customers are happy with the staff services or not is to conduct surveys at the end of the travel, which many airlines do. After a customer has filled out the survey, the survey should be properly analyzed to understand what the customer wanted to say, and the staff behavior should be improved accordingly for a better customer experience.

Airlines should share their unique features and services with the customers so that they can make informed experiences. The airlines should also provide a seamless booking experience through their mobile apps and websites. Many customers prefer to

book their seats without visiting any agent or the airline's office. These types of customers prefer to book their seats online by using mobile apps or websites. Therefore, airlines should improve their booking experience. Local airlines of Pakistan specifically have an unattractive website, and their online booking experience is not as convenient as that of other international airlines such as Emirates or Qatar Airways. Therefore, Pakistani airlines need to improve their website pages and their mobile apps.

Moreover, if the flights are delayed due to weather conditions or any other reasons, the airlines should inform the customers timely. The airlines should also reschedule the travel date, or they should refund the whole if the customers insist. However, the cancellations should not happen too frequently. Local airlines of Pakistan are known to their customers for delaying their flights. People still prefer PIA because it's the only national flag carrier in the country. PIA should take advantage of this emotional attachment of the people with the brand.

There can be many factors that can influence customers' attachment to the airline brands. As discussed above, customers' emotional attachment to the PIA is an important factor that can be well used to enhance customer base and brand attachment. Pakistani customers do not only prefer PIA, they prefer other local airlines as well, but the airlines need to work on many things to keep the customers attached to their brands.

Airlines should implement frequent flyer programs to offer specialized services and discounts to its customers. The criteria to take advantage of the frequent flyer program should be easy and should be applicable to all customers. Sometimes, airlines give frequent flyer rewards to very few customers who make many travels in a year. The local airlines in Pakistan, who need to compete with international airlines need to give more rewards to their most frequent flyers. Local airlines can even reward all the customers for which the tiered system is a good strategy. Airlines can give smaller rewards to all repeat customers. The purpose is that the customer should feel that he is being treated with care for reusing that airline's services. The club members of the airlines should be rewarded with exclusive access to the executive lounges where they should be treated differently. The purpose of the lounge access should be that the customers should feel an attachment to the airline. Airlines can also run promotions and give discounts on special days such as Hajj, Umrah, and Eid. Most Pakistani air travelers travel on these days, so airlines can offer discounts or special services on these dates. Special services can include Hajj guidance and Hajj accessories. Engaging with

customers on holidays or specific occasions creates a sense of attachment between the customers and the airlines.

The airlines can also attach with their customers by arranging special events or exclusive club activities for their customers. The airlines can participate in food festivals, annual heritage festivals, expo centers, and events in educational institutions. The fact that many travelers are students if the airlines arrange brand attachment activities at educational institutions, they can attract more customers. These are small activities that do not cost a lot of amounts, but they are very valuable for the customers and for building strong brand attachment. Brand attachment can also be enhanced by informing customers that the airlines are investing in environment-friendly activities.

Brand attachment can also be enhanced by training the employees about cultural events and activities. If local airlines give more importance to cultural values, then the customers will feel more attachment towards the local airlines. The cultural attachment also plays a key role in enhancing brand attachment. In Pakistan, diverse cultures live together, such as Punjabis, Sindhis, Pashtuns, Balochis, and Gilgitis. The airline staff should be trained to treat the customers according to their cultural background. Therefore, staff cultural training is also an important factor for enhancing brand attachment.

Brand knowledge can be enhanced by disseminating brand information to the customers. Airlines need to provide comprehensive information about the organization policies, services and benefits. The information should also be easily accessible to the customers. Customers should have enough information about the offerings of the airlines before making informed decisions. Informed decisions of the customers will enhance brand knowledge. Information about benefits such as seating choice, food, and cancellation policies should be clearly communicated to the customers. Brand knowledge can be enhanced when the customers have enough clear information about the airline policies. Brand knowledge or brand visibility can also be enhanced by partnering with local businesses, tourism departments and organizations.

In the age of social media, videos are a good way to reach and educate customers. Airlines should create video content comprising the airline's history of attachment to the Pakistani culture, the facilities that the airline offers, and the food and discounts. Once the customers get to know about these messages from the airlines, then they can make informed decisions. Apart from making video content, the airlines can write blogs for those who prefer to read stuff instead of watching videos. The airlines

can either do these activities by themselves, or they can, hire third parties, or partner with celebrities to do the marketing for them. Either way, the customers must be made knowledgeable about the airline.

Airlines can also do TV commercials to educate customers who prefer to watch TV instead of mobile phones. This way, airlines' messages can reach the young population who watch social media, the elderly who prefer to read newspapers or blogs, and the housewives who watch TV shows. In short, positive media coverage is important for the airlines to educate their customers. In all the about mentioned marketing strategies, the airlines need to clearly highlight their unique selling points. These selling points can include, as discussed above, food options, discounts, special day activities, club gatherings, lounge access, and much more. The purpose is that the airlines should make sure that their customers are well-educated about what the airlines are selling.

Another important way to inform the customers can be to arrange webinars and question answer sessions. If a local airline arranges question-answer sessions at these places, many people will know about the airline and the benefits of travelling with that airline. It can turn out to be a healthy activity to educate the customers about the benefits, policies and discounts offered by the airlines. These activities can also be fruitful in engaging with the public.

5.7 Limitation, Future Recommendations and Conclusion

It is imperative to acknowledge the limitations of this study to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the research outcomes and to provide guidance for future research endeavors in this area. Several of the principal constraints are as follows: This study's geographical scope is confined to Pakistan's local airline industry. This specificity may hinder the extent to which the findings can be generalized to other industries or nations. The distinctive cultural, economic, and competitive factors inherent to Pakistan may also play an important role in the generalizability of the findings. As a quantitative study, the research employs a cross-sectional design, which is a non-experimental research method that captures data at a single point in time. The quantitative approach does not focus on the detailed responses of the customers. Therefore, the qualitative study would be better to obtain specific responses from the customers. The utilization of survey-based methodologies is predicated upon the

dependence on self-reported data, which can potentially be influenced by various biases, including but not limited to social desirability or recall bias. This study used a purposive sampling method, which may also impact the generalizability of the study findings. Using a random sampling technique for future research would yield generalizable results. The study's scope of variables is limited. It focuses on brand experience, brand communication, brand attachment, brand knowledge, and brand consciousness. However, additional variables that influence branding outcomes in the airline sector may exist that are not considered in this investigation.

Multiple recommendations for future researchers can also be made, including investigating the long-term effects of brand experience, brand attachment, and brand knowledge on brand consciousness. The effects can also be investigated in different cultural backgrounds. As explained above, different nations living in Pakistan together have different cultures; a comprehensive study based on different cultural backgrounds would provide a better picture of the study variables and relationships. In the current age of artificial intelligence, future researchers can examine the impact of AI on airline industry in Pakistan. Researchers can also investigate how the airlines can improve their services by using AI for customer attachment, experience, and knowledge. Another important study can be on the comparison between the services and benefits offered by the local and international airlines operating in Pakistan. Comparison can also be examined between local customers and international customers who use local airlines. The use of customized or personalized marketing can also be examined to enhance brand attachment and knowledge. The impact of social media marketing campaigns on brand attachment, knowledge, experience and consciousness can also be investigated.

The impact of customer feedback on firm performance can also be examined to investigate the impact of customer feedback on airline decisions and firm performance. It can be investigated whether airlines seriously consider customer feedback, and if they do, do the airlines change their policies accordingly? It can also be investigated whether the transformed policies impact firm performance or not. The role of corporate social responsibility can also be examined to see how it impacts brand attachment, brand knowledge and brand consciousness. The effectiveness of loyalty programs and cultural activities can also be investigated. It can be investigated whether people prefer to travel using airlines that care for their culture or do they only care about the rates of air tickets.

The airline business is widely recognized as one of the most competitive and growing industries in the entire globe. The airline industry is confronted with several

obstacles, including changing demand, growing costs, stricter rules regarding the environment, and increased competition from low-cost carriers. In order for airlines to not only make it through this climate, but also thrive in it, they will need to build successful branding strategies that will help them establish a unique identity, strengthen customer loyalty, and boost profits (Ghanadiof, 2021; Vander Schee et al., 2020). Irrespective of the importance of airlines and the importance of branding strategies, Pakistani airlines lag behind international airlines in terms of attracting more customers for international travel. Therefore, this study investigated the impact of brand attachment, brand experience, and brand communication on brand knowledge and brand consciousness. The purpose of the study was to guide local airlines to improve their branding strategies so that they can compete with international airlines.

This study used the quantitative research methodology for collecting data from local customers who use local airlines for international travel. The results of the study concluded that brand attachment and brand experience significantly impact brand knowledge, and brand knowledge mediates the relationships between brand attachment and brand consciousness, and brand experience and brand consciousness. The study also concluded that brand attachment and brand experience do not directly impact brand consciousness. With respect to the brand communication variable, the study concluded that brand communication does not impact brand knowledge and brand consciousness, whether directly or indirectly. The study also found that brand knowledge significantly impacts brand consciousness.

The findings of the study are important for local airlines to compete with international airlines. The airlines can work on customer feedback, personalized services, entertainment services, food, environmental efforts, staff training, and different marketing campaigns to enhance the role of marketing strategies for better brand consciousness. Moreover, the study contributed to the theory of customer-based brand equity by incorporating the variable of brand attachment in the theory. The future recommendations included the use of qualitative study, longitudinal study, and culture-based studies for a better understanding the customer responses to marketing strategies. This also with its own limitations including generalizability, and airline comparisons.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

Letter of Approval from UiTM Research Ethics Committee

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UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

Pejabat
Timbalan Naib Canselor
(Penyelidikan dan Inovasi)

Reference : 600-TNCPI (5/1/6)
Our reference : REC/08/2024 (PG/MR/400)
Date : 1445H صفر 14
19 August 2024

Mr/Ms Raza Hassan - 2021436138
(Supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Dr Jati Kasuma Ali)
UiTM Sarawak Branch
Jalan Meranek
94300 Kota Samarahan
SARAWAK

سلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته and Greetings

Mr/Ms

APPROVAL LETTER - UiTM RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

Thank you for submitting your research proposal to the Research Ethics Committee (REC). After considering your application, the Committee approved your proposal titled "The Impact of Branding Strategies on Brand Consciousness of Pakistan's Local Airlines: The Mediating Role of Brand Knowledge" at the five airports of Pakistan (Lahore, Islamabad, Karachi, Peshawar, Quetta). Details of the approval are as follows:

Ref. number:	REC/08/2024 (PG/MR/400)
Approval Period:	19 August 2024 until 31 October 2024
Authorised personnel:	1. Raza Hassan 2. Assoc. Prof. Dr Jati Kasuma Ali

The UiTM Research Ethics Committee operates in accordance to the ICH Good Clinical Practice Guidelines, Malaysian Good Clinical Practice Guidelines and the Declaration of Helsinki. The approval of this project is conditional upon your continuing compliance with these guidelines and declaration.

We draw to your attention the requirement that a report on this research, must be submitted every 12 months from the date of the approval or on the completion of the project, whichever occurs first. Failure to submit reports will result in withdrawal of consent for the project to proceed. Amendments, if any, to the study documents are to be submitted to the REC for approval.

If you require further information, please contact the REC Secretariat at 03-55448069/03-55442794 or email at recsecretariat@uitm.edu.my.

اوسها، تقوى، موليا
"MALAYSIA MADANI"
"BERKHIDMAT UNTUK NEGARA"

Yours sincerely,

(EMERITUS PROFESSOR DATO' DR RAYMOND AZMAN ALI)
Chairman
UiTM Research Ethics Committee

c.c.: Deputy Rector (PJIM&A), UiTM Sarawak Branch

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APPENDIX 2

Questionnaire of The Study

General Data: Please tick (/) the best box according to your information.	
Email/mobile (optional)	
Gender	a) Male ☐ b) Female ☐
Age	18 years to 25 years ☐ 26 years to 35 years ☐ 36 years to 45 years ☐ Above 45 years ☐
Marital Status	Married ☐ Unmarried ☐ Widowed ☐
Income Level	Less than Rs 100,000 ☐ Rs 100,001 to 200,000 ☐ More than Rs 200,000 ☐
Education Level	Below Matric ☐ Intermediate ☐ Bachelors ☐ Masters or above ☐
Frequency of Travel	Once a Week ☐ Once a Month ☐ Once a Year ☐ Twice a Year ☐
Airport	Islamabad ☐ Punjab ☐ Sindh ☐ KPK ☐ Baluchistan ☐
Airline	Pakistan International Airlines ☐ Air Blue Airlines ☐ Others ☐

Please answer the all the questions based on the airline brand you use and tick (/) on the number that best reflects your opinion.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Brand Attachment							
This airline brand is affectionate based on what it offers							
This airline brand seems friendly to me							
This airline brand is loveable due to its offerings							
This airline brand provides peace of mind							
This airline brand is passionate in serving its customer							
This airline brand makes me delighted							
The services of this airline brand captivated							
This airline brand keep me connected							
This airline brand is well bonded with me							
I feel myself attached with this airline brand							
Brand Experience							
Sensory Dimension							
This airline brand makes strong positive impression on my senses (e.g. comfort and over all pleasant journey).							
This airline brand is interesting in sensory way (e.g. pleasant on board environment).							
This airline brand is appealing to my senses.							
Affective Dimension							
This airline brand creates positive feelings.							
I have positive feelings for this airline brand.							
This airline brand focuses creating positive emotions.							
Behavioural Dimension							
I get engage in physical actions while using this airline brand.							
This airline brand encourages me to think about lifestyle. (e.g., exploring new places).							
This airline brand focuses on experiences through activities.							
Intellectual Dimension							
I engage in a lot of positive thinking when I encounter this airline brand. (e.g., easy check-in, on-board food, entertainment).							

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I always have positive thinking about this airline brand.							
This airline brand stimulates my curiosity. (e.g., reward points).							
Brand Communication							
I react favourably to the advertising and promotions of this airline brand							
I feel positive toward the advertising and promotions of this airline brand							
The advertising and promotions of this airline brand are convincing							
The communication through advertising and promotions of this airline brand is up to the mark							
I am happy with the advertising and promotions of this airline brand							
This airline brand spend time to understand preferences of its regular customer							
This airline brand creates a dialogue with its customers regularly							
This airline brand asks information from its regular customers about their satisfaction							
This airline brand evaluates happiness of customers with the offered services							
This airline brand informs the offerings to its customers by email							
This airline brand informs its customers nicely in case of ambiguity							
This airline brand advertises its services through broachers							
This airline brand informs its key services to customers by email/SMS							
Brand Knowledge							
Brand Awareness Dimension							
This airline is very famous							
This airline is well rated by fellow customers							
Among the several brands airline, this airline is different							
I have heard a lot of positive about this airline							
I know that the services of this airline meet the international standards							
Brand Image Dimension							
This airline focuses on environmental aspect that differentiate it from another airline.							
The brand of local airline is famous in the country							
This airline attracts customers who have environmental concerns							
The journey with this airline makes me feel special.							
I know very well that those customers who travel along by this airline.							

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
This airline matches with my self-image							
Brand Consciousness							
This well-known national airline brand suits me.							
The higher the price of the airline, the better the quality.							
Nice crew members and premium services offer me the best journey ever.							
I only prefer to take service of this airline							
The local airlines brands are usually very good choices.							

AUTHOR'S PROFILE



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LIST OF PUBLICATIONS:

Raza, H., ALI, J. A. K., & Gregory, M. L. (2025). The Impact of Brand Experience, Communication, And Attachment in Enhancing Brand Consciousness: A Conceptual Study of Airline Industry. INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH, 8, 3780–3792. https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2024.8120323

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