

## **The Ultimate Influences of Brand Equity Dimensions on Consumer Decision in Hi-Tech Market**

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### **Abstract:**

Laptop market in Iran is the highly competitive market, so the researchers studied the effect of brand equity on consumer behavior in laptop market in Iran. Brand equity consists of four main categories such as brand awareness, perceived quality brand loyalty and brand association. Data were gathered from 505 respondents among different cities of Iran. The influence of brand equity dimensions was analyzed through different Statistical techniques applying SPSS ver22. The analyses proved the influence of all of the four dimensions of Iranian laptop consumption. When view from this prospective, brand Association and brand loyalty placed as higher ranks among the Iranian consumers,

In consequence, marketing and advertising manager should put their efforts to improve perceived quality and brand awareness to strength their brand equity in this

highly competitive market. As matter of fact brand image captured the strength point and value placed as weakness point in brand Association as one of dimension of brand equity. One also should not overlook the fact that brand recognition is placed as strong factor of brand awareness and similar feature captured the weakness attributes of brand awareness in Iranian laptop market.

**Keywords:** Brand Equity, Awareness, Perceived Quality, Loyalty, Association, Consumer Behavior, Laptop, Iran.

## 1. Introduction

Marketing and branding have affected consumers buying behavior and their perception towards goods and services. These days here is an excessive gap between generic (unbranded) goods with branded ones, many studies have been done since the concept of brand equity was introduced in order to examine its effects. This study is trying to review the ultimate influence of brand equity in their growing laptop market in Iran. Since Iran is a developing country and there are lots of in experienced laptop customers, therefore knowledge of marketing and branding is a crucial concept for firms competing in this segment of market. Finding more effective dimensions of brand equity makes firms able to define their marketing strategy more efficient and effective; they could save time and money and reduce their risk while differentiating their brand among other their competitors.

In the past two decade, many researches have been conducted on divers' dimensions of brand equity.

### 1.2. Research Objectives:

**H1:** to determine the famous laptop brand among the Iranian consumer who interested in buying

**H2:** to discover the relationship between brand equity and its related dimensions.

**H3:** to highlight the importance of brand equity dimension in the mind Iranian consumer in laptop market

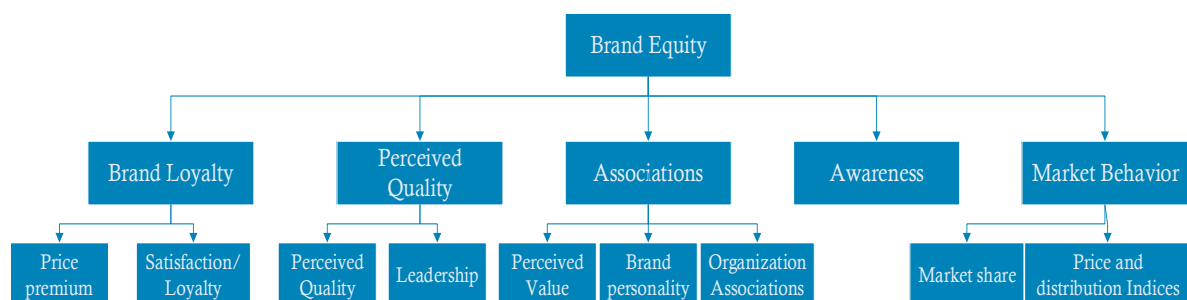
**H4:** To understand the strength and weakness of brand equity dimensional in Iranian laptop market.

## 2. Literature Review:

### Brand Equity

Brand equity born with positive marketing and branding (Atilgan, Akinci, Aksoy, & Kaynak, 2009) and has become one of the most famous concepts in marketing from the 1980s. It is defined as cause of difference in customer choice between branded and unbranded products when product features are the same. Yoo & Donthu (2001). Using this, firms can convert their generic products or services to a differentiated premium one

Brand equity is regarded as an asset in which we can find four dimensions such as brand loyalty, brand awareness, perceived brand and the positive association brand (David A Aaker, 1991) . Following this, (David A. Aaker, 1996) is related to the point that brand equity are structured by the five categories, In addition to the dimensions are mentioned by (David A Aaker, 1991), the fifth measure of brand equity includes two sets of market behavior measures that represent information obtained from market-based information rather than directly from customers. Therefore the brand equity ten, ten sets of measures grouped into five categories, are as following: (David A. Aaker, 1996). Brand equity can help the organization to earn more profit while they benefit from a low cost strategy (Keller, 1993) by creating a unique brand image in customers perception of that brand (Aaker, 1991). Due to existence of different competitors in Iranian laptop market and similarity in features and technologies offered to customers, we considered analyzing the differentiation effect of marketing and branding in laptop industry which is caused by brand equity in our case study.



**Figure1: Brand Equity Dimensions**

- Loyalty Measure

Brand loyalty is due to brand preference measurement in which a consumer will choose a particular brand in presence of competing brands. (Kumar, Kumar, & Narayana, 2016)

- Price premium: When a brand can be relatively strong and favorable equity by which increase customers' preference even at a price premium compared to other brands; and customer would like to repurchase faithfully. Customer may be willing to pay higher than another brand. (Lee, Yao, Mizerski, & Lambert, 2015).
- Satisfaction/Loyalty: Over long time, satisfaction of a brand leads to a brand loyalty. This measure of loyalty can be an indicator of loyalty for either services or products. If consumers are satisfied by a brand, undoubtedly, they prefer to purchase and choose it frequently. Physical quality, self-congruence, brand identification and lifestyle-congruence have a positive consequence on brand loyalty. Influence of consumer satisfaction would have affirmative outcome on not only brand loyalty but also brand loyalty (Nam, Ekinici, & Whyatt, 2011)
- Perceived Quality
  - Perceived Quality: This dimension has been shown to be associated with price premiums, price elasticities, brand usage, and, remarkably, stock return. Perceived quality also plays an important role on attribute of being applicable across product classes.
  - Leadership
- Associations: This measure is introduced by subset is mentioned below.
  - Perceived Value (The brand-as-product): The value measure provides a summary indicator of the brands success at creating that value proposition. Because the focus is on value rather than specific functional benefits, a measure is created which can apply across product classes.

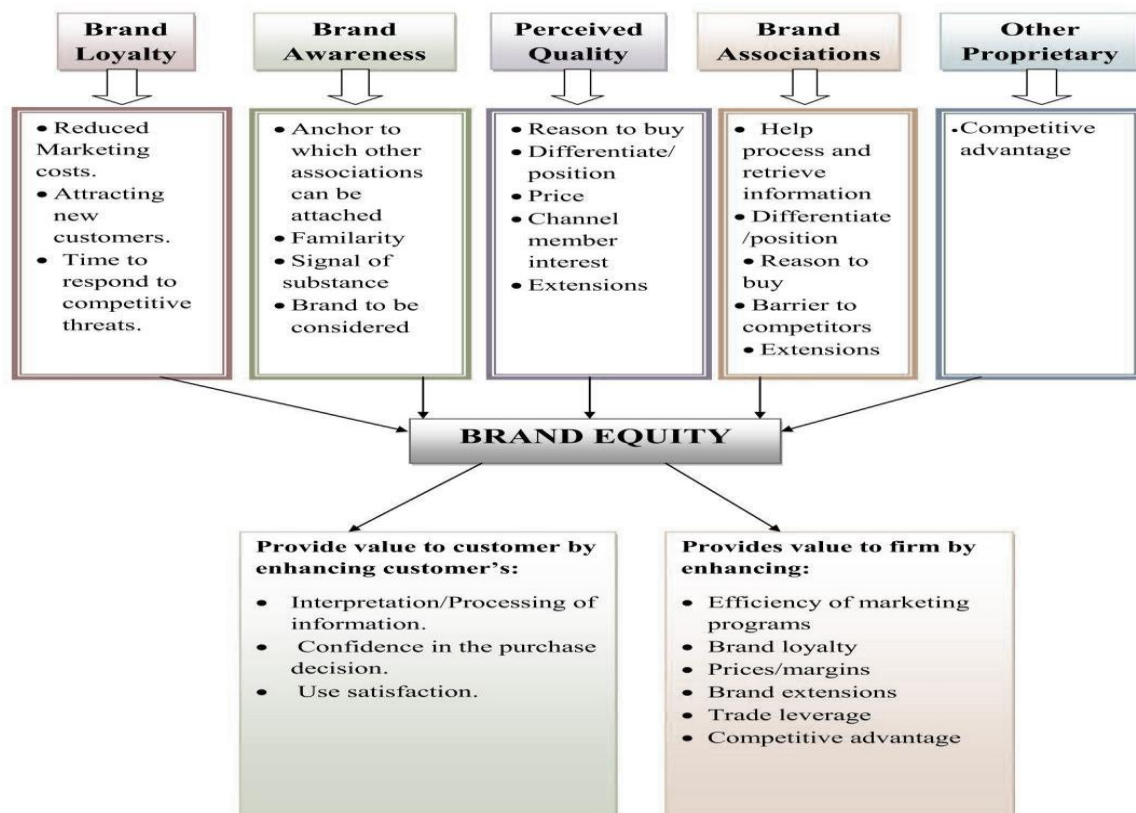
- Brand personality: This subset could have critical effects on consumer purchasing behavior due to the point that consumer will tend to purchase the product and service by which their personality would be matched.
- Organization Associations (The brand-as-organization )
- Awareness Measure
  - Brand Awareness: Awareness could have an effectiveness consequence on perceptions and attitudes. As Brand awareness shows a reflection of the brand in the mind, Therefore this action can have influences on customers' purchase due to the fact that identification of a brand in mind of consumer lead him to purchase, even repurchase. The levels of awareness are included recognition, recall, top of mind, brand dominance, brand knowledge and brand opinion. (David A. Aaker, 1996)

In 1993, Keller is argued to the point that the strong brand equity is achieved when consumers recognize brands, have favorable brand identification, and brand loyalty. Additionally Keller (1993) defines brand equity as “the differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to the marketing of the brand”. (Çifci et al., 2016). The measure of brand equity in 1991 and 1993 by testing Aaker's and Keller's cognition is developed (Yoo & Donthu, 2001) with a psychologically sound and cross-culturally. Multidimensional consumer-based brand equity (MBE) is validated by (Yoo & Donthu, 2001) in which brand loyalty is proven to be one of components of consumer-based brand equity and the three brand equity dimensions(Perceived quality and Brand awareness/Association) influence overall brand equity.

One well-documented change in a digital environment with social media, Internet and so on is the “path to purchase” or the consumer decision journey.” No longer as deliberately linear as suggested by classic “hierarchy of effects” or “decision funnel models,” much iteration can occur or steps skipped or compressed as consumers move from awareness to purchase and beyond.(Keller, 2016) Nowadays researcher is argued that digital tools have a significant positive influence on brand equity especially two main dimensions of brand equity (brand awareness and brand image) and following this subsequently affects other important branding goals,

including brand loyalty, preference, and price premium. (Godey et al., 2016)

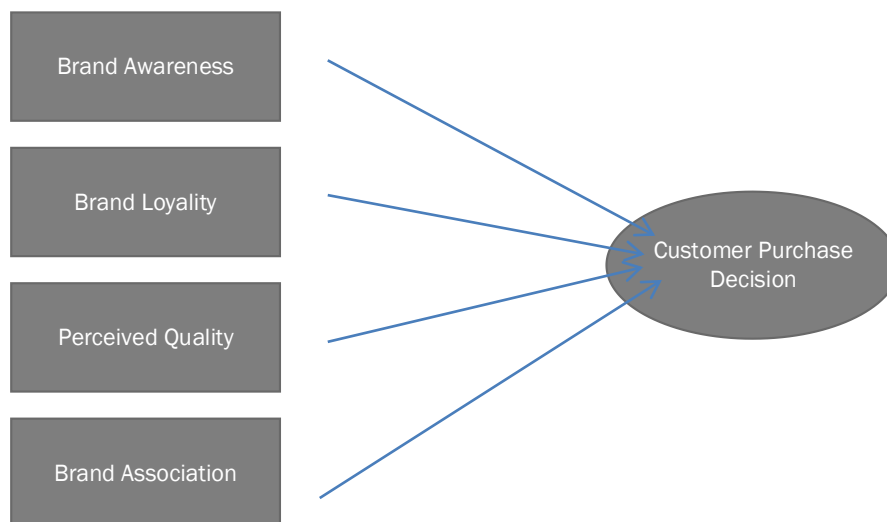
Consumer behavior refers to the mental and emotional process and the observable behavior of consumers during seeking, purchasing and post consumption of a product or service. As I mentioned financial performance can be described as brand premium and market share; non-financial performance is related to the brand awareness, brand reputation, brand loyalty and brand association. Following the brand equity analysis in the perspective of consumer and perspective of non-financial performance, relationship between brand image and brand equity will be defined consumer's attitude and purchase intention.(Upadhyay, 2016) .



**Figure2: Brand Equity Model and Its Related Factors**

On the whole, costumer-based brand equity is often defined as an asset by which consumer prefers to purchase one brand over another brand with four main dimensions brand loyalty, brand awareness, perceived brand and Image/association brand. Following the brand equity is argued to have three key ingredients.

The first key is related to the consumer's response (Preference to pay a price premium), the second point is pertained to the consumer's perceptions of the brand and another one refers the fact that consumers' willing for the brand and their brand-related behavior (buy and repurchase, positive word of mouth about the brand). (Lee et al., 2015). Without any hesitation, Purchasing or even repurchasing would be change by categories of costumer-based brand equity and in this highly competitive, Corporation need to use brand equity by which is informed and persuaded consumers to willing their brand in comparison to other brands. (Akhtar, Siddiqi, Ashraf, & Latif, 2016)



**Figure3: Customer Purchasing Decision (Akhtar Model et al., 2016)**

**Table 1. Summarized of Literature Review**

Author	Article	Year
Atilgan, et al	Customer-Based Brand Equity For Global Brands: A Multinational Approach	2009
Chaudhuri & Holbrook	The Chain Of Effects From Brand Trust And Brand Affect To Brand Performance: The Role Of Brand Loyalty	2001
Arthur Cheng Hsui	Using Free Association To Examine The Relationship Between The Characteristics Of Brand Associations And Brand Equity	2001
Aaker	Measuring Brand Equity Across Products And Markets	1996
Zinkhan & Prenshaw	Good Life Images And Brand Name Associations: Evidence From Asia, America, And Europe	1994

Keller	Conceptualizing, Measuring, Managing Customer-Based Brand Equity.	1993
Aaker	Managing Brand Equity: Capitalizing On The Value Of A Brand Name	1991
Hoyer & Brown	Effects Of Brand Awareness On Choice For A Common Repeat Purchase Product	1990

### 3. Research Methods:

Brand equity has four dimensions such as brand association, perceived quality, brand loyalty and brand awareness, therefore. Four hypotheses are developed to examine the relationship between brand equity dimensions and consumer buying behavior in Iranian laptop market. The questionnaire was built based on the study of Liu in 2007 which is translated in the Persian language. The questionnaire applied as a Measurement tool that contains different types of questions especially five point Likert scales for measuring conceptual proposed model. The respondents were asked to reflect the extent of influence of variables on the measured variable from strongly agree important to strongly disagree. The questionnaire is divided into two sections; the first section is addressed 5 questions related to the profile or demographic. The second section is composed of the 13 questions about the various four major dimensions of brand equity. The following laptops brands are participating in this study are listed as follows: Sony, Dell, Asus, Samsung, Apple, MSI, Toshiba, HP, Acer, and Lenovo.

**Table2. The Summarized Four Dimension Of Brand Equity in Iranian Laptop Market**

Recognize Famous Laptop Brand	<b>Brand Awareness</b>
Prefer Well-Known Laptop	
Prefer Well-Known Brand When The Other Brands Offer Similar Feature Or Price?	Customer behavior towards brand awareness on laptops
Well-Known Brands Present Advance In Innovation?	<b>Perceived Quality</b>

Well-Known Brands Represent Better Quality?	
Well-Known Brands Represent Better Quality And Service Even You Need To Pay A Price Premium?	Effect of perceived quality on consumer buying choice on laptops
Well-Known Brand Can Match Your Lifestyle	<b>Brand Association</b>
Well-Known Brands Present Better Value	
Well-Known Brands' Image Can Reflect Your Own Self-Image And Personality	
Actual Attributes In Decision Making Process	Impact of brand association on consumers
Satisfied with your past purchase for a laptop?	<b>Brand Loyalty</b>
Recommendation of your friends with your favorite laptop brand?	
Same brand of laptop when you consider purchasing a second laptop?	Effect of brand loyalty on recommending a specific brand

The research purpose of this study is mainly descriptive to examine the four dimension of brand equity in Iranian laptop market. The study is done through simple random Sampling as an appropriate method for this type of research. We distributed 550 questionnaires among the respondents and 505 questionnaires were collected from all respondents from the Paitakht shopping mall in Tehran and throw online survey on the Internet (Email forwarding, Facebook, Twitter, and weblogs) that indicated the acceptance rate of 91.8 percent overall. Cronbach's Alpha was applied to measure internal consistency among the constructs that are settled in a good place. Face and content validity are methods of validity that could be used, for measuring content validity used from three main sources: academic expert opinion, reviewing literature, the professional expert like IT manager. The research took the advantage of SPSS version 22 as statistical tools to perform the analysis.

**Table3. Internal consistency among 4 Brand Equity Dimensions**

Brand Equity Dimensions	0.802
Brand Awareness	0.732
Brand Association	0.887
Brand Loyalty	0.892
Perceived Quality	0.769

Reliability test conducted for all variables and construct; as a result of the reliability test, the Cronbach's alpha of all variable is 0.802 which indicates our data are highly reliable. As shown in the table 3, the reliability test for each construct shows Cronbach's Alpha. All construct have acceptable rate and they are in the range of acceptance.

#### **Data Analysis and Interpretation:**

Data analysis consists of two parts; the first part is based on customer segmentation on demographic data and second section initiated with testing the hypothesis to discover the relationship between brand equity and its related dimensions on consumer behavior.

#### **Customer Profile Segmentation in Iranian Laptop Market:**

The first part of the questionnaire includes 6 questions that are related to the respondent customer profile. Therefore the following table showed the frequencies of each question. As below table indicated The, 61.2% of respondent are male, 38.8% female which indicates number of male customers are slightly higher, 50.9% of respondents' age is between 25-35 year old with percent of 50.6 that shows majority of respondents are young, moreover The analysis proved that most of the respondents have bachelor degree 49.6% and their occupation is student with 61.1 percent. It is interesting to know that they are still in university and aware of the best technology with up-to-date knowledge.

**Table 4: Customer Segmentation Profile in Iranian Laptop Market**

Laptop Customer Segmentation		Majority (Percent)
Gender	Male	60.9
Age	25-25	50.6

Education	Graduate	49.6
Occupation	Students	61.1

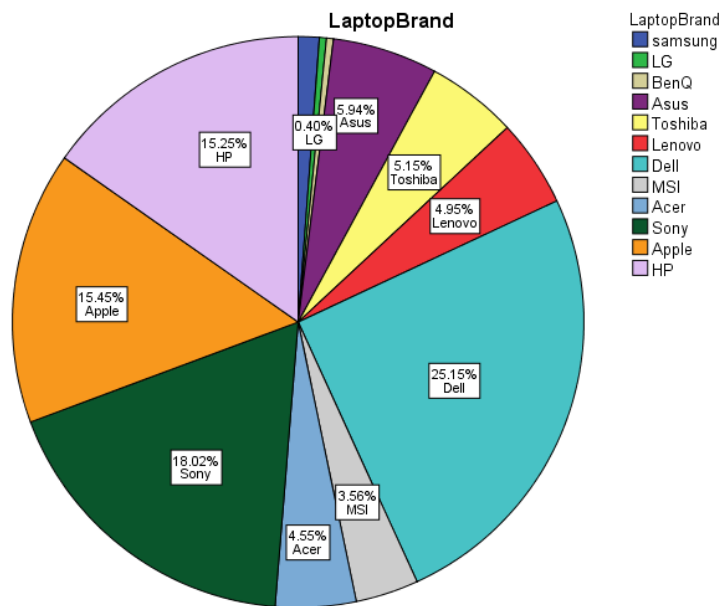
### Data Analysis and Interpretation:

**H1:** To discover the most famous Brand among the Iranian consumer in laptop Market:

**Table 5: Famous Laptop brands among the Iranian consumers**

Laptop Brands	Frequency	Percent
Samsung	6	1.2
LG	2	.4
BenQ	2	.4
Asus	30	5.9
Toshiba	26	5.1
Lenovo	25	5.0
Dell	127	<b>25.1</b>
MSI	18	3.6
Acer	23	4.6
Sony	91	<b>18.0</b>
Apple	78	<b>15.4</b>
HP	77	<b>15.2</b>
Total	505	100.0

The table 5 provides the most famous laptop brand among the Iranian customers. The customers show their interested in various laptop manufacturer in the world. Dell is the most famous laptop among the customer followed by Sony, Apple and HP in Iranian market.



**Figure 4: Famous Laptops Brands in Iranian Market**

The figure illustrated that famous brands among the Iranian consumers are classifying as Dell, Sony, Apple and HP in laptop Market, therefore brand is an essential key to help consumers to make a decision while they are interested in buying new laptops among the consumers in Iran.

The normality test conducted before test of hypothesis to assess normal distribution .this test conducted in SPSS, which divided to two parts: Histogram and Test of normality. Normality test assess for each construct. According to Pallant (2005), the significant value in Kolmogorov-Smirnov of more than 0.01 indicates normality, as it is shown is table 6, all of the data have significant level less than 0.01, therefore the distribution of them are not normal.

**Table 6: Tests of Normality**

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>	Shapiro-Wilk
	Sig.	Sig.
Brand Awareness	.065	.060
Perceived Quality	.000	.000

Brand Association	.003	.022
Brand Loyalty	.000	.000

### Test of Hypothesis

Since the data are not normal, therefore the non-parametric technique was conducted to examine the relationship between four dimensions of brand equity in Iranian consumer behavior.

### Brand Awareness

**Table 7: Brand Awareness Correlations**

			Similar Features	Brand awareness
Spearman's rho	Similar Features	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.742
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	Brand awareness	Correlation Coefficient	.742	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.

As can be seen from table 7, the result of the significant from Spearman rank order correlation is .000 which is less than 0.01 (99% confidence) therefore null hypotheses is rejected and alternative hypothesis is accepted so the relationship between brand awareness and consumer behavior is approved. The Correlation Coefficient value indicates strength of relationship between brand awareness and consumer behavior-value 0.742 shows there is a large relationship between brand awareness and consumer behavior.

**Table 8: Brand Awareness in Iranian Laptop Market**

H0:	There is no relationship between Brand awareness and consumer behavior	(rejected)
H1:	There is relationship between Brand awareness and consumer behavior	(accepted)

## Perceived Quality

**Table 9: Perceived Quality Correlations**

			Perceived quality	Pay More
Spearman's rho	Perceived quality	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.767
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	Pay More	Correlation Coefficient	.767	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.

The table above illustrate the significant value for perceived quality is .000 which is less than 0.01 (99% confidence) and rejects the null hypothesis and accepts alternative hypothesis. On the other hand R-value is 0.767 and indicates the positive and high relationship between perceived quality and consumer behavior.

**Table 10: perceived Quality in Iranian Laptop Market**

H0:	There is no relationship between perceived quality and consumer behavior	(rejected)
H1:	There is relationship between perceived quality and consumer behavior	(accepted)

## Brand Association

**Table 11: Brand Association Correlations**

			Brand association	Brand Image
Spearman's rho	Brand association	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.650
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	Brand Image	Correlation Coefficient	.650	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.

It can be seen from the data in table 11 the significant value is .000 (less than 0.01) therefore, null hypothesis rejected and alternative hypothesis is accepted.

Correlation coefficient value is 0.650 and proves positive and high level of relationship between brand association and consumer behavior.

**Table 12: Brand Association In Iranian Laptop Market**

H0:	There is no relationship between Brand association and consumer behavior	(rejected)
H1:	There is relationship between Brand association and consumer behavior	(accepted)

### Brand Loyalty

**Table 13: Brand Loyalty Correlations**

			Brand loyalty	Second
Spearman's rho	Brand loyalty	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.862
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	Second	Correlation Coefficient	.862	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.

The results obtained from the preliminary analysis of table 13 proved that the null hypothesis rejected and alternative one accepted. Since the value of correlation coefficient is 0.862 shows the high level of strengthen and positive between brand loyalty and Iranian consumer behavior.

**Table 14: Brand Loyalty in Iranian Laptop Market**

H0:	There is no relationship between Brand loyalty and consumer behavior	(rejected)
H1:	There is relationship between Brand loyalty and consumer behavior	(accepted)

**Table 15: Brand Equity Dimension Mean Rank**

<b>Brand Equity Dimensions</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Rank</b>
Brand Association	3.34	<b>1</b>
Brand Loyalty	2.55	<b>2</b>
Perceived Quality	2.18	<b>3</b>
Brand Awareness	1.93	<b>4</b>

Given the fact the brand Association placed as highest rank in consumer mind while brand awareness is considered as lowest mean rank among the consumers in Iranian laptop market.

**Table 16: Strength and Weakness Point for Each Dimension of Brand Equity**

<b>Dimensions</b>	<b>Strength Point</b>	<b>Mean Rank</b>	<b>Weakness Point</b>	<b>Mean Rank</b>
Brand Association	Brand Image	<b>2.98</b>	Value	<b>2.09</b>
Brand Loyalty	Second purchase	<b>2.36</b>	Satisfied	<b>1.61</b>
Perceived Quality	Life Style	<b>2.38</b>	Pay More	<b>1.79</b>
Brand Awareness	Recognize Brand	<b>2.13</b>	Similar Feature	<b>1.76</b>

As matter of fact, brand image captured the strength point and value placed as weakness pint in brand Association as one of dimension of brand equity. One also should not overlook the fact that brand recognition is placed as strong factor of brand awareness and similar feature captured the weakness attributes of brand awareness in Iranian laptop market.

#### **4. Conclusion:**

The most striking result to emerge from data is that all four dimensions are participating in developing the brand equity in Iranian laptop market. the study produced a result which two dimensions of brand Association and brand loyalty have more influence on Iranian consumer behavior in compared to perceived quality

and brand awareness, therefore brand Association and brand loyalty are the ways to create the complete strategy and enhance the brand equity in this competitive market. Consumption of modern goods and services such as laptops are increasing in developing countries, therefore, this is an excellent opportunity for companies to create more and more loyal customer. Such strategy could even be used to attract even next generations of current consumers and make their brand more familiar to Iranian culture. By creating the loyal customer and improving perceived quality among Iranians, firms could charge premium prices and benefit from higher profit for a long period of time that means more secure and stable Status in the market. The importance of perceived quality among consumers emphasized that they are seeking and demanding ways to reduce their risk, firms could use this opportunity to use this dimension of brand equity to present their brand as a trustable and risk-free one to absorb a huge portion of consumption market to themselves. Managers should emphasize perceived quality in their marketing strategies, and highlighted this dimension in their TV ads, catalogs, print Medias and etc. These two dimensions are the most effective tool to create differentiation for a firm competing in Iranian by developing more loyal customer and increasing perceived quality and brand awareness of in the market and put their brand and business in a unique competitive placement among the other laptop competitor in the Iranian market.

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Doi: [doi.org/10.52132/Ajrsp.e.2021.272](https://doi.org/10.52132/Ajrsp.e.2021.272)