



Antecedents of Customer-Based Brand Equity in Organized Retail Stores: An Empirical Study

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Abstract: Customer-based brand equity is an important source of competitive advantage for organized retail stores, where retailers increasingly compete through service quality, customer interactions, perceived quality, and reliable fulfilment. This study examines the antecedents of customer-based brand equity in organized retail stores. A descriptive cross-sectional research design was adopted, and primary data were collected from 150 customers using a structured questionnaire and mall-intercept sampling technique. Multiple regression analysis was employed to examine the influence of retailer awareness, brand associations, perceived quality, retail service quality, customer service, and fulfilment on retail brand equity. The findings indicate that retail service quality, retailer awareness, customer service, perceived quality, and fulfilment have significant positive effects on retail brand equity, whereas brand associations do not have a statistically significant independent effect. The findings highlight the importance of delivering superior retail service, maintaining consistent quality, providing effective customer support, and ensuring reliable fulfilment to strengthen customer-based brand equity in organized retail stores.

Keywords: Customer-Based Brand Equity, Organized Retail, Retailer Awareness, Brand Associations, Perceived Quality, Retail Service Quality

Introduction

In the contemporary retail environment, brands have become an important source of competitive advantage, particularly as organized retail stores increasingly offer similar product assortments, prices, and promotional benefits. In such an environment, the ability of a retail store to establish a distinctive and favourable position in the minds of customers becomes critical for attracting, retaining, and developing long-term customer relationships. Brand equity represents the value associated with a brand name and the perceptions that customers develop through their interactions and experiences with the brand. From the customer perspective, customer-based brand equity (CBBE) refers to the differential effect that brand knowledge has on consumers' responses to the marketing of a brand (Keller, 1993).

The concept of brand equity has been extensively examined in the marketing literature. Aaker (1991) conceptualized brand equity as a set of brand-related assets and liabilities associated with a brand name and symbol. These include brand awareness, brand associations, perceived quality, and brand loyalty. Keller (1993) subsequently proposed the customer-based perspective, emphasizing that brand knowledge, consisting of brand awareness and brand image, influences customers' responses to marketing activities. These conceptualizations demonstrate that strong brand equity is developed when customers possess favourable perceptions, associations, and experiences with a brand. In the context of organized retailing, these perceptions may be influenced not only by merchandise but also by the quality of services, store environment, convenience, reliability, and customer interactions.

Customer-based brand equity is particularly important in organized retail because customers frequently evaluate retailers on multiple dimensions beyond the products they purchase. Retailers compete through service quality, store atmosphere, employee behaviour, convenience, customer support, and the overall shopping experience. Research in the Indian retail context indicates that retailer awareness, retailer associations, perceived retailer



quality, and retailer loyalty are important dimensions of customer-based retailer equity (Bhukya, 2015). Similarly, research on apparel retail stores has demonstrated the relevance of retailer awareness, retailer associations, perceived quality, and retailer loyalty in understanding customer-based retailer equity (Deepa & Chitramani, 2016).

The quality of retail services can also contribute to the development of favourable customer perceptions. Retail service quality incorporates several dimensions associated with the customer's interaction with the retail store, including store ambience and layout, salespeople, merchandise, convenience, services, price, and customer care (Verma & Duggal, 2015). Positive experiences across these dimensions can strengthen customers' evaluations of the retailer and contribute to favourable retailer associations and perceived quality. Therefore, examining the factors that influence customers' perceptions of organized retail stores is important for understanding how customer-based brand equity is developed.

In addition to conventional brand equity dimensions, contemporary retailing has increasingly emphasized customer-oriented factors such as service delivery, convenience, security, fulfilment, and digital interaction. The expansion of organized and technology-enabled retail has changed the manner in which customers interact with retail brands. Consequently, retailers need to provide consistent and reliable experiences across different customer touchpoints. Research on organized retailing has shown that perceived quality and store associations can contribute to the development of brand equity, particularly in the context of private-label brands (Ravi & Ram Prasad, 2020). These findings suggest that customers' evaluations of different aspects of the retail offering can play an important role in building retail brand equity.

Although considerable research has examined brand equity and retailer equity, further empirical investigation is required to understand the specific factors that act as antecedents of customer-based brand equity in organized retail stores. In particular, factors such as website design, customer service, security, and fulfilment can influence customers' perceptions and experiences with a retail brand. Understanding these relationships can help explain how customers develop favourable perceptions of organized retail brands and subsequently contribute to stronger customer-based brand equity.

Against this background, the present study, titled "Antecedents of Customer-Based Brand Equity in Organized Retail Stores: An Empirical Study," examines the relationship between selected antecedent factors and customer-based brand equity in the organized retail context. By focusing on customer perceptions, the study seeks to provide empirical evidence regarding the factors that contribute to the development of customer-based brand equity. The findings may provide useful implications for organized retailers in designing customer-oriented strategies, improving service experiences, strengthening brand perceptions, and developing long-term customer relationships.

Review of Literature

Customer-based brand equity has emerged as an important concept in understanding how customers evaluate and respond to brands. Aaker (1991) conceptualized brand equity as a set of assets and liabilities associated with a brand name or symbol, including brand awareness, brand associations, perceived quality, and brand loyalty. From the customer perspective, Keller (1993) defined customer-based brand equity as the differential effect of brand knowledge on consumers' responses to the marketing of a brand. According to Keller (1993), favourable, strong, and unique brand associations enable a brand to create greater value in the minds of customers. These conceptualizations provide a theoretical foundation for examining customer perceptions of organized retail brands.

In the retail context, brand equity extends beyond the products sold by a retailer and incorporates customers' perceptions of the retailer itself. Pappu et al. (2005) examined consumer-based brand equity for retailers and demonstrated that the dimensions of consumer-based brand equity can be applied to retail brands. Their findings



indicated that retailer awareness, retailer associations, perceived retailer quality, and retailer loyalty are relevant components of consumer-based retailer equity. Similarly, Jara and Cliquet (2012) emphasized that retailer brand equity represents an important intangible asset that can differentiate retailers in increasingly competitive markets.

Retailer Awareness and Brand Associations

Brand awareness represents the ability of customers to recognize or recall a brand under different circumstances, while brand associations refer to the thoughts, feelings, perceptions, and meanings linked to the brand (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993). In organized retailing, awareness can facilitate customers' identification and consideration of a retailer when making purchase decisions. Pappu et al. (2005) found that retailer awareness and retailer associations form important components of consumer-based retailer equity. Their findings suggest that customers' familiarity with a retailer and the associations they develop through shopping experiences contribute to the overall equity of the retail brand.

Baldauf et al. (2003) examined the relationship between brand equity and performance and highlighted the importance of brand-related customer perceptions in generating competitive advantages. In the retail environment, associations may emerge from merchandise quality, store atmosphere, pricing, service encounters, convenience, and previous shopping experiences. Consequently, organized retailers need to develop distinctive and favourable associations that differentiate their stores from competing retail formats.

Perceived Quality and Retail Brand Equity

Perceived quality refers to customers' overall assessment of the excellence or superiority of a product or service relative to alternatives (Zeithaml, 1988). Perceived quality is particularly relevant to organized retailing because customers evaluate the retailer based on multiple elements, including merchandise, service, store environment, employee behaviour, and transaction processes. Aaker (1991) identified perceived quality as one of the core dimensions of brand equity because customers' perceptions of quality can influence their purchase decisions and brand loyalty.

Pappu et al. (2005) established the relevance of perceived retailer quality in measuring consumer-based retailer equity. Similarly, Yoo et al. (2000) found that perceived quality contributes to the development of brand equity through its influence on customer perceptions and behavioural responses. In organized retail stores, consistent product availability, reliable service, appropriate pricing, and satisfactory shopping experiences can therefore contribute to customers' perceptions of retailer quality and subsequently strengthen retailer brand equity.

Retail Service Quality and Customer-Based Brand Equity

Service quality is another important factor that can influence customers' perceptions of retail brands. Parasuraman et al. (1988) conceptualized service quality through dimensions such as reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles. In the retail environment, however, service quality involves a broader set of activities because customers interact with the retailer through multiple physical and transactional touchpoints.

Dabholkar et al. (1996) developed a retail service quality scale specifically for measuring customers' perceptions of service quality in retail stores. The scale incorporated dimensions such as physical aspects, reliability, personal interaction, problem solving, and policy. Their study demonstrated that retail service quality is multidimensional and closely associated with customers' evaluations of retail stores. Verma and Duggal (2015) further examined retail service quality in the Indian context and identified dimensions such as ambience and layout, salespeople, merchandise, convenience, services, price, and customer care. These findings indicate that service-related experiences can influence customers' overall perceptions of organized retail stores.



Customer Service as an Antecedent of Brand Equity

Customer service represents the interactions and support provided by a retailer before, during, and after a purchase. Effective customer service can enhance customer satisfaction, trust, and favourable perceptions of the retailer. Berry (1983) argued that relationship-oriented service strategies can help organizations develop long-term relationships with customers. In the retail context, employees' responsiveness, willingness to assist, complaint handling, and ability to provide accurate information can influence customers' evaluations of the retailer.

Brady and Cronin (2001) proposed that customers evaluate service quality through perceptions of interaction quality, physical environment quality, and outcome quality. These elements are relevant to organized retail stores because customers experience the brand through both employee interactions and the physical and transactional environment. Positive customer service experiences can therefore strengthen retailer associations and perceived quality, potentially contributing to higher customer-based brand equity.

Fulfilment and Customer-Based Brand Equity

Fulfilment relates to the retailer's ability to deliver products and services as promised, including accurate order processing, product availability, timely delivery, and adherence to commitments. Fulfilment is particularly important in organized retail because discrepancies between customer expectations and actual delivery can negatively affect customer perceptions.

Wolfenbarger and Gilly (2003) identified fulfilment/reliability as a key component of e-service quality. Parasuraman et al. (2005) similarly incorporated fulfilment into the E-S-QUAL framework, defining it in relation to the retailer's ability to fulfil promises concerning product availability and delivery. Reliable fulfilment can enhance customer confidence and satisfaction and may contribute to favourable evaluations of the retailer. Therefore, fulfilment represents an important potential antecedent of customer-based brand equity.

Empirical Evidence on Retailer Brand Equity

Empirical studies have provided evidence that customer perceptions of retailers are multidimensional. Pappu et al. (2005) developed and validated a scale for measuring consumer-based retailer equity and demonstrated the applicability of established brand equity dimensions to retail organizations. Bhukya (2015), focusing on the Indian large-retail market, examined determinants of customer-based retailer equity and reported the importance of retailer awareness, retailer associations, perceived retailer quality, and retailer loyalty. Deepa and Chitramani (2016) similarly investigated customer-based retailer equity in apparel retail stores and highlighted the relevance of retailer-related perceptions in explaining retail brand equity.

More recent work has also examined brand equity within organized retailing. Ravi and Ram Prasad (2020) investigated private-label brands in organized retailing and highlighted the importance of perceived quality and store associations in explaining brand equity. Taken together, these studies suggest that customer-based brand equity in retailing is influenced by a combination of cognitive, experiential, and service-related factors.

The existing literature establishes the importance of customer-based brand equity and demonstrates that retailer awareness, retailer associations, perceived quality, loyalty, and service quality are relevant to retail brand development. However, much of the earlier research has concentrated on measuring the dimensions of retailer equity rather than examining specific operational factors that act as antecedents of customer-based brand equity. Further, the increasing integration of physical and digital retailing has made factors such as website design, customer service, security, and fulfilment increasingly relevant to customers' overall evaluation of organized retail stores. Therefore, there is a need for empirical research that examines how these specific antecedent variables influence customer-based brand equity in organized retail stores. The present study addresses this gap by empirically examining the relationship between selected antecedents and customer-based brand equity.



Research Methodology

The present study adopted a descriptive cross-sectional research design to examine the antecedents of customer-based brand equity in organized retail stores. A cross-sectional design was considered appropriate as the data were collected from respondents at a single point in time to understand their perceptions and evaluations of organized retail stores.

The study employed a survey method for primary data collection. A structured questionnaire was developed based on the constructs identified from the existing literature. The questionnaire was administered to customers visiting selected organized retail stores. A total of 150 respondents participated in the study.

A mall-intercept sampling technique was used for collecting the responses. Under this approach, customers were approached at selected shopping malls and organized retail locations and were invited to participate in the survey. Respondents who had shopping experience with organized retail stores were included in the study. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were informed about the purpose of the study before completing the questionnaire.

The collected data were coded and prepared for statistical analysis. The study can employ descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, validity assessment, and appropriate inferential techniques to examine the relationships between the identified antecedents and customer-based brand equity. The methodology was designed to provide empirical evidence regarding the factors influencing customer-based brand equity among customers of organized retail stores.

Analysis and Discussion

The data collected for the study were systematically analysed to achieve the stated research objectives and examine the relationships among the study variables. The analysis was carried out using two major statistical techniques: percentage analysis and multiple regression analysis.

Profile of Respondents

Table Demographic Profile of the Respondents

S.No	Consumer Behaviour	Frequency	Percentage
1	Gender		
	Male	28	18.7%
	Female	122	81.3%
2	Age		
	Below 20 years	19	12.7%
	21–30 years	65	43.3%
	31–40 years	47	31.3%
	Above 41 years	19	12.7%
3	Occupation		
	Students	35	23.3%
	Housewife	68	45.3%
	Employee	32	21.3%

	Business	15	10.0%
4	Monthly Income		
	Below Rs. 20,000	48	32.0%
	Rs. 20,001–30,000	57	38.0%
	Rs. 30,001–40,000	30	20.0%
	Above Rs. 40,001	15	10.0%
5	Frequency of Purchase		
	Daily	70	46.7%
	Alternate days	43	28.7%
	Weekly	27	18.0%
	Only festivals	10	6.6%
Total		150	100%

The demographic profile of the 150 respondents provides an overview of the characteristics of the consumers included in the study. In terms of gender distribution, the majority of respondents were female (81.3%), while 18.7% were male, indicating a higher representation of female consumers in the sample. Regarding age composition, the largest proportion of respondents belonged to the 21–30 years age group (43.3%), followed by respondents aged 31–40 years (31.3%). Respondents below 20 years and above 41 years accounted for 12.7% each, indicating participation from different age categories.

With respect to occupation, housewives constituted the highest proportion (45.3%), followed by students (23.3%), employees (21.3%), and business respondents (10%). The monthly income distribution shows that most respondents belonged to the income category of Rs. 20,001–30,000 (38%), followed by those earning below Rs. 20,000 (32%). Respondents earning Rs. 30,001–40,000 represented 20%, while 10% had an income above Rs. 40,001.

The purchase frequency analysis indicates that a majority of respondents made purchases daily (46.7%), followed by purchases on alternate days (28.7%) and weekly purchases (18%). Only 6.6% of respondents reported purchasing mainly during festivals. Overall, the demographic profile indicates that the sample consists predominantly of female consumers, young and middle-aged respondents, and consumers with regular purchasing behaviour, providing a suitable representation for analysing consumer behaviour and retail brand equity.

Impact of Determinants on Retail Brand Equity

A multiple regression analysis was performed to examine the impact of Retailer Awareness, Brand Associations, Perceived Quality, Retail Service Quality, Customer Service, and Fulfilment on Retail Brand Equity. The model summary indicates a significant and substantial relationship between the predictor variables and Retail Brand Equity, with a multiple correlation coefficient ($R = 0.694$). The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.482$) reveals that the selected independent variables collectively explain 48.2% of the variation in Retail Brand Equity, while the adjusted R^2 value (0.474) confirms the model's explanatory strength after considering the number of predictors included. The ANOVA results further validate the overall significance of the regression model ($F = 60.944$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that the combined effect of the independent variables significantly predicts Retail Brand Equity. The regression coefficient analysis reveals that Retail Service Quality has the strongest positive influence on

Retail Brand Equity ($\beta = 0.231$, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that superior service experiences play a crucial role in enhancing retailer brand value. Retailer Awareness also demonstrates a significant positive impact ($\beta = 0.169$, $p = 0.005$), indicating that greater consumer familiarity with retailers contributes to stronger brand equity. Similarly, Customer Service ($\beta = 0.130$, $p = 0.005$), Perceived Quality ($\beta = 0.128$, $p = 0.023$), and Fulfilment ($\beta = 0.101$, $p = 0.045$) exhibit significant positive relationships with Retail Brand Equity, highlighting the importance of service responsiveness, quality perceptions, and reliable fulfilment processes in shaping consumer evaluations. However, Brand Associations show a positive but statistically insignificant effect ($\beta = 0.074$, $p = 0.222$), suggesting that although associations contribute positively, their independent influence is not significant within the current model. Overall, the findings demonstrate that retailer-related attributes significantly influence Retail Brand Equity, with service quality dimensions emerging as the most critical determinants. The results emphasize that retailers can strengthen brand equity by focusing on improving service excellence, enhancing customer interactions, maintaining consistent quality, and ensuring effective fulfilment mechanisms.

Table 2 Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.694 ^a	.482	.474	.57191
a. Predictors: (Constant), Retailer Awareness, Brand Associations, Perceived Quality, Retail Service Quality Customer Service, Fulfilment				

Table 3 Anova test results

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	119.601	6	19.933	60.944	.000 ^b
	Residual	128.542	393	.327		
	Total	248.142	399			
a. Dependent Variable: GLavg						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Retailer Awareness, Brand Associations, Perceived Quality, Retail Service Quality Customer Service, Fulfilment						

Table 4 Regression Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.186	.198		.941	.347
	Retailer Awareness	.195	.069	.169	2.820	.005

	Brand Association	.084	.068	.074	1.223	.222
	Perceived Quality	.134	.058	.128	2.286	.023
	Retail Service	.248	.068	.231	3.663	.000
	Quality Customer Service	.147	.053	.130	2.798	.005
	Fulfilment	.109	.054	.101	2.014	.045
a. Dependent Variable: Retail Brand Equity						

Conclusion

The study concludes that customer-based brand equity in organized retail stores is influenced by a combination of service-related and customer-oriented factors. The regression results show that retail service quality has the strongest significant positive influence on retail brand equity, followed by retailer awareness, customer service, perceived quality, and fulfilment. Brand associations, although positive, do not show a statistically significant independent influence in the present model. Overall, the findings indicate that retailers can strengthen their brand equity by improving service quality, enhancing customer interactions, maintaining consistent quality standards, and ensuring reliable fulfilment of customer expectations. The study therefore highlights the importance of creating consistent and favourable customer experiences as a means of developing stronger retail brands and long-term customer relationships.

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