Antecedents of Brand personality: Brand Communication, Playing the Mediating Role

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Abstract
There are limited studies available which measure the antecedents of brand personality and explain the mechanism through mediation of brand communication. This study develops a research model to addresses this gap by utilizing a well-known theory of self-congruity to explain the mediating role played by brand communication between the two variables i.e corporate visual identity elements and brand personality. Cellular service providing companies of Pakistan are selected as the population of this study. A sampling data of 1536 users of cellular service providing companies of Pakistan including Telenor, Ufone, Zong and Jazz was collected through convenience sampling and tested using AMOS. Findings of the study reveal a positive association between corporate visual identity and brand personality and also shows that brand communication significantly mediated this relationship. In this way it not only adds to the literature but also help the practitioners and marketing executives develop their branding strategies while keeping in mind the brand personality concept.

Keywords: Brand Communication, Brand Personality, Corporate Visual Identity

Introduction
A company's brand is considered to be one of its most important assets. Strong and recognizable brands improve firm performance and play an important role in shaping consumer views of products and businesses (Madden, 2006). Indeed, researchers have found that brands have personalities that are identical to human personalities (Aaker, 1997). Consumers work together with companies considering them as humans (Levy, 2006)
1985) as brands develop these personalities and form important associations with them (Fournier, 1998). Naturally, customers try to find out businesses which have personalities that are similar to their own personalities or the personalities possessed by their ideals (Batra, Ahuvia, & Bagozzi, 2012; Sirgy, 1982). Many marketing initiatives depend on creating and improving the image of the brand and making them stronger brands.

Consumers view brands as having humanlike features and personalities, according to Aaker (1997), brand personality (BP) is a key tool for differentiating a brand from its competitors and creating relationships with customers (Fournier, 1998). Another very essential benefit of BP its unique feature of making a brand distinguished from the alternative competing brands and establishes the identity in the form of personality. (According to Akin, 2017). The relationship between the consumers and the brands is akin to a romantic association between two people. The two people in this relationship can be amusing partners or intimate friends who enjoy the company of each other and feel contentment while being with each other (Rajagopal, 2006). According to Plummer (2000), BP is shaped by the perceptions and experiences regarding the identity of the brand. It's critical to develop a BP that corresponds to the brand's functional features. However, little research has been done on the issues of appropriate BP for sustainable brands, such as social or ecological brands.

Degoma Durie (2017) offered an integrated framework of resource-based theory, business performance and marketing strategy. The current study experimentally examined the association between these characteristics while assessing the BP of Pakistan's telecom business, which eventually leads to improved performance and competitive advantage. Resources may be characterized in marketing terms as the assets accessible to marketers and others inside the business that, when converted by the firm's marketing skills, can provide value outputs (Morgan, 2011). These valuable outputs will serve as the foundations on which a business's competitive advantage will be established, and they will be sustained inside the firm as the value, rarity, inimitability, and sustainability of these resources varies (Barney, 1991).

The current market is extremely competitive, and the telecom sector of Pakistan is very saturated. Cellular companies are focusing on maintaining and converting customers to their brand, which needs a strong brand identity. The Telecom business
is seeing constant competition, with this highly competitive industry experiencing significant growth (Svendsen & Prebensen, 2013). The majority of firms in the telecommunications industry use corporate visual strategy. Branding may help you form strong customer ties.

Competitive advantage may be gained through these strong customer-brand interactions (Keller, 2009). Because BP is an important part of establishing brands, marketing actions are carried out to create and maintain it. Brand value is a critical component for businesses, and it is equally important in academic research. Marketers can obtain a competitive advantage over other brands based on this (Keller, Parameswaran & Jacob 2011). The services sector is the world's largest and fastest-growing industry, accounting for the majority of overall production and employment in most industrialised nations. It is the world's most important and fastest-growing industry. According to (Rahman 2017), one of the steadily growing sectors of Pakistan is the services sector. Its effect to national budget is greater than that of the manufacturing and the agriculture industries. According to the Pakistan Economic Survey 2018-2019, the services sector grew by 4.71 percent. The contribution of the service industry, on the other hand, has increased from a GDP of 37.2% 1980-81 to a GDP of 61.52% in 2018-19. As a result, services sector play a critical part in adding to Pakistan's GDP.

Companies use a variety of methods to achieve the goal of improving BP, and so this research seeks to support the strategists and managers in Pakistan's telecommunication sector. In order to create a theoretical model and implement it to Pakistani Telecommunication service providing companies of Pakistan, this research examines the role of corporate visual identity (CVI) components (brand name, brand logo, and colour) in generating BP, with the intervening impact of BC. To be effective, a brand strategy must first comprehend how a client identifies a personality attribute with a product and also how he perceives it. There are two main goals of the study. The focus of this research is seeing how BP dimensions (sincerity, competence, excitement, sophistication, and masculinity) are influenced by CVI in telecommunications sector of Pakistan, and also intervening role of BC. This research will contribute towards the corpus of knowledge and therefore will aid strategists in designing efficient telecommunication services companies in designing branding efforts.
Literature Review

Previous study has found that the brand name, logo, and colour all play a significant role in the development of a brand since they summarize the company's marketing communication efforts and characterize the meaning of an organization or a brand (Henderson & Cote, 1998). Nevertheless, the study done on the influence of brand name, logo design, and brand colour on Brand Communication (BC) is limited. Before any promotional activity, the way these elements are built and constructed has a significant influence on how people feel and think about the company name, logo, and colour (Henderson & Cote, 1998). According to recent studies, marketing managers might make a lot of money by learning how to change, choose, and create CVI elements. Influence may modify the brand's identity since people's reactions to CVI features are so crucial (Henderson et al., 2003).

H1: Corporate visual identity has a significant positive influence on brand communication.

Through BC, people, sentiments, locations, experiences, things, and events are all linked to brands. It aids in the formation of groups and incidents. It assists in establishing the BP by assisting in the construction of a brand image and a brand memory. Furthermore, the stock value and revenues of the firm are affected. Luo and Donthu (2006). While these classic studies show that BP is extremely important in advertising, new research shows that it has been increasingly difficult for advertisers in recent decades to have their messages show up from the throng and produce BP. Advertisers face challenges in creating and maintaining BP with today's customers because of increased clutter, fragmentation of media (Jeong, Kim, and Zhao 2011), and the dynamic and the digital advertising characteristic of being monitored and controlled (Ha 2017). The difficulty of constructing BP is well known among industry professionals. For example, according to Nielsen's 2018 study of chief marketing officers (CMOs), 81 percent of respondents rated BP as extremely or very essential, putting it second only to client procurement on a lengthier list of the objectives of the marketing (Solomon 2018). Furthermore, large market research organizations like YouGov are increasingly likely to incorporate "head of the funnel" measurements like BP as part of overall brand strength assessments.

The importance of BC in defining a brand's personality cannot be overstated. It’s vital to increase communication efforts in light of the present tough
communication climate. In recent years, the media environment has shifted dramatically. Traditional BC means such as newspapers, television, radio, and magazines, among others, does not happen to be efficient in acquiring a control on clients. Consumers' information consumption habits have changed dramatically as a result of technological advancements and other considerations. Marketers are rethinking their previous BC techniques due to the rapid spread of digital connectivity, transportable video and video players, ad-skipping recorders, and multi-purpose mobile phones. Kaplan, Thaler, and Koval (Kaplan, Thaler, & Koval, 2003). The media's effectiveness has been hampered as a result of such dramatic developments. Advertising that used to be carried on two or three channels must now be broadcast on 100. The decline in television advertising can be attributed to several things (Briggs & Stuart, 2006).

H2: there is a significant positive influence of brand communication on brand personality

Assigning the human traits to a brand is characterized as brand personality (BP) (Aaker, 1997; Keller & Richey, 2006; Milas & Mlai, 2007). BP distinguishes a company from its competition (Park & John, 2010; Phau & Lau, 2000) and allows customers to express themselves (Aaker, 1997). Furthermore, one of the favourable influence berated by brand personality is of brand equity (Valette-Florence et al., 2011), which is defined as the value of a brand (Hoeffler & Keller, 2003), and aids in the creation of a consumer-brand relationship (Fennis et al., 2006). (Olsen & Allen, 1995). Sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication, and ruggedness are the five characteristics of Aaker's BP scale, according to the study (Aaker, 2001). Sincerity is a term used to define a trustworthy and welcoming brand (Aaker, 2001). Excitement denotes a high-energy brand, but competence denotes a trustworthy brand (Aaker, 2001). Sophistication and toughness are less well defined, but can be characterised by traits such as charm and class, and masculinity and toughness, respectively (Aaker, 2001). In this study, the five characteristics of BP will be utilised to categorise brands based on their personalities.

Brands are used by the consumers to convey their personal choices and identities, as well as their participation in suitable groups of the consumers. According to study, Pradhan & Malhotra (2020) discovered that the personality of the consumer and his favored BP are compatible in this situation. The closer a
brand's personality resembles that of its target customers, the more likely they are to buy it. BC helps to the development of BP by endorsing the consumer-brand connection. According to recent research, both high-quality visual branding elements such as the brand name, logo, and colour which adds to the value of the brands and products, resulting in a company's BP being strengthened (2019). The link is supported by two factors. The brand as a person comes first, followed by the brand as a sort of person. Perceived value of a brand can be enhanced if one or both of these elements match the customers' opinions of the brand's enticing attributes (Aaker, 1996). Brands may be a friend or provide answers for those dealing with the disorders, alienation, and stress that afflict today's environment. (Posner, 1993).

H3: There is a significant intervening role played by Brand communication between corporate visual identity and brand personality

**Fig 1: Conceptual framework of brand communication playing the intervening role between corporate visual identity and brand personality**

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**Methodology**

The approach used is quantitative. The cluster selection method is used to choose respondents from Pakistan's provinces, while census data is used to select 10 metropolitan cities. Punjab is represented by Lahore, Faisalabad, Rawalpindi, Gujranwala, and Multan, whereas Sindh is represented by Hyderabad and Karachi, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa by Peshawar, and Balochistan by Quetta.

The convenience sampling approach is used to obtain data first at personal level.
Because of the maximum citation count for the objective of determining the sample size, number of total participants for the research was assessed using the statistical technique of Krejcie and Morgan (2005). 1536 persons were picked with a margin of error of 2.5 percent and a confidence interval of 95 percent. Structured questionnaires were sent to some respondents through email, while others received them in person. Participants were promised that the data they had gathered would only be used for academic reasons therefore all data would be kept private Berenson, Levine, and Krehbiel (2009) proposed that cluster probability sampling is the best approach for producing a representative sample when the target population is distributed across Pakistan. It is because it is cost effective option when matched with probability random sampling. Regions, countries, cities, and other entities may make up the cluster.

CVI was assessed on three dimensions using the 18 questions modified from Karaosmanoglu (2006). The five BP attributes of masculinity, sophistication, competence, excitement, and sincerity, as well as items adapted from Aaker, were utilized to measure BP (1997) The most extensively used BP scale is Aaker's, which is based on the extrinsic approach (Paschen et al. 2017). As a result, it was chosen as the best option for this research. The BP assessment consisted of 36 items. For brand marketing, 15 pieces from Grace and O'Cass' (2005) work were adapted. They investigated how effective communication is in the service industry. Because telecom businesses are in the business of providing services, it is assumed that utilizing their measurements would be useful and relevant.

Data Analysis
The demographic parameters of the study include marital status, age and gender. Descriptive analysis is used to assess these population profiles. Male participants account for 62.7 percent of the total, as males throughout Pakistan seem to be more likely than females to use cellular services when they are outdoors owing to professional responsibilities. Female responders account for 37.2 percent of the total. According to descriptive data, 62.36 percent of those who replied were single, while 37.63 percent were married. Furthermore, 31.41 percent of respondents were under the age of 20, 24.86 percent were between the ages of 21 and 30, 27.01 percent were between the ages of 31 and 40, 22.40 percent were between the ages of 41 and 50,
and 12.30 percent were beyond 50. The data was analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). To determine the effect, the Bootstrap method was used, and a correlation was created to show the link between the constructs. The findings of the study showed that research model is validated, and hypothesized correlations also determined to be significant at p<.01.

CVI is favorably and strongly associated with BC, according to the stated hypothesis H1. Furthermore, the beta coefficient (β) is 0.68, with a p value of <0.05, indicating that H1 stated hypothesis is correct and verified. Furthermore, χ²/df and the values of various model fit indices are within the range specified by the authors, this shows the research model is fit. As a result, H1 gets approved.

BC is favorably and strongly connected with BP, according to the stated hypothesis H2. Furthermore, the beta coefficient (β) is 0.51, with a p value of <0.05, demonstrating that the H2 stated hypothesis is accepted. Furthermore, χ²/df and the values of various model fit indices are within the range specified by the authors, this shows the research model is fit. As a result, H1 gets approved.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1: Hypothesis Summary H₁ and H₂</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Decision/Remarks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Connection Between Variables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>β₁ (BC←CVI)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>β₂ (BP←BC)</td>
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**Mediation analysis using bootstrapping**
Both with and without the intermediary, the table below demonstrates the direct and indirect relationship between CVI and BP. The outcomes of the study reveal that both relationships with and without intervening variable (BC) are significant, hence proving that there is partial mediation. Additional tests were carried out in order to build greater awareness of the mediation link. Built on the probable relationships described in H3, the Baron and Kenny (1986) approach was used for mediation analysis. The results reported in Table 2 are confirmed using bootstrapping (Preacher and Hayes, 2008), which included obtaining 5,000 bootstrap samples with 95 percent bias-corrected confidence intervals. This strategy is proficient in testing several mediations simultaneously while outperforming previous methods. (Ng and colleagues, 2014).
H3 was first investigated as an intervening variable in the interaction between CVI and BP for BC. CVI has a substantial influence on blood pressure ($\beta = 0.399$, $p = 0.001$), and when BC is utilized as a mediator between CVI and blood pressure, the results are still significant ($\beta = 0.105$, $p = 0.015$). The indirect impact may be found to be substantial, indicating that BC is a partial mediator between CVI and BP ($\beta = 0.334$, $p = 0.001$). As a result, H3 is partially supported.

### Table 2: Intervening Relationship of BC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Total Effect (C) $\beta$ (P)</th>
<th>Direct effect (C') $\beta$</th>
<th>Indirect effect (ab) $\beta$</th>
<th>Result</th>
<th>Mediation level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CVI-BC</td>
<td>0.399 (0.00)</td>
<td>0.105 (0.01)</td>
<td>0.334 (0.00)</td>
<td>Significant</td>
<td>Partial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BP</td>
<td></td>
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### Discussion

The corporate visual identity elements of a company is one crucial parts of its personality. The evolution of BP has been the subject of several studies, such as follows: (Balmer & Gray, 2000). Melewar and Bartholmé (2011), as well as Kapferer (2004), have explored how CVI elements might aid in the development of a company's personality. In order to design a successful brand strategy, marketers must first understand how people perceive a brand and the association of personality traits with a brand. Though, to analyze the impact of CVI factors in forming a brand's personality, with BC functioning as a mediating function, is a difficult task. The new study contributes to the literature by include BC as a mediator. Previously, CVI's effect was analyzed in terms of how well a brand's reputation were improved (Silva, Rojas, & Roast, 2006). Similarly, Bosch, Jong, and Elving (2005) demonstrated how CVI features might be used to maintain brand reputation. When it comes to BC, CVI is less studied in Pakistan, however that doesn't mean it really doesn't play a role in organizational design (Jabbar, 2014). According to Pham (2014), CVI features are significant in developing a positive customer perception of a brand. The new research fills a literature gap in a precise organizational setting, and this research will look at BC as an intervening variable between CVI characteristics and BP. In addition to assessing the influence of CVI factors on BP, the intervening effect of BC is also taken into account.

### Recommendations and implementations
A theoretical model was empirically tested which shows how CVI elements affect BP, with BC acting as an intervening variable. It includes a variety of practical strategies for managers who wish to project a favourable image of their company to consumers. The findings demonstrated that BP development is a multi-layered procedure impacted by a range of elements such as CVI and BC. The good brand name and logo in addition to its color boosts the positioning of the brand and is easy to recall by target buyers. Research findings suggest that BP may deliver significant benefits provided appropriate and efficient CVI techniques are used, as well as successful communication strategies. Marketing experts must include descriptive information for the brand names in order to get great results. The use of logos by the advertising professionals is to offer identifying cues to specific consumers. In addition, logo type will aid in determining connections that certain BP attributes may elicit. Color is another important CVI factor that impacts the development of a brand's personality. As a consequence, executives may use a range of colours to impact consumer behaviour and perception, as well as increase unique selling proposition by differentiating it from rivals, separating it from the competitors.

**Future Research Avenues and Study Limitations**

A cross-sectional study only illustrates the relationship between the study's multiple variables at a certain point in time. A cross-sectional study design is used in this investigation. The cross-sectional can have an impact on some scenarios that occur after the data is collected due to the study's non-longitudinal nature. This might raise questions regarding the study's results' generalization. It's likely that the study's participants are unaware of their replies in terms of their own experiences. Because most individuals don't think about the emotional and psychological values of a brand; instead, they focus about the basic benefits, it's possible that the participants don't completely understand the BP traits, CVI features, or BC.

**Conclusion**

The study emphasized the significance of CVI in the development of BP. Data also suggest that BC mediates the relationship between BP and the brand name, logo, and colour (CVI elements). Managers and executives at telecom service providers must put a greater importance on BC in order to establish engaging brand personas. According to empirical research, the CVI components (brand name, brand logo,
and brand colour) have a significant role in the formation of a brand's personality. As a consequence of the findings, the theoretical model of the study acquired a lot of factual validation. As per the study's findings, all aspects of CVI, BC, and BP have a statistically significant and positive relationship.

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