

Promotion Mix and Brand Switching Behaviour: A Synthesis of Evidences, Measurement and Moderating Variables

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Abstract: Research on the impact promotion mix on brand choice is limited to certain traditional measures only. Present study tries to focus other emerging measures of promotion mix and their impact on brand switching behaviour of consumers. The paper goes through the extant literature deeply and presents a series of research propositions relating to the role of promotion-mix on brand switching behaviour. Further, the literature also highlights the role of brand equity and various switching costs on this relationship. The study also provides a proposed model depicting the relationship which can help both marketers and scholars to provide an insight into the brand switching behaviour of the consumers.

Keywords: Brand equity, Brand-switching, Promotion mix, Switching costs.

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I. INTRODUCTION

In the competitive market place the brand name has become a distinguished contrivance to proffer the assurance of value and quality to consumers by the companies (Nigam & Kaushik, 2011). With every next moment a new brand penetrate the market and companies have to strive hard to capture the consumers' attention. Consequently, with the overabundance of brands, switching from one brand to another by the consumers has always become a fundamental issue among the companies. Accordingly, scholars, marketers and firms are wholeheartedly discovering the successful comprehension of promotional mix structure influencing consumer's brand switching behaviour (Cobb-Walgren et al., 1995 and Anderson & Simester, 2013). Recent findings from Nielsen Global Survey (2014) revealed that half of global respondents are generally willing to switch to a new brand and higher promotional mix is the major reason of higher switching rate. Both traditional and emerging advertising media, sales promotion measures, innovative personal selling tactics and publicity campaigns are being extensively used to attract new customers towards the brand (Kotler et al., 2007). Advertising media and sales promotion produce intangible or intuitive differentiators to persuade consumers (Huang & Sarigollu, 2012). Furthermore, budding promotional tools such as word of mouth (WOM) and celebrity endorsements are also being established to be a motivating and promising force in today's competitive world that has fascinated the marketer's attention. But the consumers willing to buy a new brand have to face certain qualms which may resist their switching behaviour. Switching towards the new brands required searching and learning about new products or services and to face certain procedural formalities etc. Precipitous prices that costs five to seven times as much as keeping a current customer is a also a major concern for the firms facing brand switching phenomenon among their current customers (Umoh et al., 2012). Thus, generating awareness, increasing the value and equity of products and service brands is a new challenge among the marketers and companies. In this sense, brand equity is an essential valuable asset that allows a company to keep their customers, resist switching behaviour and successful implementation and management of ongoing promotional mix strategies (Cobb-Walgren et al, 1995; Aaker, 1996 and Selvakumar & Vikkraman, 2011). Furthermore, high brand equity provides many competitive advantages to the company by reducing the abrupt switching behaviour among the consumers (Rajgopal, 2006). Thus, allocating proper mix of promotional strategies for creating strong brand equity and attracting new customers has become another major challenge for the marketers. Therefore, the emerging concern among the marketers today is how to create a consumer need, find the right market, delivering true innovation, deploying the right marketing execution and to retain the customers. Hence it is imperative to discover the true role of promotional-mix strategies both traditional and emerging in influencing consumer behavioural intentions. In this regard researchers have typically pondered interest on the two faces of promotion mix viz. advertising that too magazines, newspaper, radio and television advertising and monetary and non-monetary inducements like games, gifts, various offers, scratch cards etc. Less

attention has been paid on the personal selling, internet advertising, celebrity endorsements and specific types of sales promotions such as buy one get one free, extra grammage and special schemes to enhance the explanatory power of the brand equity and brand switching phenomenon. Additionally, evidences regarding the significant role of word of mouth and personal selling in building brand equity and in influencing brand switching in the literature are scarce and that too are bounded to the services sector (Xu & Chan, 2010; Kim & Huyan, 2011 and Murtiasih, 2013). Consequently, it is imperative to examine its relative impact on brand switching and brand equity in comparison with advertising media, sales promotions and personal selling (Aghaei et al., 2014). Furthermore, in spite of little empirical and conceptual support, researches on brand equity and switching barriers are scarce and thus, should be focused (Nigam & Kaushik, 2011 and Anderson & Simester, 2013). Thus, the main point of this study would discuss and highlight these issues and try to provide an integrated view of various components of promotion mix and their impact on brand switching behaviour with the role of switching barriers and brand equity on this relationship.

This study proceeds as follows. First, review of literature focusing on promotion mix, brand switching, brand equity and switching costs is provided. Second, research model and propositions are discussed. Third, managerial implications followed by limitations and future research have been provided.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

II.1 Promotion Mix

promotion mix endeavours to catch the attention of new customers, encourage customer loyalty, encourage trial, inform and remind potential customers about new arrivals, encourage new customers, modify attitudes, build an image, encourage brand switching etc. (Kotler et al., 2007). Advertising is any paid form that promotes thoughts, new or existing products and services (Kotler et al., 2007). Scholars have drawn attention to different dimensions to measure the mind-set of consumers towards advertising. There is a general consensus among consumers about advertising being a significant source that provide timely and current information about new or existing products/brands. (Korgaonkar et al., 2001; Barrio and Luque, 2003; Petrovici and Marinov, 2005; Tsang et al., 2004; Wang et al., 2002; Zhang and Wang, 2005; Petrovici et al., 2007 and Wang et al., 2009). It is also believed that the advertising establishes or improves social role/image of the brand which helps the companies to attract new customers (Korgaonkar, 2001; Petrovici and Marinov, 2005; Petrovici et al., 2007 and Tan & Chia, 2007). Scholars have highlighted that many advertising campaigns with hedonic and pleasure contents/wording, give a feeling of joy and attraction to the consumers towards the advertised brand which may help the marketers to evoke the feeling of brand choice (Korgaonkar, 2001; D'Souza and Taghian, 2005; Petrovici and Marinov, 2005; Tan & Chia, 2007 and Petrovici et al., 2007). Moreover scholars have also highlighted the characteristics of consumers who believed that most advertising corrupt/diminishes values (Korgaonkar et al., 2001) and are posing falsity/ no sense about the features of the brand (Korgaonkar et al., 2001; Tan & Chia, 2007 and Petrovici et al., 2007). There are consumers who perceive that advertising are essential for the economy (Korgaonkar, 2001; Tan & Chia, 2007; Petrovici et al., 2007; Wang et al., 2009) which help to raise the standard of living of the economy. Alternatively there is also a general view that advertising new/existing brands with new technology etc. mark materialistic culture (Korgaonkar et al., 2001 and Tan & Chia, 2007). But general perception is that most of the advertising carry words with useful message involvement (Barrio and Luque, 2003) about different brands create attention (Barrio and Luque, 2003) which help to generate relative advertising strength (Barrio and Luque, 2003), claim believability (Barrio and Luque, 2003 and Ashill and Yavas 2005), cognition (Barrio and Luque, 2003), general attitude (Petrovici and Marinov, 2005), attitude institution (Petrovici and Marinov, 2005) and an instrument (Petrovici and Marinov, 2005) to create a feeling of buying advertised products/brands. Most of the time repetition of the brand advertising creates a feeling of irritation among the consumers (Wang et al., 2002 and Tsang et al., 2004). A general consensus about the brands advertising among the consumers is credibility (Wang et al., 2002 and Tsang et al., 2004; Zhang and Wang, 2005 and Wang et al., 2009) and interactivity (Wang et al., 2002 and Zhang and Wang, 2005) which varies along demographic variables (Wang et al., 2002 and Tsang et al., 2004), control (Ashill and Yavas; 2005), promotes undesirable values (Petrovici et al., 2007), alienation/ value (Petrovici et al., 2007) etc. These measures have been used for print, radio and television advertising. Competition and new technologies together have given birth to innovative practices in the field of business markets where new products/brands have placed a lot of choices before the consumers. It has made spectacular boost in advertising budgets owed to internet with raising in the usage of internet. The internet, which represents 16% expenditure of total advertising budget could reach 21% in the next five-six years (Nielsen, 2010Q1). This is due to the reason that consumers are now more prone to use internet product/ brands recommendations and preparing themselves to purchase different brands. The increase in the internet advertising may be the technology characterised by ease of use, time and money which help to draw more

chatty and significant online campaigns (PwC, 2010). In terms of measuring buying behaviour of consumers over internet, Schlosser et al.(1999) suggested that the feeling consumers get by watching internet advertising, utility/efficacy, level of trust towards internet advertising, product/brands prices and advertising regulation is an important guiding characteristics of internet advertising. Sukpanich and Chen (1999) also added awareness, preference and intention for measuring consumers attitude towards internet advertising to this argument. In this regard Li et al. (2002) argued that offering the presentation of products/brands over user control is the main advantage of internet advertising as compared to traditional media. Erics & Kesar, (2011) further favoured these measures like entertainment, in formativeness, creditability, irritation, personalization, permission and incentives. Most recently Smit et al., (2014) highlighted similarity, information, privacy, less time and money to measure the value of internet advertising.

Another interesting and most influencing form of advertising is celebrity endorsed advertising.

Celebrity endorsed advertising are generally portrayed by how attractive the endorser is, his/her similarity and familiarity to the consumer and credible information (Friedman & Friedman, 1979). In these type of advertisings a famous and reputed individual from certain areas represents product/brands favourably (McCracken, 1989). Featuring some famous person as an endorser has become a common practice in today's advertising world (Sliburyte, 2009). Scholars have further added to this list ,the perception of the consumers about the expertism, effectiveness, honesty, integrity and trustworthiness as important components of effectiveness of the message depicted by the endorser (Ohanian, 1991; Erdogan, 1999 and Spry et al. 2011). Thus endorser-brand –message emerged in the literature focusing favourable attitude of consumers towards celebrity endorsed advertisings to strengthen the endorsement effects (Fleck et al., 2014). Thus, as an emerging research area it has been continuously focusing to identify the germane uniqueness of an endorser that are matched with the brand which generate more encouraging influence towards the brand. Keeping in mind these results, marketers are employing celebrities in their marketing campaigns hoping that it will escalate sales, profits, develop feelings, brand choice, purchase intent, bring attention to those brands and may encourage higher recall and recognition (Keel & Natraajan, 2012). Fleck et al. (2014) has further added that the magic of celebrities can take the consumers to an ultimate experience but it will be effective only when there is celebrity-brand congruence. The other main component of promotion mix is sales promotions which are marketing events that are proposed to arouse nippy and larger purchases for a limited phase (Kotler et al., 2007). Scholars have shed light on various facets of sales promotions such as discounts coupons, buy one get one free, free gifts, free samples, sweepstakes and contests, which are also adopting as an essential promotional strategies influencing brand choice and building brands (Grewal et al., 1998 and Nagar, 2009).

Personal selling is one of the traditional components of promotion mix. In this approach, products/brands characteristics are represented by a sales person to the consumers for the purpose of making sales. Therefore, the success in this method lies in the capacity of the sales person to persuade the regulars to buy the brands (Sontakki, 2012). Earlier, scholars have paid attention on the important characteristics and personality measures as suggested by Lamont & Lundstrom (1977) are important components of personal selling as these have an influence on the consumers. But scholars have also discovered that **most of the** consumers found the features as depicted by the sales persons are artificial. This demanded for ethics and ethical training to the sales persons along with personal characteristics (Donoho et al., 2013). With this Kim & Hyun (2011) further suggested frequency of visit, personality, information as important characteristics of personal selling. Personal selling via over the counter and face to face contact is instrumental in offering information tailored to the different needs that each member in an organisation buying centre has. Initial awareness about the brand, development of brand image, association, perceived quality and loyalty about the brand is very much dependant on the influence of sales persons which are the important facilitators of brand choice (Mudambi, 2002 and Kim & Huyan, 2011). To promote and manage brand, marketers these days use word of mouth publicity techniques as well as viral marketing methods to achieve desired behavioural responses (Molinari et al., 2008). In marketing, word of mouth (WOM) is an informal exchange of information among individuals concerning a brand's attributes which influences brand choice (Wangenheim & Bayon, 2004 and Matos & Rossi, 2008). Most of the researchers have long been focusing the real and true nature of word of mouth in marketing. Many have proposed personal (Brown & Reingen, 1987 and Maxham, 2001) relationships and informal communication between the consumer and the word of mouth source (Silverman, 2001) are important component enhancing the attitude of the consumers towards the recommended brands. Moreover similarity and expertise of word of mouth source has been an influential factors (wangenheim & Bayon, 2003). Further Godes & Mayzlin (2004) proposed that the way the word of mouth source personally recommends the brands and interpersonal communication between the source and the consumers are an important feature of word of mouth publicity. Extending the concept further East et al.(2008) has proposed that brand choice is influenced by positive and negative word of mouth. Goyette et al. (2010) also added that the intensity of information, positive and

negative valence and content, personal word of mouth and virtual or online reviews have strong influence on the consumers. Sweeney et al. (2012) highlighted that influence, expertise and homophily with the source are influential factors that directs consumers attitude towards the brands. Hence owing to the fact that it is an imperative source of buying decision about brand choice, the main focal point of the marketers is on brand advocates who proactively propose their favourite brands and products without being paid to do so.

II.2 Brand Switching

Brand switching is the process where consumers starts using another brands of goods or services and quit their routine brands of similar products which they are using for many times. (Mazursky et al., 1987). Many consumers are brand loyal and it is very difficult to encourage them to switch brands. Additionally consumers switch brands because of attractiveness towards alternative brands (Grover & Srinivasan, 1992). Brand switching is largely affected by extrinsic motivations. Mostly many brand switches occur not only because they are key to attaining or avoiding another purchase or consumption goal but also promotional mix measures used by the marketers (Nagar, 2009).

II.3 Promotion Mix and Brand Switching

Various theoretical and empirical works on switching behaviour recognised the significant impact of patterns of advertising viz. newspaper, magazine, radio and T.V. on brand selection (Cobb & Hoyer, 1985). In this regard scholars have shed lights on the effectiveness of television advertisements in persuading consumers by creating differentiation among products and triggering cognitive efforts for making a brand choice (Deighton et al., 1994; Ackerberg, 2003 etc). Advertising in various media such as television, radio etc. along with the use experience has an effect on both utility mean and variance (Chakraborty et al., 2013). Further components such as likability, expertise, trust worthiness and similarity cause a celebrity endorser to become a source of persuasive information and effectiveness of a message (Pradhan et al., 2014). Thus, consumers often switch to those brands as supported by their preferred celebrities (Bush et al., 2004). Therefore, a major reason for consumers' switching to other brands is the impact that advertisements generate into their minds (Erdem et al., 2008 and Srivastava & Bisen, 2014). Promotions through distributed coupons, cents-off deals inducements, different kinds of bonuses, price discounts, extra grammage, savor packs and special displays influence brand switching greater than repeat purchases (Vilcassim & Jain, 1991; Erdem et al., 2008 and Nagar, 2009). A sales person is often emphasised as a principal medium for communicating the consumers about the arrival of the new brands in the markets that can satisfy their needs. Thus, brand switching is often influenced through personal selling (Kim & Huyan, 2011). Brand switching is also influenced by word of mouth publicity by others. Research study by East et al. (2008) has instituted that positive word of mouth is more influential than negative word of mouth in brand choice probability. Further, positive information about brands obtained through informal groups, family or others increases brand association, perception of quality and brand loyalty (Murtiasih et al., 2013).

II.4 Promotion Mix and Brand Equity

Ever since the origin of the term brand equity in marketing literature during 1980s, scholars are continuously trying to operationalise it. Brand equity is 'value-added' to the product (Aaker, 1993 and Keller, 1996). Scholars have put forward different dimensions to brand equity like brand awareness, brand image, perceived quality and brand loyalty. The capability for a buyer to identify or bring to mind a brand of a particular product category is brand awareness (Aaker, 1996). Thus, brand recognition and recall together make brand awareness. However, it also includes top-of-mind, brand dominance, brand knowledge and brand opinion. The discernment about a brand in a consumer's mind set is brand image (Keller, 1996). Positive brand image contributes to a favourable behaviour, especially in the process of purchase decision by the consumer, as it differentiate product, brand name extension, and create a positive feeling about the brand (Aaker, 1996). Keller (1993) have suggested certain intangible and tangible traits for measuring the image of the brand established in consumer's mind set. Another widely accepted facet of brand equity is Perceived quality. It is the personal judgment about the quality of product and services by the consumers (Tistsou, 2006). Zeithaml (1988) and Steenkamp (1990) classify the thought of perceived quality in two groups of factors that are intrinsic attributes and extrinsic attributes. The intrinsic traits are includes corporeal facet of a product (e.g. colour, flavour, form and appearance) and extrinsic traits include peripheral facet of the product e.g. brand name, stamp of quality, price, store, packaging and production information. Brand loyalty is the extent that a customer is emotionally connected to a brand. This connection with a particular brand generates loyal customer base which restricts entry for other brands. Brand loyalty forms a foundation for price premium thus, consumers thinks several times before responding to other competitive brands (Nagar, 2009).

Scholars have provided different components for measuring brand loyalty viz. behavioural loyalty and cognitive loyalty (Aaker, 1996). In the past decade, a tremendous amount of attention has been paid on the creation of brand equity construct and its main components namely, brand awareness, brand image, brand associations, perceived quality and brand loyalty for providing value and satisfaction to customers (Keller, 1993 and Akar, 1996). Keller (1996) believed that effective marketing communication mix enables not only the creations of brand awareness, it also shapes a positive brand image. Advertising is established to be widely accepted medium of creating brand equity and attach worth to the product or brand that builds a brand image (Chattopadhyay et al., 2010 and Wang & Li, 2012). Across both service and product category research, Walgren et al. (1995) established that greater spending on advertising generates strong responsiveness to brands. Celebrity endorsement achieves a greater interest, recall and awareness of a company's brand (Goldsmith et al., 2006). Marketers employ a celebrity to endorse a brand, hoping the brand will generate customers' awareness, perceptions of quality and image of the celebrity which ultimately generates brand equity (Sridevi, 2014). Thus, perceived advertising through various media via. print, television, radio internet and celebrity endorsements has a positive effects, not only on brand equity as a whole, but also on each of the elements it includes i.e awareness, image, loyalty and quality (Cobb-Walgren et al., 1995; Keller, 1996 and Selvakumar & Vikkraman, 2011). Sales promotions are also a key marketing tool in communication programs that influence brand equity (Valette-Florence et al., 2011). Different types of sales promotion tools (price and non-price) may have different effects on brand equity (Buil et al., 2013). Price promotions develop brand awareness for the entire product category (Selvakumar & vikkaraman, 2011). Consumers use price as an important indicator of product quality or benefits and are often perceived to be of higher quality and image and less vulnerable to competitive price cuts than low priced brands (kamakura & Russell, 1993). Hence frequent price promotions like discounts make consumers to infer the brand with low quality and image (Yoo et al., 2001 and Tong & Hawley, 2009). Non-price promotions more favourably and positively evoke high awareness, image, enjoyable experiences, feelings, emotions and loyalty perceptions towards the brand (Tong & Hawley, 2009 and Huang & Sarigollu, 2012). Promotional events with long term goals could build brand equity through offering actual product experience that helps to create strong, favourable and unique associations (Keller, 2008). Initial awareness/association and image of a brand are often achieved by direct contacts with sales person in a business markets (Kim & Huyan, 2011). Further positive word of mouth provided by friends, family members, colleagues, relatives etc. generates awareness/association, image, quality and loyalty about the brands (Murtiasih et al., 2013).

II.5 Promotion Mix and Brand Switching-Role of Brand Equity

Consumers exhibits switching behaviour in case brand awareness is low and mostly re-purchase those brands to which they have experienced over an unknown brand (Hoyer and Brown, 1990). Thus, the association of switching and promotion will be weaker in conditions of high brand awareness (Macdonald & Sharp, 2000). Furthermore, higher brand awareness increases conviction among the consumer and more willingness to experience the same thus, increasing brand loyalty, purchase intention and brand equity (Keller & Lehmann, 2006 and Mohebi & Khani, 2014). Higher perceived image and quality of a brand significantly influence repurchase intentions and reduce switching among brands (Keller, 1996 and Tsitsou, 2006). Construal and dispensation of information about the brand through brand equity generates confidence and satisfaction in the purchase decision which in turn develops loyalty for that brand (Yoo & Donthu, 2001 and Tasao et al., 2009). Promotions positively influence brand loyalty that increases unswerving buying of favourite brands and reduce switching to an alternative brand (Aaker, 1996 and Lin et al., 2000). In contrast, in response to promotions, disloyal consumers are always prone to switch and loyal consumers stay with their preferred brand (Nagar, 2009 and Shukla, 2009). Customer based brand equity comprised of brand loyalty, brand awareness/associations, brand image and perceived quality, allows the company to derive various functions of marketing activities favourably (Chen and Chang, 2008). Thus, if the brand loyalty, awareness, image and perceived quality are higher, brand equity will be increased. These brands with high equity provide more benefits in terms of customer retention by reducing switching towards alternatives (Sloot et al., 2005 and Stahl et al., 2012). Higher equity brands also induce re-purchases which increases the retention rate of the consumers (Eris et al., 2012; Stahl et al., 2012 and Wang & Li, 2012). Hence consumers are less prone to switch in response to the promotion as compared to the low equity brands (Liao & Cheng, 2014).

II.6 Promotion mix and brand switching-Role of switching barriers

Wang (2009) conceptualise switching barriers as the extent when consumers feels themselves being fastened into a bond with a particular brand. This possibly is related with the economic, social, or psychological costs while leaving. Switching costs act as an influential marketing tool constraining consumers' behaviour by deterring customers from changing to another supplier and thereby encouraging repeat purchase behaviour (Chebat et al., 2011). Switching costs are understood to influence customer behaviour directly as well as indirectly (Wang,

2010; Lu et al., 2011 and Nagengast et al., 2014). Alternative attractiveness is the satisfaction that the consumers' derive from other competitive brands or available in an alternative relationship (Patterson & Smith, 2003 and Lu et al., 2011). Various players in the market persuade consumers through better products, standing and striking image of innovative brands as compared to others (Wathne et al., 2001). Interpersonal relationships refer to the strength of personal bonds connecting customers and their product/service employees (Wang, 2009). Customers may derive utility from the customer - goods/service provider relationship, which serves as a switching barrier (Wathne, et al., 2001). Emerging research lays importance to satisfy their consumer's needs and making any switch difficult for the customers so that they may be induced to stay (Jones et al., 2000 and Balabanis et al., 2006). But when consumers face certain switching barriers including switching costs even satisfied consumer starts thinking about changing brands. Further inter-personal relationships and alternative attractiveness prohibits consumers, who are pleased with their brands, to think about other brands. Consequently, consumers may switch brands despite of being satisfied in case switching costs and interpersonal relationships are low (Ganesh et al., 2000). Hence, switching costs and inter-personal relationship positively influence intentions to stay (Wathne et al., 2001 and Burnham et al., 2003). In other words these switching barriers potentially foster consumer retention (Goode & Harris, 2007). When the alternative attractiveness increases due to variety seeking behaviour, the expressed customer satisfaction with the existing product/service decreases and repurchase intentions increases (Michaelidou & Dibb, 2009 and Kao, 2013).

**INSERT TABLE 1
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III. RESEARCH MODEL AND PROPOSITIONS

Based on the aforesaid literature review, the study proposes research model (Figure 1) for exploring the role of promotion-mix capabilities in brand switching behaviours. The components along with various propositions are discussed as under:

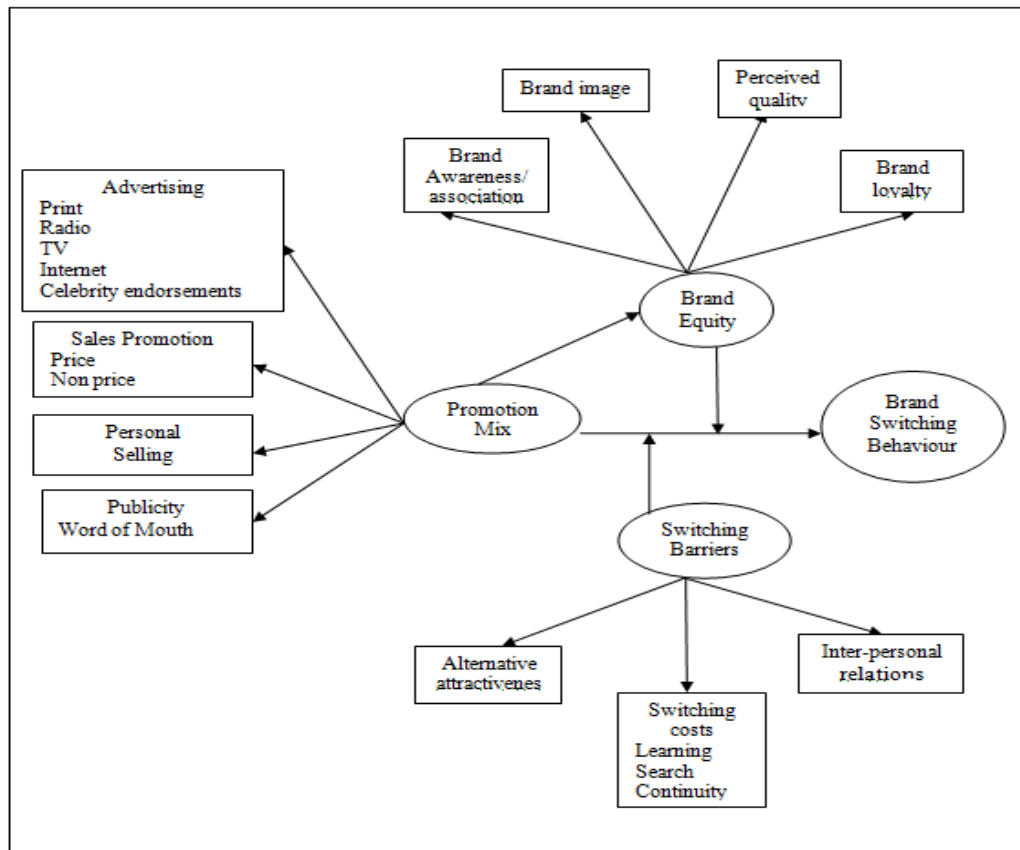


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework (Model)

Source: literature review

III.1 Promotion Mix and Brand Switching Behaviour

Advertisements are important factor that causes a significant positive impact on brand switching behaviour (Chakraborty et al., 2013 and Srivastava & Bisen, 2014). Scholars have empirically proved that newspapers, radio, magazines and television advertisements have a significant relationship with brand switching behaviour (Bell et al., 1999 and Sridevi, 2014). Celebrity endorsed advertising are also viewed to persuade the consumers to buy endorsed brands and positively affect the intentions and behaviours of the consumers (Bush et al., 2004 and Pardhan et al., 2014). Moreover scholars have also found the impact of internet advertising in influencing brand choice in emerging markets (Chakraborty et al., 2013). Sales promotions are being widely accepted as important measures to influence brand switching behaviour. Scholars have empirically and theoretically proved the positive impact of various sales promotional measures (price and non price) on consumer switching behaviour i.e distributed coupons and cents-off deals inducements and different kinds of bonuses, price discounts, buy one get one free, extra grammage and savor packs, price and special displays, in store demonstrations, sweep stakes and games (Gupta, 1988; Shi et al., 2005; Nagar, 2009; and Erdem et al., 2008). Marketers believed promotional strategies like sales person as an important consideration and an important medium of communication in business markets during the purchase of a brand (Mudambi, 2002 and Van Riel et al., 2005). Moreover, understanding the response behaviour of consumers to marketing initiatives is a pre-requisite for marketers which can either be in terms of the incidence or timing of purchases, category/ brand choice of purchases made (Lynch & Chernatony, 2004). Several research studies have shown the strength of word of mouth (WOM) in the formation of attitude or way of thinking in a brand choice context. Word of mouth plays an important role affecting switching behaviour (Mittal & Lassar, 1998; East et al., 2008 and Murtiasih et al., 2013). The interaction, pace and impartiality in word of mouth it a very successful among prospective consumer choices, particularly with regard to services for which previous know-how may be limited. In consumer choice, word of mouth is often the dominant factor e.g. Keaveney (1995) scrutinized that while finding a new product/service supplier consumers mostly considered positive word of mouth. Since the present study considers promotion mix as the significant of facilitator of brand switching we propose that:

P1: There is a positive relationship between a) advertising (print, radio, TV, internet and celebrity) b) sales promotion (price and non price), personal selling and word of mouth on brand switching behaviour.

III.2 Promotion Mix and Brand Equity

Many empirical studies show positive strengths of a range of advertising medium in building brand equity e.g. television advertisements, print advertisements, event sponsorship, mobile advertising and online/web advertising (Chattopadhyay et al., 2010 and Xu & Chan, 2010). Scholars strongly argue that as consumers are exposed to a brand's advertising more frequently, they develop not only higher brand awareness and stronger associations other than positive acuity of the brand's quality (Yoo et al., 2000). Studies have also empirically proved that celebrity endorsements if used appropriately can serve as a valuable role in developing brand equity by developing a higher degree of attention and recall, perceptions of image and quality and enhancing the brand's competitive position (Tong & Hawley, 2009). Focusing on the direct effects on brand equity and its dimensions, numerous price promotions such as price discounts are an effective marketing tool for generating traffic (Grewal et al., 1998). These are also likely to have a negative influence on perceptions of quality (Selvakumar & Vikkraman, 2011) and do not seem to be related to brand loyalty as well (Tong & Hawley, 2009). Various empirical studies have accounted that price promotions have an unenthusiastic impact on brand image and can create uncertainty about brand quality (Huang & Sarigollu, 2012). Hence frequent price or monetary promotions have a negative influence on perceptions of quality and brand loyalty as this tool leads consumers to think primarily about price and not about the brand (Yoo et al., 2000 and Buil et al., 2013). But brand image, perceived quality and brand loyalty are positively influenced by non price promotions and brand awareness is increased by both price and non-price promotions (Tong & Hawley, 2009 and Buil et al., 2013). Research studies on the role of word of mouth have highlighted its influence on brand awareness, brand image, brand association, brand loyalty and perceived quality (Money, 2004 and Murtiasih, 2013). Also the information provided by a family, friends and others can affect the formation about brand equity (Matos & Rossi, 2008). Consumers rely on information about the brand that represents the experiences of others and only such information is perceived as credible (Chattopadhyay et al., 2010). Personal selling is instrumental to offering information about the products tailored to the different needs that each member in an organisation buying center has. Mudambi, (2002) argue that preference, initial awareness and association of a brand are often achieved by direct contacts with salespersons in business markets. These consultants and sales representatives are the most effective avenues for achieving brand awareness and brand choice (Van Riel et al., 2005). Thus, we propose that:

P2: *There is a positive relationship between advertising (print, radio, TV, internet and celebrity and brand awareness, brand image, perceived quality and brand loyalty.*

P3: *Brand image, perceived quality and brand loyalty are negatively related with price promotions and brand awareness/association is positively related with price promotion.*

P4: *Brand awareness/association, brand image, perceived quality and brand loyalty are positively related with non-price promotions.*

P5: *There is positive relationship between word of mouth and brand equity.*

P6: *Personal selling significantly influences brand equity.*

III.3 Moderating Role of Brand Equity in Promotion Mix and Brand Switching

Various empirical evidences have drawn attention towards the moderating role of brand equity. Scholars have highlighted that the positive role of high or strong brand equity with the higher advertising generates significantly greater preferences for products and services, retain customers better and reduce brand switching (Chang & Liu, 2009 and Stahl et al., 2012). Numerous studies have empirically examined that different loyal segments, perceived brand image high and low level of awareness and perceived quality towards the brand, respond to promotional mix variables differently towards switching (Mittal & Lassar, 1998 and Homburg et al., 2010). Hence, high brand equity in terms of high brand awareness/association, image, brand loyalty and high perceived quality reduces the impact of promotion mix on brand switching behaviour than low brand equity (Sloot et al., 2012).

P7: *Higher the brand equity, lower will be the relationship between promotion-mix and brand switching behaviour.*

III.4 Moderating Role of Switching Barriers in Promotion Mix and Brand Switching

Scholars have proved that under the conditions of high switching costs, consumers do not show switching behaviour in response to promotion mix and under the conditions of low switching costs, consumers may switch their brands (Goode & Harris, 2006; Chebat et al., 2011 and Anderson & Simester, 2013). Also under stronger interpersonal relationships, the customer may not switch the brands because the strong relationships enhance the customers' perceived value, quality, image and influence intentions to stay with a product/service provider (Burnham, 2003 and Wang, 2010). Likewise, if customers are either unacquainted of eye-catching brands or do not recognize other services/goods as any more useful than the present bonding with the current brand, they may keep on in that relationship even-though it is less than satisfactory (Jones et al., 2000) Thus, as attractiveness of competing brands decreases, the repurchase intentions will increase (Wang, 2009). For assessing the role of various switching barriers in promotion mix and brand switching behaviour, the propositions are:

P8: *Higher the switching costs and interpersonal relationship, lower will be the relationship between promotion mix and brand switching behaviour and vice versa.*

P9: *Higher the alternative attractiveness, higher will be the relationship between promotion-mix and brand switching behaviour and vice versa.*

P10: *Higher the interpersonal relationship, lower will be the relationship between promotion mix and brand switching behaviour and vice versa.*

IV. MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

The study makes number of academic and managerial contributions. The study advances an exhaustive understanding of the implication of promotional mix measures like print, radio, television, and internet in facilitating brand switching behaviour. Further, the study contributes the existing knowledge by introducing the emerging impact of celebrity advertisements in effecting brand switching behaviour. This study digs out the comprehensive role of the brand equity concept from the literature in promotion mix and brand switching behaviour. The study also discussed the foremost function of different switching costs in promotion-mix and brand switching behaviour. This framework is important to both practitioners and scholars as promotion mix with new component like internet and publicity through word of mouth is an important consideration for marketers introducing new brands in their product line as well as to those companies which are very much concerned about loyalty and switching rate among their customers. Further, enhanced nature of switching costs can draw the attention of marketers to find the ways to reduce them in case the main concern is to establish the new brand in the market place or to engage the customers in their brands by inducing repeat purchase behaviour.

V. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Although the present study has tried to sketch out a broader framework in promotion mix and brand switching area with the moderating role of switching costs and brand equity, yet it lacks empirical support. Use of certain product categories like FMCG, utilitarian/hedonic, services, controversial etc. in sectors like house hold could provide valuable insight into the design. Further social media is also emerging as an important component of promotion mix in today's competitive world. Thus, it should also be considered in terms of its impact on brand switching behaviour of consumers. The study do not consider the intrinsic measures like satisfaction, need for uniqueness etc. as an important factors influencing brand switching behaviour which can be another avenue for future research.

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Table 1: Literature review: An overview

N o.	Author/ Year	Objective	Dimension/Scale	Research area	Results	Future research
1	Cobb and Hoyer (1985)	To investigate the impact of newspaper, television, radio and magazine advertising on brand choice decision making.	Perception, recognition, unaided recall, choice strategy.	255 supermarket consumers of tissues and 266 consumers of coffee in three metropolitan areas of US.	Advertising significantly impacts switching among the consumers despite of being loyal.	Limited to tissue and coffee brands Only. Use of other advertising media and promotion mix may influence the results.
2	Deighton et al. (1994)	To scrutinise the impact of television advertising on switching and repeat purchasing on mature and frequently purchased product categories	Awareness, belief, persuasion, existance	481 consumers of Ketchup and 167 consumers of detergents	In the categories examined, advertising works by attracting switchers primarily by the exposures that takes place between the previous and current purchase occasions than repeat purchase probabilities.	Limited to television advertising.
3	Cobb-walgren et al. (1995)	Effect of advertising on building brand equity and to explore the consequences of brand equity.	Brand equity-awareness, association, perceived quality, advertising-awareness	92 consumers of household cleansers and 90 consumers (college students) of hotels in Georgia.	Brand with greater advertising budget yielded substantially higher brand equity and these higher equity brands generated significantly greater purchase intentions and retains the customer better as compared to switching.	Further studies should examine more closely the role of other emerging promotion mix in adding values to the antecedents of brand equity and brand choice.
4	Macdonald and Sharp (2000)	To explore the effects of brand awareness on choice and the frequency with which the highest quality brand is choosen following a series of trial.	Brand awareness-recall, recognition	472 Australian consumers (undergraduate students) of soft drink were the respondents.	Consumers in the high awareness condition make their initial decisions of choice more quickly. If the price of the well-known brand is high relative to competing brands, then, although a large number of consumers will choose the well-known brand, some consumers will also be inclined to try other cheaper brands. Thus, the awareness effect is stronger than the price effect.	Other product categories such as mobile phones, automotive, eatables etc. may produce different results hence should be considered in future research.
5	Yoo et al. (2000)	To explore the relationship between selected marketing mix elements and the creation of brand equity.	Price, store image, distribution intensity, advertising spending, price deals, perceived quality, brand loyalty and brand association/awareness.	196 university students in UK purchasing athletic shoes, camera films and colour T.V sets which were analysed	Brand equity may be decreased when consumers strongly relate price and price promotion to product quality. Good image, high distribution intensity and advertising of the retail store build brand equity for all types of products.	Further research should focus on celebrity endorsement, WOM and interactions among them.
6	Frels and Mahajan (2003)	To examine the antecedents and consequences of procedural switching costs, financial switching costs and relational switching costs.	Procedural -time and effort. Financial-the loss of financially quantifiable resources. Relational-psychological or emotional discomfort due to the loss of identity and the	287 credit card consumers and 288 long-distance consumers of a South-western university were contacted.	All three switching cost types significantly influence consumers' intentions to stay with their current service provider.	The study was limited to service industries. Further research may include moderating role played by different switching costs on satisfaction and behavioural intentions such that loyalty and exit behaviour.

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			breaking of bonds.			
7	Patterson and Smith (2003)	Examined the role that switching barriers play in the propensity to stay with service providers.	Switching barriers-search costs, loss of social bonds, setup costs, functional risk, attractiveness of alternatives and loss of special treatment benefits.	402(each service) consumers of travel agencies, medical services and hairdressers in Australia and Thailand.	Switching barriers have a greater positive impact on propensity to stay than exit in a service relationship. Switching barriers alone are a powerful predictor of customer retention.	The scope of the study was limited to services sector. Moreover intentions are measured inspite of actual behaviour.
8	Wangenheim and Bayon, (2004)	To study the effects of word of mouth on services switching behaviour.	Self developed scale	267 consumers of European energy provider in Germany	Positive word of mouth has significant influence on switching behaviour and subsequent decision making. perceived risk moderate the relationship.	Limited to service industry only. Future research should integrate product brands and should focus on comparative analysis in the framework.
9	Bush et al., (2004)	To study the impact of sports celebrity on the behavioural intentions (Switching, loyalty and positive word of mouth) of generation Y	Celebrity endorsement-Rich (1997) scale. Behavioural intention-Zeithaml et al.,1996	218 adolescent (13-25 yrs) of U.K.	Celebrity sports athletes are important to adolescents when they make brand choices and talk about these brands positively. Athlete celebrities are perceived as important influencers.	The study was limited to the athlete celebrities of sports brands only and that too from teenagers' point of view.
10	Goode and Harris (2007)	Testing a model of the antecedents of behavioural intentions and evaluates how switching costs and inducements moderate the behavioural intentions of online shoppers.	Behavioural intention-Zeithaml et al.,1996 Web advertising-usefulness switching costs & Inducements-Jones et al., 2000	296 online purchasers of 'books.com' in U.K.	Both perceived reputation and banner advertising are found to be significantly indirectly (non-linearly) linked with behavioural intentions due to the moderating effects of switching costs.	The study was limited to the online loyalty dimension of behavioural intention and should focus on switching and other dimension also.
11	East, et al. (2008)	To assess the impact of positive and negative word of mouth on brand purchase probability.	Positive and negative WOM	Preliminary role-play experiments conducted from 2003 to 2005 and from 2005 to 2007 in the UK luxury goods brands (coffee, leather goods, camera, computers, cell phone, credit cards, and cosmetics) in Lebanon and Japan. Regression analysis was used.	The impact of positive word of mouth (PWOM) on brand purchase probability is generally greater than negative word of mouth (NWOM). Respondents resist negative word of mouth on brands they are very likely to choose and resist positive word of mouth on brands they are very unlikely to choose.	The effect of other variables like tie strength, similarity and favorability are not considered.
12	Chen and Chang (2008)	Examines the relationships between switching costs, brand equity, brand preference, and purchase intentions.	Brand equity-awareness, quality, association.	Data were collected from 480 passengers at Taoyuan International Airport in Taiwan and analysed using SEM.	It has been revealed that for the low switching cost groups, the effect of brand equity on purchase intentions is not significant, while both the effects of brand equity on brand preference and brand preference on purchase intentions are positive and significant.	Future studies could take into consideration different switching costs and their moderating impact.
13	Chang and liu, (2009)	Assesses the relationship among brand equity, brand preference and purchase intentions.	Brand equity-awareness, quality, association.	456 consumers of mobile Telecommunication services, ADSL services, and bank credit card services of Taiwan.	Brand with higher levels of equity generate significantly higher consumers' preference for those brands and positively related to more willingness to continue with the same brand.	Limited to service only.
14	Chung-Yu Wang (2009)	To examine the moderating role of switching barriers in the relationship between recommended intentions and its antecedents.	Switching barriers-interpersonal relationships, perceived switching costs and alternative attractiveness. Intentions-	269 undergraduate students using hair cutting services in Taiwan.	Switching barriers positively moderate the relationship between recommended intentions (WOM) and their antecedents. The impact on recommended intentions increase when customers perceive high switching barriers.	Future research may include additional services such as medical services, travel agencies, and fast-food restaurant services etc.

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			service quality, customer-perceived value, and corporate image.			
15	Shukla (2009)	To explore the concept of contextual factors and choice criteria and its impact on behavioural intentions such as brand loyalty and switching.		340 young adults of Sussex county of the UK were contacted and data analysed using SEM	Advertising and in-store promotions were found to be the most important factor affecting brand switching. Primary reference group especially friends had the highest influence on consumers' loyalty behaviour as compared to brand switching.	The study focuses on single segment and specific set of product categories in a single market.
16	Nagar (2009)	To assess the effects of sales promotion on brand switching and the role of brand loyalty.	Shi et al., 2005 Salespromotion- Price discounts, buy one get one free, free gifts, samples, extra grammage, saver packs.	427 consumers of washing powder of Jammu, Chandigarh and Delhi city were the respondents of the study.	Sales promotion significantly affects brand switching. Non loyal consumers are more prone to switch brands in response to sales promotion than loyal consumers.	Future research should focus on sweepstakes, games and scratch cards on brand switching and other loyalty programmes
17	Tsao, et al. (2009)	To explore the impact of loyalty and promotion programme on retention rate and brand switching.	-	2500 Taiwanese households using three product categories (FMCG) milk powder, shampoo and detergent	The greater the loyalty effect, the higher the retention rate, and the greater the promotion effect on the retention rate. When the proportion of loyal customers is high, the proportion of potential switching affected by promotion programmes is low.	Further research should focus on other promotion mix variables such as non price promotions on wide range of product categories.
18	Chattopadhyay et al. (2010)	Analysed the effect of various advertising media (T.V, print, event sponsorship, online and mobile) on building brand equity	Brand equity- perceived quality and awareness.	200 passenger car consumers from Andhra Pradesh, Delhi, Maharashtra, Tamilnadu and West Bengal	Advertising through television, print, event sponsorship, online and mobile significantly influence awareness and perceived quality about the brand.	The frame work was limited to passenger car buyers. In future ,the area of the study be expanded.
19	Chebat et al. (2011)	To investigate the moderating role of switching costs on staying and switching behaviours	Switching costs- continuity, learning, searching, sunk and contractual	Six hundred retail banking customers of Canada	Consumers are more prone to switch when learning and continuity costs are low despite of being highly satisfied.	Limited to service sector.
20	Lu et al. (2011)	To examine the relationships among service sacrifice, service quality, service value, satisfaction, switching barriers, and behavioural intentions.	Switching cost and alternative attractiveness - Scale by Jen et al., 2011; Jones et al., 2000; Lin et al., 2008; Patterson & Smith, 2003. Behavioural intention- Zeithaml et al., 1996	543 coach passengers in Taiwan	Customers are to stay with current service providers when switching costs increase and/or the attractiveness of alternatives decreases.	Future research studies may emphasis on interpersonal relationships, which provide intrinsic benefits.
21	Nigam and Kaushik (2011)	Analyses the marketing mix factors influencing brand equity and the relationship between brand equity and purchase decision making	Marketing mix- advertising, product, price, place and promotion. Brand equity- awareness, quality, association and loyalty.	100 car owners at Rohtak, Jhajjar, Bhadurgarh and Sonapat and	High brand equity is influenced by marketing mix factors which has a significant positive influence on purchase decisions of the cars. This high brand equity helps the companies to retain their customers better. In case of low brand equity, consumer repurchase intentions become low and switching intentions increases.	Right mix of advertising media should be focused to exploit brand equity in terms of the behavioural intentions.
22	Valette-Florence et al (2011)	Examines how perceived sales promotions and brand Personality affect brand equity	Price promotions brand personality- consciousness, sophistication, fallaciousness and introversion Brand equity- brand loyalty, brand knowledge, social value and perceived	538 university students and staff in France using laptop and coffee brands.	Price promotions have negative impact on brand equity.	The study focused on luxury brands therefore, fast moving consumer goods, durable goods or and brands, as well as private versus public goods, may exhibit different path coefficients.

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23	Stahl et al. (2012)	Examine the relationship between brand equity and customer acquisition, customer retention and profit margin and to demonstrate the role of marketing activities in this relationship.	quality Brand equity-knowledge (awareness and image), relevance, esteem and differentiation marketing mix-product, price, advertising, promotion, and distribution.	Based on secondary data of about 39 major U.S. brands of cars from 1998-2008.	Brand equity has a positive & significant relationship with customer retention, acquisition, and profit margin. Change in marketing actions can have a meaningful significant impact on brand equity.	The study is limited to secondary data. Future research may include luxury, non luxury and consumer goods.
24	Buil et al. (2013)	This study explores the impact of advertising and sales promotions on brand equity creation.	Advertising - Yoo et al. (2000) Sales promotion-price discounts and Gifts Yoo et al. (2000). Brand equity-perceived quality,brand awareness/association, brand loyalty	302 UK consumers of sportswear, electronics and cars	Advertising strategies can develop higher brand awareness and positive perceptions of their brands. Price discounts have a negative influence on perceived quality whereas free gifts have a positive effect on awareness, perceived quality and brand associations.	Perceptual measures, television advertising, luxury products and only price discounts and free gifts components of sales promotions limit the scope of the study.
25	Sucherly and Siringoringo (2013)	To evaluate the influence of word of mouth (WOM) towards brand equity	Perceived quality, brand awareness/association, brand loyalty.	214 automotive customers from Indonesia.	WOM significantly influence brand equity. The stronger the positive WOM received by customer, higher is the perception of quality which increases brand loyalty.	Limited to automotive sector.
26	Anderson and Simester (2013)	To investigate the impact of advertising in a competitive markets and the role of products standard, customer learning and switching costs.		A field experiment of a huge sample comprising of 184,625 customers of a medium sized apparel retailer in UK.	The product categories with the greatest spillovers are those in which customers seem to learn about product attributes and standards and searching about the new product brands. Dissatisfaction do not have any relationship with switching in case customers have to face switching costs.	Future research may include the role of advertising with consumer switching costs with other product and service categories.
27	Aghaei et al. (2014)	To investigate the relationship between dimensions of brand equity and service marketing mix.	Perceived quality, brand awareness, brand association and brand loyalty, price, product, place, advertising, physical evidence, process and people.	385 consumers in chain stores of Tehran city participated in the survey to collect the data. Cor-relation analysis were employed to analyse the data.	There is a positive and direct relationship among seven mix factors and brand equity. An increase in the price, product, place, advertising, physical evidence, process and people, brand awareness, brand association, perceived quality and loyalty will be increased.	The study did not consider emerging advertising media and different price and non price promotions.
28	Nagengast et al. (2014)	To analyse the role of switching costs (SC) in the relationship between satisfaction and repurchase behavior.	Switching costs-Ping,1993 Procedural SC - Jones, Mothers baugh, and Beatty 2000 Search costs, cognitive costs, set up costs, financial costs, sunk costs, relational costs, lost performance costs, brand relationship costs and personal relationship lost cost.	1764 European grocery consumers, 276 banking customers, 5695 customers of European retailers, 214 consumers of cleansing services and 276 retail banking customers and 214 customers of commercial cleansing services	If SC is low, customers seem to switch despite being satisfied. If positive SC are low, customers switch because switching is easy. Banking customers perceive even small procedural SC as relatively painful and do not switch when they are satisfied. If procedural SC are high, because of the high perceived losses even dis-satisfied customers do not adapt their repurchase behaviour.	Future studies should incorporate dissatisfied customers in the proposed framework.
29	Dr. J. Sridevi (2014)	To ascertain the effectiveness of celebrity advertisement on selected FMCG.	Effectiveness of celebrities.	500 consumers of FMCG (shampoo, tooth paste, soap and hairoil) from Chennai city of Tamil Nadu state.	The consumers' shows positive attitudes towards celebrity endorsed advertisement which creates brand choice.	The study covers only personal care products.

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