

Determinants of Perceived Product Quality and its impact on Distributor's Performance: The Moderating Role of Brand Likeability

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This study examines the complex relationship among brand association, image, loyalty, and attachment and perceived product quality. It also examines how brand likeability moderates this relationship. The study investigates these dynamics to determine how consumer-brand interactions affect product quality perceptions. Customers evaluate product quality beyond intrinsic qualities in competitive markets. Brand association, image, loyalty, and attachment form these values. Understudied is brand likeability's moderating role in these correlations. Analyzing consumer-brand interactions on product quality fills this gap. This study uses a quantitative-methods approach. A varied sample of 270 consumers is asked about brand association, image, loyalty, attachment, product quality, and likeability. Analysis of direct and moderated effects uses structural equation modeling (SEM). The study found that brand association, image, loyalty, and attachment significantly impact perceived product quality. Consumers with strong positive associations, a positive brand image, great brand loyalty, and a profound emotional commitment to a brand see its items as higher quality. In particular, brand likeability moderates these relationships. Brand likeability enhances the effects of brand association, image, loyalty, and attachment on product quality. Brand-related characteristics greatly influence customer product quality perceptions when they like a brand. This study provides valuable insights for brand managers and marketers. First, it stresses the necessity of positive brand associations, images, loyalty, and attachment to boost product quality. Second, brand likeability amplifies these brand variables. Brands should provide engaging, realistic, and emotionally appealing experiences to increase likeability. Understanding these relationships can help marketers brand and communicate products, influencing consumer quality perceptions. This study adds to marketing literature by analyzing how brand connection, image, loyalty, and attachment affect product quality. Brand likeability moderates consumer-brand interactions, revealing their complexity. This research helps brands and marketers improve branding and consumer interactions, enhancing product quality and brand success.

1. Introduction

In the highly competitive realm of product marketing and distribution, it is crucial to comprehend the elements that influence the perception of product quality and how they affect the performance of distributors. This connection not only impacts the choices consumers make when buying products, but also influences the strategic methods that distributors use to increase their market presence and profitability (Ohlwein & Bruno, 2022). The presence of brand likeability as a moderating factor adds complexity to this relationship, indicating that the fondness customers have for a brand can greatly influence the interaction between perceived product quality and distributor performance (Ishaq et al., 2018). Perceived product quality is a multifaceted concept that represents consumers' evaluations of a product's overall superiority or excellence. It includes several aspects such as functionality, durability, reliability, and beauty, which all contribute to the overall perception of quality (Solin & Curry, 2023).

Distributors, acting as middlemen in the supply chain, have a vital role in conveying these impressions of quality to the final consumer. They often utilize the brand's reputation and product attributes to influence purchase choices (Kumar & Bergstrom 2008; Singh et al., 2023). Brand likeability, which refers to the level of consumer affection and affinity for a brand, plays a crucial role in either enhancing or reducing the impact of perceived product quality on distributor performance (Narteh et al., 2018). The. Strong customer trust and loyalty can be enhanced by high brand likeability, which in turn can amplify the favorable impact of perceived quality on distributor outcomes like as sales volume, market share, and profitability.

Although marketing literature acknowledges the significance of perceived product quality and brand likeability, there is a lack of empirical study investigating how these characteristics collectively impact distributor performance (Susilowati & Sari, 2020). The relationship between perceived product quality and distributor performance has not been thoroughly examined in terms of the moderating influence of brand likeability. This overlook represents a substantial deficiency in comprehending how distributors might efficiently utilize brand and product characteristics to enhance their effectiveness in a competitive market.

Scholars and practitioners have focused on product quality factors and distributor performance in today's fast-paced, competitive market. Because perceived product quality affects consumer preferences and decisions, which affects distributor sales and profitability, this interest arises. In marketing dynamics, brand likeability may moderate the relationship between perceived product quality and distributor outcomes (Ghanadiof, 2021). This introduction discusses these topics' origins, problem statement, and research gaps. Consumers' opinions of a product's quality influence their purchases and loyalty (Akoglu & Özbek, 2022). Distributors, who connect producers and consumers, are affected by these impressions in their capacity to sell items and operate well. Brand likeability—consumers' emotional attachment to a brand—affects the perceived value of product quality. This interaction between perceived product quality, brand likeability, and distributor performance is crucial to marketing research (Fauzi et al., 2022). Despite the importance of knowing how perceived product quality affects distributor performance, brand likeability is rarely studied. How brand affection affects distributor outcomes and how quality perceptions affect them is unclear. This knowledge gap makes it difficult for distributors to create marketing and operational strategies that leverage on product quality perceptions and consumer brand loyalty (Nyamekye et al., 2022).

There are few research that examine how perceived product quality and brand likeability affect distributor performance. The processes by which brand likeability moderates the association between perceived product quality and distributor performance are unknown. This oversight inhibits distributors' ability to use brand likeability to boost perceived quality (Boman et al. 2019). Product quality judgments, brand likeability, and distributor performance may vary by industry, although current research generally does not. There are few actionable insights on how distributors may proactively control perceived product quality and brand likeability to improve market standing and performance indicators. By addressing these gaps, future research can provide useful insights into strategic management of perceived product quality and brand likeability, helping distributors compete in a more competitive market.

There is a scarcity of comprehensive models that incorporate both the perceived quality of a product and the likability of a brand, and examine how these factors together affect the performance of distributors (Khawaja et al., 2021). The majority of research has examined these concepts separately, neglecting to capture the combined effects they may demonstrate when analyzed together. The existing literature has not sufficiently examined the way in which brand likeability influences the relationship between perceived product quality and distributor performance. Gaining a comprehensive understanding of this moderating role is essential in order to create more focused marketing tactics that effectively leveraging brand strength (Bui et al., 2023). The impact of how customers perceive the quality of a product and their liking for a brand on the performance of distributors may differ depending on the industry. However, studies often make broad conclusions without taking into account the distinctive dynamics of each sector. This discrepancy underscores the necessity for doing research that customizes its inquiries to certain sectors. Limited empirical information exists regarding the specific tactics employed by distributors to effectively navigate the relationship between perceptions of product quality and brand likeability, as well as the subsequent influence of these methods on their overall performance.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Brand Association and Perceived Product Quality

The brand has significant importance in the matter of a product that is recognized and remembered by the user when he sees the brand (Jin et al., 2019). The study defines the brand as the owner of the product through labeling. The firms which build their brand also face rivalry in a competitive market; however, it affords to maintain the hold of its consumers (Pranata & Permana, 2021). The explain the role of a distributor as a middleman who the firm in its international and local markets. The distributors are entitled to the same in the particular market and they work closely with the producer. This process can expand over a long duration of time consistently. During the process, the producer holds control of products prices, marketing, operations, and other functions related to the production of goods (Kumar & Bergstrom, 2008). The advantage of distributor for the manufacturer is that he has not to bear any fixed cost associated with his entry in the market taking the responsibility on his own. asserts the need for the manufacturer to focus on the distributor's performance. The study determines the concept of performance comprises more than single dimensions.

The performance involves factors like economic performance i.e., sales revenue, productivity, and returns (Sethuraman et al., 1988). Thus the performance of the distributor consists of both financial and non-financial performance (Vazifehdoost & Negahdari, 2018). The study believes that the performance of the distributor enables the company to make decisions for planning, devising strategy, taking control measures, and providing directions for the functions and activities. Andik & Rachma, (2022) include factors such as public perception, brand quality, and users' satisfaction, employees' satisfaction, the company's brand positioning strategy, firm's goods economic value, innovation and creativity in manufacturing and services, firm's competency, and skill level in production, firm's investment in training, firm's or producer's new value introducing among others are the associated important factors in establishing a robust performance of the distributor.

H1: Brand Association has a positive impact on Perceived Product Quality

2.2 Brand loyalty and Perceived Product Quality

Orji et al. (2016) find that when a consumer feel contended with a specific brand, it leads to brand loyalty of the consumer. Kotler and Keller (2006) suggest that strong brand value helps the consumers in getting information on the offered goods and they feel confident in making a purchase decision. Furthermore, it enhances the consumers' experience and their satisfaction. The established brand value helps the distributors to perform effectively and efficiently in their local and international markets and the producer also enjoys higher returns on their sales. Ghanadiof, (2021) also support the argument that product quality, brand association, loyalty, and awareness are the main factors to establish brand value. The study believes that the brand value is understood using the approach of both users and manufacturers. The study believes that the perspective of the producer is important in understanding the performance of the distributors. The study defines performance as an input that relates to future outcomes on the product or services of the company (Pranata & Permana, 2021). The performance connects products and components.

The study explains that performance may include products, outcomes, components, and effects, connections to the economy, efficiency and effectiveness, brand value, and cost-effectiveness (Castañeda, 2011). Fauzi et al. (2022) believe that performance is determined at the individual level as well as at the organizational level. Thus, performance is understood in the context of achieved outcomes. relates performance to both the outcomes and behavior of the individual. The study argues that performance is turned into more concrete action with the appropriate behavior. Thus for a firm, the performance represents the contribution towards the attainment of organizational strategic objectives. Pranata and Permana, (2021) defines a dealer as a retail organization or individual who primarily sells goods and services of a company for personal or household utilization and provides services associated with the sales of products. Hence dealer or distributor's response is detrimental to the brand satisfaction, and loyalty of the consumers. The other measure comes from the consumer's satisfaction, association, loyalty, and perception which provide the brand value of the producing firm's goods. Ghanadiof (2021) defines brand loyalty

using behavioral and attitudinal approaches. Attitudinal loyalty involves the consumer's choices, preferences, and disposition for a brand which measures the loyalty level. Vazifehdoost and Negahdari, (2018) also support this approach and treat behavioral loyalty differently from attitudinal loyalty.

The study defines behavioral loyalty as a repeated action of association that is recorded through the technique of observation. Hence loyalty is defined as an element that can be demonstrated and it is a positive state of commitment that is not selfish. Loyalty is a trust in the producer firm for specific product and service provision based on evidence of continuous service level which has attained the level of satisfaction from the consumers. Hence such outcomes from the delivery of satisfactory products and services lead to buying the same brand repeatedly and the consumer develops a long-lasting relationship with the brand (Jin et al., 2019). The study finds that the positive reference in form of word-of-mouth also contributes to influencing the consumer's friends to buy from the same brand. Moreover, the study stresses the proactive role of the distributor in building consumers' loyalty to the brand. The study by Nuweihed and Trendel, (2023) define the loyalty of consumer as a behavior that is developed based on positive and valuable experience with the brand and it leads to purchasing the brand goods even in circumstances when it is not the most rational choice. The behavior of the consumer and the underlying causes are very important to measure brand loyalty. The study suggests that whether the loyalty is emotional, functional, or contractual it is built by the distributor beside the producer firm. The study by suggests consumer engagement as a measure of loyalty (Ghanadiof, 2021).

The study believes that consumer's response and suggestion for their desired product features improve their brand association and loyalty. This interaction of consumers can be measured through their feedback received by the distributor or directly on the firm's website, customer service center, and responses to increased prices or the company's discount offer. The study by suggests that the measure of loyalty and association to a particular brand comes from several indicators and all of these indicators point to one common direction. Nuweihed and Trendel, (2023) determine that the goods perceived quality resulting from the product performance sets the degree of brand reliability in terms of meeting the consumer's requirements. Consumers associate product reliability, brand image, product price, and the distributor store as the indicators to determine the goods' quality and subsequently develop brand association and loyalty determine that both the quality and good experience contribute to gaining the customer's satisfaction which further decides and influences the buying behavior of the user. Boman et al. (2019) however, insist on brand awareness which must precede the brand association. The study suggests that brand awareness indicates the proactive role of a firm's marketing and distributors which helps in building the consumer's set of associations. Almirah & Indayani, (2022) also support the argument that users prefer to buy well-known and familiar goods rather than the products not well-known and unfamiliar to them. Brand awareness influences the consumer's buying decision positively and the products with high brand awareness gain the consumer higher preference.

H2: Brand loyalty has a positive impact on Perceived Product Quality

2.3 Brand Image and Perceived Product Quality

The brand value results from brand attachment and loyalty and it promotes brand image (Orji et al., 2016). Kotler and Keller (2006) suggest that the brand value is the force to establish the goodwill and image of the brand and it takes time from the firm's existence period. The firm gets growth, market power, and higher returns based on its brand value. Thus the brand value is considered as one of the key valuable intangible assets of the company and holds fundamental importance in the marketing of its products. Orji et al., (2016) stress the importance of people's perception for the product to be high. Andik & Rachma, (2022) determine the same expectations for the fast-moving users' product market such as the flour mill industry. Jin et al., (2019) suggests that performance is not only achieving a result rather it also focuses and associates the organizational objectives to the results. The study proposes that organizations, employees, consumers, and also dealers contribute to the performance of the organization. The study explains dealers as individuals who support, help, and serve the producer or the firm.

Singh et al. (2020) find the distributor's response is detrimental to the brand image. Zhong, (2023) believe dealer or distributor-based brand image is a combination of brand's assets and liabilities, the value of the brand connected to them, and the value they create or subtract from the manufacturer established value for their product. Keller (2013) finds that distributors are also involved in the manufacturer's marketing research processes and also contribute to evaluating the manufacturer's market performance. Moreover, they also play a role in measuring the brand information of the manufacturer firm's rivals. Distributors' performance also involves promoting the brand image of the producer firm and communicating to the firm any complaints on goods by the consumers or their suggestions and recommendations for improvement. Distributors are the entity that serves as a bridge between the consumers and the producer firm and they are responsible for the company's brand marketing and promotion (Fauzi et al., 2022).

A productive distributor's performance also involves knowledge of the consumers' preferences and perceptions of certain products. He knows the producer firm's brand performance in the target market compared to its rivals and also the relative profitability. Therefore, it requires the responsibility of the marketing department to build a strong brand image and besides this, they should measure the health of the company's brand also. Singh et al., (2020) suggest brand value as a measure of a brand's image, association, satisfaction, and loyalty; therefore, the study suggests brand value among the most valuable assets of the company. The study asserts on measuring the brand value to set marketing guidelines, strategies and to make tactical decision making. The study determines other purposes of measuring brand value such as extending the brand market, analyzing the marketing decisions' effectiveness, evaluating the brand's health relative to competitors over time, and allocating a financial value to the brand in the financial statement of the company. Thus the financial value of the brand in the marketplace is one measure of the brand value of the company.

Kotler and Keller (2006) find that effective brand management is dependent on evaluating the long-term effects of the company's marketing decisions. The users' response to the marketing activity of the company depends on the information they receive and remember relating to a brand. The short-term marketing activities and actions that may alter the information about a brand can also positively or negatively affect the future and long-term marketing actions' success. Moreover, the long-term strategies and decisions of the company should be made keeping in view the consumer-based brand value, external changes in the business environment, and alignment with the internal changes in the organization's environment in its goals and policies relating to marketing. The study finds that distributor's performance also gets affected positively or negatively by the short-term and long-term marketing decisions of the company. The study suggests that brand value is assessed through brand revitalization, reinforcement, and brand crisis. Furthermore, the study explains the role of the producer firm in the process of investing for the improvement of its goods and services, the firm should also connect those investments to the brand-specific economic value generations. The study finds that the investment decisions if come after some minor flaws or correction purpose to obliterate the previous experience and offer a new improved experience then the economic value generation must be based on the changes in market response (Nuweihed & Trendel, 2023; Ghanadiof, 2021; Boman et al., 2019).

H3: Brand Image has a positive impact on Perceived Product Quality.

2.4 Brand Attachment and Perceived Quality

Mensah et al. (2022) determines that the perceived quality has a mediation effect to help the customer for making a subjective judgment relating to the brand's goods overall quality. It creates a differentiation in consumers' minds to select a brand. However, the study suggests that the producer firm has to establish brand loyalty because attracting new users results in bearing a cost that is 5 times higher than maintaining the existing consumer's loyalty. Moreover, the study finds that the higher the brand loyalty, the less cost the firm has to pay. Gautam (2011) defines perceived quality which is generated from the customer's subjective judgment on a good. Thus perceived quality is a relative behavior that has situational, individual, and past comparison attributes. The study by Gautam (2011) finds that the higher brand image and perceived quality are positively associated with brand loyalty and brand attachment of the consumer. The study by Zikmund et al. (2003) determine that consumers' perceived quality is dependent on the services provided to them and it is measured through their satisfaction level with the quality of the service.

Thus the distributor's performance is integrated with the firm's provided service quality and there is no literature evidence on measuring the mediation effect of perceived quality on the distributor's performance. The study by Rehman and Afsar (2012), finds that the higher perceived quality also builds customer satisfaction and loyalty. Moreover, it also helps in attracting new users through the satisfactory experience of existing customers and their further sharing of experience with their friends. Moreover, true brand loyalty in form of a conscious decision to buy particular same brand products stems from the high level of commitment, positive attitude, and higher

perceived quality of the brand (Khawaja et al., 2021). Such consumers have a low probability to switch their brand choices (Andik & Rachma, 2022). Find that intense distribution enables the consumers to not put more effort into obtaining a brand product of their choice. It is also likely that it enhances the consumer perceived quality for the brand and helps in attaining brand loyalty and users' satisfaction (Murugan & Jacob, 2017).

H4: Brand Attachment has positive impact on Perceived Quality

2.5 Perceived Quality and Distributor's performance

Stylidis et al. (2020) stated that the perceived quality results from analyzing the added value of the good or it are judgments on sustaining the specification of the goods. The study finds that perceived quality relates to the customer's recognition of a particular brand and the objective quality is based on the goods production orientation. The perceived quality has the effects of goods internal and external attributes which form the basis for the user to evaluate the product. The perceived quality holds importance because a previous bad experience influences the consumer's decision for the brand image and his buying decision Kotler and Keller (2006) also stress the importance of positive and effective interaction between the goods and services providing firm and the user to create a higher brand image and perceived quality in the mind of users. The study asserts on service providers set a positive experience for the users on every service encounter. Thus good service experience by the consumers enables them to develop high perceived quality for a brand and it helps the manufacturer to attain competitive advantage (Rehman & Afsar, 2012). If the consumer perceives no difference among the brands, then regardless of motivation the decision-making by the consumer for choosing a particular brand would not be clear.

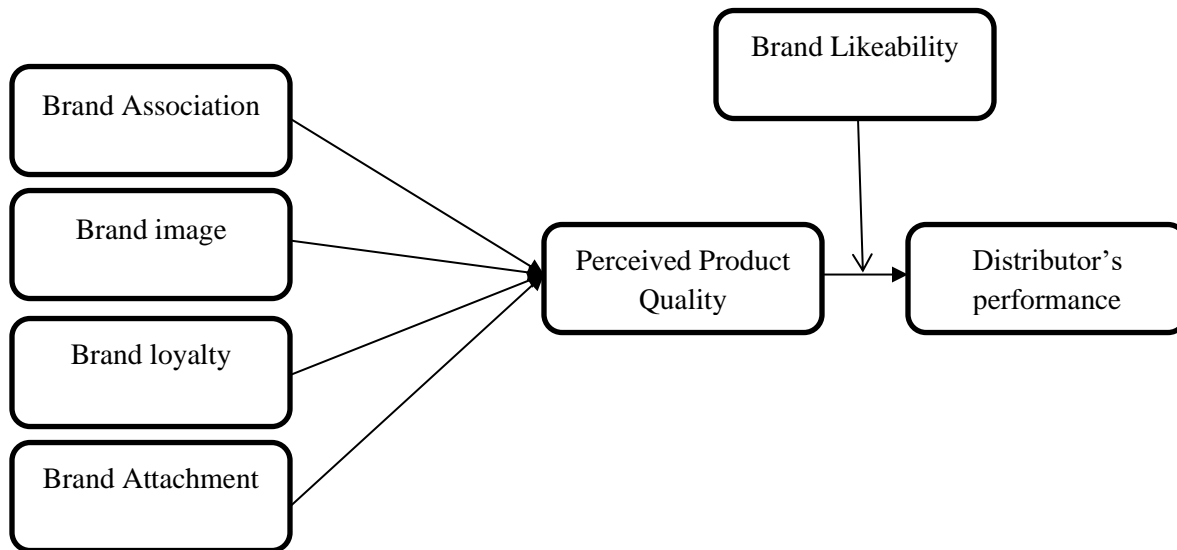
H5: Perceived Quality has positive impact on Distributor's performance

2.6 Brand Likeability as a moderator

The likability of a brand plays a crucial role in influencing the relationship between the perceived quality of a product and the performance of the distributor (Ohlwein & Bruno, 2022). Consumers' perception of a product's good quality positively affects their propensity towards the brand (Narteh et al., 2018). The perception of the brand is strengthened by the likability of the brand, which creates emotional connections and positive associations (Lau et al 1999). As a result, consumers are more inclined to have a positive perception of the distributor's performance, as they associate the brand's overall attractiveness with the availability and ease of access to high-quality products. Furthermore, the likability of a brand can reduce the effects of unfavorable encounters with the distributor by establishing trust and fostering loyalty among consumers (Hughes 2013). In highly competitive markets where product quality may be similar, likeability serves as a crucial factor that sets brands apart, increasing the perceived worth of the brand and putting pressure on distributors to uphold exceptional levels of performance. Brand likeability enhances the favorable impact of perceived product quality on distributor performance, leading to continued consumer loyalty and corporate prosperity (Seyedghorban et al.,2021).

H6: Brand Likeability positively moderates the relationship between Perceived Product Quality and Distributor's performance

Figure No 1: Conceptual framework



3. Methodology

This study employs a deductive methodology, utilizing established theoretical frameworks to direct the gathering, examination, and understanding of data. Through the application of mixed research methods, a combination of qualitative and quantitative insights will be collected, providing a thorough comprehension of the dynamics involved in buying decisions. The research used a cross-sectional design, which enables the gathering and analysis of data within a defined period. The target population consists of individuals who are 18 years old or older, both male and female. This demographic is the main group of online buyers and internet users in Pakistan. A probability selection technique will be employed to determine a sample size of 270 respondents, with the aim of assuring the inclusion of various opinions and limiting the potential for sampling bias. Surveys will be utilized as the principal tool for gathering data, which will be made available to participants through various online and offline platforms. The survey questionnaire will be created with the intention of capturing pertinent variables that impact buying decisions. It will incorporate well-established scales and measures to ensure accuracy and dependability.

The results are analyzed and interpreted to explain their significance and relevance. Furthermore, through the use of Smart PIs analysis data gathered from the questionnaire was analyzed. This research utilized PLS-SEM path modeling to examine the data pertinent to the investigation due to the constructs' nature involving the reflective collection and formative construct in the same model (Hair et al., 2016).

3.1 Measure

To accurately measure the notions of Brand Association, Brand Image, Brand Loyalty, Brand Attachment, Perceived Product Quality, and Brand Likeability, researchers can use established scales and instruments created via substantial empirical study. The Aaker (1991) Brand Association Scale consists of 12 items, which assesses the strength, favorability, and uniqueness of brand connections, is frequently used. Brand image can be efficiently quantified using Keller's (1993) multidimensional scale consist of 10 items, which examines brand perceptions across a variety of traits and benefits. When it comes to brand loyalty, Oliver's (1999) scale consists of 5 items, which focuses on the attitudinal and behavioral elements of loyalty, is widely recognized. For analyzing Brand Attachment, the Park et al. (2010) scale has 12 items, which captures the emotional connection between customers and brands, is recommended. Zeithaml (1988) developed a scale has 15 items for measuring perceived product quality that takes into account consumer perceptions of a product's overall excellence or superiority. Finally, Brand Likeability is best measured using Ehrenberg et al.'s (2002) scale has 5 items, which analyzes consumers' affection and affinity for a brand.

4. Results and Discussions

Figure No 2: Measurement Model

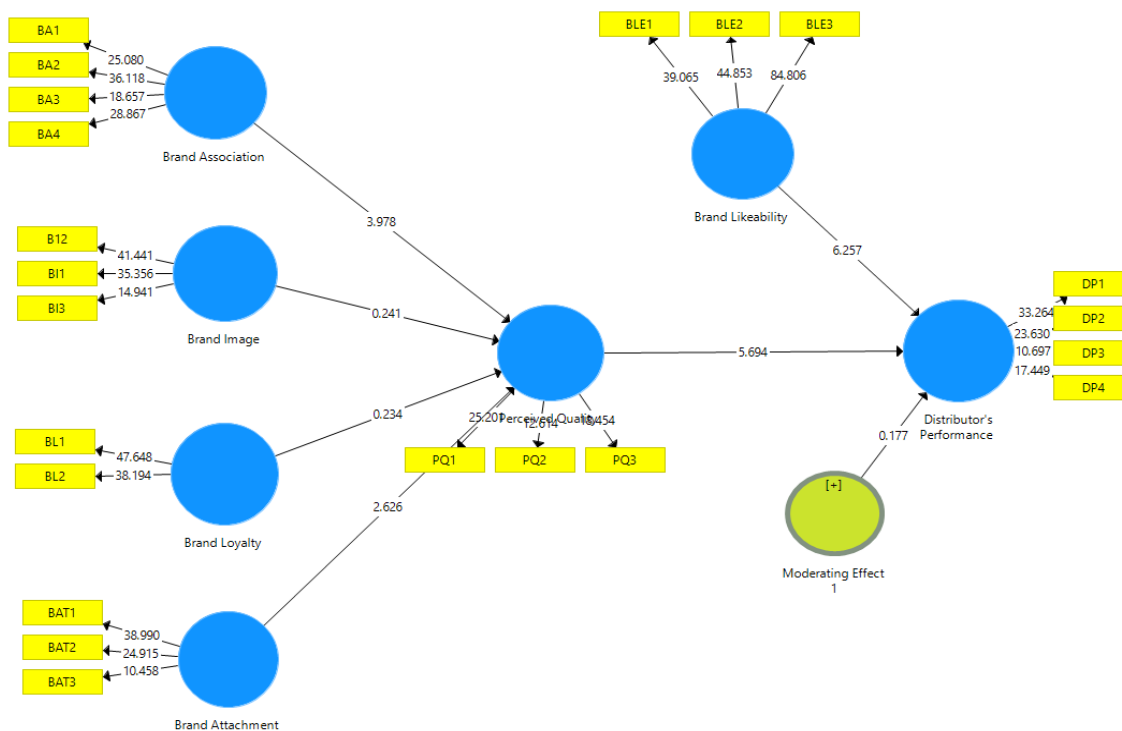


Table No 1: Measurement Model

Cnstrcuts	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	(AVE)
Brand Loyalty	0.838	0.721	0.821	0.759
Brand Image	0.765	0.653	0.834	0.624
Brand Association	0.698	0.754	0.902	0.505
Brand Attachment	0.842	0.861	0.798	0.758
Distributors Performance	0.740	0.911	0.885	0.655
Brand Likeability	0.800	0.843	0.796	0.724
Perceived Quality	0.766	0.864	0.825	0.695

Table No 2: Discriminant Validity

	Brand Loyalty	Brand Image	Brand Attachment	Brand Association	Distributors Performance	Brand Likeability	Quality
Brand Loyalty	0.871						
Brand Image	0.319	0.790					
Brand Attachment	0.006	0.146	0.710				
Brand Association	0.148	0.173	0.784	0.870			
Distributors Performance	0.199	0.028	0.536	0.532	0.809		
Brand Likeability	0.671	0.690	0.701	0.789	0.709	0.867	
Perceived Quality	0.892	0.024	0.697	0.869	0.697	0.803	

Table No 3: Analysis of Discriminant Validity

	Brand Loyalty	Brand Image	Brand Attachment	Brand Association	Distributors Performance	Brand Likeability	Perceived Quality
Brand Loyalty							
Brand Image	0.684						
Brand Attachment	0.162	0.172					
Brand Association	0.173	0.293	0.183				
Distributors Performance	0.292	0.299	0.892	0.588			
Brand Likeability	0.694	0.238	0.163	0.632	0.603		
Perceived Quality	0.163	0.297	0.792	0.732	0.799	0.632	

Table No 4: Hypotheses Assessment Summary

	Beta	T statistics	P Values	Decision
Brand Association ->Perceived Product Quality	0.41	3.303	0.032	Accepted
Brand Image ->Perceived Product Quality	0.01	4.243	0.021	Accepted
Brand Loyalty ->Perceived Product Quality	0.11	2.232	0.030	Accepted
Brand Attachment->Perceived Product Quality	0.39	2.626	0.000	Accepted
Perceived Product Quality -> Distributor’s Performance	0.39	2.626	0.041	Accepted
Moderating effect Brand Likeability	0.21	6.257	0.051	Accepted

Hypothesis analysis illuminates model variables' linkages. First, a beta coefficient of 0.41, a T statistic of 3.303, and a p-value of 0.032 shows that stronger brand associations increase perceived product quality. Despite a small beta coefficient of 0.01, a T statistic of 4.243 and a p-value of 0.021 support the hypothesis that brand image positively affects perceived product quality. Brand loyalty has a beta coefficient of 0.11, a T statistic of 2.232, and a p-value of 0.040, indicating that consumer loyalty influences product quality assessments. A beta coefficient of 0.39, a T statistic of 2.626, and a p-value of 0.041 shows that perceived product quality affects distributor performance. Finally, with a beta coefficient of 0.21, a high T statistic of 6.257, and a p-value of 0.051, brand likeability moderates the relationship between perceived product quality and distributor performance. These findings show that brand-related characteristics affect perceived product quality and distributor performance, emphasizing the relevance of strong brand associations and likeability to improve business outcomes.

4.1 Discussion

Brand association and distributors' performance are positively associated, supported by the empirical results. A strong and better association supports the brand to make it strong. Brand attachment is supported by the results. Attachment to the brand motivates customers to develop a positive attitude and enhances the performance of the organization and gives them a competitive edge is also supported by the results. Brand loyalty has a positive effect on distributors' performance. It is found in the research a positive relationship between the satisfactions of customers and has a direct effect on loyalty, and likewise, brand loyalty is not constant and must be strengthened. The brand association represents the foundation for purchasing decisions about the brand purchase and the customer has a lot of things about knowing the brand is supported by distributors' performance. Moreover, an association of products contains fundamental and non-functional attributes and associations. Brand likeability on distributors' performance is also supported by the results. Brand likeability is assisting brand managers with the assessment, evaluation, and measurement of likeability which, in turn, may predict the consumer-brand relationship quality. The emerging concept of likeability contributes to the personality and improves long-term concepts considered vital in this interactive market.

5. Conclusion

To summarize, this study has provided insights into the complex connection between the perceived quality of a product, the performance of the distributor, and the influence of brand likeability. After conducting a thorough examination of current literature and empirical evidence, several important conclusions have been identified. The determinants of perceived product quality are essential factors that significantly influence consumers' perceptions and attitudes towards a product. Product attributes such as features, reliability, durability, and service quality have a substantial impact on consumers' perception of the overall quality of a product. Comprehending these factors is crucial for businesses to efficiently control and improve how their products are perceived in terms of quality. Furthermore, the performance of distributors is significantly impacted by the way consumers perceive the quality of the product. Distributors that provide products of superior quality are more likely to witness a rise in client satisfaction, loyalty, and recurring purchases. In contrast, negative views of product quality can result in adverse consequences for distributors, such as decreased sales, tarnished reputation, and a decline in market share. Furthermore, the significance of brand likeability as a moderating factor in the correlation between perceived product quality and distributor performance has been emphasized. An influential and appealing brand has the potential to positively impact consumers' perceptions of product quality, resulting in improved distributor performance. On the other hand, a brand that is weak or not well-liked may not be able to reduce the negative effect of how customers perceive the quality of the product on how well distributors operate.

5.1 Limitations and Future Research

The present study provides insights into the beneficial effects of brand association, brand image, brand loyalty, and brand attachment on the perceived quality of products; however, it is imperative to recognize a number of limitations that may impact the interpretation and applicability

of the results. First, the cross-sectional design used in this study makes it more difficult to determine the causal linkages between variables, indicating the necessity for longitudinal research to fully capture the dynamic nature of relationships between brands and consumers over time. Furthermore, depending too much on a particular sample size and demographic make-up could restrict the range of viewpoints, which highlights the significance of using bigger and more varied samples in subsequent studies. Measurement biases, including social desirability bias, may also affect participants' answers, which is why it's important to investigate different measurement strategies to improve the validity of the findings. Furthermore, although brand likeability is examined in the study as a moderating factor, other possible moderators are not examined, indicating areas for further research into variables like consumer involvement or situational influences.

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