

# Factors Affecting Consumer's Purchase Intention Toward Japanese Car in Pakistan

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## Abstract

The main objective of this study is to inspect such factors that affect the purchase intention of consumer towards imported Japanese cars and to analyze generally prevailed perception about relative advantage of imported Japanese cars on locally assembled cars. Reliability is used in a sense of trustworthiness as it is the quality of being trustworthy or of performing consistently well. This research emphasizes the impact of four independent variables derived mainly from literature including brand awareness, brand association, perceived quality, and brand loyalty. The consumer's purchase intention toward Japanese car in Pakistan is the dependent variable. This study used a questionnaire-based survey and respondents were evaluated on 5 points Likert scale ranging from 1-strongly disagree to 5-strongly agree. Total 165 questionnaires were distributed out of which 150 questionnaires were used. Further in this research convenience based sampling (non-probability) technique was used. Respondents from different age groups and gender revealed more or less similar behavior towards said factors and data collected from respondents reflects that all mentioned factors influence consumer purchase intention.

**Keywords:** Japanese cars, Reliability, Perceived quality of automobiles, Durability

## 1. Introduction

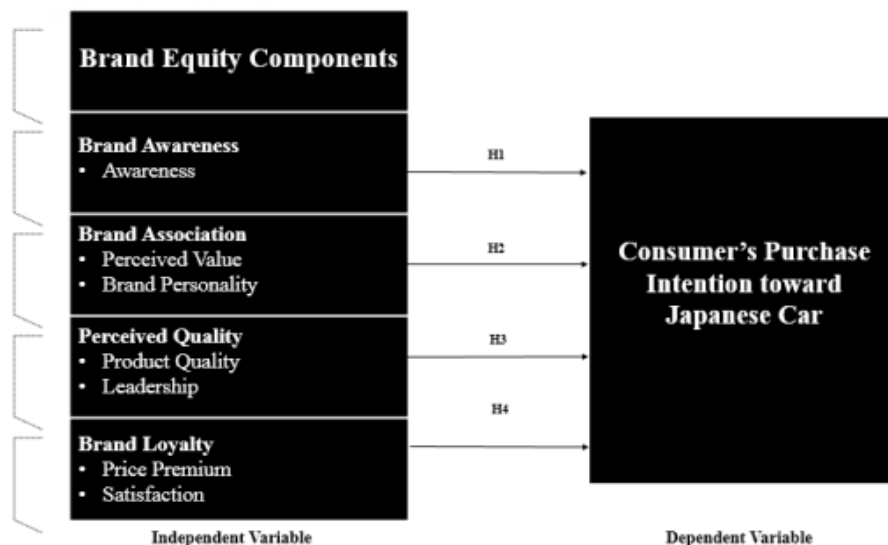
Reliability is the most important factor in molding the customer buying intention towards any product. When a consumer is going to purchase an automobile the intensity of this factor increase even more. According to the drive.com (2010), 54% of the total customers that buy automobile was only based upon reliability. Now the question arises what are the factors that increase the intensity of reliability of automobile customer. If we talk about the automobile industry Japanese cars are at the top of the list. Japan has been in the top three countries with most cars manufactured since the 1960s, surpassing Germany. Japan is now currently the third largest automotive producer in the world with an annual production of 9.9 million automobiles. Japanese investments helped grow the auto industry in many countries throughout the last few decades if we talk about Pakistan the investment of Japanese industry is almost 90% (includes both local assembled and imported cars). This study focuses on the trend of the increasing interest of Pakistani customers towards imported Japanese cars and what are the factors that affect customer reliability towards Japanese cars. Japanese have performed an economic miracle since World War II. In a relatively short time, they have achieved global market leadership in industries thought to be dominated by impregnable giants. In Japan, the automotive industry got a boom from the 1970s to the 1990s, as before the U.S was the production leader, but Japan overtook with 1.3 million cars in exporting and manufacturing per year. In the period of 1990, very cheap, reliable and famous cars were manufactured by the Japanese and for such reasons in 2000, Japan became one of the leading nations in the production of cars. Japan's car industry continues to flourish, it's market share has risen again, and in the first quarter of 2008 Toyota surpassed American General Motors to become the world's largest car manufacturer. (Bunkley & Nick, 2008). The relation of the Japanese automobile industry with the Pakistani economy and market has become stronger and stronger over the years. According to a study, the auto sector is in the list of top-5 in Pakistan with respect to tax revenues and owns a workforce of 3 million people. Production

data revealed that production from 2006-7 till 2013-14 remained negative and a rise observed in imports of vehicles from Japan. The import ratio of new cars has become low as compared to used cars in the recent year 2017-18 (The Nation, 2018). The ratio of used cars has gained certain importance because of improving better political and social situations. The import of used cars has jumped considerably in the first five months of the fiscal year 2017-18 due to improving macros and better law and order situation. In the fiscal year 2017, a drastic increase has been seen in the import of used cars as it reaches to 55,000 units. All these elements forced to conduct a study on imported Japanese cars and find out the factors that influence customer reliability on Japanese cars. Literature suggests that reliability, perceived quality, inexpensive to service/repair, driving comfort, performance, price/value for money, fuel economy, safety, etc. are among top factors that influence the purchase of a new or used car. Quality and durability, however, remain the key factors which are widely discussed in purchase decisions. Consumer behavior today is more inclined towards reliability while purchasing a car. Keeping in view the same more and more people compelled towards Japanese Cars due to their quality and a similar trend is also being observed here in Pakistan. There are many factors which are involved in making Japanese cars a quality product and the same factors are believed to increase the reliability of Japanese Cars in consumer prospect. Thus to understand what are the underlying causes that promote the purchase of imported Japanese cars instead of locally assembled cars it is important to understand the factors that affect the reliability of Japanese Cars. To study the factors affecting customer reliability towards Japanese cars on the students of Punjab University by examining the four variables which are; Perceived Quality, Affordable Price, Durability and Low Maintenance and Operational Cost. Secondary markets today plan an important role and offer a wide range of products for consumers. In the US the number of transactions for used cars is approximately thrice of new cars and for obvious reasons the price variation is more in case of used cars so what are the factors that make used cars more favorable in the minds of the consumer. This study presents a very simple model to address this question. This study will help in determining the key factors that influence the purchase of imported Japanese cars and to analyze what are the relative advantages imported Japanese cars possess over locally assembled cars.

### *1.1 Conceptual Framework*

This study explores the relationship between Consumer Purchase Intention which is taken as the dependent variable and Brand Awareness, Brand Association, perceived quality, and brand loyalty are taken as independent variables. The purpose of this study is to look at factors that affect the purchase intention of the consumer.

**Conceptual Framework**



*1.2 Hypothesis*

H.1: Brand awareness affects a consumer's purchase intention.

H.2: Brand association affects consumer's purchase intention.

H.3: Perceived quality effect consumer's purchase intention.

H.4: Brand loyalty affect consumer's purchase intention

*1.3 Literature Review*

According to literature, Garvin in 1984 attempted to define quality from perspectives that are mainly five in number, the transcendent based approach, product-based approach, user-based approach, manufacturing-based approach, and the value-based approach. In his framework, he also suggested eight different dimensions as elements of product quality. These dimensions include features, performance, reliability, conformance, durability, serviceability, aesthetics and perceived quality. Four of them are used as components in this study.

*1.4 Consumer's Purchase Intention*

Consumer behavior is the study of the processes involving individuals or groups select, purchase, use or dispose of products, services, idea or experiences to satisfy the needs and desires (Solomon, 2013, p. 31). Consumer's purchasing behavior is influenced by cultural, social, personal and psychological factors moreover consumer also has different in various factors such as age, income, education level and preferences that can affect the way they use goods and services. (Kotler, 2012, p. 173). Marketers try so hard to create stimuli in order to satisfy consumer; however it is not easy because the consumer has differed in lifestyle, cultural, social, personal and psychological aspects the factors which affect to consumer's lifestyle that is a pattern of living, it involves activities, interests, and opinions. Lifestyle also reflects their choice of how an individual spends or allocates time and money to different products and services. If consumers are pleased with the product or service then they would like to repurchase or suggest to their friends. (Perreau, 2014). According to Kotler, 1997 a consumer will repurchase the product if he/she feels satisfied with it but if the quality of the

product is not good then he/she will not purchase it and ignore it. Consumers have different needs that depend on the situation, they will try to satisfy their most important and then they move on to other needs. There are five hierarchies of needs composed of psychological needs, safety needs, social needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization needs. For example a salesman wants to have his own car for drive to meet a customer (need 1), he prefers a car with safety capacities (need 2), while many his friends use Toyota Vios so he wants to buy it too (need 3), he is a senior salesman and thinks that Toyota Altis is suitable for his position (need 4) and thinking about his future and his family, so Toyota Camry is the appropriate choice (need 5) and in the end he will select the most important need (Maslow, 1970). Consumer needs become a motivation that they try to respond to their needs. Motivation may refer to reasons that conduct consumer's behavior which is arising from the needs, drives or desires. After motivation occur consumer will struggle to achieve their needs or objectives that could be caused naturally or by learning it (Freud, 1880).

Paszkiwicz (2003) explained in her research about cost and demographic factors that affect consumer's purchase intention either to buy a brand-new car or by leasing a used car. The frequent way of owning a car is by buying a brand-new car or leasing a used car as leasing a used car is not a common type but buying a new car is the most frequent way. This decision is not only affected by the cost factor but also by other factors as there is less burden in leasing a used car. 88% of the total customers have their own new cars or lease a used car according to Consumer Expenditure (CE) Survey data 2000. The Survey from Consumer Expenditure (CE) explains that customer's purchase decision of cars is affected by the demographics.

Siriwathananukul (2013) explained in his research about influential factors toward consumer decision making that consist of demographic factors, marketing mix factors, and motivation factors. Demographic factor analysis with 400 people and most of the representative samples were 290 males which were 72.5 percent. Their ages were between 21-30 years old, which was 90.5 percent. For the educational level, the majority were Bachelor's degree and their average income was 15,001-30,000 baht/month, which was 77 percent. The researcher found that demographic factors including age and education level only that effect on consumer decision making on buying the eco-car for the first car project of the customer in Bangkok. As many scholar's research, it can summarize that Consumer's purchase intention means the sum total of a consumer's intention affects to behavior on purchasing toward product or service. Brand Equity represents the symbol of a brand. It is the intangible product of features, brand symbol, the background of the product and its repute in the market, its price and packaging and the methods of their advertisement. A brand is also defined by the consumer's impression of people who use it, as their own experience (Ogilvy, 1995). In the consumer perspective toward the brand, they accumulate their experience with the brand then they will gradually create a brand image. A brand is simply a sum of different perceptions that occur in the mind of customers (Feldwick & Cowley, 1991). Products provide functional or tangible benefits in term of physical satisfy while brand provides emotional or intangible benefits that can satisfy consumer's passion. A brand is all about the memories that people have in their minds about their childhood things like mothers said and mental connections. However, when new brands are launched, memories can be created from the advertisement. (Millward Brown

International). Whether consumer's memories in childhood or memories from advertising, they cover all consumer emotional aspects which are intangible such as trust, confidence, familiarity, shared experiences relationship, status, and personality. A brand can deliver up to four levels of meaning; features, benefits, values, and personality. If a company does not maintain its quality and merely treats a brand as a name, it misses the point of branding (Kotler, 1991). These four levels are supported by the brand, attributes are shape and image that consumer can recognize and remind them to the brand. Benefits are the advantage of product or service which is tangible, the value may intangible but the consumer has a feeling with brand and personality provide characteristic to the consumer who uses the brand. Marketers around the world agree that brand image is a power factor for successful marketing. Brand image aids marketers to differentiate their products or services from competitors. It helps consumer remember impressive products or services. A product was produced by the manufacturer and a brand is selected by the consumer when they choose the product (King, 1988). It draws out about the importance of brand image, even products were produced by the same manufacturer but different brands also satisfy the consumer. When the time changes, the marketing factor also changes.

Siripullop (2000) explained in his article, they adore the famous brand product without considering any reason. They use the expensive brand product without product knowledge, the decision to buy a product is only based on the popularity of brand and brand image. Nowadays, in the era of Generation C which is a new generation and without specific age but divided by using electronic devices and social media addicted behaviors (Decharin, 2012). The consumer has more reasons in order to make a decision on purchasing a product, they now consider the product at a reasonable price or the attributes fitting to their needs or not. Therefore, it has an effect on the importance of brand image because they seek for the importance of brand equity and purchasing a valid product.

### *1.5 Brand Equity*

Aaker (1991) explained that brand equity is a set of brand assets and liabilities linked to a brand, its name, and logo that increases or decreases the value of a product or service provided to the firm or its consumers. Brand equity can be divided into five categories; brand loyalty, brand awareness, perceived quality, brand association, and other proprietary brand assets. Gasca (2014) proposed in his article that nowadays young people are the most powerful customers, it is necessary to instill brand loyalty to them. Companies need to understand consumers that what they are thinking and what they are looking for in a brand. The new generation is mobile and social network individuals. If the brand wants to connect with a new generation, the firm should be technologically equipped. The generation today has much more knowledge than the previous one, as the younger generation gathers knowledge from a different type of sources as the most common is the use of the internet. Chainirun (2011) mentioned in his article which focused on perceived quality and brand association that firms have to define which position of their brand in the market also to present the difference from other products of the same kind. Communication is the most important strategies that firms have to reach to the consumers and one of the most effective methods is through social media. Consumers should understand the product quality to show the brand value which are the functionality and emotional values. Every company tries to create brand equity on their



products or service because they want to satisfy the consumers need also keep customer-based. Sometimes it is not hard to gain the attention of the customers but to keep them loyal to the brand might be difficult to retain. Thus, firms need to focus on customer-based brand equity that is affected by two factors one is brand information of consumers and second is the marketing of brand (Kotler, 2012, p. 266). According to brand equity theory, there are related significant factors which are brand awareness, brand association, perceived quality, and brand loyalty.

### *1.6 Perceived Quality*

In the past, the extent of quality was identified using “zero defects” yardstick but this definition of quality is simply not enough. According to Mitra and Golder perceived quality is the “perception of the customer” and they derived this from the definition of Zeithaml. Zeithaml (1988) described perceived quality as the individual judgment about product superiority. Norman (2005) refers to perceive quality as emotional responses of the customer towards a particular design. Similarly according to Aaker perceived quality represents the quality of the product which is in the mind of customer’s w.r.t to its proposed purpose as compared to its substitutes, so we can say that perceived quality is more about the perception of the customer. According to Kotler consumer matches perceived quality with expectation. If quality matches expectation consumer will be happy but if the quality falls short of expectation consumer will be annoyed that’s why companies today take into account the cost of poor quality and analyze the financial impact of quality on sales of the product. To take full advantage one should know the customer’s perception of quality or we can alternatively say one should fully understand the dimensions of perceived quality. For automobiles, perceived quality can be categorized as Value based perceived quality and Technical perceived quality (Stylidis, Wickman, & Soderberg, 2015).

Today consumer behavior is evolving and in the modern era of cut-throat competition, there is more than ever need to improve perceived quality because the success of any company can be directly or indirectly related to the initiatives it took to improve quality of the product. So we can say with confidence that perceived quality is one of the most important factors in judging the success of car manufacturers (Stylidis, Wickman, & Soderberg, 2015). According to Armstrong and Kotler (2003) “Reliability and quality are correlated with one another, if the quality of the product is same then customers will buy that product again and will remain loyal to the brand and if the quality is affected then brand loyalty will decrease”.

Resale value is always under shadowed and normally not being evaluated as a measure or criteria while purchasing a new vehicle. According to a study of Schoettle and Sivak (2018) while purchasing passenger cars or light trucks expected resale value is ranked as seventh or eighth most important criteria. So keeping in view the significance of resale value it is considered as one of the major components of perceived quality because according to Thanomsub perceived quality is consumer perceive quality from product or service and have an appreciation for it. Features can be defined as additional characteristics that increase the attractiveness of the product for the consumer. According to Garvin, features are the “bells and whistles” of products and services and they complement the basic function of the product so for some reason feature is included as a dimension or component of perceived quality. Consumer while purchasing automobiles considers the design, color, resale value, less fuel

consumption and driving method as key aspects (Zaman, Ahmed, & Irfan, 2013) so the design is an important component of perceived quality. During the design process, there is always more focus on important design attributes (Hauser, 1988). More importance should be given to the brand image and less value should be given to the manufacturing quality design characteristics (Stylidis et al., 2014; Wiedmann et al., 2013).

### *1.7 Brand Awareness*

Brand awareness is one of the major factors for a well-known brand, product or service in the market. Whenever a certain product is being launched into a marketplace the main aim of it is making its customers well-aware of its unique features and to attract the customers. Within a year of the launch of the product, it must be known to its target population. (Kokemuller, 2012).

Rossiter and Percy (1987) described the term brand awareness as a critical discussion. It must be noted that detailed information is not the requirement for brand identification. When customers purchase a brand then it is recognized, and people become aware of it. There is a concept of communication and it plays a vital role in brand awareness.

When a brand is launched it must be known to its target customers, it can either be done by advertisement. The advertisement is one of the major pillars of brand awareness. The company designs the strategy of advertising their product. When customers see continuous adds of a certain brand, their minds tend to purchase decision the product. (Macdonald & Sharp, 1997).

In this particular research, the author explains that brand awareness is closely connected to the consumer's awareness. Firstly, a consumer recognizes a brand but have no perception about it. It is the primary objective of a brand to prepare such advertisement that should initiate its customers to make a purchase decision and after consuming they give positive feedback.

### *1.8 Brand Association*

Aaker (1991) suggested that close connections between a product and its brand are termed as a brand association, the higher the brand association the more good opinion about the product. Generally, it is the intrinsic feelings, thoughts, perception, and personality of a person that is the reason behind the purchase decision of a product.

The brand association may also be described as the entanglement of the emotional level of customers and their perspective of a particular product. This perspective of consumers will urge them to buy certain product Berger (1992).

Brand association can provide perceived value in two ways: first, there is a perceived value of a product in customer's mind that will influence the customer, to buy a particular brand product but not of the other brands. Second, the perceived value of a product will make it easy for customers in positioning strategy of different products (Vantamay, 2007).

In this particular study, the brand association is the key to measure the perceived value of the product that it is worthy of being purchased by the customers. The customer will always select the product from a specific brand which matches its personality and attitude.



### *1.9 Brand Loyalty*

Brand loyalty is considered as loyalty towards the quality of a brand product and continuous purchase of it. It is also explained as using a specific brand product due to its quality and not switching towards other brands (Jacoby & Kyner, 1973).

Brand loyalty is a key component in the success of a product as companies maintain the quality of a product, the brand retains its customers for a long time. When customers are familiar with a brand and the quality of the product remain the same then they will buy the product in repetition and will recommend it to others even at the premium pricing. The customer loyalty of a brand product explains its premium pricing (Shetz & Sobel, 2004), (Vaazquez & Iglesias, 2001).

In the paper, brand loyalty is described as the willingness of consumers to pay extra as premium pricing for a particular product of a brand and recommending it to others. Consumer satisfaction for a brand is important for making a purchase in repetition. When a customer consumes a product and feels satisfied with its quality then he/she will purchase a similar product next time. When a customer purchases the same product several times it shows commitment towards a brand. Trust and perceived values also determine the brand loyalty of a product (Rizwan, 2014). Thereby, brand loyalty can be measured by quality, commitment, satisfaction and premium pricing.

## **2. Methodology**

This study used a quantitative approach. In this study, data is collected in a natural setting as non-contrived settings. Considering time constraint and cost of study this study uses a cross-sectional approach. This study used Questionnaire-based survey and students of Punjab University are used as respondents. Since the exact population is not known so this study will use item response theory to determine sample size. Further, this study used a convenience-based sampling technique to get a response from respondents. Existing scale of a previous study is used i.e. Factors Affecting Consumer's Purchase Intention toward Japanese Car in Bangkok by Morradok Thanomsub. There were 150 respondents from University of the Punjab, Lahore. The non-probability convenience sampling was used because the exact population was unknown. Primary data was gathered through a questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed between 18 to 40 age groups because it is observed they were faced with financial threats. To inspect the findings of this study SPSS software is used. Different tools like Histogram, Regression Descriptive Statistics, Pearson Correlation, and One sample T-Test are used for analysis. Fortunately, there were no outliers. This helped the researcher to analyze the impact of independent variables.

## **3. Descriptive Analysis**

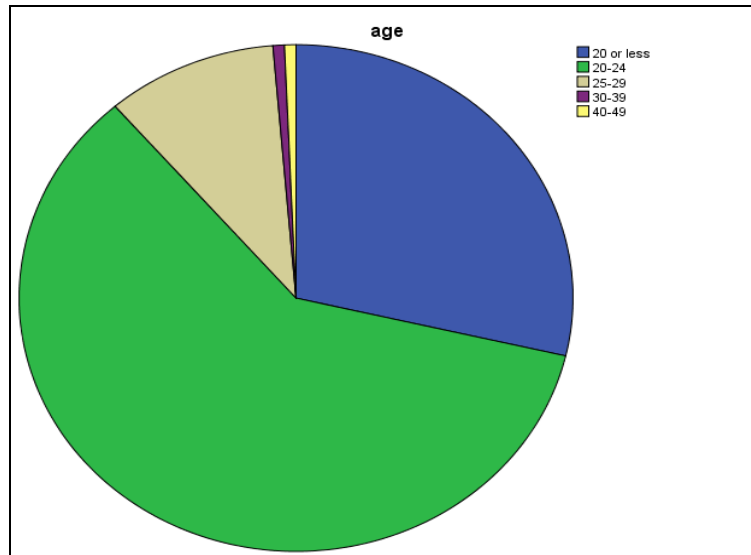
Demographical distribution of respondents

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Gender of respondents

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	Frequency	Percent
Male	88	58.7
Female	62	41.3
Marital status		
Married	30	20
Single	120	80



Age of the respondents

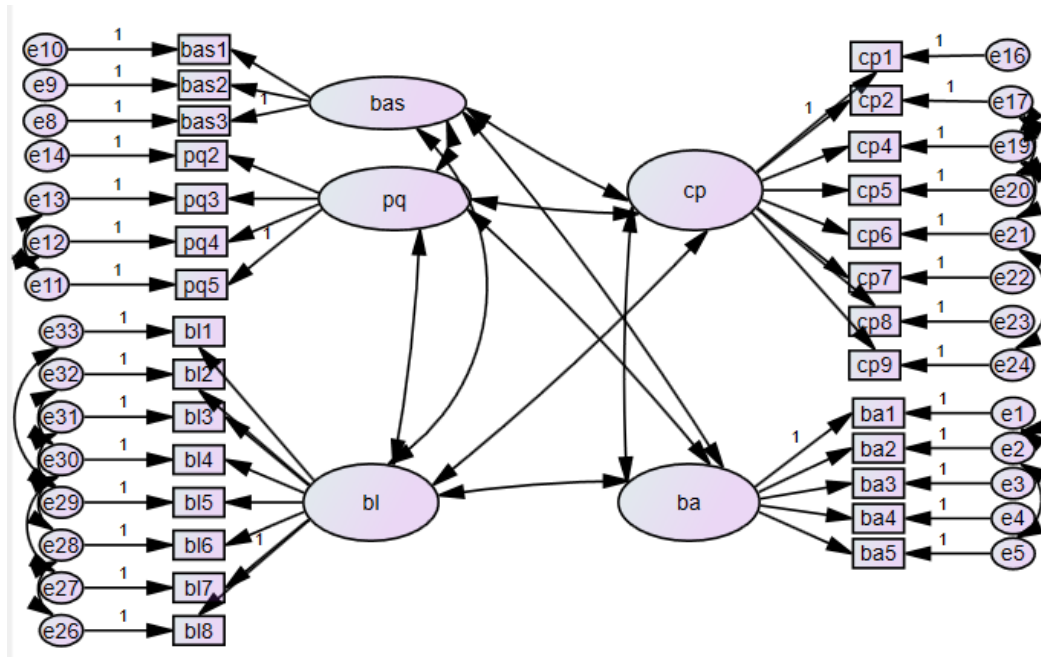
### 3.1 Reliability

Construct	Cronbach's alpha
Brand awareness	.795
Brand association	.694
Perceived quality	.785
Brand loyalty	.889
Consumer purchase intention	.863

The reliability of all question is above .70. The value shows a good sign of reliability. Nunnally (1978, p. 245) is often associated with the assertion that instruments used in basic research should have the reliability of .70 or better

### 3.2 Correlation Matrix

	1	2	3	4	5
Brand loyalty	1				
Consumer purchase intention	.574**	1			
Perceived quality	.466**	.525**	1		
Brand association	.709**	.667**	.649**	1	
Brand awareness	.631**	.792**	..707**	.617**	1

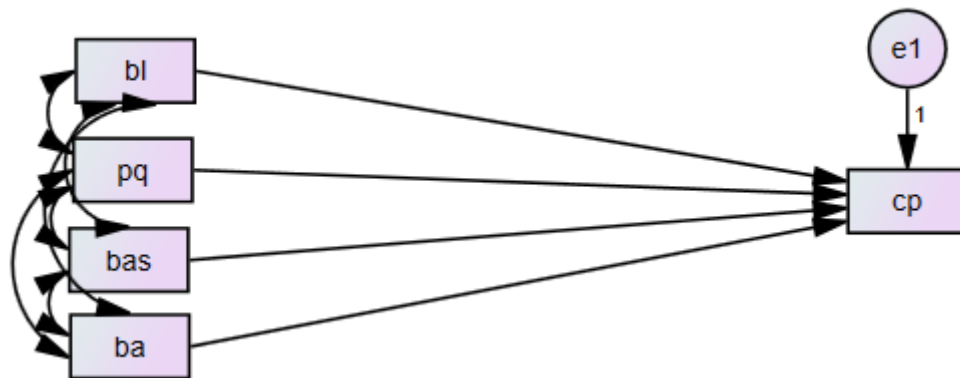


Model fitness summary

MODEL	CMIN/DF	GFI	CFI	RMSEA
	1.483	.820	.916	.057

The comparative fit index (CFI), The GFI (Goodness of fit index), CMIN and RMSEA were within the acceptable range.

### 3.3 Structure Equation Model



Hypotheses	Beta values	Results
BL-CP	.368***	Accepted
PQ-CP	.274***	Accepted
BAS-CP	.325***	Accepted
BA-CP	.494***	Accepted

The effect of brand loyalty on consumer purchase intention is significant with beta value .368 or p-value .001 which shows that a person who has loyalty toward brand affect the consumer purchase intention. The effect of perceived quality on consumer purchase intention is significant with beta value .274 or p-value 0.001 which shows that zero defects product engaged the consumer toward them and consumer shows more interest toward the product. The effect of brand association on consumer purchase intention is significant with beta value .325 or p-value 0.001 which shows that close connection with a product lead toward high consumer purchase intention. The effect of brand awareness on consumer purchase intention is significant with beta value .494 or p-value 0.001 which shows that brand awareness is closely connected to consumer's awareness.

#### **4. Discussion**

The main objective of this study was to examine the effects between components that affect brand equity and purchase intention of customers. As 1<sup>st</sup> hypothesis was about brand awareness that it has an effect on customer's intention to purchase and this hypothesis was supported and results are similar to the previous research Percy & Rossiter (1987). The 2<sup>nd</sup> hypothesis was the effect of brand association on customer's intention to purchase and it was also supported and results were similar to the research of Vantamay, 2007. The 3<sup>rd</sup> hypothesis was about perceived brand quality effect customer's intention to purchase and results showed that this hypothesis was also accepted, the results were similar to previous research Zeithamal (1988). the 4<sup>th</sup> hypothesis was brand loyalty affects customer's purchase intention and it was also supported, results were related to the past research of Thanomsub (2014).

#### **5. Implications**

In order to make brand equity better from competitors, the company must focus on brand awareness, brand association, perceived quality, and brand loyalty. The company must focus on creative ways to advertise their product to capture its customer's mind and to compete with its competitors. The company must pay heed to modern and innovative ideas in advertising their product. The company should move towards new interesting situations and ideas in advertising in order to make its brand awareness. Lowest agree level in the brand association is safe to use. The company should introduce new and effective ways to improve the security systems of cars and make a contract with some trustworthy security companies so that they can increase the customer's trust. The company must focus on the quality of the car as the quality component enhances the value of brand among customers. Customers seek the brand which gives them the best value. Perceived quality of the brand is the reliance of customers on the brand. When it comes to brand loyalty, price premium shows the customers are well aware of features of the car and its price, so the company must focus on car models while setting their price. Sometimes, the customers do not value the company which offers fewer prices as they think the quality is below average, so the company should focus on increasing features to the car in order to increase its value.

Finally, customer's purchase intention must be understood by the Japanese car companies in order to make strategies which differentiate it from its competitors.

#### **6. Future Recommendation & Limitations**

Firstly, the researcher only focuses on Japanese cars but there are other brands such as local

and Korean brand, the origin of cars has a major impact on customer's purchase intention. Secondly, this research is done on students of the University of Punjab so, there is a class difference as they prefer local brands and further research can be done on other sectors. Thirdly, the research is done in Lahore region, further research should see the impact on a big city such as Karachi, and purchase intention of customer's changes as it is influenced by the environment of different cities.

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