Comparison between Consumer Buying Preferences w.r.t. Brand Value Chain in Indian Markets

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Abstract: *Brand value both played a role in determining brand and category loyalty of the consumers. Brand personality was seen to play a much more significant role. Brands with a clearly communicated consistent personality had a bigger set of loyal customers. Desktops are the dinosaurs of the PC industry then came the laptops which first enabled mobility that smart phones later extended. In three years, the market is nearly equal that of desktops and is on track to surpass laptops possibly this year. The role of brands within companies has changed over the last decades. Being no longer just any part of the corporate value chain they are today the key to a company's success. This development can be explained by the fact that the market value of a company does not mainly come from its tangible assets anymore, but its intangibles and goodwill. Brands as intangible assets thus gain more and more importance for a company's existence. The research design is the conceptual structure within which research is conducted; it constitutes the blueprint for the collection, measurement and analysis of data. Research designs are classified into three traditional categories: exploratory, descriptive and causal, the choice of the most appropriate design depends largely upon the objectives of the research. The type of research followed was Exploratory in nature and it was followed by Descriptive research. The data was collected from 120 present and potential consumers of personal computers in Delhi-NCR. The participants were divided into three different strata depending on various characteristics. Convenience sampling method of non – probability sampling was adopted for this study.*

Keywords: *Consumer Behaviour, Perception, Brand Value Chain, Computers*

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I. Introduction

The combined desk-based and mobile PC market in India totaled nearly 2.9 million units in the third quarter of 2012, a 5.9 per cent decrease over the third quarter of 2015. Which accounted for 47% of the overall desktop market, declined 35% in the third quarter of 2012 compared to the same period last year. Initiatives such as Ultrabooks and Windows 8 haven't reinvigorated the PC market as much as the industry had hoped. International Data Corp. (IDC) expects growth to remain muted in the upcoming years. However, this is still a more than US\$60 billion market in the Asia-Pacific (excluding Japan) region alone." According to IDC's report, ongoing weakness in the global economy, coupled with a preference in the region's mature markets for smartphones and tablets, served to hurt PC shipments. In the fourth quarter specifically, the market came in 4 per cent below IDC's initial forecasts, with a 5 per cent year-on-year decline. The market researcher cited clearing out of existing Windows 7 inventory before bringing in new Windows 8 stocks. Furthermore, all brands except for Lenovo (which grew 11 per cent) and Asus (18 per cent) fell in terms of sales last year. Lenovo led the market with a market share of 24.6 per cent thanks to its success in expanding the brand beyond China, including posting strong growth in India. Asus, while ranking only fifth in the region, managed to grow its market share from 6.2 per cent in 2015 to 7.5 per cent in 2012 on the back of an 18 per cent growth in unit sales. This came thanks to its strategy of targeting lower-tier cities in emerging markets with entry-level units, said the report. While Acer remained second in the region, its market share shrank from 11 per cent in 2015 to 10 per cent in 2012 due to an 11 per cent drop in unit sales. HP and Dell dropped 8 per cent and 15 per cent in sales, respectively. Internal re-organization activities kept HP busy for much of the year, though its decline was arrested by recent efforts at regaining partner confidence. Meanwhile, in case of Dell, a shift towards higher valued products was adopted.
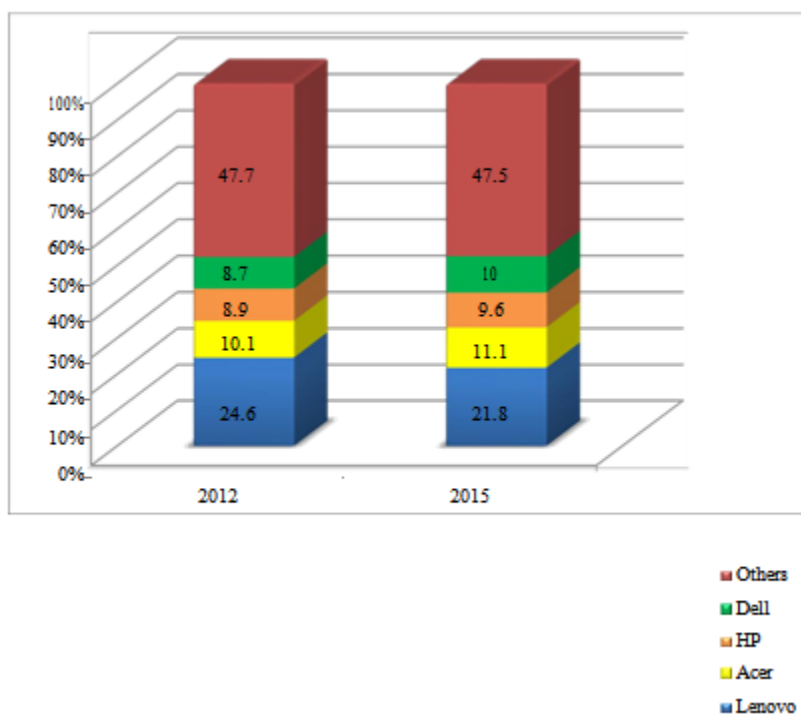
Table 1.1

Figure 1.1

PCs, the market was impacted by high inflation, global economic uncertainty and limited share of wallet as consumers preferred to spend on other consumer durables.

A brand personality describes how an organisation imbues a brand with human personality traits intended to create symbolic associations that are strong, unique and congruent to the customer (Freling & Forbes, 2005). Aaker (1997), provides numerous implications for brand personality research. First, for a brand to be successful, its personality must match the consumer's current or ideal human personality. This can be done by identifying the brand dimension that describes the brand, and insuring the personalities of this dimension are adequately portrayed to the consumer. The ultimate goal is to insure the brand personality influences the consumer's preference for a brand in a specific product category. Additionally, the Brand Personality Scale (Aaker, 1997) can be used to benchmark one's brand against competitors' brands in the same product category. Companies can easily identify the most successful brands in a product category, learn personalities this brand conveys, and copy or adjust their marketing strategies to capture the same or other market segments. Brand personality, all the human characteristics associated with a brand contains. Any direct or indirect contact that the consumer has with a brand helps in forming the Brand Personality. The trait approach states that personality is a set of traits, defined as "any distinguishable, relatively enduring way in which one individual differs from others" (Batra, Lehmann and Singh, 1993). It is about psychological phenomena giving sense to the action and to the human experience. Personality can be defined as "the consistency of interaction towards a person's external and internal stimuli" (Fiske, 1971). The brand personality has a concept of positioning the personality with specific meanings to the customers. Therefore the customers will use brands with personality to build their own self-image. Furthermore, the brand personality help distinct the product out of the crowds when it come to the competition. Then, it will help the products differentiate themselves, resulting into the competitive advantage. The individuals use the brand with the personality that they perceive themselves to be, which can be called 'Self-Concept'. Self-concept can be defined as "the totality of the individual's thoughts and feelings having reference to himself as an object" (Rosenberg, 1979, p. 7). In the other words, they use the brands with the personality to describe their particular personality. (Diamantopoulos A.; Smith G.; Grime I, 2007). Schlenker, Helm and Tedeschi (1973) suggested that in some consumption environments, consumers form strong attachments to brands that might predict their commitment, and their willingness to make sacrifices in order to maintain the relationship. A good strategy to maintain one's self identity is by building Consumer-brand relationships. Consumers tend to choose a brand that they find similar to their own personality so as to establish relationships with brands. As stated by J.N. Kapferer in The New Strategic Brand Management (2008), brand personality is described and measured by those human personality traits that are relevant for brands. Since 1996, academic research has been shifted to brand personality, after Aaker's (1995) creation of a so-called 'brand personality scale'. However, this scale has not been very successful in measuring brand personality, but a

plenty of different dimensions are more or less related to it , and that correspond in fact to other facets of a brand's identity (Azoulay and Kapferer, 2003).The empirical research (Romaniuk and Ehrenberg, 2003) carried out recently has corroborated this. For instance, computers or electronic equipment are the products that need most updated technology just as ice creams are associated with the 'sensuous' trait, and energizer drinks with 'energizing'. Thus it is clear that data this scale is not measuring personality instead physical facets of the brand are measured by the traits also the cultural facets may be included in this scale creating conceptual confusion. This can be explained from Aaker's conceptualization of brand personality which has been adopted from the old habit of advertising agencies which describes 'brand personality' in their creative briefing. Lawrence Ang, Chris Dubelaar and Wagner Kamakura researched on the topic —Changing Brand personality through Celebrity Endorsement. They took the watch brands and measured change the brand personality of a watch according to the celebrity endorsed with that brand. They said that transfer of personality of celebrity to the product is more likely to occur and this tends to be positive, but if this image of the celebrity and watch brand doesn't fit then personality transfer is less likely to occur and it tends to be negative. So, mainly the aim of this research was to investigate the transfer effect. In the end they found that celebrities can change the personality of the watch. Ramesh Kumar, Amit Luthra and Gaurav Datta (2001) worked on the topic —Linkages between Brand Personality and Brand Loyalty: The work was based on Qualitative Study in an Emerging Market in the Indian Context. It may not be wrong to say that Brand associations/brand personality and brand loyalty are associated with one another. They seem to have worked well on the literature by adapting gaps in the literature to focus on how each relates to the other and this study has attempted to bridge between the two in both consumable and durable categories. For this study a small group among the buyers of PCs (consumables) and cars (durable) were taken, a framework linking brand loyalty and brand personality was obtained from the focus group. The results obtained from the study helped Indian marketers to formulate brand appeals and branding strategies for different kinds of Consumers.

a) The main objective is to find out the influence of Brand Personality on consumers while purchasing personal computers.
b) To conduct comparative analysis of leading Personal Computer brands.
c) To study the dimensions of brand personality.

Exploratory research was constructed to develop initial insights and to provide direction for any further research needed. Exploratory research is the foundation of the good study and it is normally flexible, unstructured and qualitative and serves as an input to further research. After obtaining some primary knowledge of the subject matter, descriptive research was conducted next. Contrary to an exploratory research, a descriptive study is more rigid, pre-planned, and structured.

1. To maximize the proportion of subjects answering our questionnaire i.e., the response rate.
2. To obtain accurate relevant information for the survey.

For the present study both primary and secondary data was collected. Secondary data was collected from Journals, Books and Articles. Primary data was collected with the help of scheduled close-ended questionnaire. The mode of collecting the data was basically online survey and face to face conversations with the consumers. MS Excel and SPSS were used for analysis. Graphical tools including bar diagrams and pie charts were used in the process of analysis and interpretations of the collected data. The Sample size for the study was 120. The data was collected from 120 present and potential consumers of personal computers in Delhi-NCR. The participants were divided into three different strata depending on various characteristics. The division was based on age, sex, and occupation to have a more representative and comprehensive sample. Convenience sampling method of non – probability sampling was adopted for this study. It is a sampling technique in which units are selected from the population based on their easy availability and accessibility to the researcher. This is the method of choosing items in an unstructured manner from the population frame.

4. Interpretation And Analysis
4.1 Demography Of Respondents

Age

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Below 20	18	15.0	15.0	15.0
	20-30	68	56.7	56.7	71.7
	30-40	26	21.7	21.7	93.3
	Above 40	8	6.7	6.7	100.0
	Total	120	100.0	100.0	
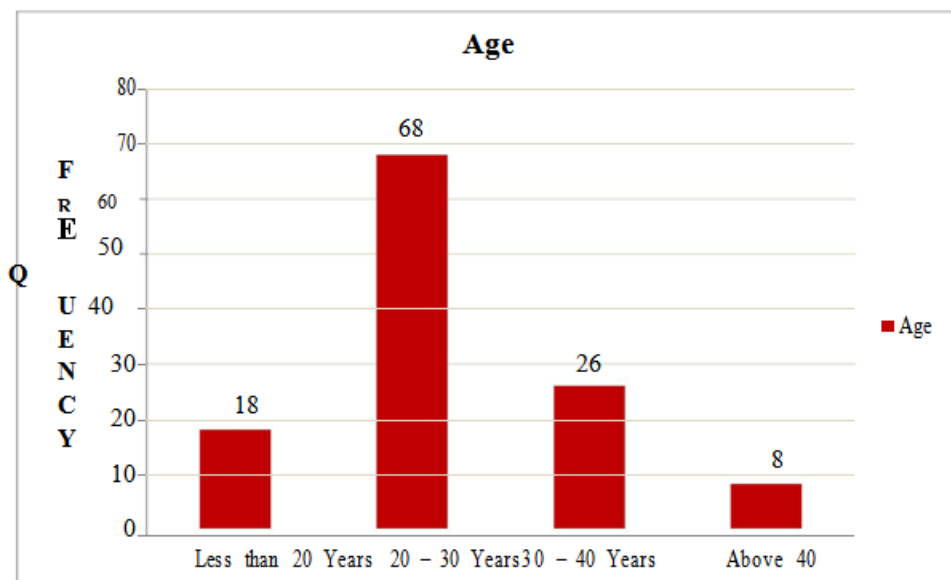
Table 4. 1

Figure 4. 1

Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	77	64.2	64.2	64.2
	Female	43	35.8	35.8	100.0
	Total	120	100.0	100.0	

Table 4. 2

As shown in Table 4.1, out of 120 respondents 15% respondents were less than 20 years old, 56.7% were aged between 20 & 30, which indicates that maximum respondents were from this age group and 28% respondents were aged more than 30 years. However, 77 respondents were Male whereas 43 respondents were Female.

Profession

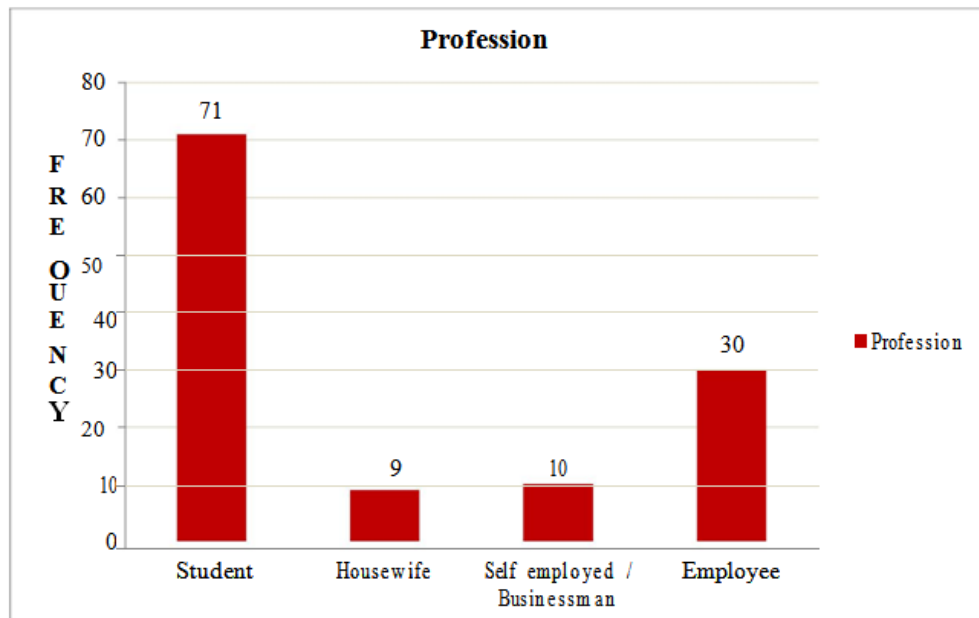|		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Student	71	59.2	59.2	59.2
	Housewife	9	7.5	7.5	66.7
	Self-employed/Businessman	10	8.3	8.3	75.0
	Employee	30	25.0	25.0	100.0
	Total	120	100.0	100.0	

Table 4. 3

Figure 4. 3

Above figure exhibits that maximum respondents were students i.e. 71 out of 120, whereas 30 respondents were working professionals and very few were housewife and businessman. 20

4.2   TOP OF MIND RECALL

Brand Recall

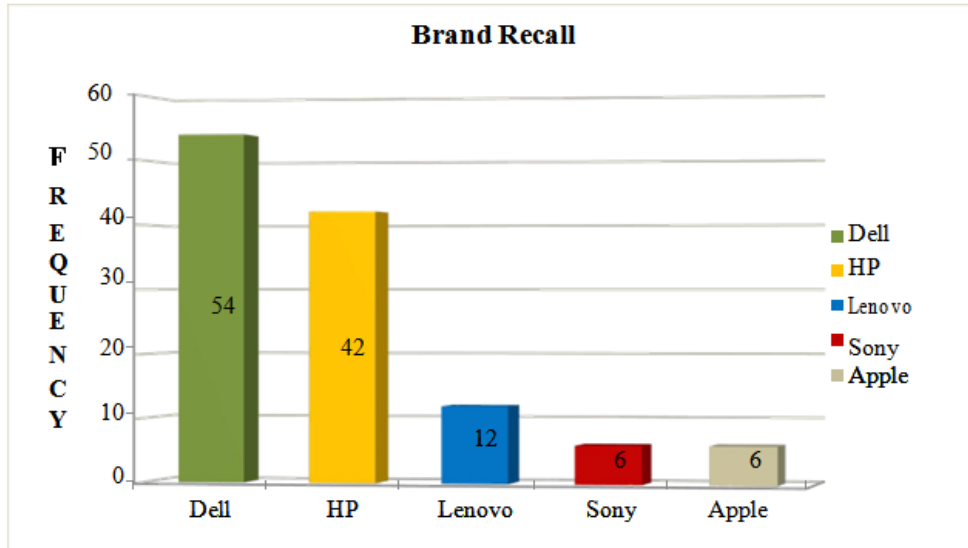|		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Dell	54	45.0	45.0	45.0
	HP	42	35.0	35.0	80.0
	Lenovo	12	10.0	10.0	90.0
	Sony	6	5.0	5.0	95.0
	Apple	6	5.0	5.0	100.0
	Total	120	100.0	100.0	

Table 4. 4

Brand Recall

Figure 4. 4

Respondents were asked to choose a brand which is comes to their mind the moment they think of personal computer. Figure 4.4 exhibits that 54% of respondents consider Dell at Top of Mind Awareness, while 42% of the respondents consider HP at TOMA, whereas only 12% of the respondents consider Lenovo.

4.3 BRAND OWNED / USED

Usage

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Dell	30	25.0	25.0	25.0
	HP	28	23.3	23.3	48.3
	Lenovo	38	31.7	31.7	80.0
	Sony	9	7.5	7.5	87.5
	Apple	3	2.5	2.5	90.0
	Other	12	10.0	10.0	100.0
	Total	120	100.0	100.0	

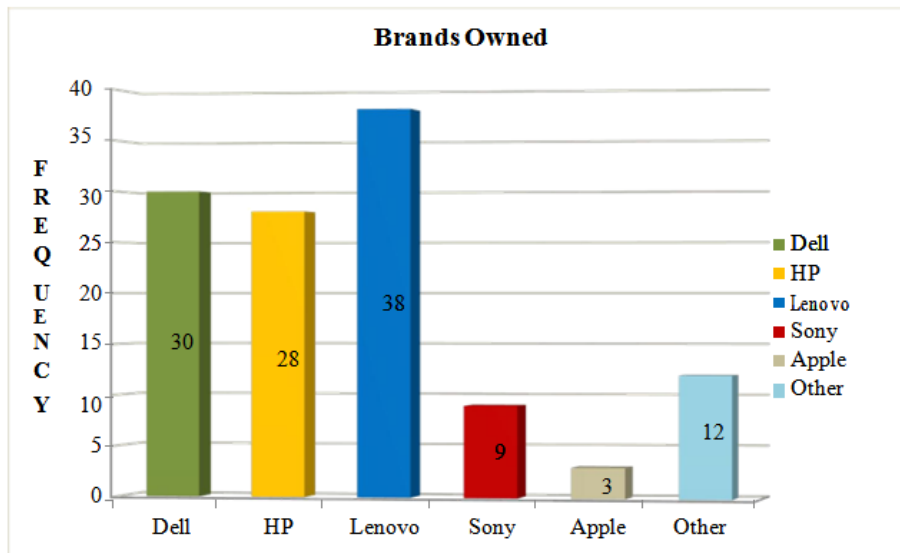**Table 4. 5**

Brands Owned

Figure 4. 5

From Table 4.5 it can be inferred that maximum respondents i.e. 31.7% were using or have used Lenovo PCs, 25% were using Dell and 23.3% were using HP, whereas 10% were using other brands.

4.4comparative Analysis

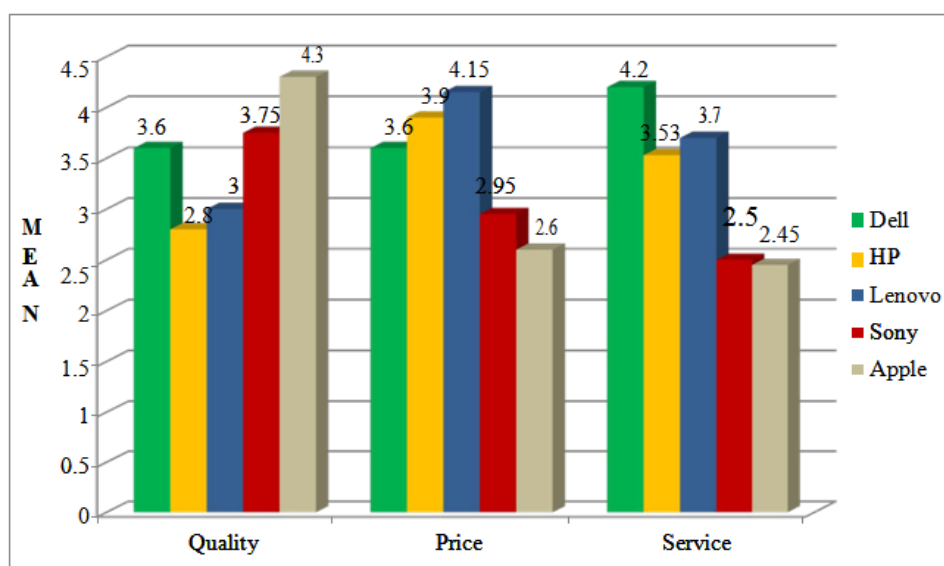| ATTRIBUTES	MEAN				
	Dell	HP	Lenovo	Sony	Apple
Quality	3.6	2.8	3	3.75	4.3
Price	3.6	3.9	4.15	2.95	2.6
Service	4.2	3.53	3.7	2.5	2.45

Table 4. 6

Figure 4. 6

From table 4.6 it can be inferred that maximum respondents rated Apple to be having topmost quality while price wise Apple was rated the lowest whereas Lenovo was the most preferred brand price wise followed by HP. However, service wise most respondents generalized Dell as the best service providing brand followed by Lenovo.

4.5 Factors Influencing Conumers Decision

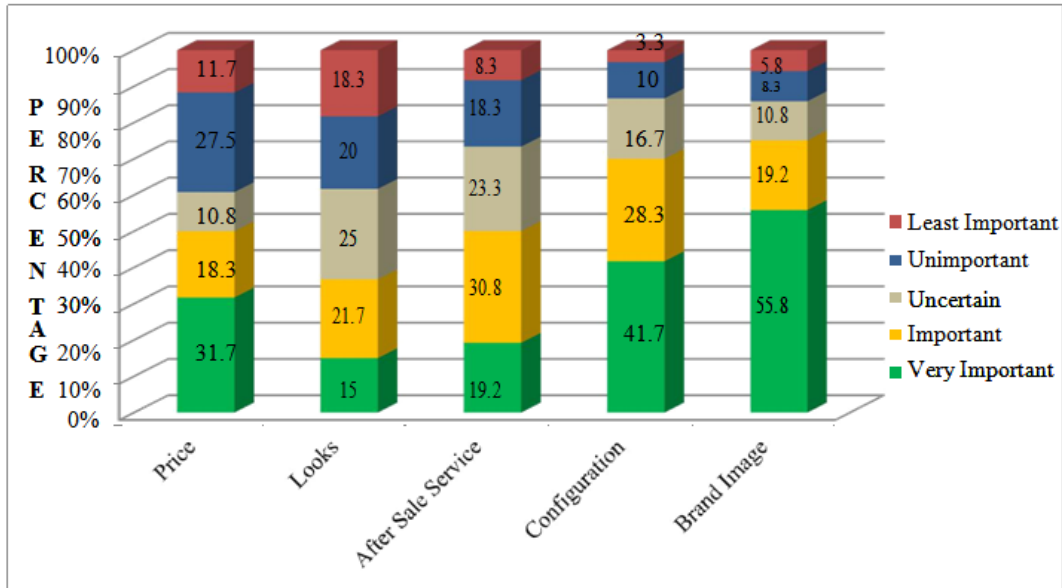| FACTORS	PERCENTAGE				
	Very Important	Important	Uncertain	Unimportant	Least Important
Price	31.7	18.3	10.8	27.5	11.7
Looks	15.0	21.7	25.0	20.0	18.3
After Sale Service	19.2	30.8	23.3	18.3	8.3
Configuratio n	41.7	28.3	16.7	10	3.3
Brand Image	55.8	19.2	10.8	8.3	5.8

Table 4. 7

Figure 4. 7

When respondents were questioned about the factors which influenced their buying behavior, 75% of the consumers responded Brand Image to be the leading factor after which 70% respondents felt Configuration to be the Second most important factor. However Factors like Looks, After sale services and Price seemed to be of less importance to most of the respondents. This indicates that the Brand Image is the biggest factor which influences the buying behavior of majority of consumers while purchasing PCs.

H0: Configuration is an important factor in influencing consumer decision while buying personal computer

H1: Configuration is not an important factor in influencing consumer decision while buying personal computer

One-Sample Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Configuration	120	2.05	1.136	.104

Table 4. 8

One-Sample Test

	Test Value = 2					
	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Configuration	.482	119	.631	.050	-.16	.26

Table 4. 9

The result shows that with the degree of freedom is 119 and with 95% confidence level, our significant value is 0.631 which is greater than 0.05, hence we accept the null hypothesis i.e. "Configuration is an important factor in influencing consumer decision for buying personal computer"

H0: Brand Image is an important factor in influencing consumer decision while buying personal computer

H1: Brand Image is not an important factor in influencing consumer decision while buying personal computer

One-Sample Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Brand Image	120	1.89	1.235	.113

Table 4. 10

One-Sample Test

|	Test Value = 2					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Brand Image	-.961	119	.339	-.108	-.33	.11

Table 4. 11

The result shows that with the degree of freedom is 119 and with 95% confidence level, our significant value is 0.339 which is greater than 0.05, hence we accept the null hypothesis i.e. "Brand Image is an important factor in influencing consumer decision while buying personal computer"

4.6   INFLUENCE OF ADVERTISEMENTS

Influenced by Advertisements

|		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	62	51.7	51.7	51.7
	No	58	48.3	48.3	100.0
	Total	120	100.0	100.0	

Table 4. 12
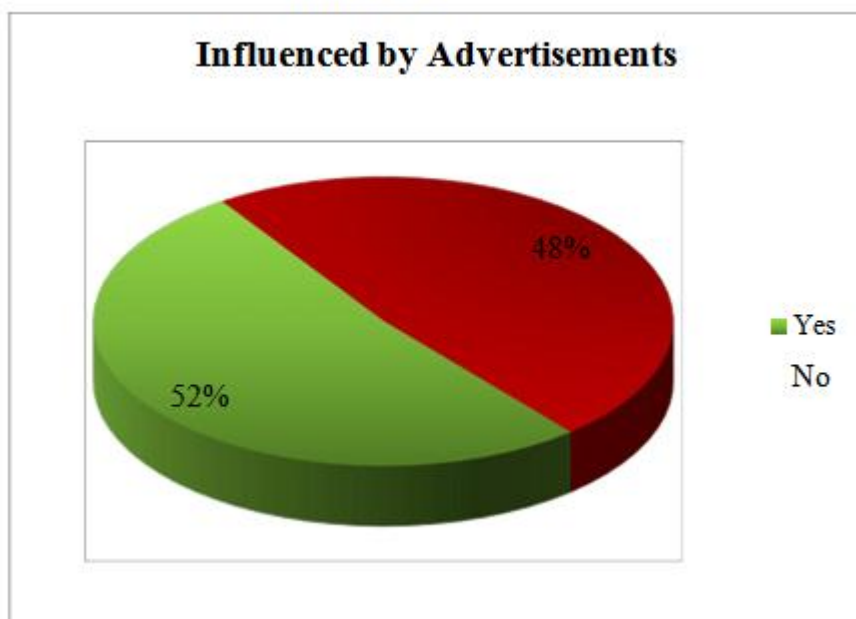
Figure 4. 8

Table 4.8 reveals that about 52% of consumers are influenced by Advertisements when it comes to choosing a brand and its product however 48 % of respondents to do not give much importance to Advertisements while making their decision regarding the buying behavior.

4.7 Brands Personality Traits

PC Brands can have Personality Traits

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	73	60.8	60.8	60.8
	No	47	39.2	39.2	100.0
	Total	120	100.0	100.0	

Table 4. 13
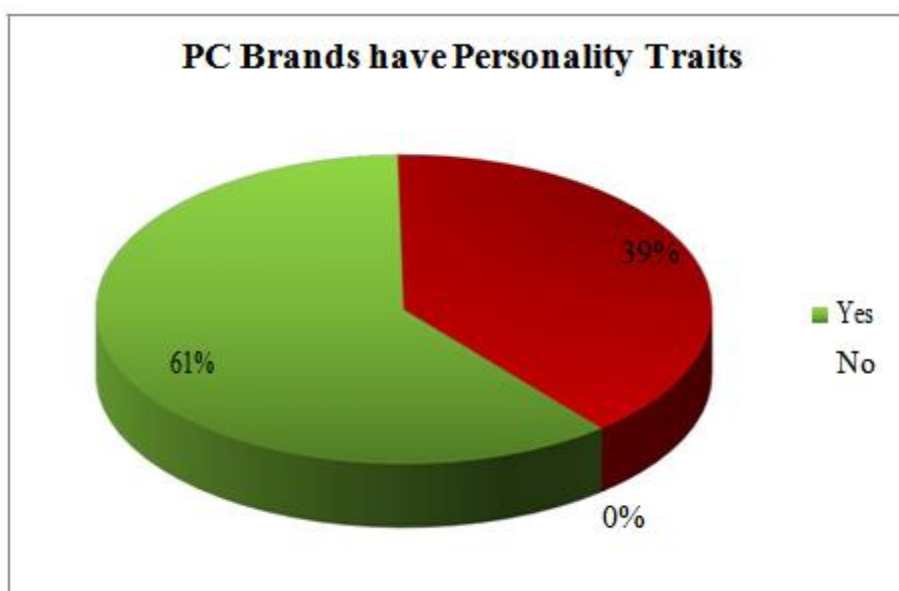
Figure 4. 9

From Table 4.9 it can be inferred that when respondents were questioned Whether PC brands can have personality trait, approximately 61% of respondents agreed to the fact that they can have personality traits like Sincerity, Excitement, Competence, Sophistication and Ruggedness however the rest 39 % of respondents however did not agree with the same.

CROSS TABULATION
AGE OF RESPONDENTS * BRANDS OWNED / USED

|		Usage						Total
		Dell	HP	Lenovo	Sony	Apple	Others	
Age	Below 20	5	4	3	4	2	1	18
	20-30	18	15	23	4	1	7	68
	30-40	5	7	10	0	0	4	26
	Above 40	2	3	2	1	0	0	8
Total		30	28	38	9	3	12	120

Table 4. 14

From Table 4.14 It can be inferred that majority of respondents below 20 years of age owned Sony and Apple as these brands have become youth icons and are user friendly, however respondents belonging to the age group of 20-30 owned Lenovo followed by Dell, as both the brands offers Value for Money products to all. It was also seen that respondents of higher age those being 30 and above also owned Lenovo because of its Strong Brand Image and good configuration.

GENDER OF RESPONDENTS * BRAND IMAGE AS AN IMPORTANT FACTOR

		Brand Image					Total
		Very Important	Important	Uncertain	Unimportant	Least Important	
Gender	Male	31	24	9	7	6	77
	Female	26	11	2	3	1	43
Total		57	35	11	10	7	120

Table 4. 15
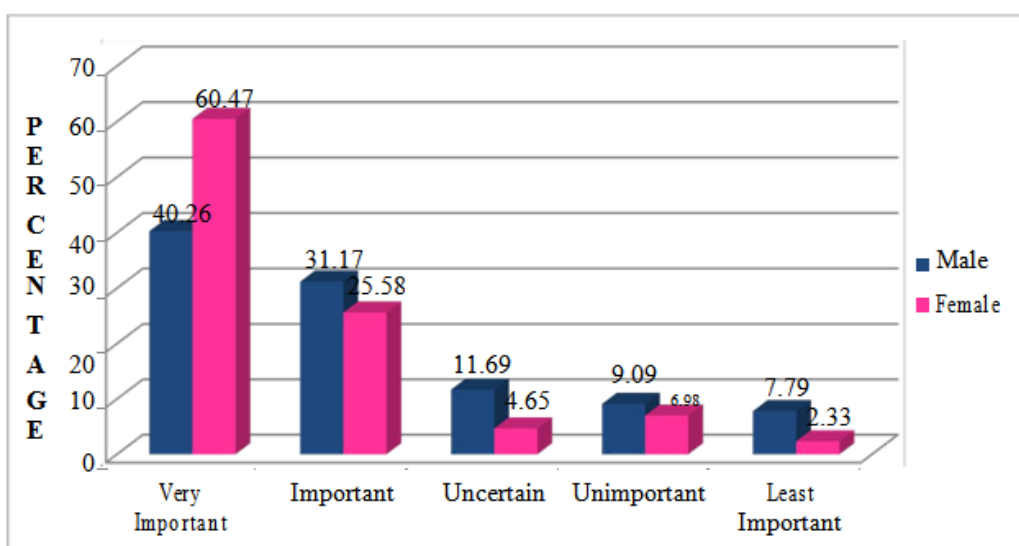
Figure 4. 10

From table 4.15, it can be observed that about 85% of female respondents consider Brand Image to be the most significant factor governing their buying behavior, however in case of males only 71 % of them considers Brand Image as an important factor.

4.8   BRANDS PERSONALITY SCALE

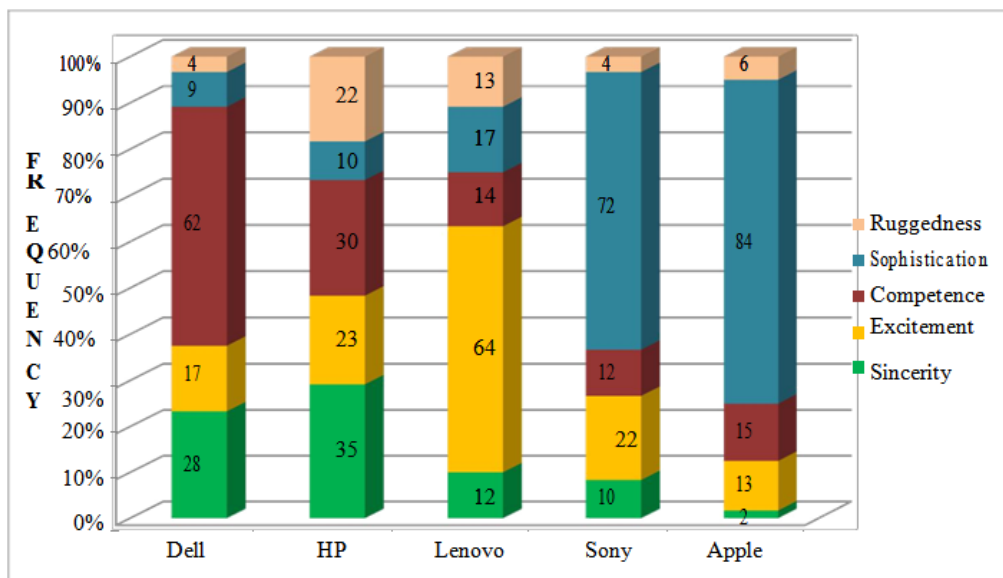| BRAND PERSONALITY	FREQUENCY				
	Dell	HP	Lenovo	Sony	Apple
Sincerity	28	55	12	10	2
Excitement	17	23	64	22	13
Competence	62	30	14	12	15
Sophistication	9	0	17	72	84
Ruggedness	4	12	13	4	6

Table 4. 16

Figure 4. 11

From the Figure 4.11, it can be analysed that brand like Apple and Sony are successful in positioning themselves as a Sophisticated Brand and targeting the upper class society with falling into the glamorous frame. While brands like Lenovo and Dell are partially successful in making themselves recognized as value for money brand because of having traits like Excitement and Sincerity. However, HP fails to achieve any such trait like Ruggedness, Sincerity, Excitement etc.

II.   Conclusion And Recommendation

A detailed study of Personal Computer brands has been conducted through a survey among respondents having a good knowledge about the various PC brands. Most of the respondents surveyed were students, followed by employees while a few of them were home makers and entrepreneurs also. The Top of the Mind Awareness table was drawn from the survey and it was found that most of them (54%) consider Dell at TOMA, while 42% of respondents had HP. Since most of the respondents were PC users analysis was made about the brands owned by each of them, it was learned from the above analysis that Majority of Respondents were Lenovo users. Apple was rated top most quality wise, while Lenovo being a preferred brand price wise followed by HP, however service wise it was Dell being topmost for the surveyed respondents. The Above Study reflected that Most of the respondents were concerned about the brand Image the most and Configuration being the second most desired factor then followed by factors like Price, After Sales Services and Looks which were yet not a big issue for them. The above study also reveals that advertisements have a strong impact on the consumers buying behavior. The Inferences indicated that PCs can have Brand Traits which were categorized as Sincerity, Excitement, Ruggedness, Sophistication and Competence. Further it was seen that brand like Apple and Sony have been successful in positioning themselves as a Sophisticated Brand and targeting the upper class society with falling into the glamorous frame. While brands like Lenovo and Dell have been partially successful in making themselves recognized as value for money brand because of having traits like Excitement and Sincerity. However, HP fails to achieve any such trait like Ruggedness, Sincerity, Excitement etc. The findings revealed attributes like Brand Image and Configuration play a significant role in influencing consumers to choose a PC brand. Since majority consumers are influenced by PCs configuration, therefore the companies should keep their products and service up to date with latest technology. The consumers prefer those PCs which are user friendly and have good graphical user interface (GUI). Since the consumer today have become prosumers i.e. they know the product well in advance, so there is a need to offer the best product to the well aware consumers. Prices should also be taken care of .They should be kept after taking into consideration the prices offered by other brands for the similar products. Different product lines with variable price range can be constructed for different consumers in the market. Though prices do not influences the users much but products should not be overpriced, since consumers want value for money products nowadays. Companies dealing with PC brands are following multi channel distribution in urban areas and they are en-cashing on it also but at the same time they should make their presence felt in rural areas also, as more than 70% of our population is in rural area and no PC brand have targeted such vast population yet. Most of the companies are mainly focusing on the Pull strategy for promotion. Since the competition is strengthening, Push strategy also can be used along with this. Building brand image should also be the main focus, since brand image is the most important factor that

influences consumers while purchasing PCs. they should position themselves clearly in the mind of the consumers. They can use celebrity endorsement to impact the target audience.

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