

“Effect of Branding on Consumer Behavior of Telecommunication Companies in Nepal”

**A dissertation submitted to the Office of the Dean, Faculty of Management, T.U.,
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master’s Degree.**

By

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CERTIFICATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I hereby certify that I have completed and submitted the final draft of the dissertation entitled **“Effect of Branding on Consumer Behavior of Telecommunication Companies in Nepal.”** I affirm that this work has not been submitted previously for the conferment of any degree, nor has it been presented as part of the requirements for any other academic purpose. All assistance and contributions received during the course of this research have been duly acknowledged. Furthermore, I declare that all information sources and literature used are properly cited and included in the references section of this dissertation.

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REPORT OF RESEARCH COMMITTEE

Mrs. Julie Pal has successfully defended the research proposal entitled: **“Effect of Branding on Consumer Behavior of Telecommunication Companies in Nepal.”** The Research Committee has approved the proposal and registered the dissertation for further progress. It is recommended that the research work be carried out in accordance with the suggestions and guidance of the supervisor, **Mr. Chakrapani Dahal**, and that the final dissertation be submitted for evaluation and viva voce examination.

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Although every effort has been made to maintain academic rigor and accuracy, I acknowledge the possibility of inadvertent errors and humbly apologize for any such oversight.

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ABBREVIATIONS

| | | |
|-------|---|---|
| NTC | : | Nepal Telecom |
| NCELL | : | Ncell |
| STPL | : | Smart Telecom Private Limited |
| NST | : | Nepal Satellite Telecom |
| UTL | : | United Telecom Limited |
| MBS | : | Masters of Business Studies |
| CBB | : | Consumer Buying Behavior |
| CS | : | Case Study |
| SD | : | Standard Deviation |
| X | : | Mean |
| FS | : | Field Survey |
| BL | : | Brand Loyalty |
| SPSS | : | Statistical package for social sciences |
| EPA | : | Environmental protection Agency |
| SEE | : | Secondary Education Examination |

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

A brand in the business context is a concept, symbol, or idea that signifies a company and its products or services. It serves as a representation of the company's mission, image, or message and reflects its identity through specific characteristics. The process of branding involves creating and establishing a recognizable identity for a company in the market. This identity is maintained consistently across all internal and external communications, incorporating elements such as messaging, design, and strategic presentation.

Brand communication is the collection of activities, including advertising, social media engagement, and customer reviews, used to connect with consumers. This communication occurs whenever customers or potential clients engage with the brand, influencing various stakeholders such as employees, customers, investors, and sponsors. It is essential for management to maintain consistent communication with stakeholders to keep them informed about the brand's developments and significant matters. Serving as the brand's voice, effective brand communication helps build strong, long-lasting relationships with stakeholders. It is a core component of brand management, crucial for maintaining a meaningful dialogue with stakeholders and promoting the brand's image, company reputation, and product or service offerings.

Brand communication involves delivering targeted, meaningful messages about the brand to stakeholders. It leverages a mix of traditional media, such as newspapers and television, along with modern digital channels like social media, content marketing, blogs, and digital marketing. This integrated approach ensures that customers and stakeholders remain updated on the brand's latest developments.

Consumer buying behavior refers to the process by which individuals seek, choose, purchase, use, and eventually dispose of products or services to fulfill their needs and desires. Since consumer behavior directly impacts a company's success, businesses must develop a marketing mix that effectively meets customer expectations. Typically, consumers follow a five-step process in making purchasing decisions: identifying a problem, searching for information, evaluating alternatives, making a

purchase decision, and engaging in post-purchase evaluation. The decision-making process varies depending on the type of product and the emotional attachment or loyalty consumers have towards the brand.

The relationship between branding and customer behavior has been widely studied by researchers, including Zhang (2015). Numerous studies have established that customer satisfaction, both perceived and actual, is closely linked to a brand's image. Customer satisfaction fosters brand loyalty, which in turn influences consumer purchasing behavior, either directly or indirectly. However, some studies suggest that brand image alone may not directly create loyalty; instead, it is customer satisfaction that fosters long-term loyalty.

Corporate branding is influenced by several factors, including organizational culture, vision, and image, as noted by Hatch et al. (2001). Effective corporate branding requires coordination among stakeholders, management, and employees, enabling a broader understanding of the brand's identity. A strong corporate brand can boost confidence among employees, create a sense of belonging for stakeholders, and foster customer loyalty.

Knox and Balmer (2001) highlighted that many organizations only recently recognized the strategic value of branding. In response to market competition, businesses have begun using branding as a means of differentiating themselves from competitors.

1.1.1 Advantages of good Brand Communication

Good brand communication refers to the strategic and consistent transmission of a brand's values, identity, and message to its target audience. It plays a critical role in shaping consumer perception, fostering trust, and building long-term relationships with customers. Effective brand communication ensures that consumers clearly understand what the brand stands for, what it offers, and how it differs from competitors.

1. **Creates a Strong Impact:** Effective brand communication significantly influences customers, fostering a sense of connection with the brand. For instance, well-

executed social campaigns can leave a lasting impression on customers, thanks to the creative collaboration between the brand and its marketing agency.

2. **Establishes Authority:** Brands like Bosch and Siemens are widely respected for consistently emphasizing their superior engineering in their communications. This authority is not only rooted in product quality but also reinforced through consistent brand messaging. Similarly, brands like Monster.com in job search and Rolex in watchmaking have established their authority by consistently communicating their expertise.
3. **Ensures Differentiation:** A brand that resonates with customers naturally sets itself apart from competitors. This differentiation becomes a competitive advantage, especially when customers are making purchase decisions. For instance, in the crowded markets of smartphones or air conditioners, brands like Samsung, Apple, and Daikin stand out because of their strong brand communication and distinctive offerings.
4. **Enhances Customer Loyalty:** Positive brand communication fosters customer loyalty. When customers have satisfying experiences with a brand, consistent communication through advertising or promotions can transform them into brand advocates. These loyal customers can further promote the brand through word-of-mouth recommendations.
5. **Expands Market Presence:** Brands that maintain active communication with customers gradually build a positive market presence. Companies like HUL and P&G are prime examples of businesses that understand this concept. By consistently communicating their brand messages, they effectively promote their diverse range of products.

Nepal's telecommunication sector is a vital part of the country's economy, encompassing companies like NTC, STPL, NST, UTL, and NCELL. These providers compete by delivering both mobile and fixed-line services, as well as internet connectivity. Since 2012, the industry has experienced significant growth, with these companies continuously striving to attract and retain customers.

Consumers often rely on branding as a shortcut when making purchase decisions. Branding simplifies the decision-making process by offering recognizable options that customers trust. For instance, Nepal's commitment to the World Trade Organization

(WTO) agreement on basic telecommunications in 2004 highlighted its intent to enhance information access nationwide.

Branding is the process of creating a distinct identity for a product or service through elements such as names, logos, designs, or other distinguishing features. It serves as a valuable tool for businesses, allowing customers to differentiate between competing products and make informed choices. The American Marketing Association defines branding as a unique name, term, design, or symbol that identifies a seller's product, making it legally a trademark.

Branding also plays a crucial role in the telecommunication industry. Companies like NTC, STPL, UTL, NST, and NCELL utilize branding to establish a strong image and attract customers. Effective branding has been shown to directly influence customer satisfaction, which, in turn, fosters customer loyalty. This connection between brand image, customer satisfaction, and loyalty has been confirmed by several studies, including research on Starbucks in Taiwan (Tu et al., 2012).

The long-term success of Nepal's telecommunication sector relies on maintaining strong relationships with customers. Satisfied customers are more likely to remain loyal to a brand, which supports the industry's economic sustainability. This study aims to explore how branding influences consumer behavior within Nepal's telecommunication companies.

1.1.2 Market Strategy of Telecommunication

Developing an effective marketing mix is crucial for ensuring the optimal use of marketing resources. Marketing professionals are responsible for designing these inputs to ensure that top-quality services are delivered to various customer segments effectively. In the context of telecommunications, the marketing mix includes several components: the product mix, promotion mix, pricing strategy, place mix, and people mix. Each of these elements plays a vital role in bridging the gap between promised services and the actual services delivered, maintaining a balance between performance and employee orientation.

Product Mix

Telecommunication companies provide a wide range of services to both individual and institutional customers. These services include voice calls (both mobile and landline), telegraph services, email, fax, and internet connectivity. While telecom providers often believe their services are satisfactory, many customers still experience dissatisfaction, making it essential to focus on continuous service improvement.

Among the various service categories, telephonic services (including mobile and cordless options) are particularly significant due to their widespread usage. To maintain service quality, telecom providers must ensure clear voice transmission, minimal disruptions, high-quality audio, and reliable connectivity. Additionally, technical teams should ensure that users receive quality devices, and replacements should be readily available when necessary.

Promotion Mix

The promotion mix is centered on creative marketing strategies designed to inform, engage, and persuade customers. This mix includes various promotional methods such as advertising, publicity, sales promotion, personal selling, and word-of-mouth marketing.

Advertising

Telecommunication companies can promote their services through various media, including print, broadcast, and digital platforms. When designing advertisements, marketers should focus on creating engaging slogans, compelling themes, and appealing messages that effectively reach the target audience.

-) **Print Media:** Print advertisements provide ample space for detailed information, making them useful for educating customers about services.
-) **Broadcast Media:** Radio advertisements can effectively reach a broad audience, while the visual appeal of television ads (telecast media) can capture viewer interest.

) **Digital Media:** Online platforms allow telecom companies to leverage audio-visual elements, which can be highly effective in educating and influencing customers.

To maximize the impact of advertising, telecom companies should work with skilled advertising professionals capable of designing creative layouts, composing engaging slogans, and crafting messages that resonate with the target audience. With the right expertise, these professionals can also ensure that the advertising budget is used efficiently.

1.1.1 Organizational Profile

The telecommunication industry in Nepal has been operational since 1996. Nepal Telecom (NTC) was the pioneer in providing telecommunication services in the country. Over time, NTC managed to secure a dominant position in the market, largely due to its extensive network coverage and the introduction of various value-added services that attracted a large customer base. Another key player in the industry is NCELL, which is recognized as a world-class service provider offering both fixed-line and mobile cellular services. NCELL has grown rapidly to become the second most popular mobile network provider in Nepal.

In recent years, Nepal Satellite Telecom (NST) has also entered the competitive telecommunication market, primarily focusing on rural areas. Although NST successfully obtained a license to operate a cellular network following a competitive bidding process, its network rollout experienced delays due to bureaucratic hurdles from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

It is important to note that this overview does not represent the entire telecommunication landscape in Nepal but serves to provide context and support for the arguments made in this study. The figure below (Figure 3.1) illustrates the logos and branding of the major telecommunication service providers operating in Nepal.

Figure 3.1: logos of some selected telecommunication companies in Nepal



1.2 Focus of the Study

In the competitive marketplace, differentiation is crucial. Whether it is a manufacturer, intermediary, retailer, or agent, every player strives to offer something unique compared to what is already available. While conventional thinking suggests that commodities are highly sensitive to price changes — where even a slight price reduction can boost sales — this is not always the case. In an ideal economic scenario, price and sales volume are closely linked, but in reality, several other factors can influence sales beyond just pricing.

Brand managers can leverage a brand uniqueness measurement tool to gain insights into how their brands are performing in the market. This tool helps them understand the distinctive value their brand offers, allowing them to assess their competitive standing effectively.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

According to Denmark (2010), corporate branding is a crucial concept that creates synergy between an organization's resources—both tangible (such as fixed assets) and intangible (including human resources)—and its strategic goals. This synergy is essential for achieving a competitive advantage in the market. However, once a company has achieved success through corporate branding, it becomes equally important to maintain and manage the brand's reputation to sustain its position as a market leader.

For telecommunications companies, which operate in a service-driven industry, it is essential to offer services that genuinely meet customer expectations to ensure economic sustainability. Understanding consumer behavior is a critical aspect of this

process, as it allows these companies to evaluate the effectiveness of their service offerings.

The telecommunications sector is undergoing rapid transformation, requiring companies like NTC, STPL, and NCELL to adopt more proactive branding strategies. As Blackett (2005) noted, by implementing innovative branding approaches, these companies can strengthen their presence both locally and globally. However, in Nepal, some telecom providers, such as UTL and NST, currently use limited branding strategies to capture customer loyalty. Only a few operators effectively leverage brand image to enhance customer satisfaction.

Extensive research on branding has primarily focused on understanding concepts such as brand choice, brand switching, brand loyalty, and brand extension (Moore et al., 2008). A clear relationship exists between brand loyalty and continued demand. Satisfied customers tend to make repeat purchases, leading to long-term profitability (Schultz, 2005).

This perspective is significant because maintaining long-term customer relationships in the Nepalese telecommunications industry indicates economic sustainability for telecom operators. Customer satisfaction is a key indicator of success, with branding being one of the most influential factors. However, the exact impact of product branding on consumer decision-making is an area that requires further exploration. This study, therefore, aims to assess how branding influences consumer behavior in Nepal's telecommunications sector.

Research Questions:

1. What are the branding strategies employed by telecommunication companies in Nepal?
2. How does branding impact the behavior of consumers in the Nepalese telecommunications industry?
3. What is the relationship between branding and consumer buying behavior in Nepal's telecom sector?

1.4 Objectives of the study

The primary objective of this study is to examine the relationship between branding and consumer buying behavior within the Nepalese telecommunication sector. Specifically, the study aims to understand how various components of branding—such as brand awareness, brand loyalty, perceived quality, and brand association—affect customer decision-making and purchasing patterns.

- J To identify and analyze the branding strategies used by telecommunication companies in Nepal.
- J To assess the impact of branding on the operational behavior of telecommunication companies.
- J To explore the relationship between branding and consumer purchasing decisions in the Nepalese telecom sector.
- J To provide recommendations for enhancing marketing strategies and to suggest directions for future research on the impact of branding, based on the key findings of this study.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study is anticipated to provide valuable insights for telecommunication companies regarding the impact of branding on consumer behavior. It aims to refresh and reinforce their understanding of how customers perceive and respond to their existing branding strategies. By highlighting which aspects of branded telecommunications products most influence consumer choices, the study will guide companies in developing more effective strategies to capture customer loyalty.

Additionally, this research is expected to enrich the existing body of knowledge on branding within the telecommunications sector, both in Nepal and internationally. It will serve as a valuable reference for future researchers interested in exploring or expanding upon this topic.

1.6 Limitations of the Study

This study encountered several challenges that hindered its smooth progress. These challenges included:

- J **Financial Constraints:** The study was entirely self-funded by the researcher, which significantly limited the scope of the research. Expanding the study beyond the available budget was not feasible.
- J **Time Limitations:** As a student, the researcher had limited time to conduct the study. This restricted the research to a cross-sectional survey rather than a more comprehensive time series or longitudinal study.
- J **Complex Statistical Analysis:** The researcher had to quickly learn and apply complex statistical tools, which posed a considerable challenge.
- J **Respondent Compliance:** Some respondents were uncooperative, leading to unnecessary delays in data collection.
- J **Limited Scope and Sample Size:** Given the constraints of time and resources, the sample size was relatively small compared to the entire population of telecommunication users, which may impact the generalizability of the findings.

Despite these challenges, the study was successfully completed due to the researcher's persistence and the continuous support of the project supervisor.

Data Collection Approach:

- J The study primarily relied on both primary and secondary data.
- J Primary data were collected from telecommunication users through structured questionnaires, focusing on market response and customer satisfaction or dissatisfaction.
- J The sample consisted of various consumers who were administered the questionnaire.

1.7 Organization of the Study

The research study is systematically organized into five distinct chapters, each serving a specific purpose in the overall structure of the study.

Chapter One: Introduction

The introductory chapter offers a comprehensive overview of the study, beginning with a general background that highlights the significance of brand communication and its advantages, particularly within the telecommunications sector. It outlines the

importance of the research, defines the study's objectives, and discusses the scope and limitations that may impact the research process. This section serves as a foundation, providing readers with an understanding of the study's focus and purpose.

Chapter Two: Review of Literature

This chapter provides an in-depth exploration of existing literature related to the research topic. It presents theoretical concepts of branding, various branding strategies, and how these strategies are applied in telecommunication companies. The chapter also examines consumer perceptions of branding, the impact of branding on consumer behavior, models of consumer behavior, and a detailed look at consumer behavior within the Nepalese telecommunications sector. By analyzing previous studies, this section establishes a theoretical framework that supports the research.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology

Chapter three describes the research design and methodology adopted for the study. It explains how the research was planned and executed, detailing the methods used for data collection and the types of data gathered. This section also specifies the tools and techniques employed to collect data, ensuring that the research objectives are met. It serves as a guideline for understanding the systematic approach used in conducting the study.

Chapter Four: Data Presentation and Analysis

This chapter is the core of the research study, focusing on the presentation, analysis, and interpretation of the collected data. It addresses the issues outlined in the introduction, explaining how the data was analyzed and what the analysis revealed. The findings derived from the analysis are presented in this section, providing clear insights into the research problem.

Chapter Five: Summary, Conclusion, and Implications

The final chapter offers a concise summary of the entire study, briefly revisiting the research objectives and key findings. It presents the conclusions drawn from the analysis and provides recommendations based on the study's outcomes. This chapter

also highlights the practical implications of the research, offering suggestions for future research or improvements in branding strategies within the telecommunications industry.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This section of the research is dedicated to a comprehensive review of existing literature that is directly related to the study's objectives. It aims to provide a deeper understanding of key concepts and theories surrounding branding, branding strategies, consumer behavior, and their impact on the telecommunications industry. Specifically, it explores topics such as the concept of branding, various branding strategies, the relationship between branding and consumer behavior, and how consumers perceive and interact with telecommunications brands. This review not only clarifies the theoretical foundation of the study but also highlights the connections between branding and consumer behavior within the context of telecommunication companies.

2.1 Concept of Branding

Branding is a strategic process focused on creating a unique identity for a product, service, or company in the minds of consumers. It involves the use of distinctive elements such as names, symbols, designs, slogans, and messaging that set a brand apart from its competitors. This section explores the fundamental principles of branding, highlighting how it shapes consumer perceptions, influences purchasing decisions, and cultivates brand loyalty. By reviewing various definitions and perspectives, it provides a solid theoretical foundation for understanding the impact of branding on consumer behavior, particularly in the telecommunications sector.

The concept of branding has been widely examined and interpreted by scholars and industry experts. According to Bennett (1995), branding involves the use of identifiable variables—such as attractive names, symbols, slogans, and signs—either individually or combined, with the purpose of associating these elements with specific products or services in a way that distinguishes them from competitors. Branding has existed long before the industrial revolution, initially used by artisans to differentiate their work. A well-planned and effectively executed brand resonates deeply with consumers, embedding itself in their subconscious so that they can easily recall it when needed. This makes branding a crucial tool for businesses aiming to penetrate and dominate markets. For example, in Nepal, brands like NTC, STPL, UTL,

NCELL, and NST are instantly recognized when thinking of mobile networks. Similarly, the name “Nestle” evokes thoughts of beverages.

The American Marketing Association (2014) defines branding as the process of using names, symbols, logos, terms, and designs—alone or in combination—to create a unique identity for products and services that differentiates them from competitors within the same industry. This definition is supported by researchers like Watkins (1986), Aaker (1991), and Kotler, who emphasize that branding fosters an emotional connection between customers and products or organizations. When such emotional bonds form, products are more easily identified in a crowded marketplace.

Effective communication of a brand to potential customers is critical. Proper brand communication helps customers understand and relate to the brand, eliminating confusion and building brand awareness. The branding process can be viewed through four key stages: brand positioning, brand communication, brand performance, and brand equity leveraging. Through these stages, a product becomes more than just a product—it gains emotional and psychological significance for consumers (Kapferer, 1992; 2008).

Kotler (2000) formally defined branding as the use of names, associations, and other elements to identify a product. Consumers inherently assign meaning to brands, making branding an integral part of the product experience. In the telecommunication industry in Nepal, providers like NTC, STPL, and UTL cultivate customer loyalty through effective branding. A brand perceived as high-quality and prestigious enhances consumer trust and preference. For example, telecom companies that maintain strong quality and prestige tend to retain their customers. This illustrates how significant branding is in influencing consumer behavior and, consequently, how it can impact market dynamics within the telecommunications sector, potentially causing consumers to switch from one provider to another based on brand perception.

2.1.1 Branding Strategies

Analysts and pundits have repeatedly affirmed that the telecommunication industry is entities that have the potency to greatly influence consumers. The Globalization of production and the chain of multinational companies have influenced companies to develop strategic branding tools that are executed through specific goals, the culture

of the organization and the chain of command within the organization. Brands of organizations can range from visuals (logos, symbols, colors, the physical edifice of the organization and the likes) to audios (jingles, composed songs, recitals and others) and also be grouped under tangible and intangible elements of branding (Davies, 2000).

In addition, Davies (2000) mentioned five strategic branding strategies; positioning, brand extension, the channel through which distribution takes place and pricing. The positioning of product is essential and deals with its uniqueness, sustainability, credibility and the value that customers' get for their money and depending on the level of satisfaction the customer gets, the more they are drawn to the product.

Positioning also elucidates the product direction and the basis for the product and in a pursuing new market, communicating and setting prices as well as gives clarity and guidance for internal employees. The value of branding has also been recognized by suppliers who produce ingredients or components that are incorporated into final products.

Further studies also show an analogy between branding strategy and strategic pricing. The author is of the view that premium strategy also has price tendencies. This implies that when telecommunication companies invest in strategic branding it would win customers even in the face of higher service charges (Davies, 2000).

2.1.2 Branding Strategies in Telecommunication Companies

Every organization's primary asset is its brand, especially in the highly competitive telecommunications industry where multiple brands compete to meet the diverse needs of customers. The branding strategies employed by telecom companies such as STPL, UTL, NST, NTC, and NCELL are shaped by the market conditions they operate in and their specific business goals. For instance, if a company aims to increase its subscriber base, it must target under-served or under-penetrated segments. Before launching services, telecom providers develop branding strategies designed to build a strong and recognizable brand presence.

Branding involves not only creating but also managing a brand that clearly differentiates itself from competitors while adding value for customers (Murphy, 1990). In the telecom sector, branding has become increasingly important due to globalization, strategic alliances, and intense competition. The telecom industry is

known for fierce rivalry, especially regarding tariffs and data services, which intensifies challenges for service providers. Consequently, customers expect brands to engage with them across every available digital channel. Research indicates that 51 percent of customers develop strong loyalty when they have positive experiences with a telecom provider.

Given the saturation and fierce competition in the telecom market, traditional go-to-market strategies have become less effective. Therefore, companies must rethink their approaches and organize themselves to support sustainable growth. Strategic branding in telecommunications usually involves elements such as communication, market positioning, value proposition, brand identity, and personality (Alamro, 2011).

Brand Equity as a Strategy

According to Bonne and Kurtz (2005), brand equity refers to the additional value that a brand adds to a product compared to its alternatives. Telecom companies can enhance their brand equity by offering value-added services beyond basic network connectivity. Examples include mobile money transfers, health tips, and other services that go beyond their core function of providing communication. These value-added services can be used by both facilities-based providers and resellers to differentiate themselves from competitors.

Cost-Driven Strategy

A cost-driven strategy in the telecom industry involves structuring pricing in a way that reflects usage while maintaining service quality. By optimizing pricing strategies, telecom companies can attract and retain customers who are willing to pay for reliable, high-quality services. In Nepal, companies like STPL, NTC, UTL, NST, and NCELL can leverage this strategy to gain a competitive edge in the market.

Core Identity

Another important branding strategy is establishing a strong core identity. This involves deploying advanced technology to meet the needs of individual consumers, corporate clients, and government sectors. Building a strong core identity not only helps serve current market segments but also positions the company to enter new

markets in the future. Understanding and enhancing brand knowledge among customers is essential to this strategy's success.

In summary, telecom companies need to adopt multifaceted branding strategies—ranging from brand equity initiatives and cost-driven pricing to technological innovation and core identity development—to thrive in an ultra-competitive and saturated market.

2.1.3 Consumers View on Branding

Branding undoubtedly add a significant amount of value to a particular product that instigate consumers to purchase it. This unseen value is delivered together with the physical product that customers buy from cosmetic shops, groceries, convenient shops, telecommunication industries and among others. Consumers prior to acquiring a product develop a perceived level of expected satisfaction or experience through the brand of the product especially when they understand the brand of the organization. A vivid example is, before a potential customer purchases an Apple product, they are assured of originality, quality, having a good experience and prestige for the brand of Apple. A special attachment both emotional and mental is developed by the customer towards the brand. Similarly, the vibrant telecommunication industries in Nepal such as NTC, STPL, UTL, NCELL and NST can possibly adopt these strategies; low cost of charges, promotional packages, charge exemptions and other aspects of dealing with value addition. From the ongoing it can be said that branding and customer buying behaviors are mutually related.

2.1.4 Impact of Branding On Consumer Behavior in Telecom Industry

The process of selection, organization, and interpretation of information regarding a decision to purchase a product or service is termed customer perception (Kotler, 2009). Hence branding has major impact on perception since perception is regarded as the recognition and interpretation of sensitive information. In similar fashion branding could be thought or picture in the mind of the customer. In this manner perception that is the recognition and interpretation a customer assign to a product or service is been influenced by the efficacy of the brand.

Moreover, whenever a customer is introduced into brand through such medium as packaging, word -of-month, and their level of brand awareness significantly

increased. When this happens the buying decisions are also affected through perception of the brand in question (Erdem, 1998).

Relating this to the telecommunication business in Nepal, it is very clear that most of the telecommunication companies that position themselves strategically regarding branding are able to control greater market share of the telephony service users by influencing their perceptions.

Foxall and Goldsmith (1994) in their study recommended that there is a strong association between perception of the customer regarding a particular product and service are been influenced by the perception of the brand. In the telephony sector brands are built to generate short term and long term profit, positive perception and recognition about the corporate services and products.

When telecommunication services were first introduced into the Nepalese soil, the perception was that these kinds of services were geared towards the rich but subsequently strategic branding has eluded all those pre-conceived mentality and restores positive images about the industry. Today the impact of the telecommunication industry which historically thought to be for the rich is evidence in their provision of corporate social responsibilities in the area of health, education, agriculture, social life religion and business with lot of life changing testimonies.

Several factors have been influencing the behavior of the customers under a given circumstance. Typical among the factors are internal factors, psychological factors and personal factors. The internal factors include; conditions such as demographics, personality, lifestyle, psychographics, motivation, knowledge, beliefs, feelings and attitude. Psychological factors include; individual motivation, perception, attitude and belief. Likewise, the personal factors include such factors as income levels, age, personality, occupation, and lifestyles.

2.1.5 Theory of Branding in Marketing & Brand Marketing

Like most marketing concepts, branding has evolved significantly over the last few decades. And it's gotten darn complicated. Every year, new branding buzzwords make the rounds in marketing circles. New branding roles are created in corporate marketing departments. And branding agencies and consultants promote the latest branding tactics. Businesses looking to level up their branding efforts face a variety of confusing options.

- Should they focus on brand awareness?

- Do they have a brand positioning problem?
- Will they need a branding agency to help?

Brand theory brings clarity to the guesswork and uncertainty that inevitably arises. It refers to the strategic use of branding not as individual tactics, but as the foundation for company growth. It's about aligning the core principles of messaging and positioning to fuel smart growth marketing. Before that can happen, it's important to define the many subsets and nuances of branding. That's just what we'll do in this article, so you can identify the areas your business needs to build the right foundation, and single out the best branding services to help.

Brand theory is the methodical alignment of all branding concepts with a company's growth goals, including:

-) Brand awareness
-) Brand experience
-) Brand loyalty
-) Brand strategy
-) Brand personality
-) Brand positioning
-) Brand recognition
-) Brand reputation

Brand marketing is the strategic promotion of a company's products or services across marketing channels with the intent of establishing and increasing recognition. Rather than short-term sales or marketing goals, brand marketing looks to build awareness, reputation, and loyalty over the long-term. Now that we've covered the basics of brand theory, let's get into even more nuance. What is the difference between brand awareness and brand experience? Is brand strategy the same as brand positioning? It can seem like splitting hairs, but it will help to understand the various disciplines within brand theory when building your brand.

Brand awareness

It refers to the level of familiarity a target audience has with a company. But it's much more than recognizing a business' name, logo, or colors. It's how well a brand's image, messaging, and values are understood in the market. In a sense, it is a measure of how well a company's brand marketing is performing. If it is performing well, a brand should be clearly differentiated from competitors and alternatives.

Brand experience

It describes the sensory, emotional and tangible aspects of a customer's interactions throughout the process of researching, considering, purchasing and using a company's product or service. In theory, the more favorably a consumer views a brand at each stage of the buying journey, the more likely they are to purchase, promote and otherwise demonstrate loyalty to a brand.

Brand loyalty

It is a customer's personal allegiance to an individual company, its products or services. An increase in purchasing behavior is one of the primary goals in earning brand loyalty among consumers. However, buyers may express their brand loyalty in many ways – by recommending a brand to others, promoting brand content on social media, frequenting brand-sponsored events, leaving positive reviews, and even wearing branded apparel.

Brand strategy

It is a long-term plan that aligns brand marketing activities with business objectives. Successful brand strategy will focus on improving competitive positioning, generating awareness among a target audience, and driving customer acquisition to achieve revenue goals.

Brand personality

It refers to human characteristics or traits associated with a company's name. Designed to influence buyer perception of a brand and encourage loyalty through shared values or ideals, brand personality attributes can convey trustworthiness, responsibility, youthfulness, quirkiness, sophistication, and a range of other human qualities.

Brand positioning

It refers to how a company positions itself in the market and in the minds of its target customers. The most successful brand positioning articulates a value that is greater than anything the market currently offers, differentiating from competitors and alternatives in a way that creates a category of its own. When done right, brand positioning is a company's competitive advantage. It employs all the principles of brand theory to render competitors and alternatives inadequate in solving buyers' needs.

Brand recognition and brand awareness

They are closely related, but have different objectives. While the goal of brand awareness is to clearly communicate a brand's values and attributes to its target audience, brand recognition looks to maintain that awareness over time. Brand awareness is successful if buyers can easily understand what a brand represents. Brand recognition is successful if buyers can easily recall those ideals when they encounter a company's logo, messaging, packaging, or other brand elements.

Brand reputation

It refers to the perception of a brand's image among the general public, in the media, or within an industry. A brand's reputation is closely associated with the level of trust and confidence earned from its target audience and can be influenced by many factors. Brand reputation management is the practice of monitoring and exercising control over the variables that influence customer loyalty and confidence as it relates to a brand's social status.

2.2 Review of previous studies

2.2.1 Review of Journal and Articles

2.2 Review of previous studies

2.2.1 Review of Journals and Articles

Hatch et al. (2001) emphasized that corporate branding is an essential organizational tool. It functions effectively when aligned with three core elements: organizational culture, organizational vision, and corporate image. Effective corporate branding requires harmonious coordination among stakeholders, management, and employees, ensuring a shared understanding of brand identity.

Knox and Balmer (2001) highlighted the evolution of corporate branding, revealing that many organizations only recently recognized its strategic importance. As competition intensifies, organizations increasingly leverage branding to differentiate themselves in the market.

Bickerton (2003) explored corporate branding's complexity, emphasizing that successful brand management requires understanding the mechanisms behind brand

identity. The study noted that market saturation demands unique branding to capture consumer attention.

Uggla (2005) analyzed the strategic positioning of corporate brands, demonstrating how associations with related entities—such as other brands, products, individuals, or places—enhance brand perception. This interconnected network strengthens brand identity and market presence.

Saraniemi and Ahonen (2008) investigated the use of corporate branding in destination marketing, particularly in tourism. Their research found that strong branding in tourism relies on unique experiences and visual elements that differentiate destinations.

Ghodeswar (2008) identified four key stages of brand building: brand positioning, brand communication, brand performance delivery, and brand equity leveraging. The study concluded that effective communication is crucial for establishing brand awareness and customer loyalty.

Cooper et al. (2009) integrated corporate branding with Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and sustainability. They argued that organizations can build a strong brand by engaging in socially responsible practices, which foster customer trust and loyalty.

Denmark (2010) discussed how corporate branding integrates organizational resources and strategic goals. The study emphasized that maintaining brand reputation is crucial for sustained market leadership.

Shah et al. (2012) examined the relationship between brand image, brand attitude, and brand attachment, showing that brand popularity significantly influences consumer purchasing behavior, often outweighing environmental concerns.

Dolatabadi et al. (2012) studied brand personality's impact on product sales, focusing on the cosmetics industry. Their findings highlighted a strong connection between brand equity, customer trust, and loyalty.

Alizadeh et al. (2014) compared product branding and corporate branding, concluding that the choice between the two should be guided by internal and external market factors. They emphasized the need for a strategic approach that aligns with the organization's goals.

Zhang (2015) analyzed the impact of brand image on consumer behavior, revealing that brand image indirectly influences brand loyalty through customer satisfaction.

Pattuglia et al. (2015) explored the effects of authenticity on brand image, trust, and loyalty, suggesting that authentic branding can enhance customer perception and loyalty.

Saravanan (2021) investigated brand awareness for Ashok Leyland (Boss) in Madurai, finding that higher brand awareness directly improved product performance and customer loyalty.

Dr. Bhadrappa Haralayya (2021) conducted a study on branding's impact on consumer buying behavior for Ford cars in Karnataka. The study revealed that brand image and loyalty significantly influence purchasing decisions in the automotive industry.

Panta (2013) Panta's research in 2013 focused on examining brand loyalty among Nepalese consumers. The study revealed that while consumers in Nepal tend to be loyal to specific brands, the overall percentage of brand-loyal customers remains relatively low. The level of brand loyalty was observed to vary across product categories. Products that are frequently needed showed a higher degree of brand loyalty compared to those purchased less frequently. Moreover, Panta identified that consumers within the age group of 26 to 40 exhibited higher brand loyalty compared to other age groups. Furthermore, the research indicated a positive correlation between brand loyalty and consumer income levels. Those with higher incomes were more likely to remain loyal to a brand. Interestingly, brand-loyal consumers were less affected by promotional offers such as discounts, coupons, free samples, or advertising.

Ghimire (2015) Ghimire conducted a study on brand loyalty, specifically focusing on the branding policies of durable consumer goods. His findings suggested that brand loyalty among Nepalese consumers was moderate. He reported that 34% of consumers exhibited high brand loyalty, while 55% maintained loyalty to a certain extent. However, only 35% of consumers were willing to wait for their preferred brand during unavailability. Ghimire's research highlighted the complexity of brand loyalty, distinguishing it from simple brand preference. He treated brand loyalty as a general characteristic applicable across various products, a view that contradicted established research, which suggests brand loyalty is product-specific.

Banskota (2016) Banskota's research in 2016 focused on consumer satisfaction with Himalayan Bank Limited (HBL). The study primarily aimed to evaluate the bank's financial health, examining financial ratios, operational efficiency, and profitability. The findings revealed that HBL demonstrated efficient utilization of external funds for profitable lending. However, the bank's cash and bank balance ratios were suboptimal. The research also highlighted a positive correlation between the bank's deposits and loans, indicating effective fund management. Moreover, HBL maintained a low loan loss provision, suggesting a reduction in non-performing loans.

Joshi (2017) study examined consumer satisfaction at Everest Bank Limited (EBL). The research focused on analyzing the bank's financial indicators, including liquidity, profitability, and leverage ratios. Joshi found that EBL preferred to invest in government securities, which, despite being low-risk, yielded lower returns. The study recommended that EBL diversify its investment portfolio and explore new income sources beyond traditional banking activities. Additionally, the research indicated that EBL had a high debt ratio, signaling a need for caution in risk management.

Bhatta (2018) explored the impact of sales promotion on beer sales, using the Nepalese beer market as a case study. The research identified that most consumers preferred San Miguel beer, primarily for relaxation. It was also found that consumers were aware of sales promotion activities, with cash prizes being the most influential promotional tool. Bhatta's findings suggested that promotional offers, especially cash prizes, significantly impacted consumer purchasing decisions in the beer market.

Adhikari's 2018 study focused on the effectiveness of sales promotion tools in the cold drinks market. The research determined that consumers were well-informed about promotional activities, with cash prizes being the most attractive. Additionally, the study emphasized the popularity of electronic media (FM radio and TV) in promoting cold drinks.

Poudel's 2018 study investigated the influence of sales promotions on beer sales in Bhaktapur. The study showed that beer consumption was significantly higher among males, with Tabor being the most preferred brand. Cash prizes were found to be the most effective promotional tool, and the study indicated that consumers exhibited low brand loyalty in the beer market.

Aryal (2018) centered on assessing the market share of Colgate toothpaste compared to other brands. The study revealed that Colgate and Close-Up were the most stocked and sold brands. It also highlighted that promotional schemes, such as discounts and gifts, positively influenced consumer purchasing decisions.

Yadav's 2021 study explored brand choice and loyalty among consumers in Bhagawanpur Rural Municipality. The findings showed high brand loyalty in toothpaste products, with minimal differences between male and female consumers. The study also identified that loyalty varied across different demographic factors, including age, income, and education levels. Price promotions and advertising were key factors influencing brand switching among consumers.

2.3 Research Gaps

The primary aim of this study is to explore the impact of branding on consumer behavior within telecommunication companies and to identify new insights, knowledge, and suggestions related to this relationship. While previous studies provide a valuable foundation, it is important to build upon them to ensure continuity in research. However, there is a noticeable gap as no prior research specifically addresses the effect of branding on consumer behavior in Nepal's telecommunication sector.

To bridge this gap, the researcher has referred to a variety of sources, including books, journals, articles, dissertations (both published and unpublished), and field

opinions. These materials serve as guidelines to facilitate a smoother and more comprehensive research process. By reviewing past studies, the researcher identifies areas that remain unexplored or insufficiently addressed, which the current study aims to investigate.

Since this topic is relatively new in the research context, the study is expected to uncover previously unexamined aspects of branding's effect on consumer behavior in telecommunications. The research will focus on filling the gap between existing literature and new findings, guided by the study's specific objectives and limitations.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents a comprehensive account of the research methodology adopted to investigate the influence of branding on consumer behavior in the context of telecommunication service providers in Nepal, with an emphasis on the consumer base located within Lahan Municipality. It systematically outlines the overall research design, clearly delineating the rationale behind the chosen approach. Furthermore, the chapter elaborates on the target population, specifies the sample size, and explains the sampling techniques employed to ensure the representativeness of the study.

In addition, the chapter identifies both primary and secondary sources of data, and provides a detailed description of the data collection instruments and procedures utilized to gather relevant information. The strategies and tools used for data analysis are also discussed, highlighting how they support the interpretation and validation of research findings. Lastly, the chapter addresses the ethical considerations observed during the entire research process, ensuring compliance with established academic and professional standards.

3.1 Research Design

Research design has been defined in various ways, but generally, it refers to the overall plan that guides how data is collected, the sources of data, the methods of data analysis, and the ethical considerations that must be observed to effectively achieve the study's objectives or answer specific research questions (Creswell, 2003; Sekaran, 2003; Wilson, 2014). For this study, the researcher adopted a mixed-method research design, combining both qualitative and quantitative approaches to comprehensively address the research objectives. Specifically, a descriptive-longitudinal mixed-method design was used, which involves collecting data without manipulating the environment, often referred to as correlational or observational research. This approach enhances the reliability and validity of the findings by compensating for the limitations inherent in each method, thereby reducing potential biases. Additionally, interviews were conducted as part of the data collection process.

3.2 Population of the study

The population of a study refers to a group of individuals who share common characteristics that are of particular interest to the researcher (Creswell, 2003; Morgan, 1997). It can also denote people living within a specific geographic area who share similar cultural traits. In this study, the population includes all telecommunication service providers and their customers within Lahan Municipality, Nepal. This encompasses both the users of telecommunication services and marketing officials from companies such as STPL, NTC, UTL, NST, and NCELL.

For practical reasons and efficient management, the researcher chose a sample size of 200 respondents drawn from various locations within the municipality. This sample size was considered adequate to complete the research within the given timeframe and to fulfill the objectives of the study effectively. The selected participants were telephone service users who were accessible and willing to take part in the study. Each participant was given a questionnaire to complete. Additionally, the researcher provided necessary support to respondents, which included explaining the purpose of the study and clarifying individual questions, especially since some respondents had limited formal education.

3.3 Sources of Data

Data are information that has been translated into a form that is more convenient to move or process. There are two main sources of data used in this study namely; primary and secondary

3.3.1 Primary Data

Primary data refers to original information gathered directly through firsthand methods such as interviews, experiments, surveys, questionnaires, focus groups, and measurements. For this study, primary data was collected using questionnaires.

3.3.2 Secondary Data

Secondary data consists of information obtained from existing sources such as publications, journals, and newspapers, often collected by other researchers or organizations. This study did not utilize any secondary data from the telecommunication organizations under investigation.

3.4 Method of Data Collection

After evaluating various data collection techniques, the researcher opted for structured questionnaires. This choice was based on the ability of questionnaires to efficiently cover a broad sample within a limited time frame. Additionally, questionnaires are well-suited for studies that use a quantitative research design, which aligns with this study's approach.

The questionnaires were distributed to selected respondents including students, corporate employees, and other telecommunication users. Two primary measurement scales were employed: nominal and ordinal. The nominal scale captured variables such as age group, gender, profession, education level, and preferred network. For the ordinal scale, a five-point Likert scale was used, where 5 represented "strongly agree" and 1 represented "strongly disagree." To enhance clarity and facilitate analysis, the questionnaires were organized according to the study's specific objectives.

3.5 Data Analysis Technique

Data analysis involves converting raw data into meaningful insights. This study employed a quantitative research design, which required the use of statistical analysis methods. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used alongside Microsoft Excel to analyze the collected data. The data was thoroughly checked for completeness and accuracy, removing any omissions, errors, inconsistencies, and non-responses. Descriptive statistics such as means, standard deviations, relative importance index, and frequencies were computed. The results were then presented using tables and charts, and the findings were compared and discussed in relation to previous studies.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

In conducting this study, ethical standards were carefully observed to ensure that the research was carried out responsibly and respectfully. The researcher made sure to treat all participants with dignity and fairness, recognizing their rights and valuing their contributions. Respect for the individuals involved was a priority throughout the data collection and analysis process.

One of the key ethical aspects addressed was protecting the identity of the respondents. To maintain their privacy, all information collected was kept confidential and handled securely, preventing any unauthorized access or disclosure. This approach helped create a trusting environment where participants felt safe to share honest and accurate responses without fear of being identified.

Overall, these ethical considerations helped ensure the integrity of the research and safeguarded the welfare of all those involved in the study, reflecting the standards outlined by Morgan (1997).

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a detailed analysis and interpretation of the data collected during the fieldwork, with the aim of comprehensively assessing the impact of branding on consumer purchasing behavior within Nepalese telecommunication companies, specifically focusing on the Kathmandu Metropolitan area. The analysis centers on several key dimensions: the branding strategies implemented by telecommunication service providers, consumer perceptions of branding within the sector, the overall influence of branding on consumer decision-making, and the broader implications of these dynamics for the telecommunication industry. Furthermore, the chapter explores the nature of the relationship between branding efforts and consumer buying behavior. The findings are systematically presented through statistical measures such as mean values, standard deviations, frequency distributions, and the Relative Importance Index (RII), offering a quantitative basis for understanding the trends and patterns observed in the study.

4.1.1 Distribution of Respondents by Gender

This subsection provides a demographic overview of the respondents, specifically focusing on their gender distribution. Understanding the gender composition of the sample is essential, as it offers contextual background that may influence consumer behavior patterns and perceptions related to branding within the telecommunication sector. This information also contributes to the overall reliability and representativeness of the study's findings.

Table 4.1: Respondents by Gender Distribution

| Variable | No. of Respondents | Percentage |
|-----------------|---------------------------|-------------------|
| Male | 118 | 59.0 |
| Female | 82 | 41.0 |
| Total | 200 | 100.0 |

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Figure 4.1: Respondents Sex Distribution

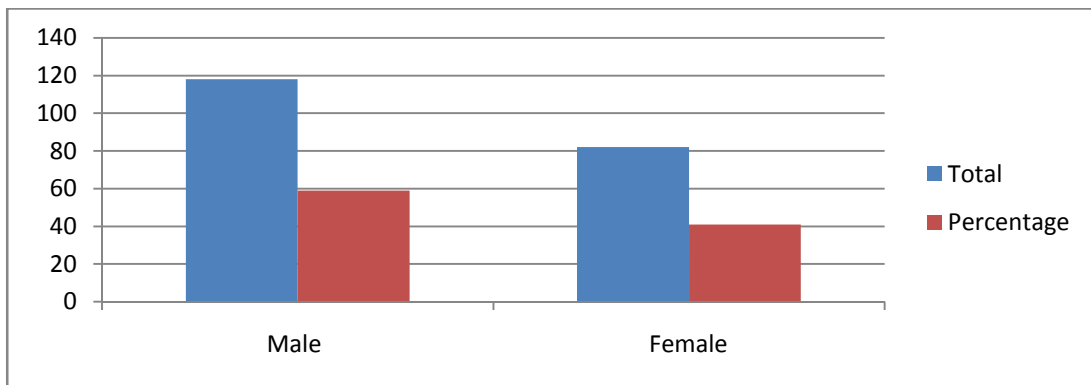


Table 4.1 illustrates the gender distribution of the 200 respondents who participated in the study. Of these, 118 respondents (59.0%) were male, while 82 respondents (41.0%) were female. This indicates a slightly higher representation of male participants in the sample. Understanding the gender composition of the respondents is important, as consumer behavior and brand perception can differ across genders. These demographic insights are taken into account during the analysis and interpretation of branding's influence on consumer decision-making within the telecommunication sector.

4.1.2 Distribution of Respondents by Age

This subsection outlines the age distribution of the respondents, offering insight into the age demographics represented in the study. Understanding the age composition is essential, as consumer preferences, attitudes toward branding, and purchasing behaviors can significantly differ across age groups. The analysis of age-related data helps in identifying potential generational trends and behavioral patterns that may influence how branding strategies are perceived and acted upon in the telecommunication industry. This demographic variable thus plays a crucial role in contextualizing the findings of the study.

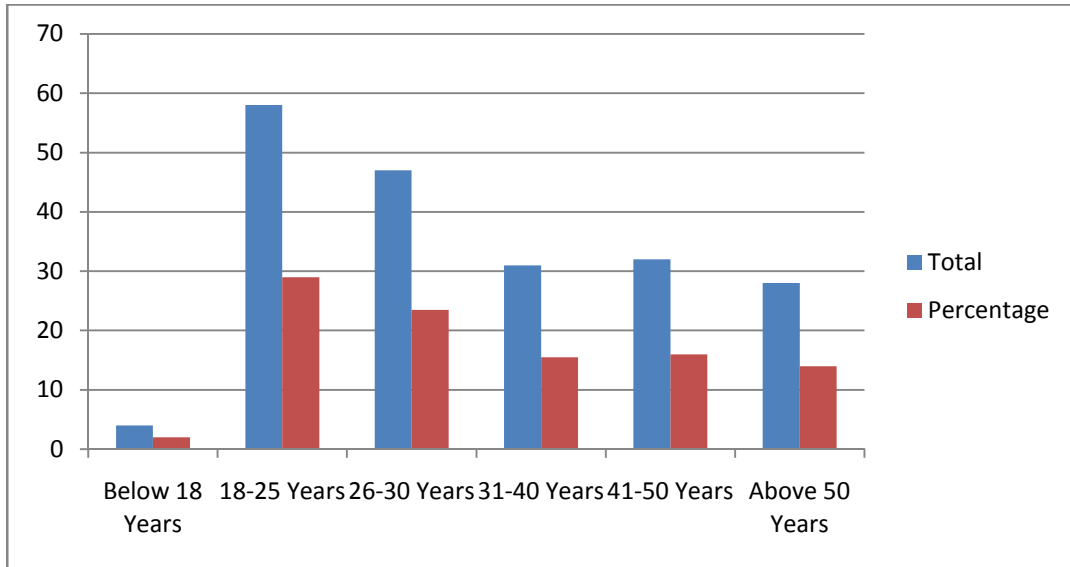
Table 4.2: Respondents Age Distribution

| Variable | No. of Respondents | Percentage |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|
| Below 18 Years | 4 | 2.0 |
| 18-25 Years | 58 | 29.0 |
| 26-30 Years | 47 | 23.5 |

| | | |
|-----------------------|------------|--------------|
| 31-40 Years | 31 | 15.5 |
| 41-50 Years | 32 | 16.0 |
| Above 50 Years | 28 | 14.0 |
| Total | 200 | 100.0 |

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Figure 4.2: Respondents Age Distribution



The age distribution of respondents, as presented in the corresponding table and figure, demonstrates a broad representation across different age categories. The largest segment of participants (N = 58, 29%) fell within the 18–25 years age group, highlighting a substantial presence of young adult consumers in the sample. This was followed by 23.5% of respondents aged 26–30 years. Participants within the 41–50 years age range constituted 16% of the total, while 15.5% were between 31–40 years of age. Those aged 50 years and above accounted for 14% of respondents. A small minority (2%) were below 18 years of age. This age distribution reflects a well-rounded sample, allowing for meaningful insights into the influence of branding on consumer behavior across different stages of the consumer lifecycle.

4.1.3 Distribution of Respondents by Educational Attainment

This subsection presents the distribution of respondents based on their level of educational attainment. Educational background is a significant demographic factor, as it can influence consumers’ awareness, interpretation, and responsiveness to

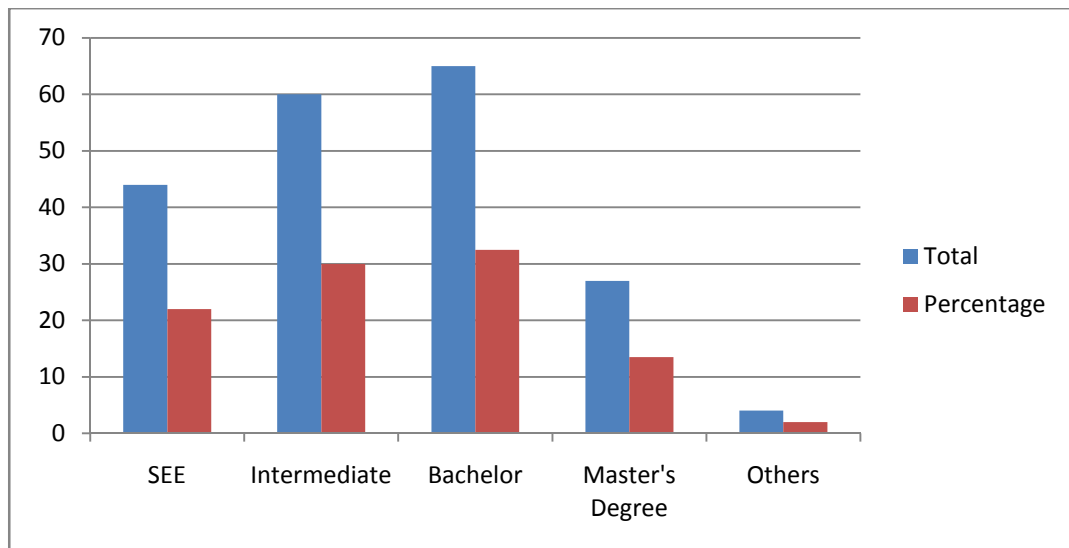
branding strategies. Analyzing the educational qualifications of respondents provides insight into their potential exposure to marketing communication and their capacity for brand evaluation, which are relevant to understanding variations in consumer behavior. The data on educational levels thus contributes to a more nuanced interpretation of the impact of branding within the telecommunication sector.

Table 4.3: Respondents Educational Level

| Variable | No. of Respondents | Percentage |
|------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|
| SEE | 44 | 22.0 |
| Intermediate | 60 | 30.0 |
| Bachelor | 65 | 32.5 |
| Master's Degree | 27 | 13.5 |
| Other | 4 | 2.0 |
| Total | 200 | 100.0 |

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Figure 4.3: Respondents Educational Level



The data presented in the corresponding table and figure indicate a varied distribution of respondents in terms of educational attainment. The largest proportion of respondents (32.5%) held a Bachelor's degree, followed closely by those with an intermediate level of education, accounting for 30% of the total. Additionally, 22% of the respondents had completed the Secondary Education Examination (SEE) level, while 13.5% possessed a Master's degree. A small fraction, approximately 2%, fell

into other unspecified educational categories. This distribution reflects a relatively well-educated sample population, which is significant in understanding how education may influence consumer perceptions and responses to branding strategies in the telecommunication sector.

4.1.4 Distribution of Respondents by Religion

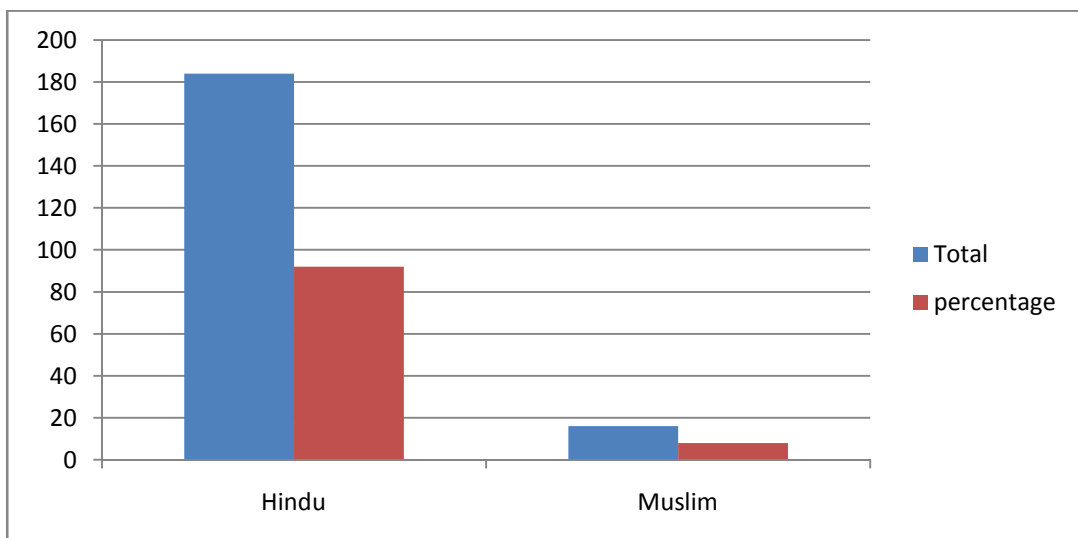
This subsection outlines the religious affiliation of the respondents, providing additional demographic context relevant to the study. Religion, as a socio-cultural factor, can subtly influence consumer values, preferences, and decision-making behaviors. Understanding the religious composition of the sample allows for a broader interpretation of consumer attitudes toward branding, particularly in a culturally diverse setting like Nepal. By analyzing religious affiliation, the study gains further depth in assessing how cultural identity may intersect with branding perceptions and consumer behavior in the telecommunication industry.

Table 4.4: Respondents Religion

| Variable | No. of Respondents | Percentage |
|---------------|--------------------|--------------|
| Hindu | 184 | 92.0 |
| Muslim | 16 | 8.0 |
| Total | 200 | 100.0 |

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Figure 4.4: Respondents Religion



The data presented in the corresponding table and figure reveal that the vast majority of respondents (92%) identified as adherents of the Hindu faith, while a minority (8%) reported being of the Muslim faith. This distribution reflects the predominant religious composition of the study area and provides a cultural context for interpreting consumer behavior. While religion may not directly determine purchasing decisions, it can shape underlying values and lifestyle preferences, which in turn may influence responses to branding and marketing strategies within the telecommunication sector.

4.1.5 Duration of Mobile Telecommunication Service Usage

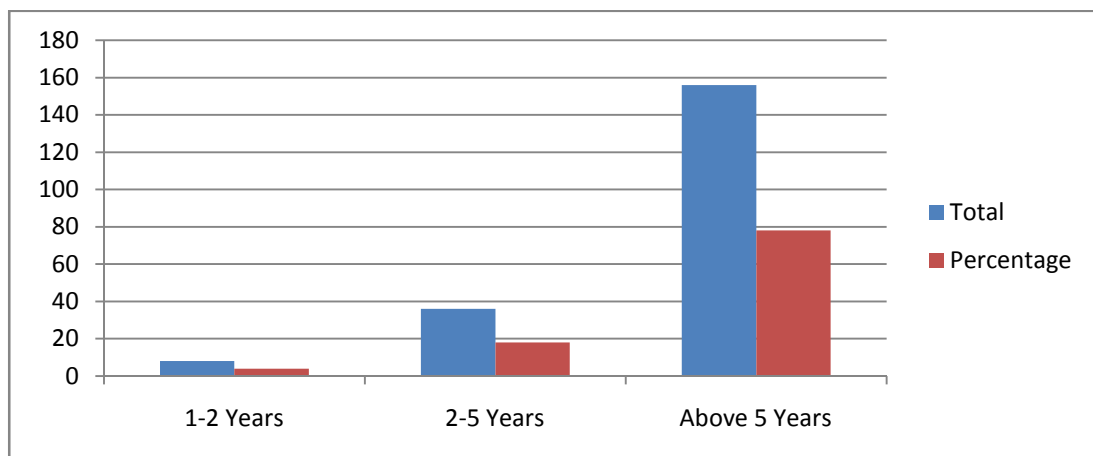
This subsection examines the length of time respondents have been using mobile telecommunication services. The duration of service usage is an important factor that can affect consumers' familiarity with brands, loyalty levels, and purchasing behavior. By analyzing how long consumers have engaged with telecommunication services, the study aims to understand the potential relationship between service tenure and the influence of branding on consumer decision-making. This information contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of consumer-brand dynamics within the telecommunication industry.

Table 4.5: Years of using mobile telecommunication services

| Variable | No. of Respondents | Percentage |
|---------------|--------------------|--------------|
| 1-2Years | 8 | 4.0 |
| 2-5 Years | 36 | 18.0 |
| Above 5 Years | 156 | 78.0 |
| Total | 200 | 100.0 |

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Figure 4.5: Years of Using Mobile Telecommunication Services



The data presented in the accompanying table and figure indicate that a substantial majority of respondents (N = 156, 78%) have been using mobile telecommunication services for more than five years. Additionally, 18% of respondents reported using these services for a period ranging between two and five years, while a smaller segment, representing 4% of the sample, indicated usage duration of between one and two years. This distribution highlights a predominantly long-term engagement with mobile telecommunication services among the study participants, which may have significant implications for their brand awareness, loyalty, and overall consumer behavior.

4.2 Branding Strategies Employed by Telecommunication Companies

This section examines the various branding strategies implemented by telecommunication companies to enhance their market presence and influence consumer behavior. The discussion focuses on the specific approaches adopted by these companies to differentiate their services, build brand equity, and foster customer loyalty in a competitive industry. By analyzing these strategies, the study aims to understand how branding initiatives contribute to shaping consumer perceptions and preferences within the Nepalese telecommunication sector.

The study investigated the branding strategies employed by officials from various telecommunication companies in Nepal, including STPL, NCELL, UTL, NTC, and NST. The findings revealed that these companies adopt a range of branding approaches focused on cost leadership, quality service, core identity, and differentiation to establish their competitive positioning in the market.

A marketing official from NCELL (Participant #1) emphasized the company's cost-driven strategy, stating, "*We believe our services are distinctive because of our call tariffs. We strive to offer the lowest rates among competitors, and as a result, customers recognize us primarily for this advantage.*"

From NTC, a participant (Participant #2) highlighted the company's commitment to service differentiation, explaining, "*We believe in what we do best. We are known for our service differentiation and consistently lead the industry by innovating, which distinguishes us from other telecommunication providers.*"

A marketing official from UTL (Participant #3) noted the company's focus on innovation and technology, remarking, "*Nepalese consumers recognize us as the*

smart phone network. We are pioneers in innovation and technology, offering affordable options tailored for our valued customers.”

Similarly, an official from STPL (Participant #4) described a unique strategy of providing additional value beyond core services, stating, *“We offer health tips and other services to our customers, which extend beyond our primary role of enabling communication. This approach allows us to differentiate our offerings in a market that includes both facilities-based providers and resellers.”*

Lastly, a representative from NTC (Participant #5) underscored the importance of brand identity, explaining, *“Our differentiation lies in our identity, which involves deploying advanced technology to meet the needs of individual consumers, corporate clients, and government sectors. This strategic approach not only enhances our brand knowledge but also facilitates entry into new market segments in the future.”*

Collectively, these insights demonstrate the multifaceted branding strategies that Nepalese telecommunication companies employ to build brand equity, foster customer loyalty, and maintain competitive advantage.

4.2.1 Customers’ Understanding of Branding

This subsection explores how customers perceive and interpret the concept of branding within the telecommunication industry. Understanding consumers’ awareness and interpretation of branding is essential, as it influences their attitudes, preferences, and purchasing decisions. The analysis draws on respondents’ views to assess the extent to which branding elements—such as brand identity, reputation, and differentiation—are recognized and valued by consumers. This insight provides a foundation for evaluating the effectiveness of branding strategies in shaping consumer behavior.

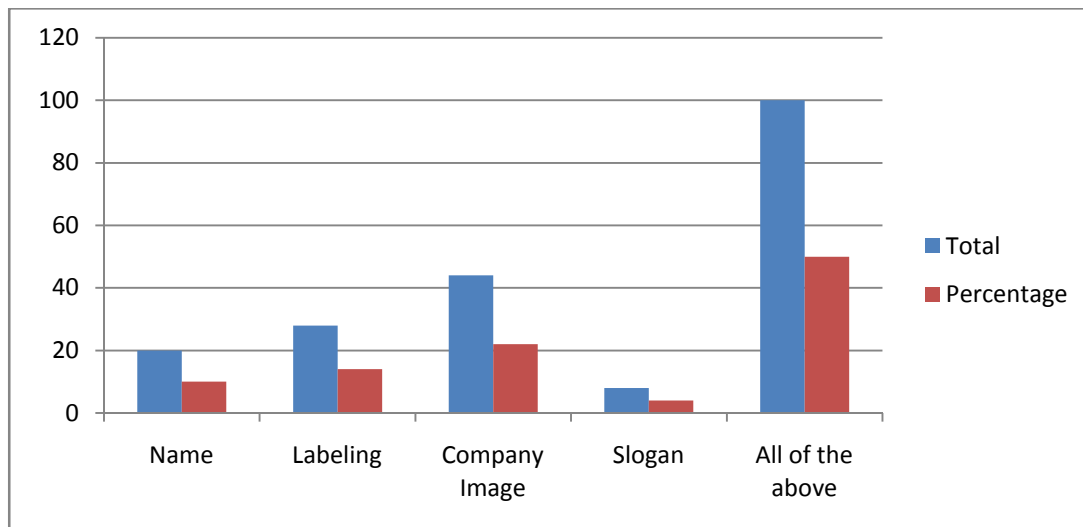
Table 4.6: Understanding of branding

| Variable | No. of Respondents | Percentage |
|----------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|
| Name | 20 | 10 |
| Labeling | 28 | 14 |
| Company Image | 44 | 22 |

| | | |
|-------------------------|------------|--------------|
| Slogan | 8 | 4 |
| All of the Above | 100 | 50 |
| Total | 200 | 100.0 |

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Figure 4.6: Understanding of branding



The data presented in the accompanying table and figure provide insights into respondents' understanding of branding within the telecommunication sector. A significant portion of respondents (50%) demonstrated a comprehensive awareness of branding by selecting "all of the above" when describing key brand elements. Additionally, 22% of respondents associated branding primarily with the company's image, while 14% highlighted labeling as an important aspect of brand identification. A further 10% indicated that they recognize organizations mainly by their brand names, and a smaller proportion (4%) identified brands through slogans. These results suggest that while there is a general awareness of multiple branding components among consumers, specific elements such as company image and labeling are more prominently recognized in shaping brand perception.

4.2.2 Differentiation of Preferred Mobile Telecommunication Service Brands

This subsection examines consumers' perceptions of how their preferred mobile telecommunication service brands distinguish themselves from competitors in the market. It investigates the specific attributes or characteristics that customers associate with these brands which set them apart, such as service quality, pricing,

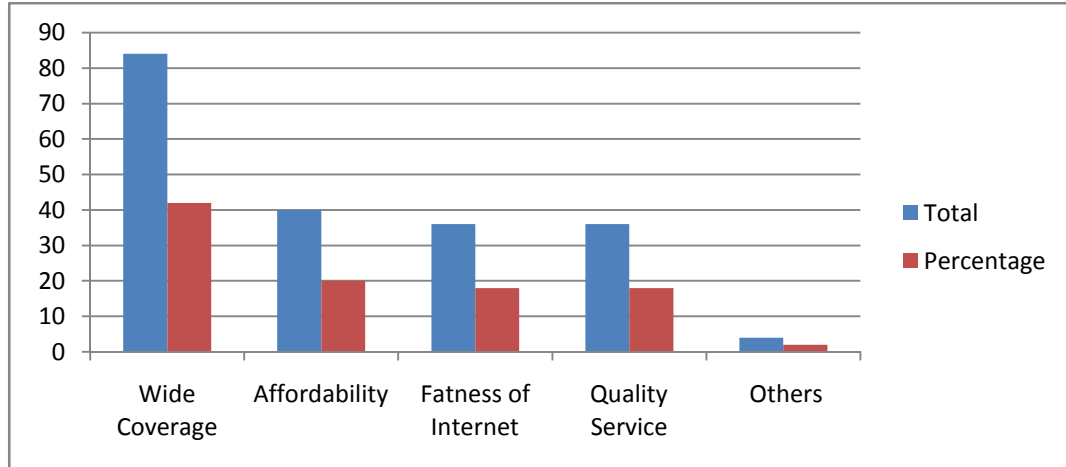
innovation, or customer support. Understanding these perceived points of differentiation is crucial for evaluating the effectiveness of branding strategies and their role in influencing consumer preferences and loyalty within the competitive telecommunication sector.

Table 4.7: Preferred Mobile Telecommunication Service Brand Being Different From Other Brands

| Variable | No. of Respondents | Percentage |
|------------------|--------------------|--------------|
| Wide coverage | 84 | 42.0 |
| Affordability | 40 | 20.0 |
| Fast of Internet | 36 | 18.0 |
| Quality Service | 36 | 18.0 |
| Others | 4 | 2.0 |
| Total | 200 | 100.0 |

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Figure 4.7: Preferred Mobile Telecommunication Service Brand Being Different From Other Brands



The data presented in the corresponding table and figure reveal key factors that respondents associate with the differentiation of their preferred telecommunication service brands. A plurality of respondents (42%) identified wide network coverage as the primary branding strategy that sets a company apart. Additionally, 20% of respondents indicated that affordability significantly influences their perception of a brand's distinctiveness. Factors such as internet speed and service quality were each cited by 18% of respondents as important differentiators. A smaller segment, representing 2% of the sample, attributed their brand preference to other unspecified

factors. These findings highlight the multifaceted nature of brand differentiation within the telecommunication industry, with network coverage and cost-effectiveness emerging as particularly influential in shaping consumer preferences.

4.2.3 Preferred Brand When Mobile Telecommunication Services Are Mentioned

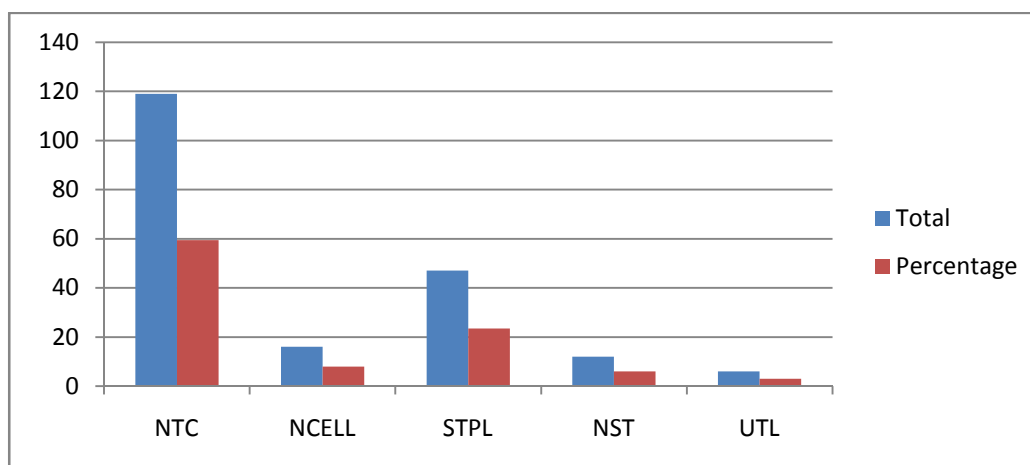
This subsection investigates the preferred mobile telecommunication brands among consumers when prompted to identify their first choice in the industry. Understanding brand preference provides insight into brand loyalty, market positioning, and consumer awareness. The analysis highlights which brands hold the strongest presence in the minds of consumers and explores the factors contributing to these preferences. This information is critical for assessing brand dominance and competitiveness within the Nepalese telecommunication sector.

Table 4.8: Preferred Brand When Mobile Telecommunication Services

| Variable | No. of Respondents | Percentage |
|--------------|--------------------|--------------|
| NTC | 119 | 59.5 |
| NCELL | 16 | 8.0 |
| STPL | 47 | 23.5 |
| NST | 12 | 6.0 |
| UTL | 6 | 3.0 |
| Total | 200 | 100.0 |

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Figure 4.8: Preferred Brand When Mobile Telecommunication Services



The data presented in the corresponding table and figure illustrate respondents' brand familiarity within the mobile telecommunication sector. The findings reveal that the majority of respondents (N = 119, 59.5%) identified Nepal Telecom (NTC) as their preferred brand when telecommunication services were mentioned. Following NTC, 23.5% of respondents favored NCELL, while 8% preferred STPL. Smaller proportions of respondents associated their preference with NST (6%) and UTL (3%). These results suggest that NTC holds a dominant position and enjoys significant brand recognition among Nepalese consumers in the mobile telecommunication market.

4.2.4 Impact of Branding on Consumer Buying Behavior in Telecommunication Companies

This subsection analyzes the ways in which branding influences consumer buying behavior, both directly and indirectly. It focuses on how consumers' perceptions, attitudes, and recognition of telecommunication brands shape their purchasing decisions. The analysis aims to elucidate the relationship between effective branding strategies and consumer loyalty, preference, and overall behavior within the competitive telecommunication market. Understanding this impact is crucial for assessing the role of branding in driving consumer choice and sustaining market share.

Table 4.9: Brand Loyalty

| Brand Loyalty | SA | A | N | D | SD |
|--|-----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| I am Motivated to recommend the brand that I use to others | 105(52.5) | 59(29.0) | 12(6.0) | 8(4.0) | 16(8.0) |
| I am Motivated to Purchase alternative packages | 60(30.0) | 76(38.0) | 44(22.0) | 12(6.0) | 8(4.0) |
| I would continue to use this brand even at high Usage Rate | 82(41.0) | 28(14.0) | 40(20.0) | 24(12.0) | 26(13.0) |
| I would be Motivated to switch to other competitive brand | 50(25.0) | 44(22.0) | 32(16.0) | 31(15.5) | 43(21.5) |

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The table above illustrates the influence of brand loyalty on customers' purchasing intentions, measured using a five-point Likert scale (SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree; N = Neutral; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly Disagree). A majority of respondents (52.5%) strongly agreed that they are motivated to recommend their

preferred brands to others, with an additional 29% agreeing to this behavior. Conversely, 6% remained neutral, while 4% disagreed and 8% strongly disagreed with recommending their brands.

Regarding motivation to purchase alternative packages, 30% of respondents expressed strong motivation, and 38% agreed that brand influence encourages them to consider alternative offerings. Meanwhile, 22% were neutral, 6% disagreed, and 4% strongly disagreed with this statement.

When asked about continuing to use their chosen brand despite high usage rates, 41% strongly agreed they would maintain their loyalty, while 14% agreed. However, 20% remained neutral, 12% disagreed, and 13% indicated they would discontinue use if costs increased substantially.

Concerning brand switching, 25% of respondents were motivated to switch to a competing brand, and 22% agreed with this possibility. Nonetheless, 16% were undecided, 15.5% disagreed, and 21.5% strongly disagreed with switching to alternative brands.

These findings collectively demonstrate that brand loyalty significantly shapes consumers' purchasing intentions and behaviors, influencing both their willingness to recommend brands and their decisions regarding brand continuity and switching within the telecommunication sector.

Table 4.10: RII Index on Brand Loyalty

| Brand Loyalty | Mean | SD | RII | Rank | RII Index |
|--|-------------|-----------|------------|-----------------|------------------|
| I am Motivated to recommend the brand that I use to others | 4.15 | 1.20 | 0.83 | 1 st | Medium important |
| I am Motivated to Purchase alternative packages | 3.89 | 0.97 | 0.76 | 2 nd | Medium important |
| I would continue to use this brand even at high Usage Rate | 3.58 | 1.45 | 0.72 | 3 rd | Medium important |

| | | | | | |
|---|-------------|------|------|-----------------|---------------|
| I would be Motivated to switch to other competitive brand | 3.14 | 1.49 | 0.63 | 4 th | Low important |
| Unweighted Mean = | 3.69 | | | | |

Source: Field Survey, 2023

To assess the relative importance of each factor or variable, the study employed a Relative Importance Index (RII) with the following classification criteria: values ranging from 0.85 to 1.00 indicate high importance, 0.65 to 0.84 denote medium importance, and 0.00 to 0.64 represent low importance. Here, **X** denotes the mean score and **SD** represents the standard deviation. The results, as summarized in Table 4.8, reveal the relative significance of various dimensions of brand loyalty.

The statement, “*I am motivated to recommend the brand that I use to others,*” recorded a mean (**X**) of 4.15, a standard deviation (**SD**) of 1.20, and an RII of 0.83, indicating medium importance. This suggests that customers who exhibit brand loyalty are moderately likely to promote the brand through recommendations. Similarly, the assertion “*I am motivated to purchase alternative packages*” received a mean of 3.89, SD of 0.97, and an RII of 0.76, also reflecting medium importance.

Furthermore, the response to “*I would continue to use this brand even at a high usage rate*” yielded a mean of 3.58, SD of 1.45, and an RII of 0.72, confirming its medium importance status. Conversely, the statement “*I would be motivated to switch to other competitive brands*” was rated less important, with a mean of 3.14, SD of 1.49, and an RII of 0.63, indicating a relatively low influence on consumer behavior.

These findings underscore the varying degrees to which different aspects of brand loyalty impact consumer intentions in the telecommunication sector.

Table 4.11: Brand Awareness

| Brand Awareness | SA | A | N | D | SD |
|---|-----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| I can easily Recall this brand during any purchase Power | 58(29.0) | 76(38.0) | 38(19.0) | 16(8.0) | 12(6.0) |
| I consider Point of Difference among brands before deciding | 25(12.5) | 95(47.5) | 80(40.0) | - | - |

| | | | | | |
|--|----------|----------|----------|----------|---------|
| I have adequate Knowledge about this Brand | 60(30.0) | 75(37.5) | 20(10.0) | 35(17.5) | 10(5.0) |
| My Position of Choice Set is high toward the brand | 66(33.0) | 76(38.0) | 40(20.0) | 18(9.0) | - |
| I can Recall of competitive Brands easily | 38(19.0) | 56(28.0) | 76(38.0) | 22(11.0) | 8(4.0) |

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The table above presents the effects of brand awareness on customers' purchasing intentions, measured using a five-point Likert scale (SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree; N = Neutral; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly Disagree).

A notable 29% of respondents strongly agreed that they can easily recall their preferred brand when making a purchase decision, while 38% agreed with this statement. In contrast, 19% remained neutral, and 14% (8% disagreed and 6% strongly disagreed) indicated difficulty in recalling their brand during purchase occasions.

Regarding the ability to differentiate among brands prior to making a decision, 47.5% of respondents agreed, 12.5% strongly agreed, and 40% remained neutral.

With respect to possessing adequate knowledge about their preferred brand, 30% strongly agreed, 37.5% agreed, 10% were neutral, while 22.5% (17.5% disagreed and 5% strongly disagreed) expressed insufficient knowledge.

When considering the brand's position within the consumer's choice set, 33% of respondents strongly agreed and 38% agreed that their brand holds a favorable position, with 20% neutral and 9% disagreeing.

Finally, regarding the ease of recalling competing brands, 19% strongly agreed and 28% agreed, while a majority of 38% remained neutral. Meanwhile, 15% of respondents (11% disagreed and 4% strongly disagreed) reported difficulty in recalling competitor brands.

These results indicate that brand awareness plays a significant role in consumer purchasing intentions, influencing brand recall, differentiation, knowledge, and positioning within the choice set.

Table 4.12: RII Index on Branding Awareness

| Brand Awareness | Mean | SD | RII | Rank | RII Index |
|--|-------------|-----------|------------|-----------------|------------------|
| I can easily Recall this brand during any purchase power | 3.85 | 1.05 | 0.74 | 2 nd | Medium important |
| I consider Point of Difference among brand before deciding | 3.69 | 0.62 | 0.64 | 5 th | Low important |
| I have adequate Knowledge about this brand | 3.76 | 1.20 | 0.69 | 4 th | Medium important |
| My Position of Choice Set is high towards the brand | 3.97 | 0.93 | 0.76 | 1 st | Medium important |
| I can Recall of competitive Brands easily | 3.56 | 0.99 | 0.71 | 3 rd | Medium important |
| Unweighted Mean | 3.77 | | | | |

Source: Field Survey, 2025

To evaluate the relative importance of each variable, the study utilized a Relative Importance Index (RII) with the following thresholds: 0.85–1.00 indicating high importance, 0.65–0.84 indicating medium importance, and 0.00–0.64 indicating low importance. In this context, **X** represents the mean score, while **SD** denotes the standard deviation.

The assessment of brand awareness factors revealed that the statement, “*We can easily recall this brand during any purchase power,*” was rated as of medium importance, with a mean (**X**) of 3.85, a standard deviation (**SD**) of 1.05, and an RII of 0.74. The assertion, “*We consider point of difference among brands before deciding,*” was considered less important, recording a mean of 3.69, **SD** of 0.62, and an RII of

0.64. Similarly, the statement “*We have adequate knowledge about this brand*” was rated as averagely important with a mean of 3.76, SD of 1.20, and an RII of 0.69. Lastly, the item “*My position in the choice set is high toward the brand*” achieved medium importance, with a mean of 3.97, SD of 0.93, and an RII of 0.76.

These findings suggest that while certain aspects of brand awareness moderately influence consumer perceptions, the point of difference among brands holds relatively lower importance in the purchasing process.

Table 4.13: Perceived Quality

| Perceived Quality | SA | A | N | D | SD |
|---|-----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| I will purchase brand with Product Performance | 140(70.0) | 40(20.0) | 12(6.0) | - | 8(4.0) |
| I will purchase brand with Value added features | 120(60.0) | 48(24.0) | 20(10.0) | 4(2.0) | 8(4.0) |
| I will purchase a brand with high Service Quality | 148(74.0) | 28(14.0) | 16(8.0) | - | 8(4.0) |
| Quality perception influences my brand decision | 82(41.0) | 82(41.0) | 30(15.0) | - | 6(3.0) |
| Innovation is key in my choice for mobile telecom brand | 88(44.0) | 40(20.0) | 60(30.0) | 12(6.0) | - |

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The table above illustrates the influence of perceived quality on customers’ purchasing intentions, measured using a five-point Likert scale (SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree; N = Neutral; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly Disagree). The data reveal that a significant majority, 90%, of respondents indicated that product performance is a key determinant in their brand purchasing decisions, with only 6% dissenting from this view.

Similarly, 84% of respondents affirmed their willingness to purchase brands offering value-added features, while 6% reported that such features do not influence their purchase decisions. Additionally, 88% agreed that high service quality strongly

motivates their purchasing behavior, whereas 4% did not prioritize service quality in their choices.

Furthermore, 82% of respondents acknowledged that their perception of brand quality influences their buying decisions, while 15% indicated that quality perception does not affect them. Lastly, innovation was considered a critical factor by 64% of the respondents in selecting mobile telephony services, though 30% reported that innovation does not influence their brand preference.

These findings underscore the pivotal role of perceived quality, including performance, added features, service quality, and innovation, in shaping consumer purchase intentions within the telecommunication sector.

Table 4.14: RII on Perceived Quality

| Perceived Quality | Mean | SD | RII | Rank | RII Index |
|---|-------------|------|------|-----------------|------------------|
| I will purchase brand with Product Performance | 4.63 | 0.76 | 0.89 | 1 st | High important |
| I will purchase brand with Value added features | 4.35 | 1.02 | 0.73 | 4 th | Medium important |
| I will purchase a brand with high Service Quality | 4.55 | 0.95 | 0.89 | 1 st | High important |
| Quality perception influences my brand decision | 4.27 | 0.82 | 0.80 | 2 nd | Medium important |
| Quality perception influences my brand decision | 4.06 | 0.96 | 0.79 | 3 rd | Medium important |
| Unweighted Mean= | 4.37 | | | | |

Source: Field Survey, 2025

To assess the relative importance of the factors related to perceived quality, the study employed a Relative Importance Index (RII) with classification thresholds set as follows: 0.85–1.00 indicating high importance, 0.65–0.84 indicating medium importance, and 0.00–0.64 indicating low importance. Here, **X** represents the mean score and **SD** the standard deviation.

The results, as presented in Table 4.12, reveal that the statement “*I will purchase a brand based on product performance*” was rated as highly important, with a mean of 4.63, standard deviation of 0.76, and an RII of 0.89. Similarly, the assertion “*I will purchase a brand with high service quality*” also achieved high importance, reflected by a mean of 4.55, SD of 0.95, and RII of 0.89.

Conversely, the item “*Quality perception influences my brand decision*” was classified as medium importance, with a mean score of 4.27, SD of 0.82, and RII of 0.80. The assertion “*Innovation influences my brand decision*” was similarly rated medium importance, recording a mean of 4.06, SD of 0.96, and RII of 0.79. Lastly, the statement “*I will purchase a brand with value-added features*” was considered medium important with a mean of 4.35, SD of 1.02, and RII of 0.73.

These findings suggest that product performance and service quality are the most critical determinants within perceived quality, while other factors such as quality perception, innovation, and value-added features hold moderate influence on consumer purchasing decisions.

Table 4.15: Brand Association

| Brand Association | SA | A | N | D | SD |
|---|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|
| I will patronize in brand with Closeness to Life | 50(25.0) | 56(28.0) | 56(28.0) | 14(7.0) | 24(12.0) |
| I like brand with high Social Image | 100(50.0) | 62(31.0) | 24(12.0) | 6(4.0) | 8(4.0) |
| Personality feelings is key in my brand decision | 57(28.5) | 60(30.0) | 60(30.0) | 15(7.5) | 8(4.0) |
| Sing Value or recognition influence my brand decision | 18(9.0) | 39(19.5) | 115(57.5) | 12(6.0) | 16(8.0) |

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The table above presents the influence of brand association on customers’ purchasing intentions, assessed using a five-point Likert scale (SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree; N = Neutral; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly Disagree). The survey findings indicate that 53% of respondents are more likely to patronize brands that support life-enhancing causes, whereas 19% expressed unwillingness to do so.

Additionally, 81% of respondents prefer brands associated with a strong social image, while 12% remained neutral, and 8% reported that social image does not influence their branding decisions.

Further analysis revealed that a majority of 58.5% consider personality feelings as a significant factor in selecting telecommunication brands, while 30% remained uncertain regarding its influence. Moreover, 28.5% of respondents acknowledged that brand recognition affects their choice, in contrast to 14% who indicated that recognition does not play a role in their decision-making process.

These results underscore the considerable impact of brand association dimensions—such as social responsibility, social image, personality feelings, and recognition—on consumer preferences within the telecommunication sector.

Table 4.16: RII on Brand Association

| Brand Association | Mean | SD | RII | Rank | RII on Index |
|---|-------------|-----------|------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| I will patronize in brand with Closeness to Life | 3.47 | 1.27 | 0.68 | 3 rd | Medium important |
| I like brand with high Social Image | 4.23 | 1.04 | 0.79 | 1 st | Medium important |
| Personality feelings is key in my brand decision | 3.69 | 1.08 | 0.74 | 2 nd | Medium important |
| Sing Value or recognition influence my brand decision | 3.14 | 0.96 | 0.62 | 4 th | Low important |
| Unweighted Mean= | 3.63 | | | | |

Source: Field Survey, 2025

To evaluate the relative importance of the various factors related to brand association, the study utilized a Relative Importance Index (RII) with the following categorization: 0.85–1.00 indicating high importance, 0.65–0.84 indicating medium importance, and 0.00–0.64 indicating low importance. In this context, **X** represents the mean score and **SD** the standard deviation.

The findings, summarized in Table 4.14, reveal that the statement “*I like brands with high social image*” was rated as medium importance, with a mean of 4.23, a standard deviation of 1.04, and an RII of 0.79. Similarly, the assertion “*Personality feelings*

are key in my brand decision” was also considered medium important, recording a mean score of 3.69, SD of 1.08, and RII of 0.74.

The item *“I will patronize brands that are close to life”* was deemed moderately important with a mean of 3.47, SD of 1.27, and RII of 0.68. Finally, the assertion *“Sign value or recognition influences my brand decision”* was rated as having low importance, reflected by a mean of 3.14, SD of 0.96, and RII of 0.62.

These results indicate that social image and personality feelings hold moderate influence over consumer brand association, while closeness to life factors are somewhat important, and sign value or recognition plays a comparatively minor role in shaping brand preference.

4.2.5 Relationship between Branding and Consumer Buying Behavior in the Nepalese Telecommunication Sector

This section of the analysis examines the relationships between different dimensions of branding and consumer buying behavior within the context of Nepalese telecommunication companies. The focus is on how various branding components—such as brand loyalty, brand awareness, perceived quality, and brand association—interact and influence consumers’ purchasing decisions and preferences in this industry. The analysis aims to identify the strength and nature of these associations to better understand the impact of branding strategies on consumer behavior in the Nepalese telecommunication market.

Table 4.17: Correlations

| | | Consum e buying behavio r | Brand Loyalty | Brand awarenes s | Perceive d quality | Brand associati on |
|---|--------------------------------|--|--------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Consumer buying behavior | Pearson correlation | 1 | | | | |
| | Sig. (2- tailed) | | | | | |
| Brand | Pearson | .65^{**} | 1 | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|---------------|---------------|-------------|-------------|----------|
| Loyalty | correlation | | | | | |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .003 | | | | |
| Brand awareness | Pearson correlation | .093 | -.048 | 1 | | |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .315 | .604 | | | |
| Perceived quality | Pearson correlation | .256** | .476** | .021 | 1 | |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .005 | .000 | .821 | | |
| Brand association | Pearson correlation | .243** | .613** | .484 | .229 | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .009 | .000 | .000 | .014 | |

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-Tailed).

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The findings indicate a statistically significant (p-value < 0.05) and positive correlation between consumer buying behavior and the various dimensions of branding. Specifically, a significant relationship was observed between consumer buying behavior and brand loyalty (p-value < 0.05, r = 0.665). Similarly, brand awareness demonstrated a significant association with consumer buying behavior (p-value < 0.05, r = 0.593). Additionally, perceived quality was significantly correlated with consumer buying behavior (p-value < 0.05, r = 0.665). Furthermore, brand association also showed a significant positive correlation with consumer buying behavior.

These results corroborate previous research in the field of marketing. For instance, Dolatabadi et al. (2012) investigated the influence of brand personality on product sales through brand equity within the cosmetic retail sector. Their study emphasized that delivering equity through products is fundamental to building customer trust and loyalty, which, in turn, fosters customer satisfaction and retention. Dolatabadi et al.

found a significant relationship between product equity and both customer loyalty and trust. Similarly, Ghodeswar (2008), through a literature review and case studies of successful Indian brands, identified communication as a critical element in brand building. Effective communication facilitates customer understanding and association with a brand, thereby sustaining brand strength over time.

4.3 Major Findings of the Study

) Understanding of Branding:

Half (50%) of the respondents indicated they understood all aspects of branding. Meanwhile, 22% identified understanding company image, 14% easily identified labeling, 10% recognized the brand name of the organization, and only 4% identified companies through slogans.

) Branding Strategies Used by Telecom Companies:

Various branding strategies are adopted by communication companies such as STPL, NCELL, UTL, NTC, and NST. These include cost-driven quality service, core identity, and differentiation. According to survey results, 42% of respondents consider wide network coverage a key branding strategy; 20% emphasize affordability; while fast internet speed and quality services each accounted for 18%. Other variables influenced 2% of respondents.

) Years of Using Mobile Telecommunication Services:

A majority (78%, N=156) have used mobile telecommunication services for over five years, 18% for 2–5 years, and only 4% for 1–2 years.

) Brand Preference:

NTC was the most preferred brand (59.5%), followed by NCELL (23.5%), STPL (8%), NST (6%), and UTL (3%), indicating NTC's popularity among Nepalese users.

) Brand Loyalty and Recommendation:

More than half (52.5%) strongly agreed they are motivated to recommend their favorite brand, while 29% agreed. A small fraction (12%) were neutral or disagreed.

) Motivation to Purchase Alternative Packages:

Thirty percent are motivated to try alternative packages, 38% are motivated due to brand influence, 22% neutral, and 10% disagreed.

) Brand Usage Despite High Costs:

Forty-one percent would continue using their brand even if usage rates were high, 14% agreed, 20% neutral, 12% disagreed, and 13% would discontinue usage.

) Switching to Competitive Brands:

Twenty-five percent would be motivated to switch, 22% agreed, 16% undecided, while 37% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

) Relative Importance Index (Brand Loyalty):

) “I am motivated to recommend the brand I use” scored medium importance (X=4.15, SD=1.20, RII=0.83).

) “I am motivated to purchase alternative packages” was medium important (X=3.89, SD=0.97, RII=0.76).

) “I would continue to use this brand even at high usage rates” scored medium importance (X=3.58, SD=1.45, RII=0.72).

) “I would be motivated to switch to other competitive brands” was low important (X=3.14, SD=1.49, RII=0.63).

) Brand Recall and Awareness:

) 29% strongly agreed and 38% agreed they can easily recall their brand during purchase decisions; 19% neutral, 14% disagreed.

) 60% (47.5% agree + 12.5% strongly agree) consider the point of difference among brands before deciding.

) 67.5% (37.5% agree + 30% strongly agree) reported adequate knowledge about the brand.

) 71% (38% agree + 33% strongly agree) reported a high position of choice set toward the brand.

) Recall of Competitive Brands:

Only 19% strongly agreed they can easily recall competitive brands, 28% agreed, and 38% neutral.

) Relative Importance Index for Branding Awareness:

-) “Recall this brand during purchase” was medium important ($X=3.85$, $SD=1.05$, $RII=0.74$).
-) “Consider point of difference among brands” was low important ($X=3.69$, $SD=0.62$, $RII=0.64$).
-) “Adequate knowledge about this brand” was medium important ($X=3.76$, $SD=1.20$, $RII=0.69$).
-) “Position of choice set is high” was medium important ($X=3.97$, $SD=0.93$, $RII=0.76$).

) Perceived Quality and Purchase Intentions:

-) 90% purchase based on product performance, 6% would not.
-) 84% purchase brands with value-added features, 6% would not.
-) 88% consider high service quality important, 4% do not.
-) 82% influenced by quality perception; 15% not influenced.
-) 64% consider innovation key in telecom brand choice, 30% do not.

) Relative Importance Index for Perceived Quality:

-) “Purchase brand based on product performance” was highly important ($X=4.63$, $SD=0.76$, $RII=0.89$).
-) “Purchase brand with high service quality” was highly important ($X=4.55$, $SD=0.95$, $RII=0.89$).
-) “Quality perception influences brand decision” was medium important ($X=4.27$, $SD=0.82$, $RII=0.80$ and $X=4.06$, $SD=0.96$, $RII=0.79$).
-) “Purchase brand with value-added features” was medium important ($X=4.35$, $SD=1.02$, $RII=0.73$).

) Brand Association:

-) 53% likely to patronize brands that support life, 19% unlikely.
-) 81% prefer brands with a high social image; 12% undecided; 8% indifferent.
-) 58.5% influenced by personality feelings, 30% undecided.
-) 28.5% influenced by brand recognition, 14% do not consider recognition.

) Correlation Between Branding and Buying Behavior:

Significant positive correlations were found between consumer buying behavior and brand loyalty ($r=0.665$), brand awareness ($r=0.593$), perceived quality ($r=0.665$), and brand association ($p\text{-value} < 0.05$).

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Summary

This chapter offers a comprehensive overview of the study's findings, providing insights into the branding strategies used by telecommunication companies, customer perceptions of branding in the telecommunications sector, the influence of branding on consumer behavior, and its overall impact on the industry. It also explores the relationship between branding and consumer purchasing behavior.

5.1 Summary Consumer buying behavior is shaped by four key factors: cultural, social, personal, and psychological influences. These factors drive consumers to form preferences for specific products and brands. Although marketers may not have direct control over these influences, understanding their effects is crucial for designing effective marketing strategies that resonate with target consumers.

The consumer decision-making process typically involves five stages: problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision, and post-purchase behavior. The complexity of this process varies based on the nature of the product, ranging from routine purchases to extensive problem-solving decisions. Consumers are often influenced by various external factors, including the opinions of others and social interactions, making the decision-making process a collective effort rather than an isolated one.

Brand loyalty is defined as a consumer's conscious or unconscious decision to consistently repurchase a specific brand. This loyalty is often rooted in the consumer's perception that the brand offers the desired features, quality, and value at an acceptable price. Marketers aiming to cultivate brand loyalty must first disrupt existing consumer habits, encourage the adoption of new preferences, and continuously reinforce these choices through targeted reminders and value-driven communication.

In the context of the Nepalese market, intense competition is a defining characteristic. Domestic industries produce a wide range of goods, while international products also

compete for consumer attention. As a result, Nepalese consumers are presented with numerous options for nearly every product category, enabling them to choose from a variety of brands rather than being limited to a single option. This competitive landscape has intensified promotional activities, with businesses leveraging various marketing channels, such as television commercials, radio advertisements, print media, billboards, and personal selling, to capture consumer interest.

Understanding consumer brand loyalty behavior is crucial in this competitive market environment. Despite the abundance of brands available, limited research has been conducted in Nepal to assess consumer loyalty patterns. Therefore, this study aims to bridge this gap by examining whether Nepalese consumers demonstrate brand loyalty and identifying the factors that influence their preferences.

5.2 Conclusion

This section presents the conclusions derived from the research, highlighting the essential findings related to the branding strategies adopted by Nepalese telecommunication companies and their impact on consumer buying behavior.

The study has revealed that various branding strategies are actively employed by the major telecommunication companies in Nepal, including STPL, NCELL, UTL, NTC, and NST. These strategies are not limited to a single aspect but span across multiple dimensions, including cost-driven quality services, core brand identity, and differentiation approaches. Additionally, companies prioritize coverage, accessibility, availability, pricing, and promotional activities to ensure a strong market presence.

The research further explored customer perceptions of these branding strategies, finding that a significant majority of respondents were well-informed about the various branding elements used in the telecommunications sector. While some customers viewed branding as simply involving logos, service quality, pricing, coverage, image, signage, and slogans, most respondents perceived branding as a combination of all these factors working together.

Moreover, the analysis of the collected data demonstrated a clear and significant relationship between branding and customer buying behavior. Specifically, brand loyalty was found to have a strong positive association with consumer purchasing

decisions. Similarly, brand awareness showed a positive and significant impact on customer buying behavior, indicating that customers are more likely to choose a brand they are familiar with. Additionally, perceived quality and brand association also exhibited positive and significant connections with customer purchasing behavior.

In summary, this study has successfully established that branding significantly influences consumer buying behavior in the Nepalese telecommunications sector. The findings suggest that telecommunication companies in Nepal utilize a range of branding strategies—encompassing visual elements (logos, signage, and slogans), quality of service, pricing models, and extensive coverage—to enhance customer awareness and positively shape consumer perceptions. This multi-faceted approach to branding helps these companies maintain competitive advantages in the market while fostering customer loyalty.

5.3 Implications

Based on the conclusions drawn from the study, several recommendations are essential for achieving sustained success in the telecommunication sector. These recommendations emphasize strategic branding, customer satisfaction, quality service, continuous improvement, research and development, and the adoption of appropriate branding strategies.

- 1. Research and Development:** Regular scientific research is vital for the success of any business, including telecommunication companies. These organizations should conduct ongoing research activities such as customer surveys and brand performance assessments. Such studies will help identify areas for improvement and ensure brand sustainability.
- 2. Customer Satisfaction:** Prioritizing customer satisfaction is crucial, especially in a competitive telecommunication industry. Companies must focus on customer service elements such as complaint handling, reducing waiting times, and maintaining effective customer relationship management. A strong connection between brand perception and customer behavior can enhance customer loyalty.
- 3. Adopting Effective Branding Strategies:** Telecommunication companies must implement well-planned branding strategies to attract and retain customers. This

includes creating a distinctive brand identity using logos, slogans, imagery, and other brand elements that resonate with the target audience.

4. **Ensuring Quality Service and Continuous Improvement:** Companies should consistently maintain high service quality by offering products and services that meet customer expectations. Continuous improvement processes should be in place to eliminate defects and enhance service delivery. Satisfied customers often promote the brand through word of mouth (WOM), which is a valuable marketing tool.
5. **Strategic Branding:** Effective branding should integrate customer insights and preferences into the overall brand strategy. When customers feel that their opinions are valued, they are more likely to develop a strong sense of brand loyalty. Strategic branding helps ensure that the brand remains memorable and relevant to customers.

The researcher believes that incorporating these recommendations into the branding policies of telecommunication companies will enhance their brand image, customer loyalty, and overall success in the highly competitive market.

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APPENDIX
Tribhuvan University
SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

**Topic: Effect of Branding on Consumer Behavior in Tele communication
Companies in Nepal**

Introduction

This questionnaire is part of a study that is determining the effect of branding in the Nepalese telecommunication companies on consumers' buying behavior. Kindly select the right response from among alternative answers for each question by ticking in the appropriate box. Where alternative answers are not provided, fill in the gaps provided. You are assured of the confidentiality of this exercise because it will be solely used for academic purpose. Thank you for your contribution.

Section A: Background Information

1. What is your Sex?

Male

Female

2. Indicate your age groups?

3. Below 18years

18-25years

26-30years

31-40 years

41-50years

50 Above

4. What is your highest educational attainment?

SEE

Intermediate

Bachelor

Master's Degree

Other Specify:

5. Indicate your Religion?

- Hindu
- Muslim
- Traditionalist
- Others (specify).....

6. How long have you been using mobile telecommunication services?

- a) Less than a year
- b) 1 -2 years
- c) 2 – 5 years
- d) Above 5 years

7. What do you understand by branding?

- a) Name
- b) Labeling
- c) Company image
- d) Slogan
- e) All of the above

8. Which brand comes into mind when mobile telecommunication services are mentioned?

- a) NTC
- b) NCELL
- c) STPL
- d) NST
- e) UTL

Section- B: Brand Loyalty, Brand Awareness, Perceived Quality, Purchasing Intentions and Brand Association

Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement to the following statements on brand loyalty by using the agreement legend provided. Agreement Legend

Strongly agree=5,

Agree=4,

Neutral=3,

| Brand Awareness | Use the 5-point Likert Scale | | | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| I can easily Recall this brand during any purchase | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Power Brand Loyalty | Use the 5-point Likert Scale | | | | |
| I am Motivated to recommend the brand that I use to others | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| I am Motivated to Purchase alternative packages | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| I would continue to use this brand even at high Usage Rate | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| I would be Motivated to switch to other competitive brand | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

Disagree=2,

Disagree=1

Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement to the following statements on brand awareness by using the agreement legend provided. Agreement Legend Strongly agree=5, Agree=4, Neutral=3, Disagree=2, Disagree=1

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I consider Point of Difference among brands before deciding | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| I have adequate Knowledge about this Brand | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| My Position of Choice Set is high toward the brand | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| I can Recall of competitive Brands easily | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement to the following statements on perceived quality by using the agreement legend provided. Agreement Legend Strongly agree=5, Agree=4, Neutral=3, Disagree=2, Disagree=1

| Perceived Quality | Use the 5-point Likert Scale | | | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| I will purchase brand with Product Performance | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| I will purchase brand with Value added features | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| I will purchase a brand with high Service Quality | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Quality perception influences my brand decision | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Innovation is key in my choice for mobile telecom brand | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement to the following statements on brand association by using the agreement legend provided. Agreement Legend Strongly agree=5, Agree=4, Neutral=3, Disagree=2, Disagree=1

| Brand Association | Use the 5-point Likert Scale | | | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| I will patronise in brand with Closeness to Life | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| I like brand with high Social Image | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Personality feelings is key in my brand decision | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Sing Value or recognition influence my brand decision | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

How does your preferred mobile telecommunication service brand differ from other brands?

(tick as may apply)

- a) Wide coverage []
- b) Fast internet []
- c) Affordability []
- d) Quality services []
- e) If other please specify

THANKS FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION

| Perceived Quality | Mean | SD | RII | Rank | RII Index |
|---|-------------|-----------|------------|-----------------|------------------|
| I will purchase brand with Product Performance | 4.63 | 0.76 | 0.89 | 1 st | High important |
| I will purchase brand with Value added features | 4.35 | 1.02 | 0.73 | 4 th | Medium important |
| I will purchase a brand with high Service Quality | 4.55 | 0.95 | 0.89 | 1 st | High important |
| Quality perception influences my brand decision | 4.27 | 0.82 | 0.80 | 2 nd | Medium important |
| Quality perception influences my brand decision | 4.06 | 0.96 | 0.79 | 3 rd | Medium important |
| Unweighted Mean= | 4.37 | | | | |

Appendix II

RII on Perceived Quality

| Brand Association | SA | A | N | D | SD |
|--|-----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| I will patronize in brand with Closeness to Life | 49(24.5) | 55(27.0) | 56(28.0) | 12(6.0) | 24(12.0) |
| I like brand with high Social Image | 100(50.0) | 52(26.0) | 24(12.0) | 4(2.0) | 8(4.0) |
| Personality feelings is key in my | 53(26.5) | 60(30.0) | 60(30.0) | 15(7.5) | 8(4.0) |

| | | | | | |
|--|---------|----------|-----------|---------|---------|
| brand decision | | | | | |
| Sing Value or recognition influence my brand decision | 18(9.0) | 35(17.5) | 115(57.5) | 12(6.0) | 16(8.0) |

Appendix-III

Brand Association

Source: Field Survey, 2025. Where SA=Strongly Agree; A=Agree; N=Neutral;
D=Disagree; SD=Strongly Disagree