

Brand equity and purchase intention for ecommerce platforms in Vietnam

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Abstract. In this paper a quantitative approach is taken to identify factors that influence purchase intention and brand equity on the top 3 e-commerce platforms in urban Vietnam. Overall perceived brand equity and purchase intention is compared amongst these brands to rank them and an analysis on individual factors leading to brand equity or purchase intention is conducted. As each brand is analyzed individually, a summary of factors influencing each one is presented, as different brands will be impacted by different factors. Techniques used rely mostly on ANOVA and regression analysis.

Keywords: e-commerce, brand equity, purchase intention, Shopee, Lazada, Tiki, Vietnam

1 Introduction

The increasing popularity of e-commerce platforms in Vietnam is undeniable in the last few years. Reports on the popularity of each one of the main platforms (Shopee, Lazada and Tiki) are issued on regularly basis and show the increasing values of sales and visits in all of them. However, it becomes harder to show in these reports what is the key difference between brand equity and purchase intention across these 3 brands. Papers [48, 53, 54] amongst others highlight this difficulty in other geographical areas.

Motivated by this problematic, the authors present the following quantitative paper set to find an answer to the following questions: Is brand equity different between these brands? Is purchase intention different between these brands? What factors mostly influence either brand equity or purchase intention, on each one of these brands?

Bearing in mind also the findings of [48] and existing reports on e-commerce in Vietnam, geographical area plays a key role, with potential differences in buying behavior being revealed from several demographic and psychographic factors. In this study, the emphasis is put on a more urban population, with it being set to Hanoi citizens, in its vast majority aged 18 to 50, to better understand key factors in this geographical area and age group.

Techniques used rely mainly on factor and regression analysis to analyse relevant factors and on ANOVA and difference in means to analyse discrepancies between brands.

2 Literature Review

2.1. Brand equity Models

A sizable amount of research has been devoted to this area as the power of branding becomes more widely recognized as one of the factors that contribute to firm survival and success [1-4,16, 19, 28, 41-45]. Therefore, there is debate about how brand equity is built and operationalized. Although brand equity definitions and concepts continue to vary, most approaches—often implicitly—emphasize brand equity as a strategic element of corporate growth. Brand equity is the extra worth that a product has over what it would have without the brand name, which enables businesses to gain more value and profit.

Given its strategic responsibilities and contributions, achieving and maintaining a high degree of brand equity is an obvious goal for businesses. Although there are many different conceptualizations of brand equity, Aaker's 1991 model, Dimensionality of Consumer-Based Brand Equity, is the most often utilized model for empirical research [2,3,13,14,27]. The framework developed by Aaker, which includes the elements of brand awareness, brand quality, brand association, and brand equity, also used in this essay. This approach enables the consideration of consumers' physiological and behavioral characteristics. Combining these elements has some advantages. Although perception is a poor predictor of market behavior, it is a precursor to behavior [16].

2.2. Ecommerce brand equity

One of the most popular channels for buying goods and services is now e-commerce [51,52].

While company name can play a crucial function in the digital marketplace, brand is sometimes characterized as affinities toward a certain product or services that distinguish from competitors [26,28]. Because the service offered by an online merchant is directly linked to its proprietors, this implies that buyers distinguish them by [47]. Corporate reputation, reliability, and brand names are therefore crucial to consumers' purchasing decisions in the internet world [5]. As a result, this essay concentrates on ecommerce platforms as a brand because they are thought to have competitive advantages.

2. 2.1 Perceived quality: Consumer perceived quality is usually defined as the consumers' perception of brand excellency. This perception is calculated by comparing consumers' expectation with the real experience with experimenting the products or services [25].

In this paper, the authors use 5 factors scale (Product quality, Service quality, Customer service quality, Delivery time and Convenient use of the platform) that covers post, during and after purchase interaction, as in Zeithaml et al (2005).

2.2.2 Brand Associations: Following the brand equity trends suggested in [23] and functional and emotional associations [1213]. This study considers both functional and emotional aspects of brand association.

a. Functional associations

From an information processing perspective, functional relevance increases the opportunity for brands to meet consumer needs [13]. Initial purchase motivations are the functional values of a product or service that create basic expectations in consumers [19]. Functional advantages of e-commerce platforms are split in product variety, price value and perception of promotion.

b. Emotional associations

Perceived brand leadership plays an important role in e-commerce. Several studies have shown that perceived leadership helps brands influence consumer decision-making [13,14]. To be recognized as a leader, a brand must not only focus on better quality and value, but also possess certain positive attributes and appeal to consumers' self-image [13]. As such, emotional associations represent a particular competitive advantage and help brands influence consumers and other competitors [13]. This paper follows these three brand associations. (i) Brand uniqueness, (ii) Brand trust/credibility, (iii) Young brand

2.3. Brand equity, usage and purchase intention

The ultimate goal of any e-commerce platform is to generate sales and revenue. In general, the online customer journey has two phases. The first phase consists in attracting consumers to the e-commerce platform. After that, it is important to encourage them to buy again [57]. This second phase is essential for e-commerce websites as the cost of retention is much lower when compared to the cost of acquiring new customers [51]. Furthermore, existing customers who have had a positive previous experience and have established trust in the e-merchant are more willing to purchase more items. It becomes crucial to examine the relationship between brand equity, brand usage, and brand purchase intent.

According to [30] Brand value, usage, and buying intention are related by Expectation Confirmation Theory (ECT) developed by Oliver (1980). The theoretical framework consists of two stages [40]. Stage 1 considers the pre-purchase process. It is argued that consumers have expectations of the product or service they receive before completing a transaction [31]. Phase 2 is the post-purchase stage and consists of three small steps. First, expectations after receiving and experiencing a product or service are first compared to pre-established perceptions [30-33]. This comparison builds a certain level of satisfaction based on which the consumer recalibrates the brand's perception of her equity. Finally, repurchase decisions are a function of brand usage experience and recalibrated brand equity, either encouraging repurchase or over time discouraging bad consumer experiences [12].

The relationship between brand equity, brand purchases, and purchase intent is central to marketing research.

In theory, ECT is widely recognized as a powerful model of brand equity and purchase intent [31]. It has also been applied to several industry sectors, such as mobile data services and tourism [27, 30, 33].

The ambition of this paper is therefore to introduce functional and emotional components to brand associations and to examine brand equity and purchase intention in the context of urban Vietnam.

3 Conceptual Framework

In this section the authors detail the different hypothesis being tested in this study and conceptual framework for the exploratory analysis.

The first part of this study is dedicated to analyse the difference in terms of both brand equity and purchase intention between all 3 brands involved (Shopee, Lazada and Tiki). Two general hypotheses are developed to assess this first objective:

H1: Perceived brand equity is equal amongst all 3 brands

H2: Purchase intention is equal amongst all 3 brands

The second part of this study pertains the exploratory factor analysis on both purchase intention and on brand equity. The below diagram details the factors in analysis for purchase intention and brand equity

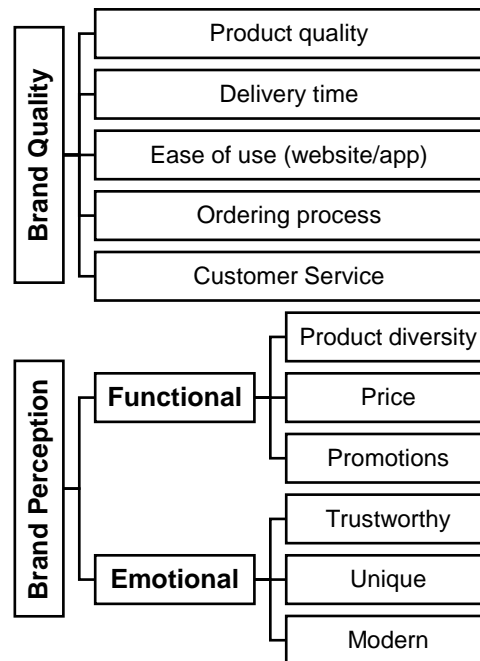


Figure 1 -Variables diagram

For each one of the brands the following hypothesis are formulated for purchase intention:

H3: Quality component is positively correlated to purchase intention

H4: Functional component is positively correlated to purchase intention

H5: Emotional component is positively correlated to purchase intention

And for brand equity similarly

H6: Quality component is positively correlated to perceived brand equity

H7: Functional component is positively correlated to perceived brand equity

H8: Emotional component is positively correlated to perceived brand equity

4 Data collection and Sampling

For this research a total of 122 responses were collected amongst people who had a certain knowledge or had used ecommerce platforms, the population is mainly characterized by being urban and residing in Hanoi area. The data was collected using social networks, using a snowball sampling method. Out of the 122 responses collected, only 105 were considered valid.

In the questionnaire, the main dependent variables brand equity, brand awareness perceived quality, functional associations, emotional associations, and brand loyalty, were collected, using dimensions as per in Table 1 Variables detailed

Table 1 Variables detailed

Variables	Subfactors
Brand Purchase Intention	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Future Purchase Intention
Brand Equity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Overall Evaluation of the Brand
Brand Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Product Quality• Delivery Quality• Customer Service Quality• Ease of use• Ordering Process
Brand Perception	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Functional<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Product Diversity○ Price Perception○ Promotion level• Emotional<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Brand Trustworthiness○ Being a Young Brand○ Being Distinctive

All rating dependent and independent variables are measured using a 1- 5 Likert scale, to assess the strength of each statement with 1 = “strongly disagree” and 5 = “strongly agree”.

The set of questions on brand equity, brand usage and purchase intention were repeated three times devoted to each of the most popular ecommerce platforms namely Tiki, Lazada and Shopee, in line with the approach suggested in Aaker (1991, 1996) and Kelly (1993).

The research model and technique used was split in two parts. In a first part, the difference in purchase intention and brand equity between all 3 brands was analysed. After each brand was analysed in separate, to better understand and assess the components that for both purchase intention and brand equity.

5 Data Analysis

The population was mainly characterized by being in its vast majority less than 40 (94.3%) and with a level of monthly income below 20 million VND (71.4%), as illustrated in Table 2 - Age Distribution and Table 3 - Monthly Income distribution, below

Table 2 - Age Distribution

	Frequency	Cumulative Percent
less than 18	4	3.8
18-25	38	40.0
26-32	40	78.1
33-40	17	94.3
41-50	6	100.0
Total	105	

Table 3 - Monthly Income distribution

	Frequency	Cumulative Percent
< 10 mil VND	13	12.4
10 - 15 mil VND	48	58.1
16- 20 mil VND	14	71.4
> 20 mil VND	30	100.0
Total	105	

The male/female split in this population is 68 to 32%.
 The level of confidence considered forward for this study is 5%.

5.1 Brand preference

To study hypotheses H1 and H2, a one-sample t test was conducted. In terms of public preference, this study shows that Shopee has higher brand equity than the others, even when looking at confidence intervals, as confirmed by the T-test shown in Table 4 - Equity results

Table 4 - Equity results

One-Sample Test						
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Tiki Equity	46.237	104	.000	3.648	3.49	3.80
Lazada Equity	35.127	104	.000	3.276	3.09	3.46
Shopee Equity	47.940	104	.000	3.876	3.72	4.04

This highlights that there is a difference of mean classification between brands, that is transferrable to the population. From H1, we can conclude that perceived brand equity is not equal amongst brands.

In terms of Purchase Intention, the T-test confirms the preference for Shopee, with a clear non-intersection on the confidence intervals.

Table 5 - Purchase Intention results

One-Sample Test						
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Tiki Purchase Intention	22.826	104	.000	2.695	2.46	2.93
Lazada Purchase Intention	21.354	104	.000	2.505	2.27	2.74
Shopee Purchase Intention	29.447	104	.000	3.190	2.98	3.41

This highlights that there is a difference of mean classification between brands, that is transferrable to the population. From H2, we can conclude that perceived purchase intention differs from brand to brand.

An individual analysis per brand was then conducted, to assess the main factors influencing either brand equity or purchase intention. Subfactors were combined using factor analysis and regression analysis was used to conclude on influence.

5.2. Tiki

The Functional and Quality components were assessed using Factor Analysis, results for Tiki are shown in

Table 6 - Component scores for *Tiki*

Table 6 - Component scores for Tiki

	Components	Component matrix	KMO Test
Functional	Product diversity	.859	0.714
	Price	.881	
	Promotions	.917	
Quality	Product Quality	.903	0.902
	Service Quality	.899	
	Customer Service quality	.861	
	Delivery time	.891	
	Convenience to use	.910	
Emotional	Safe and trustworthy	.898	0.746
	Unique	.902	

	Modern	.916	
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The method used in multiple regression was stepwise regression, to test relevance of factors at the population level.

In terms of Purchase intention, the relevant predictor seems to be Quality, as listed in Table 7 - Tiki Purchase Intention Regression output

Table 7 - Tiki Purchase Intention Regression output

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error		
1	(Constant)	2.695	.112	24.063	.000
	Tiki QUAL FA	.399	.113	3.546	.001

With an adjusted R square of 10.9%. The model summary obtained is listed below.

Table 8 - Tiki Purchase intention model summary

Model Summary									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.330 ^a	.109	.100	1.148	.109	12.572	1	103	.001
a. Predictors: (Constant), Tiki QUAL FA									

As per the initially set hypotheses, only H3 seems to be statistically significant.

The final model for Tiki's purchase intention is given by

$$\text{Purchase intention} = 2.695 + 0.399 \times \text{Quality} \quad (1)$$

In terms of subfactors that affect purchase intention, thus full diagram for Tiki becomes

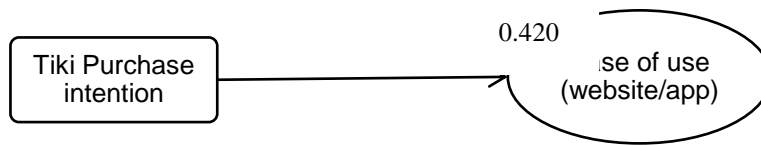


Figure 2 - Tiki Purchase intention subfactors

When it comes to Brand equity the main predictors are the Quality and Functional components, as shown in Table 9 - Tiki Brand equity regression

Table 9 - Tiki Brand equity regression

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error		
2	(Constant)	3.648	.059	61.477	.000
	Tiki Functional FA	.309	.105	2.953	.004
	Tiki QUAL FA	.256	.105	2.441	.016

With an adjusted R square of 43.4% and Model Summary given in Table 8, as per the initially set hypotheses, H6 and H7 seem to be statistically significant. The regression equation is given by

$$Brand\ equity = 3.648 + 0.309 \times Functional + 0.256 \times Quality \quad (2)$$

The result for Tiki equity model suggests a simplification of Aaker (1996). Instead of having all four dimensions, only quality and the functional aspect play a combined role in predicting brand equity. In terms of subfactors, product diversity and quality appear to be the main characteristics, as shown in the diagram below

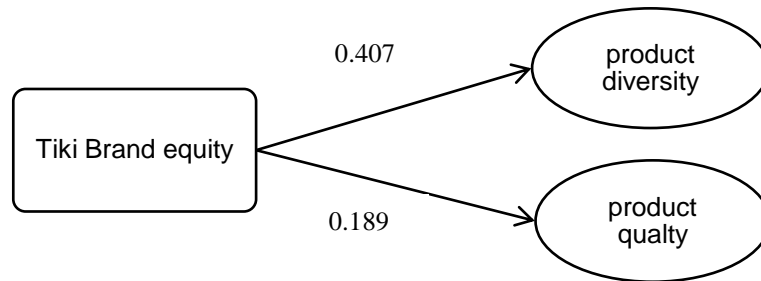


Figure 3- Tiki Brand equity subfactors

5.3 Lazada

The Functional and Quality components scores for Lazada are shown on Table 10 - Component scores for Lazada below

Table 10 - Component scores for Lazada

	Components	Component matrix	KMO Test
Functional	Product diversity	.912	0.750
	Price	.944	
	Promotions	.928	
Quality	Product Quality	.905	0.902
	Service Quality	.963	
	Customer Service quality	.937	
	Delivery time	.905	
	Convenience to use	.909	
Emotional	Safe and trustworthy	.943	0.767
	Unique	.939	
	Modern	.953	

In this case Usage and Equity are the main predictors for Lazada's purchase Intention, as seen in Table 11 - Lazada Purchase Intention

Table 11 - Lazada Purchase Intention

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error		
1	(Constant)	2.505	.107	23.483	.000
	Lazada QUAL FA	.511	.107	4.772	.000

With an adjusted R square of 18.1%. Model summary in

Table 12 - Lazada purchase intention model summary

Model Summary									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.426 ^a	.181	.173	1.093	.181	22.773	1	103	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Lazada QUAL FA

As per the initially set hypotheses, only H3 seems to be statistically significant. The regression model for Lazada’s purchase intention is given by

$$\text{Purchase intention} = 2.505 + 0.511 \times \text{Quality} \quad (3)$$

In terms of subfactors for Purchase intention

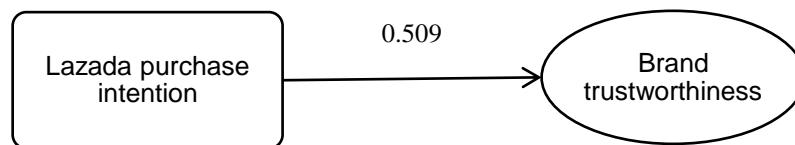


Figure 4 - Lazada purchase intention subfactors

When it comes to Brand Equity, for Lazada only one predictor was found to be valid, with a 50.8% R square. Tables below illustrate those conclusions.

Table 13 - Tiki's brand equity regression

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.276	.066		49.821	.000
	Lazada QUAL FA	.681	.066	.713		

a. Dependent Variable: Lazada Equity

Model summary summarizes the results

Table 14 - Tiki's brand equity model summary

Model Summary									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.713 ^a	.508	.503	.674	.508	106.207	1	103	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Lazada QUAL FA

The regression model is given by

$$\text{Brand equity} = 3.276 + 0.681 \times \text{Quality} \quad (4)$$

As per the initially set hypotheses, only H6 seems to be statistically significant. The result for Lazada Purchase Intention confirms the relationship between Purchase Intention and quality as suggested by ECT theory. With respect to Brand Equity, no multidimensional model can be found but Quality alone helps to explain 51% of Lazada intangible power.

In terms of subfactors

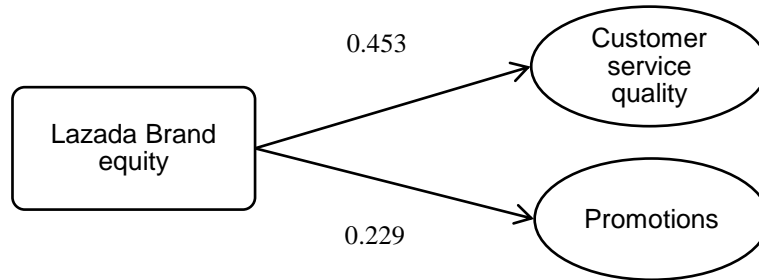


Figure 5 - Lazada brand equity subfactors

The results highlight the variables Customer service quality and Promotions as statistically relevant, with a stronger emphasis on Customer service.

5.4 Shopee

For Shopee the component scores are shown Table 15 - Component scores for Shopee

Table 15 - Component scores for Shopee

	Components	Component matrix	KMO Test
Functional	Product diversity	.952	0.774
	Price	.951	
	Promotions	.948	

Quality	Product Quality	.871	0.891
	Service Quality	.956	
	Customer Service quality	.895	
	Delivery time	.909	
	Convenience to use	.897	
Emotional	Safe and trustworthy	.923	0.740
	Unique	.912	
	Modern	.886	

In this case Quality is also the main predictor for Shopee's purchase Intention, as seen in Table 11 - Lazada Purchase Intention

Table 16 - Shopee Purchase Intention

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error		
1	(Constant)	3.190	.100	31.954	.000
	Shopee QUAL FA	.443	.100	4.412	.000

With an R square of 15.9%. Model summary is presented below

Table 17 - Model summary Shopee's purchase intention

Model Summary									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.399 ^a	.159	.151	1.023	.159	19.465	1	103	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Shopee QUAL FA

Relevant quality subfactors in this case are price, with an R square 0.160.

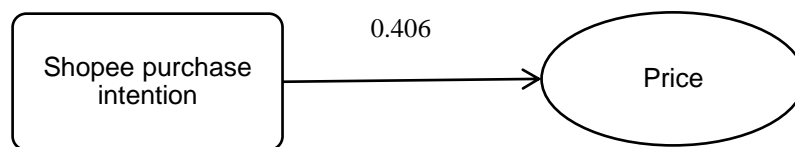


Figure 6 - Shopee Purchase intention subfactors

As per the previous brands, in terms of purchase intention also H3 is considered statistically significant. The specific regression model can be given by

$$Purchase\ intention = 3.190 + 0.443 \times Quality \quad (5)$$

When it comes to Brand Equity, for Shopee only one predictor was found to be valid, with a 37.9% R square. Tables below illustrate those conclusions.

Table 18 - Shopee's brand equity regression

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.876	.064		60.524	.000
	Shopee QUAL FA	.510	.064	.615	7.923	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Shopee Equity

Model summary below

Table 19 - Model summary Shopee brand equity

Model Summary									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.615 ^a	.379	.373	.656	.379	62.766	1	103	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Shopee QUAL FA

$$Brand\ equity = 3.190 + 0.4431 \times Quality \quad (6)$$

In terms of hypotheses, for Shopee only H6 is validated at the population level.

For Shopee, Quality plays a significant role for both Purchase Intention and Brand Equity. The result diverts from both ECT theory and multidimensional equity models to a certain degree. The diagram with subfactors includes

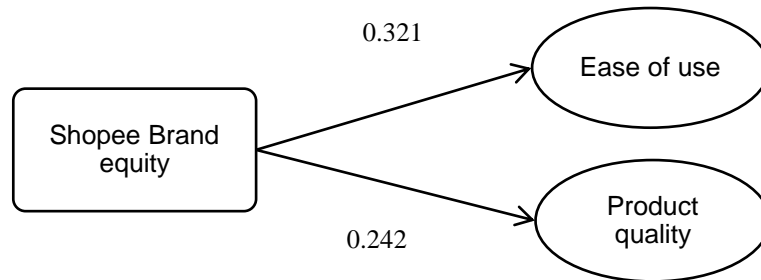


Figure 7- Shopee brand equity subfactors

5.5 Summary of results

The table below summarizes all hypotheses results for each brand at a level of significance of 5%.

Table 20 – Summary of hypotheses testing

	Hypotheses	Tiki	Lazada	Shopee
Purchase intention	H3	Accept	Accept	Accept
	H4	Reject	Reject	Reject
	H5	Reject	Reject	Reject
Brand equity	H6	Accept	Accept	Accept
	H7	Accept	Reject	Reject
	H8	Reject	Reject	Reject

In summary, in this study we conclude that for Purchase Intention, Quality seems to be the only valid factor across brands, with no statistically significant difference.

The same factor, Quality, seems to show relevance in terms of Brand Equity, across the same 3 brands, with Tiki showing an additional statistically significant factor, Functionality.

The difference shows when analyzing these brands at a micro level in each of these main factors.

Tiki's purchase intention is led by convenience of use, Lazada's by a perceived level of safety and trustworthiness of the products and Shopee lead by price. This difference highlights now different behavior in the population. If combined with the fact that Shopee leads the market, one can infer that price is the market leading characteristic in ecommerce platforms.

As per brand equity, quality is common to all 3 brands, but Tiki also has a functional component that is considered statistically significant. Subfactor analysis here reveals also different aspects of each brand. Tiki's brand equity seems to be driven by diversity and quality of products, Lazada's by service quality and promotions and Shopee's by convenience of use and product quality.

6 Conclusion

From this research it shows that there seems to be a preference towards Shopee, when compared to Lazada and Tiki. This preference is noted both in terms of Brand Equity and Purchase Intention.

It is clear from the analysis that purchase intention is linked to perceived quality to all 3 brands. What becomes interesting at a micro level is that the level of perceived quality that leads to purchase intention differs in subfactors.

This study clearly established not just macro indicators for each brand's perceived purchase intention and brand equity but also a micro perspective on subfactors that lead to that perception.

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