MASTER THESIS ON

BRANDING IN SMALL COMPANIES

A CASE STUDY OF VITAL TEA, PAKISTAN

Authors: **Supervisor:**

Waqas Khalid   **Mr. Ian Robson**
810110- 8291
waqaskhalid815@hotmail.com

Waqar Ahmad
780623-0830
Khanwaqar_78@hotmail.com
waac07@student.bth.se

SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT

BLEKINGE INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY, SWEDEN

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ABSTRACT

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Branding is in the midst of those marketing gadget which are presumed to be used for only large-size companies or organizations. Our study is an endeavor to confiscate this distinction among large and small enterprises and proving it with the help of branding models and theoretical literature depending on our empirical findings. The aim of this research report is to stimulate the significance of this pivotal tool of business among the small enterprises so that it can also be supportive in smoothing the progress of their businesses as well from its benefits.

In order to reach the purpose of our study, we have used the qualitative research approach and used the telephonic interview based data collection technique in this regard. The study is conducted by a case-study at VITAL TEA, a tea company located in Pakistan. Vital tea is the company which has not been considering branding as the best suited tool to grow in the small markets as the general small companies' perception described above. The study has come up with the results that either you can't apply the full fledge branding model in a small size company but still being a small company they can apply the branding models up to their capacity of resources like time, funds, trained personnel etc.

Moreover, we have found that the proper implementation of branding activities needs, planning, awareness and proper training to the company's personnel's if the small companies really want to get the competitive edge over competitor companies. Finally, we have answered all our research questions along with the recommendations to our sample company (The Vital Tea).

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1. 1 Chapter Introduction:

In this chapter we will discuss the introduction of the branding later we'll describe the background of our research. Furthermore, we will discuss the problem areas and define our research purpose. In order to achieve the purpose of the study, we will formulate research questions in last.

1.2 Introduction:

Branding is not a new notion. This notion has been in practice over a period extended over centuries. According to Clifton *et al*. (2003) p 14, "The word brand comes from the Old Norse **brandr**, meaning to burn, and from these origins made its way into Anglo-Saxon. It was of course by burning that early man stamped ownership on his livestock and with the development of trade buyers would use brands as a means of distinguishing between the cattle of one farmer and another". Brand is defined by Angus (2004) p 12, "A name, term, sign, symbol or design, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of the competitors".

According to Wood, 2000 p 664, the aforementioned definition has been criticized for being too product-oriented, with emphasis on visual features as differentiating mechanisms (Arnold, 1992; Crainer, 1995). Despite these criticisms, the definition has endured to contemporary literature, albeit in modified form. Watkins (1986), Aaker (1991), Stanton *et al*. (1991), Doyle (1994) and Kotler et al. (1996) adopt this definition. Dibb *et al*. (1997) use the Bennett (1988) variant of the definition which is "A brand is a name, term, design, symbol or any other feature that identifies one seller's good or service as distinct from those of other sellers". The key change to the original definition are the words ``any other feature'' as this allows for intangibles, such as image, to be the point of differentiation. The particular value of this definition is that it focuses on a fundamental brand purpose, which is differentiation. It should not be forgotten that brands operate in a market environment where differentiation is crucially important. Even where monopolies exist, companies may choose to position their brand(s) with a view to future competition. The other key feature of this definition is that it takes the corporate perspective rather than emphasizing consumer benefits.

For developing brand the value must be added in the product, value includes the set of attribute and benefit that define about brand. Value added product also differentiate your

product with its competitor and fulfill the needs and wants of customer because these attribute should be added with according to customer need and wants.
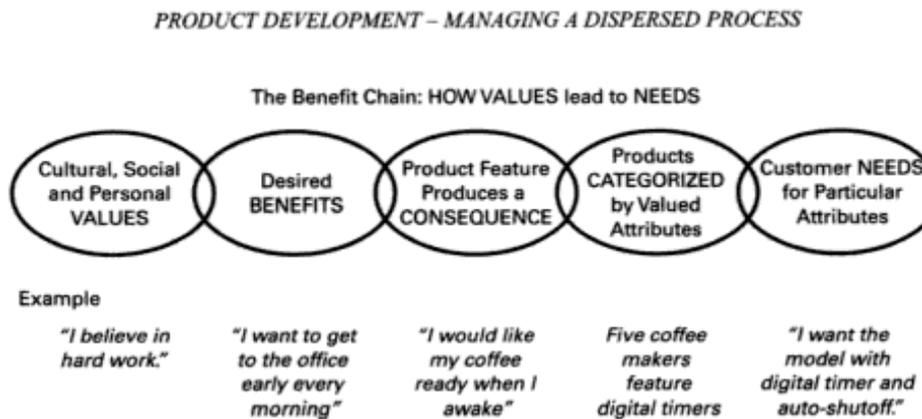
Figure 1: Benefit chain structure for a coffee/tea maker

Source: Adapted by wensley & weitz (2002) p, 189

This brand value chain is focus why customer has a particular need that is not described by existing product. This brand value chain is also helpful to making the effort of market research with regarding to customer needs (Keller 2002).

Brand image, identity and positioning are very important components of branding. According to Selame & Selame, (1988) p 7 "identity is what one really is, while image only means how one appear to other people" brand image is considered very important and powerful asset for a company and is essential for the positioning of a company for maximum growth. Image can influence the customer choice, building brand and to add value in the minds of audience. It is in fact the perception of the customer that how he or she thinks and feels about the brand. Brand positioning sets the direction of marketing activities and programs which the brand should and should not do with regard to its marketing. Brand positioning involves establishing key brand associations in the minds of customers and other important constituents to differentiate the brand and establish (to the extent possible) competitive superiority (Keller et al. 2002).

Presently the role of branding is of great significance in the business world and its role is quite hard to ignore. Branding helps differentiate goods or services of one firm from another. It is because of branding that customers are able to identify and prefer the products and services of one firm over another.

1.3 RESEARCH BACKGROUND:

<u>BRANDING IN SMALL VS LARGE ORGANIZATIONS:</u>

Although an impressive body of literature has emerged focusing on the critical activities regarding branding in large organizations with well established brands and substantial marketing budgets, less research has been undertaken to examine branding within small companies Pierre Berthon *et al.* (1999).

According to Merrilees, (2007) p 403, "Small business branding is often seen as an oxymoron. Branding is usually considered the province of big business. Big businesses, such as banks, fashion labels and car companies, are household words with strong recognition by the majority of the population. Does anyone not know that Ford is a car company? In contrast, many small businesses themselves, such as the local butcher, may well not think they are a brand. If they do, they are not likely to incorporate this knowledge into their daily operations. Many members of the public would associate a brand with large advertising expenditures, again reinforcing the mindset that big businesses can be brands, but not little businesses. Just as small business branding might be considered an oxymoron." Literature found that there is a difference between small to medium sized companies and large companies with regards to their branding activities as in small to medium sized companies owner plays vital role in making decision in all processes of the business regardless operational or managerial as stated by Pierre Berthon *et al.* (2008) p 28, "It has long been recognized that the management style, operations, and functions of SMEs are different from Large Organizations. The SME owner–manager is often the key decision-maker and is responsible for managing and attending too many of the functions performed within the organization, such as banking, advertising, recruitment, or even stationery purchases. The use of specialists, such as advertising or recruitment agencies, is rare."

According to Derrick & Brad (2007), Branding activities are different significantly based on the age and size of the organization. A key role of branding is to create and reinforce an identity that promises relevant points of difference to consumers. Smaller organizations have an advantage in this area for a number of reasons like Leadership, Size, Business scope, Brand structure, Organization structure, Corporate Culture, Market Place, Decision Making, Financial resources, Brand identity, Brand awareness, Brand differentiation, Marketing method. The management style within small organization is one that is very unique and personal to each firm "Several scholars have been quick to extol the virtues of being small"

They suggest that unlike the large organizations, small companies have a tendency to be more entrepreneurial, flexible and innovative, which makes them more adept at serving specialist or niche markets and remaining responsive to customer needs (Pierre Berthon *et al 2008*. p 28).

1.4 SMALL COMPANIES BRANDING:

The role of small companies is increasingly important in these days. According to Khan & Bamber (2007), there were approximately 80,000 SMEs operating in Pakistan providing 90 percent of all urban employment and contributing 30 percent of the GDP. SMEs have many characteristics which differentiate it from large organizations like small management team, strong owner influence, centralized power and control, lack of specialist staff, multifunctional management, lack of control over business environment, limited market share, low employee turnover and reluctance to take risks (Seyal *et al,* 2004). Despite certain constraints, some of these attributes contribute towards making the Small companies more vigilant and active for e.g. the presence of strong control of the owner upon the organization is useful for rapid implementation of decisions as they normally are made by the owner manger. Most of the characteristics of Small organizations can be exploited towards better performance if given adequate amount of consideration. Branding can also offer organizations with better opportunities for their growth and performance irrespective of their size. Traditionally, branding has been thought as a resource for only large scale businesses but branding can prove equally good for small and medium sized firms. According to Abimbola & Vallaster, 2007, "brand strategy is not a preserve of large organizations alone and outlines practical suggestions on branding for smaller firms". According to Bergvall, 2001 smaller firms have lot of advantages within its regional market. The structure of these companies is more flexible and creative nature and has their existence closer to the target market as due to the flat structure of the smaller firms which enable the decision making process easier.

Branding and its significance is an important concern now a days. According to Gilmore *et al.* (2001) p 6, "It is well documented that SMEs have unique characteristics that differentiate them from conventional marketing in large organizations (Carson, 1990). These characteristics may be determined by the inherent characteristics and behaviors of the entrepreneur or owner/manager; and they may be determined by the inherent size and stage of development of the enterprise. Such limitations can be summarized as: limited resources (such as finance, time, and marketing knowledge); lack of specialist expertise (owner-managers tend to be generalists rather than specialists); and limited impact in the marketplace. "

As per Abimbola, (2001), p 101, "A brand name represents a strong communication link between the firm and the market. Small firms are more able to communicate their competence and capacity to offer superior value to customer, compared to their competitors, by building their reputation around a brand as focus of their output. Market-based assets such as consumer trust, perceived quality, and the perceived value that a brand embodies are important factors that could positively influence Small companies' performance." Before the discussion move further there is need to explain the functions of the brand like according to the Hollensen (2007) the functions of branding are:

- To distinguish a company's offering and differentiate one particular product from its competitor.
- To create identification and brand awareness.
- To guarantee a certain level of quality and satisfaction.
- To help with the promotion of the product.

As the business world is dominated by competition, so only those firms would be able to survive in the longer term that can gain competitive edge by the help of strong brand as the strong brand is the most valuable source a company has. A successful or strong brand has recently been defined according to Caldwell and Freire (2004). p 51 "An identifiable product, services, persons are place, augmented in such a way that the buyer or user perceives relevant unique added values which match their needs most closely". It is through branding that even smaller companies are able to expect higher prices than firms which are unable to look upon this concept. In another discussion by Ying (2005) p 343 "A successful brand is believed to bring its owner great financial value in terms of either higher sales or premium prices. The ultimate objectives in branding can be summarized as follows: To dominate the market (to reduce or eliminate competition); to increase customer loyalty (by increasing the switch cost); and. to raise the entry barriers (to fend off potential threat)".

According to the Pierre Berthon *et al.* (1999) p 28, "Small business managers generally accept that a good corporate reputation is important to receiving legitimization from different stakeholders. However, the difficulty often arises in terms of translating this viewpoint into specific reputation building activities. Managing the external image of a business is one way to build and enhance its reputation".

In the food sector competition for the market share and growth is extremely fierce and different options available to consumers are increasing. Now not only large but small food

and drink manufacturers can also exploit branding for their own prosperity and growth because it enables an end user to differentiate quality products from other competitor's products. According to Wright *et al.* (2000) p 433, "Many food and drinks manufacturers carry out marketing research to determine the extent to which branding can affect perceptions of taste quality and profile and the drivers of these perceptions." Branding provide consumers a unique set of perceived benefits which are not found in other products resultantly these perceived benefits potentially simplify the decision making process of the consumer and provide basis for the customer loyalty which is an great advantage for a manufacturer. Although the decision making process of a consumer in selecting a food or tea beverages is not much complex as selecting automobile or electronic home appliances even then attributes of the product its reputation, brand awareness, brand recognition, brand position and brand image have great impact on consumer buying behavior and his\her psychological demand. Food and Beverages products provides an array of information like perceived price, taste, brand awareness, brand reputation, packaging, advertising e.g. in order to help the consumer while making the decision for it. The package of attributes offered by any brand constitutes its market position in relation to the other brands (Wen Lee, Cheng and Shun Liao, Chi, 2009).

Small companies even with the presence of the limited budgets can creatively manage and leverage the maximum potential of their brands through the help of proper planning and proper understanding regarding the concepts of the branding. These companies have opportunity to receive the customer's valuable feed back because these are closer to the customers which in result enable to provide the value-added service (Pierre Berthon *et al*. 2008).

Branding attract and keep customers by promoting the value, prestige and a lifestyle. Branding is a technique to build a sustainable differential advantage by playing the nature of human being. Once a consumer become the habituated to a certain brand they do not willingly accept the substitutes this means that through developing a brand, brand image and identity has a great importance for brand development (Rooney, 1995).

Regardless to the size of an organization, branding can be used equally for small organization. Small firms have potential to capitalize upon branding. However this might be a cautious attempt either by the owner himself or done through his/her employees. Resource constraints in the case of small organizations are overcomed through a better planning as to how a company can employ its limited resources to attain the benefits of branding.

1.5 Problem Discussion:

Branding is one of those terms which can lead the consumer concept about the product or service on the wrong direction if the practitioners are not in clear state of mind themselves. The main aim of branding is to develop and manage the brands. Apart from developing a brand from grass root level, branding strategy used to get strengthen, expansion or extension an already existing brands. During brand development process, it's important to have strategic management to be successful in relation to mission (Keller, 2002). As Food industry is already competitive industry and is becoming more increasingly. In addition, consumer behavior in food industry is becoming increasingly less predictable, more fragmented and less consistent. Customers are demanding value added food product which satisfy their need and wants apart from having quantity in food. Due to intensive competition food manufacturers started working on research & development as well as branding of the new & existing products in order to get prosperous. Food companies should be market oriented and required to get much understanding about the market.

Although, the development of food related products is crucial for small food manufacturing company's ability to meet and sustain customer demand. There are considerable challenges faced by the product formulator during food product development; these include constraints of finance, manpower, time and the need for continual innovation so in these days food manufacturing companies required to take into consideration and develop both areas like Brand development and Market orientation as well. There is also existence of positive relationship between market orientation and company performance (Imram, 1999).

Small food manufacturers can compete in an equally competitive environment and one characterized by the same dynamic market trends as for larger firms. An environment characterized by fierce innovative activities, intense competition, and technological advances provides the interface between SMEs and branding (Abimbola, 2001).

1.6 PURPOSE:

The purpose our study is to analyze the worth of branding in the small enterprises; how can they be benefited by the help of branding their products and explore the penetration of branding into the competitive environment.

1.7 Research Questions:

Based on the above discussions the idea of this study is to gain better understanding and awareness of how small company develops its brand and get benefited with the help of branding. Research questions are being developed for understanding of the problem. Our Research will be based upon the case study of **Vital Tea** in our research we will focus on the existing brands of the company also we would focus to attract the prospective customers. In our study we will analyze that what literature review findings are describing about brand development in small companies and based on these findings how the subject company would get develop its brands. Our research questions would enable us to deep understanding of our main topic and will help us in order to arrest the answer of research questions.

1. *Can a small company develop a unique brand for the national market?*
2. *How can Keller model of brand development guide the (vital tea) developing the brand?*
3. *What unique core values can be identified in creating the vital tea brand?*
4. *How can the vital tea brand be differentiated from competitive brands?*

1.8 Chapter conclusion:

Small companies face many issues while doing branding practices. In our thesis, we are focusing on proper planning and ample awareness of branding. This chapter started with the introduction of the topic, background and ended up with the purpose and research questions. In the next chapter, we will describe the Literature review of branding on the basis of existing theories.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Chapter Introduction:

Here we are aiming to focus at the previous researches and discussions with relation to our topic of thesis which in result will help to conduct the analysis and enable us to answer the research questions which will be provided later in our thesis. With the help of different models e.g. Keller Strategic Brand Management process & Porter's Five Forces, we will support the significance of branding not merely for large companies but for small companies as well.

2.2 Branding:

Brands may have been in existence for well over 1,000 years but never has any society before seen the power of branding as it is witnessed today. Brands are prevalent in every aspect of human life: production and consumption, food and clothing, personality and lifestyle; and from pop culture to politics even. Branding is no longer just about adding value to a product; branding represents and promotes lifestyles and brands themselves become a kind of culture. Brands are now gunning for a share of consumers' inner lives, their values, their beliefs, their politics and their souls as well. The impact of brands and branding is far beyond the field of marketing and advertising. Branding is a social construct as well as an economic construct. As an economic construct, brands have been studied from both marketing and financial perspectives. As a social construct, brands have not yet been fully understood owing to the dearth of academic research in this area. Branding is considered as the centre of any marketing communications (Ying, 2005).

The process of branding originated as a means by which a firm could differentiate its goods or services from those of its competitors. Initially, branding acted as a promise of consistency and quality for consumers. Now, however, brands are renowned for offering consumers a unique set of perceived benefits not found in other products. These perceived benefits potentially both simplify consumers' purchase decision making and provide a basis for customer loyalty. According to Boyle, (2007), "Products that "match their (consumers') needs most closely" become brands. It is the perceived unique benefits that brands offer consumers that give them their value adding potential and enable them "to sustain a price premium over their commodity form".

According to Wells *et al*, 2007 food product development and innovation continues to be seen as a fundamental strategy for competitive success and survival within a competitive global market. Despite this acknowledgement, a large number of new food products continue to fail due to difficult task that food manufacturers face in today's food industry. Food manufacturers are facing a somewhat challenging scenario where the cost of marketing is also rising and it is becoming more difficult to maintain sales for brands that are not the first choice household name. In addition, consumers are becoming more demanding in terms of quality and choice and are constantly seeking a product which is customized according to their want and need. Products are developed to, and indeed are expected by consumers to taste good; therefore, it is not surprising that consumers will increasingly make their initial choices. Thus, the question commonly faced by many food companies is how to distinguish or differentiate their product from competing products, how to develop such a unique brand which is the core requirement of competition and what would be the branding strategy which could better help the company in order to survive in future.

2.3 Objectives of Branding:

Branding has numerous objectives to discuss. Branding objectives follow from the marketing strategy. Brand should represent the company image, personality, characteristics and core competencies. To developing this impression is a basic framework of brand. Because with the help of strong brand we can easily motivate the customers and can leave strong influence on market. Branding is not only to focus the competition and target market .it is something else and try to represent that you are the only company who provide the solution of their problems. The objective of good brand will achieve to.

- ➢ Connects emotionally with your target group
- ➢ Deliver the message clearly
- ➢ Confirm your credibility
- ➢ Motivate the buyer
- ➢ Concretes user loyalty

According to Kohli & Thakor, 1997 Managers can use branding for a variety of purposes including:

- ➢ Conveying intended positioning
- ➢ Establishing product differentiation
- ➢ Dominating the market
- ➢ Reducing the competition
- ➢ Establishing a new market segment, or to create a distinctive image
- ➢ Build strong reputation amongst different existing competitors
- ➢ Raise barriers to new entrants
- ➢ Build worthy relationships with customers by specifying consumer demands

While the primary purpose of product branding is to aid sales and profitability, the primary purpose of company branding is to embody the value system of the company and to help promote and enhance corporate reputation. A brand cannot be separated from the organizational context in which it was created or is developed and managed. Thus it can be argued that there is a link between brand values and an organization's corporate culture and mission statement. Now the companies are looking for the brand that helps to make their businesses valuable as per today's requirement

Apart from the above described benefits Rooney, 1995 in the view of that branding focus to create mutually beneficial situations. Creating these situations is bit difficult. It is challenge for the companies in order to generate good sales and get valuable position in the market for this companies strive for the good brand mix.

2.4 Competitive Advantages from Brand Equity:

Company's brand equity relates to the attitudes and associations that wide stakeholders have of a company as opposed to those of an individual product (Ying, 2005). It is the perceived unique benefits that brands offer consumers that give them their value adding potential and enable them "to sustain a price premium over their commodity form" (Chernatony and McDonald, 1992). The added value that firms derive from building and owning brands is known as brand equity. Brand equity has been defined as "a set of assets (and liabilities) linked to a brand's name and symbol that adds to (or subtracts from) the value provided by a product or service to a firm and/or that firm's customers". There are four key brand assets from which brand equity is derived. These provide the stepping stones for understanding the brand co creation process. The four brand assets lists are: the perceived quality of the brand,

brand awareness, brand associations and brand loyalty. These assets are largely self explanatory apart from that of brand associations (Boyle, 2007).

2.4.1 Perceived Quality:

According to Gotlieb *et al,* 1994 Perceived quality is similar to an attitude and that it may affect behavioral intentions. Perceived quality is denned as a consumer's appraisal of a product's overall excellence or superiority. Therefore, perceived quality is an appraisal variable that helps to explain the behavioral intentions of consumers.

2.4.2 Brand Awareness:

Brand awareness is defined as a rudimentary level of brand knowledge involving, at the least, recognition of the brand name. Awareness represents the lowest end of a continuum of brand knowledge that ranges from simple recognition of the brand name to a highly developed cognitive structure based on detailed information. Recognition is taken here to be the process of perceiving a brand. The distinction between awareness and recognition is a subtle one; the former denoting a state of knowledge possessed by the consumer and the latter a cognitive process resulting from awareness (Hoyer & Brown, 1990).

Brand awareness has a direct impact on the purchase decision of the consumer. According to Aaker (1991 p.62), there are three levels of brand awareness:

Brand recognition: It is the ability of consumers to identify a certain brand amongst other i.e. "aided recall". Aided recall is a situation whereby a person is asked to identify a recognized brand name from a list of brands from the same product class.

Brand recall: This is a situation whereby a consumer is expected to name a brand in a product class. It is also referred to as "unaided recall" as they are not given any clue from the product class.

Top of mind: This is referred to as the first brand that a consumer can recall amongst a given class of product or service.

2.4.3 Brand Association:

Brand associations may be defined broadly as anything that reminds a person of the brand. They are the impressions and images that consumers have of a brand. According to Boyle 2007 "Such is the significance of brand associations in explaining the success of brands that it

has been argued that effectively, a brand is nothing more than a network of associations in the consumer's mind". Brand associations are derived by consumers from two key sources. On the one hand, prior to consumption communications about the brand from both the brand managers and elsewhere provide the main source of brand associations. These brand associations typically act as motivators to consumers to purchase. On the other hand, the consumption of a brand can result in a consumer developing a new set of brand associations. It is these associations that will determine whether a consumer repurchases the item or not. Thus, not only are these two sources of brand associations activated at different stages in the product purchasing and consumption process, but also consumer engagement in these processes can cause the associations to change.

2.4.4 Brand Loyalty:

Uniquely beneficial post-consumption associations motivate consumers to want to repeat a consumption experience. Furthermore, it is through repeated consumption that not only the unique quality of the item is confirmed but also its consistency is assured. According to De Chernatony and McDonald (1992) the aim of branding is to facilitate the firm's task of getting and maintaining a loyal customer base in a cost effective manner in order to achieve as high a return on investment as possible. Customer loyalty is a well-researched area, the focus of which has moved from customers' repeat purchase behavior to that of their relative attitudes to the item compared to their rivals to the idea of consumer-brand relationships. There can be a number of different types of consumer/brand relationships all of which could be construed as brand loyalty. However, where the relationship is strong and durable consumers are likely to have favorably biased perceptions about the brand and its attributes, a devalued perception of the competition, and be tolerant and forgiving of discrepancies and inconsistencies in it. Holt (2004) suggests that the strongest type of brand/consumer relationship is one of brand paternalism. Trust, commitment, love and adoration have all been identified as key characteristics of consumers' loyalty to a brand it is argued that one feature of adoration is that "alternatives to the love object are not processed". Thus truly loyal consumers do not consider consuming other brand items. However, often items are not purchased and consumed as alternatives to one another. If, on consumption, the product associations of a new item offer more unique benefits and higher value than the original item then loyalty to the original item may be weakened Brand loyalty, like post-consumption associations is outside the direct

control of the brand managers. The best brand managers can hope to do is to cultivate customer loyalty. Only items with product superiority (i.e. product advantage), customers who are "determined defenders of the brand, plus a supportive social environment" can ever gain real brand loyalty (Boyle, 2007).

2.5 Porter's Five Forces:

Here we take help from the porter's five forces/industry analysis in order to understand the different aspects (internal and external) faced by the industry in competition environment which is the hot issue in the business world and every company regardless smaller or larger has to face.
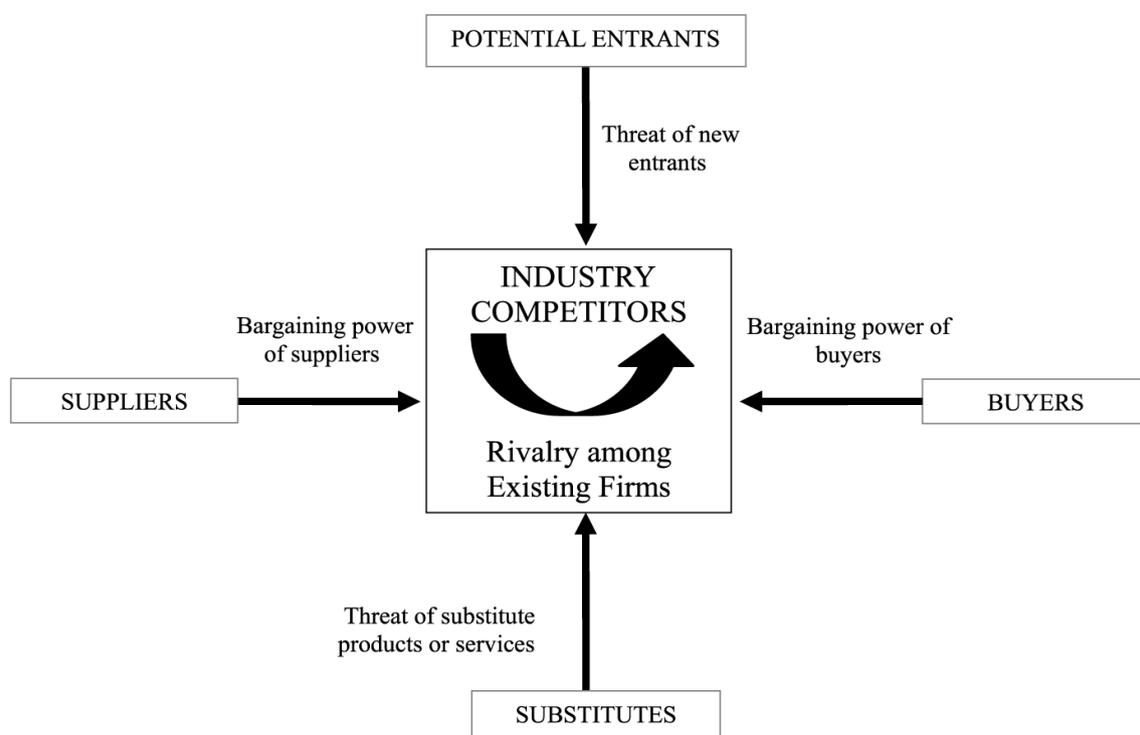
Source: Porter (1998a)

Figure 2: Porter's Five Forces

Competition in any industry does not stem only from competitors, but is also influenced by the underlying structures of the industry. Additionally, the porter industry analysis stresses on competitive advantage which is created and hence can be controlled by individual firms – and not comparative advantage (access to factors of production, like cheap or natural resources) which is mainly inherited. This is a very challenging view of the world where companies are fighting constantly against the five forces to fend them off and still be able to deliver value in their products in order to survive. Porter five forces focus on company's competitive strategy

which is to "find a position in the industry where the company can best defend itself against these competitive forces or can influence them in its favor." Porter's five forces model is the conceptual framework for understanding the realities and forces of the external environment as well (Porter, 2003).

According to Fratto *et al,* 2006 Porter developed five forces framework which includes competitors, threat of new entrants, substitute products, bargaining power of suppliers and bargaining power of buyers. Strategy is about making choices to pursue things a firm wants and overlook things it does not want (no firm can be all things to all people). It is a deliberate and conscious effort to be different from all other players in the industry. This means that a firm has to set limits on what it is trying to accomplish to become unique which is highly demanded by the business world in order to get the valuable position.

Fratto *et al,* 2006 in the view of that any firm's attractiveness has a vital impact on the firm's profitability and its competitive strategy. Historical and current economic structures define competition that and it is highly dependent on five basic above mentioned competitive forces: potential entrants, buyers, substitutes, suppliers, and rivalry among existing firms. These above mentioned five forces work collectively and determine the firm's ability to compete at the time of competition. Different techniques like price competition, advertising, Branding, product development, or services instigate competitive rivalry. The rivalry stems from one or more competitors seeking to improve their position in the market relative to their competitors. Porter's industry analysis identifies several factors that increase the threat of rivalry like:

➢ Large number of competing firms
➢ High fixed cost
➢ Lack of diversity in competing firms (size, products, influences)
➢ Slow industry growth
➢ lack of product differentiation or brand identity
➢ Product capacity added in large increments

According to Fratto *et al,* 2006 Rivalry extends to form competitive strategies, actions that defend a firm's position in the market. Cost leadership, differentiation and focus are three generic strategies that firms can implement to outperform other firms. An industry may mature to this concept rather than initially compete on price. If an industry evolves and firms are having trouble in differentiating its products, firms may be more likely to competing price

as a means of differentiation. The differentiation of the products is very important as rivalry get increased when firms are unable to differentiate their products from their competitor's products so it is very important to develop product with some unique attributes or with some differentiation. With the help of making differentiation small companies can get benefited. Involvement in activities such as frequent price cutting, frequent new product introductions, brand development of the products, adding value in product, intense advertising campaigns, and rapid competitive reactions to other firms' actions are characteristics of firms in a rival intense environment.

According to Porter, 2003 five forces model argues that strategy is a race to one ideal position, the creation of a unique and valuable position, where a firm can differentiate itself for the targeted customer and add value by an asset of activities different than those of rivals. Additionally, Porter defines strategy as "a combination of the ends for which the firm is striving and the means by which it is striving to get there." Thus, in order to advocate a concept of strategy that mixes some planning (means to get there) with a dominant position.

By analyzing and the proper understanding of industry analysis small companies could understand and identify their current position in comparison to other competitors and by the help of making differentiation and putting value in product company can better perform in order to survive in highly competitive environment with effective growth rate.

2.6 Marketing advantages of Strong Brand:

According to Wood, 2000 Strong brands usually provide higher profit margins and better access to distribution channels, as well as providing a broad platform for product line extensions. A strong brand gives the customer value for the dollar and gives employees the satisfaction and confidence in their products. Strong brands also accelerate market awareness and acceptance of new products entering the market.

Once a brand has successfully entered the marketplace and has achieved status as a leading or strong brand, marketers must be concerned with keeping it there. Strong brands cannot rest on their laurels and brand owners must constantly review the appeal of their brands to ensure that they remain contemporary and relevant. Killing a strong brand or brand leader is difficult task top do companies which neglect their brands increase their risk of failure (Rooney, 1995).

A strong or well-established brand enables its owner to introduce innovative and new product offerings into the market with a better chance of success than otherwise would have being possible without an established and reputable market presence. In addition, strong brand

presents an opportunity for comparative assessment of any new offerings with firms' previous competence, capability and customers' trust in the offerings. This enables consumers to make confident purchase decisions about the latter. A strong brand can also create attributes which are difficult for competitors to copy, providing a key source of immutable assets for the firm. Immutable association represents a strong source of intellectual property as well as a source of sustainable growth for corporations (Abimbola & Kocak, 2007).

According to the Keller 2002 building strong brand is the objective of every organization regardless small or large. Following are the important benefits derived from the strong brand like:

- ➢ Good profit margin
- ➢ Effective marketing communication
- ➢ Improved perception of product performance
- ➢ High level of customer loyalty
- ➢ Help to develop good marketing actions
- ➢ Provide opportunities while process of brand extension
- ➢ More inelastic in customer response to price increase
- ➢ More elastic in customer response to price decrease
- ➢ Provide help at the time of marketing crises

Strong brand provide numerous benefits in terms of greater revenue and lower cost. If the brand is considered the favorable and strong in the market then association of the customer will play a vital role by leaving the positive influence on product's evaluation by consumer, price and the quality of the product. One great characteristic of the brand is the brand loyalty which has a vital importance for the company as brand loyalty has a direct and close relation with the brand equity. Customers if loyal to a particular brand never consider the price while purchasing it which off course provide the greater revenues along with the repeat purchase by consumers. Positive brand equity develops the brand association in other product categories. Another aspect that in order to enhance the image and awareness of the brand companies used to license their brand names in order to capitalize the value of brand. Company can increase its revenue by giving the trademark to a brand and creating its link to other products which resultantly increase the revenue and after that licensing to trade mark provides the legal protection to brand which lead to increase the customer trust and prevent company from its

competitors. Another great benefit of strong brand with brand equity is to provide the better space to enter into a new market (Keller, 2002).

According to Keller, 2002 Strong brand develop the brand awareness and mental association among the customers which in result provide the benefits to company like less marketing efforts are required by the company because strong brand has already created the same practice. Unlike less developed brands special advertising campaigns are not required by strong brand. Moreover, customer of strong brands likes to interact with company in form of direct e-mails to company, provide response to sales promotion schemes e.g.

As per Keller & Hoeffler, 2003 Strong brands are thought to have a memory encoding and storage advantage over unknown brands in building brand awareness and image. Strong brand can have an impact on aspects of consumer behavior and consumer decision-making processes.

2.7 Developing a Unique Brand:

Many sectors are facing the same challenges as small food manufacturers across the world, including more demanding customers, fierce competition and relentless innovation but creating unique brand can provide strength as a competitive edge. These drivers force businesses and services to aim to increase the value of their products in the eyes of the consumer. The brand becomes a significant strategy to ensuring that the product or service is recognized by customers. Beyond that (if the brand is well developed and effective) it can also convey meaning to people about what the product or service is about. A strong brand will increase the trust a person has in purchasing a product, and will allow the customer to visualize the nature of a product before it is purchased. A strong brand becomes a "promise of future satisfaction". If a company brings together the desperate elements of its activities, services/products using a consistent and co-ordinate brand, then the interest, prior knowledge and awareness of people will be enhanced. Brands are also perceived as having a relationship with an aspect of a service or product that most suppliers seek to have in place – quality. Branding is a process that conveys the nature of services/products being provided, and gives the customer an enhanced insight into the quality level. An effective brand will demonstrate the value of a product to the prospective purchaser or user in the marketplace (Walton, 2008).

According to the Luongo, 2006 a brand typically includes two elements: sensory elements - which include your company name, logo, colors, and other graphic or text elements, and

intangible expectations - which are the perceptions associated with a product or service that arise and reside in the minds of everyone who comes in contact with your business. Here we will focus on the intangible expectation element of a brand. Building your identity as a unique brand takes work, but it is work that any business regardless of size or industry can do, and do well. Developing unique brand for small companies consists of three core steps like in first step you must explore what your unique value is to your customers, secondly crystallize it to help you focus on the one or two most important attributes, and lastly communicate your brand message to all those who need to hear it. We'll look at each of these steps in turn:

2.7.1 Explore:

In this first step you need to examine your assumptions about what your customers, employees, and community are thinking. What unique value do you provide for your customers? Maybe it's personalized solutions; maybe it's faster or more responsive customer service; maybe its low prices and no hassle set up. But you need to be sure. You need to find out from your customers directly. Surveys or phone interviews are a great way to gather this information. This kind of information can be gathered from customers by few simple questions in order to identify:

> ➢ The value you provide to customers (apart from product or service).
> ➢ The number one compliment you hear from customers.
> ➢ What you do better than anyone else, especially your closest competitors.

2.7.2 Crystallize:

After receiving input from a few different sources you need to analyze and define the unique value attributes that were identified. Focus on just one or two key elements of the feedback and use those attributes to develop your unique brand which will enable to develop uniqueness in your brand.

2.7.3 Communicate:

Now that you have determined your unique value attributes, you need to follow through by actively and consistently communicating them. Your unique brand should be integrated and broadcast in all your marketing communications as a means to guide people's decisions to do

business with you. It is important to note that, because your brand is based on how you and your business is perceived, the marketing messages that you will create should serve to reinforce these intangible elements of your unique brand. It is also important from time-to-time to evaluate the unique value that you and the business provide to your target market to ensure that it is continuing to positively impact them and, if it isn't, you will need to go back and Re-evaluate your branding strategy.

Clearly, developing a unique brand requires getting information from others, working to understand that information through objective analysis, and then effectively and consistently communicating your message through your marketing channels and other customer touch points.

There is plenty of guidance and direction on the processes to go through to create and develop a unique brand. According to Walton, 2008 there are some commonalities in the various stages that are proposed for organizations wishing to produce an effective brand like:

- ➢ Establish which customers are to be targeted by the brand and develop an understanding of their needs and values.
- ➢ Explore the competition to the service/product and identify what the customer's value from the competition, monitoring competitors, progress and developments.
- ➢ Design a compelling brand that encompasses all activities.
- ➢ Achieve employees buy in to the brand and give them the skills, tools and support to deliver the customer experience promised by the brand.
- ➢ Measure and monitor how the brand is received and how it is delivered.
- ➢ Show a level of patience, react to competitors and further develop the brand informed by effective evaluation.

It is very important aspect that how to increase the brand strength, which includes locating a niche for the product and by being different to competitors. The differentiation also should extend to the value and quality represented by the brand. It is not enough to establish a niche, the niche has to be filled well and be truly valued by customers. Companies should emphasize on need for emotional connection, which is achieved when the brand engenders feelings of trust and closeness in the customer. The brand has to be internalized as customers' actual

experiences will always make or break a brand. If negative customer experiences persist it would be difficult for brand to survive (Walton, 2008).

Companies should effectively develop their own unique brand identity which is critical for growing business sustainability and profitability. Further to discussion as your business get expands, having a defined brand will allow you to build on the strengths of your businesses and more easily leverage that unique value in new markets.

2.8 Branding Strategy:

Branding is a market strategy for creating, nurturing and fostering the continual development of relevant and appropriate brand value propositions. It consists of "the development and maintenance of sets of product attributes and values which are coherent, appropriate, distinctive, protectable and appealing to customers". Brand strategy emphasizes the entrenched continuity and connectedness of the firm with its external environment. It enables firms to build reputation among its customers and other stakeholders and create, nurture and innovate on their market-based assets. In turn, market-based assets enable firms to nurture customer perceived brand value, brand equity and enhances its reputation. In this context, brand may serve as a platform for innovative practices for enhancing firms' market-based assets such as reputation, enhancing and commanding trust from potential and existing customers (Abimbola & Kocak, 2007).

In organizations brand managers plan long-term brand strategy and watch over their brand's profits. By working closely with advertising agencies and considering the demands and different important aspects of their target markets as well as consumers they create national branding campaigns to build market share and long term consumer brand loyalty which in result enable to get an edge over their competitor which is a vital phenomenon in today's world of competition (Boyle, 2007). Organizations always indulge in the process of making such a branding strategies that could enable to establish their brands strong and worthy and uses strategies the best suitable according to the situation exist. There are 2 different branding strategies mainly called as building and buying as per Doyle, 1990 adopting building strategy is a long term process to create strength of company's brand besides this it involves much cost and having much risk on the other hand buying brand strategy is a relatively faster than building brand strategy and involves less cost and have less risk but sometime this strategy fails to get the long term value of brand which is a vital object and quite hard to ignore. The

decision of building or buying strategy is highly dependent on the company's main objectives like if a company's main objects are related to finances like return on investment then it will lead to adopt the buying or acquisitioning strategy but if the company's main objects are relates to the marketing area like capturing more market share, reputation building e.g. then it will go for building brand strategy.

2.9 Keller Strategic Brand Management Process:

This model will help us for better understanding about the strategic brand management process for a company. After better understanding of this model company's can easily translating their viewpoints into the specific reputation building activities which is the core element in the branding process. The strategic brand management process involves the design and implementation of marketing programs and activities to build measure and manage brand equity. The strategic brand management process is defined in four main steps which are illustrated below:

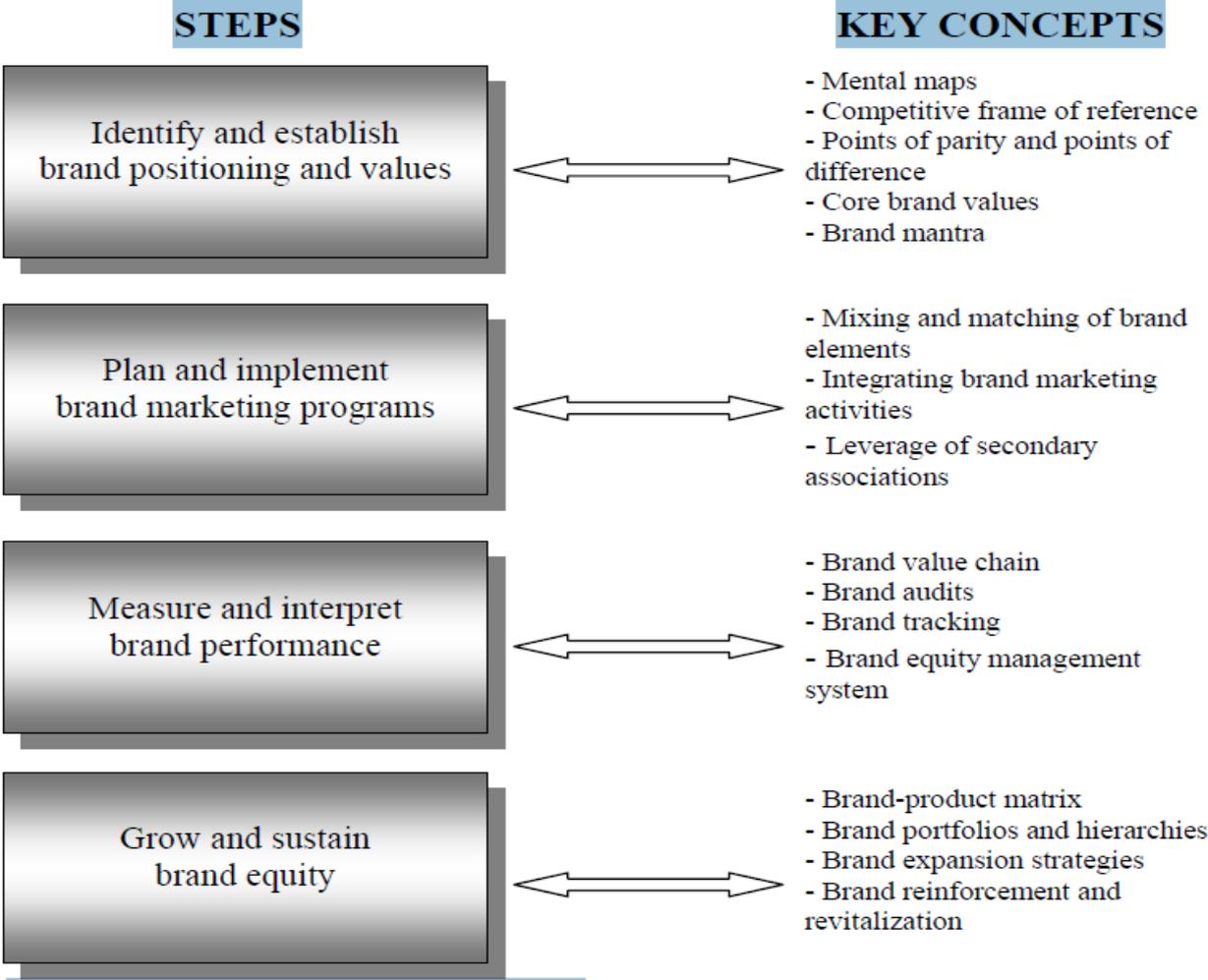| STEPS	KEY CONCEPTS
Identify and establish brand positioning and values	- Mental maps - Competitive frame of reference - Points of parity and points of difference - Core brand values - Brand mantra
Plan and implement brand marketing programs	- Mixing and matching of brand elements - Integrating brand marketing activities - Leverage of secondary associations
Measure and interpret brand performance	- Brand value chain - Brand audits - Brand tracking - Brand equity management system
Grow and sustain brand equity	- Brand-product matrix - Brand portfolios and hierarchies - Brand expansion strategies - Brand reinforcement and revitalization

Figure 3: Strategic brand management process
Source: Adapted from Keller (2002), p.44

2.9.1 Identify and Establish Brand Positioning and Values:

In the first step company should start by providing the clear overview and knowledge that what the brand is suppose to represent and how can brand positioning and brand values be seen in relation to its competitors. Brand positioning can define "act of designing the company offer and image so that it occupies a distinct and valued place in the target customer minds" the goal is to locate the brand in the mind of customer such a way that firms can maximizes their potential benefit. Competitive brand positioning is all about creating brand superiority in the minds of customers. Fundamentally positioning of brand involves convincing the customers regarding the advantages of the brand.

Determining the desired brand knowledge structure thus involves positioning of the brand in the mind of customers. Deciding on the positioning requires determining a competitive frame of reference - by identifying the target market and nature of competition. Once the company develops the strategy in order to form the brand positioning then actual marketing program to create, strengthen or maintain brand associations can be put into the place (Keller, 2002).

2.9.2 Planning and Implementing Marketing Programs:

With regards to the second step here company has to consider that building brand equity requires creating a brand that consumers are sufficiently and aware of with which consumers have strong, favorable and unique brand associations. In general brand building process depends on three factors like:

➢ The initial choices for the brand elements or identities making up the brand.

➢ The marketing activities and supporting marketing program and the manner by which the brand is integrated.

➢ Other associations indirectly transferred to the brand by linking it to some other entity like (the company, country of origin, channel of distribution or another brand) (Keller, 2002).

2.9.3 Measure and Interpret Brand Performance:

In order to understand the effects of brand marketing programs it is important to measure and interpret the performance of brand a useful tool in order to measure it is brand value chain. A brand value chain is a means to trace the value creation process for brands to better understand the financial impact of brand marketing expenditures and investments. The brand value chain provides help to direct marketing research efforts. The brand value chain assumes that brand value creation process starts when the company invests in any marketing program by targeting its actual or potential customers. Any marketing program investment that potentially can be attributed to brand value development falls into this category for example product research, development and design, trade or intermediary support or any marketing communication program. A profitable brand management system requires successfully designing and implementing a brand equity measurement system which consists of set of research procedures designed to provide timely, accurate, and actionable information for marketers so that they can make the best possible tactical decisions in the short run and strategic decision for the long run. Implementing such kind of system involves two important aspects like conducting tracking studies and implementing a brand equity management system (Keller, 2002).

2.9.4 Grow and Sustain Brand Equity:

According to Keller, 2002 The skillful design and implementation of marketing programs that capitalizes on well-conceived brand positioning, strong brand leader ship positions can be achieved. Maintaining and expanding on brand equity however, can be challenging for a company. Brand equity management concerns those activities that take a broader and more diverse perspective of the brand's equity-understanding how branding strategies should reflect organization concerns and be adjusted, if at all, over time or over geographical boundaries or market segments. Managing brand equity involves managing brands within the context of other brands, as well as managing the brands over multiple categories, overtime and across multiple market segments.

2.10 Components of branding:

Now, here we would focus the elements which lead to create the brand differentiation gradually Image, identity, reputation and the positioning are the most important components

of the branding when company strive for making its brand different from its competitor and are described in depth as follows:

2.10.1 Brand Image:

Creating a brand image involves getting customers to know that the brand exists. Once a brand has been separated from the crowd, it is easier to develop its image. The branding process itself may be the starting point for product differentiation. Brand image enables consumer to recognize a product, lower purchase risks, evaluate the quality and obtain certain experience and satisfaction out of product differentiation. The image a top brand develops may be the only way for the consumers to tell the difference. The difference will exist primarily in the mind of the consumer. Image is the receiver's perception regarding the particular brand and it is formed in the mind of the receiver and is therefore beyond control by the sender. The consumer will perceive one brand as more desirable than its competitors and purchase it based on those perceptions (Rooney, 1995).

2.10.2 Brand Identity:

Brand Identity is a central concept in branding as it describes the core values and provides direction, purpose and meaning of brand (Aaker, 1996). According to Rooney, (1995) if brand has a recognizable identity, then it should be aimed at opportunity markets to yield maximum success. The company can control the identity that is sent but cannot control the image. Although identity and image are different terms but several times these terms are used by the companies in the same way. Companies must manage the image and identity of a brand and tie it to the total business strategy. Each organization must decide how branding fits into its general strategy because one strategy does not work for all. The point is business strategy and brand strategy should be relevant to the goals of the organization. Although there are specific directions for matching a brand with a certain strategy the individual operations must create a unique strategy that works for them.

2.10.3 Brand Positioning:

Positioning may be simply defined in a term of how a brand is positioned in the minds of customers with respect to the values with which it is differentially associated or which it owns. The commercial utility of Positioning lies in how the imbuing of trademarks with unique, true and compelling values can influence purchasing decision and its impact on the

sales. Indeed, the entire enterprise of branding itself can be understood as an exercise in positioning; using product experience and marketing initiative to increase profitability by associating the trademarks with compelling the consumer values (Marsden, 2002). According to Kapferer, (1997) Brand Positioning focuses on the unique characteristics that makes the brand unique from the competitor's brand and provide attraction to customers so that they could buy the product The essence of brand positioning is that the brand has a sustainable competitive advantage or "unique selling pro position" that gives consumers a compelling reason for buying that particular brand.

According to Wood & Pierson, (2006) in consumer marketing, branding provides points of differentiation between competitive offerings and allows for market positioning. The brand can create an image of the product in the consumers' mind that is associated with quality, and informs the market of the product's uniqueness in general, or in relation to other competing products. The success of brand development may depend on the approach taken to brand description, the use of the marketing mix to position a brand in the market place is very important.

2.10.4 Reputation:

Corporate Reputation is often confused with image and brand. In fact, the nature and importance of reputation appears to be debated than it is actually demonstrated in terms of its benefit and value. The notion of causal ambiguity captures the inherent difficulty in measuring concepts such as reputation.

According to Abimbola & Kocak, (2007), however, there are a number of operational frameworks for measuring the concept. Reputation refers to value judgments about an organization's qualities, trustworthiness and reliability built up over time. This suggests that reputation is more durable than image, cannot be developed or altered as quickly and it requires nurturing through time. It is difficult, however, to separate brand and reputation in practice.

Few small businesses follow a reputation building strategy. And that they often resort to "image management" around public relations campaign in times of crisis (ref). Reputation is important to receiving legitimization from different stakeholders. However, difficulty often arises in terms of translating this viewpoint into specific reputation building activities. Companies with high word of mouth advocacy rates (i.e. likelihood of recommendation) grow

fast while those that do not have high word of mouth advocacy rates stagnate or shrink. The overall strategic goal of reputation building is to optimize the likelihood of people having a favorable attitude that predisposes them to behave positively towards an organization based on their experience or that of others. Reputation is clearly different from image; however, we contend that reputation is theoretically based on and influenced by the output of an organization epitomized in its brand. We argue that since customers evaluate brand in developing their value judgment about trustworthiness, reliability and inherent quality to determine reputation, it is appropriate to view both in brand and reputation as one and the same (Abimbola & Kocak, 2007).

2.11 Unique Core Values:

Branding is getting day by day more attention from its practitioners. The idea of developing a strong brand is a top priority in every company. In current scenario idea of branding has been dominated by strong focus on the product as the brand. Product branding emphasizes brand recognition which states that to what extent product brand is familiar and recognized by customers and potential customers, and to what extent does a product brand make sense to customers. Companies are now focusing on developing the unique features, values and association in their product which resultantly comes in a shape of strong brand (Kristensen and Morsing, 2001).

The unique core features of a brand, such as the so-called soul of a brand, and the fundamental beliefs and values, constitute the core identity. The extended identity, consisting of sub-brands, sponsoring etc., contributes to the fine-tuning of the core identity and is very important in order to develop the brand identity (Morling, Miriam Salzer and Strannegard, Lars, 2004).

All companies possess a core set of values that are used as working principles, have fundamental value to each company, and which everyone believes to be important are called as unique core values. Core values relate to the internal brand building process by linking the brand to the company's mission, vision and fundamental organizational values. Core values must be seen as durable, but also dynamic by nature and continually adaptable. These values should be developed so as to encourage a sense of challenge and adventure that is relevant both within and outside the organization. Such values also affect the brand architecture, product attributes, brand positioning and communications strategy which are the important concerns for all organization regardless large or small. According to the Kent, Tony and

Stone, Dominic, 2007, "Core values influence continuity, consistency and credibility in the building of an organization's brand which enable the brand different amongst the competitors".

The brand took on a greater significance if their core values are unique and came to be realized as an intangible asset which is most important in today's scenario. Brand managers in company have consistently required adding value around the core of the brand, or brand essence, to create and maintain distinguishing positions in a market. To assist them, brand metrics have evolved to successively manage brand image, brand positioning and brand identity. These developments have been in response to two forces, the changing business environment, and recognition that the organization has a strategic influence in the branding process. Indeed, marketing success is identified in the combining of organizational assets and competencies to create unique products and services (Kent, Tony and Stone, Dominic, 2007).

According to the Harris and Chernatony, 2001 every brand will have a unique set of values that are relevant to its target market but it is the consistency of the perception of those values, as well as the nature of those values, that is an important characteristic of successful brands for which now a day's all companies are striving.

According to Urde, 2003, Values can be seen from three different aspects like:

  ➢ Values that are related to the organization.
  ➢ Values that summarize the brand.
  ➢ Values as they are experienced by customers.

2.11.1 Values Related to Organization:

Organization values are described quite simply as "rules of life". "The combination of value connects the organization around mission and vision". Organization's core values which are the organization's essential and considered as a small set of timeless guiding principles that require no external justification and importance to those who are inside the organization. Core values are considered as unique organization value proposition in relation to the core processes of the organization. Organizational values can be explained in other contexts as well, as it refers as a component of intellectual capital.

2.11.2 Values that summarize the brand:

Brand essence is a term that some organizations have worked with since many years. The primary objective is to define and describe the innermost core of a brand. The term brand essence is used and expanded on by many authors. Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2000, p. 45), for example, talk about brand essence as part of identity: "The brand essence can be viewed as the glue that holds the core identity elements together. . ." Macrae (1996) investigates the relation between brand essence and value-adding. Upshaw (1995, p. 25) also sees the brand essence as an inner value: ". . . the core of the core – the brand essence". Keller (1999) uses the term brand mantras: ". . . are short three to five word phrases that capture the irrefutable essence or spirit of the brand positioning." Randazzo (1993) likens, in principle, brand essence and core value, and elects to speak of the brand soul: "The brand's soul is its spiritual center, the core value(s) that defines the brand and permeates all other aspects of the brand" (Randazzo 1993, p. 17). Kapferer (1992) uses kernel in his reasoning about the core of the brand. De Chernatony (1999) develops and creates an interesting distinction between core values and peripheral values.

2.11.3 Values as experienced by the customer:

"Brands have value; it turns out, because they add value." added value provides a good overview and specifically demonstrates the lack of terminology consensus. Added values include "value proposition" and "functional" and "emotional discriminators". "Customer value" is the term use to express what the customer is prepared to exchange for a brand. Added value is also used in other contexts "added value" to explain durable competitive advantages from a strategic perspective. Adding value in a particular product is about the process of developing specific brands. Each of these contributions is of interest and value in its own right (Urde, 1997). The development of core values is synonymous with the development of the brand. By definition, core values affect leadership, strategy, organization, product development, communications etc. When an organization grows from a position in which the mission, vision and organizational values are brought together in the form of core values, a vital step on the road towards high-level brand orientation has been taken. This means that the corporate brand and its core values are, in almost every respect, the hub around which the company's strategy and business revolve (Louro and Cunha (2001)) on brand management paradigms. At the extreme, this is an attitude that pre-supposes brand

management competence that aims to develop the brand as a resource and strategic competitive advantage (Urde, 2003).

According to Morling, Miriam Salzer and Strannegard, Lars, 2004, small company's brand core value should be unique enough to adapted by any other competitors, valuable and possible to communicate from the perspective of the consumer which is vital element in developing unique core values in the particular brand, resultantly will help in making the brand equity and brand loyalty also enable the firm to get the good position in target market.

2.12 Chapter Conclusion:

In this chapter, we have described theoretical framework in detail relating to our research topic. We explained Keller Strategic Brand Management process & Porter's Five Forces in popping up the concepts of branding to ensure the equal benefits among the companies regardless of their sizes/structure. In the next chapter, we are going to define the methodology of our research topic.

3- Research Methodology:

3.1 Chapter Introduction:

In this chapter we will explain the research methodology of our thesis which we have selected in order to answer our research question mentioned above in the first chapter. Furthermore, we will state the type of our research along with its approach, strategy and data collection techniques.
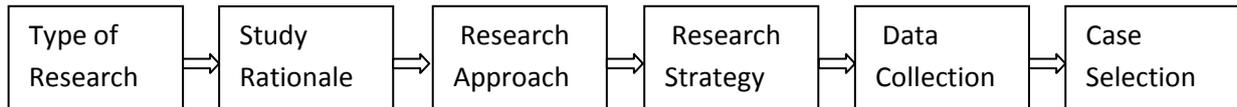
Type of Research	Study Rationale	Research Approach	Research Strategy	Data Collection	Case Selection

Figure 4: Research Model

3.2 Type of Research:

According to Zikmund (1990), exploratory research is an initial research that clarifies and defines the nature of a problem. Exploratory research will not provide conclusive evidence or a specific course of action. To be able to obtain conclusive evidence further subsequent research is required. Descriptive research aims at describing the characteristics of a population or a phenomenon. Descriptive research is based on previous understanding of the nature of the problem. It differentiates from exploratory research because in case of descriptive research we tend to find answers regarding questions starting with who, what where, how and when. Although, giving no explanations to for the cause of the findings.

The main purpose of our thesis is to gains the deeper knowledge about the research problem but also describe how small companies can manage their brands. The research is an exploratory nature because it is initial study and problem area of research is unclear. Some part of this study is a descriptive nature because identity and image can be measured in the light of theories to find out how can they apply. Exploratory research will not provide evidence or a specific course of action. But with the help of conclusion we can point out actions that are suitable for specific case. Therefore the thesis is exploratory and as well descriptive.

3.3 Study Rationale:

Due to high competition among national firms and monopoly of multinational companies in the food industry in Pakistani market, national small companies are striving for growth and profitability as well as their brand awareness efforts among Pakistani audience led us to point out this problem and then research. We got inspirations from media talks and discussions of different scholars about small business branding. As we have deeply studied literature review, we came to know that there is much space for research work on this area and sufficient research has not been done on branding in small businesses in Pakistan.

3.4 Research approach:

There are two types of research approaches that are widely used qualitative and quantitative. The main purpose of qualitative approach is to gain better understanding of subject in depth instead of measuring. The purpose of this approach is to describe a situation in detail about the problem area of research and relies on small number of respondents' .In qualitative method several variables should be investigated in detail among a few no of entities.

Quantitative methods are based on representative sample of population, large enough to make results general for the entire population, within estimated level of accuracy. The method is used to measure things (Hague & Jackson 1996, p.64)

Our research process would be a qualitative research because in qualitative research the detailed examination will get held for the deep understanding of case. In our thesis the results are not measurable in how many and how much, so exploratory approach is suitable for our case. As our research question initiate with how? So in this case an "**exploratory case study**" would be very beneficial.

3.5 Research Strategy

There are three major research strategies; experiments, surveys & case studies (Wiedersheim-Paul & Eriksson, 2001).Yin (1994) is also agreed with these three research strategies and describes that a case study approach is suitable for a research problem formulated as "How" or "Why" our research question also starts with how so we took case study strategy for our thesis. Case study is also helpful in order to investigate problem in depth as well as entire organization can be investigated in detail with the help of case study (Zikmund, 1999). In our thesis we will use single Case study where one entity will be carried out and it would done by interviews.

3.6 Data Collection:

Collection of data is very important to answer the research questions. According to Ghauri & Gronhaug (2005), collection of data has significance in answering the research questions. This can be done in two ways, either using secondary data or primary data. Secondary data not only help answering the questions but also provide a better understanding in explaining the research objective. However when not enough secondary data is available with respect to one's research topic, researcher has to rely upon the empirical study also called primary data.

3.6.1 Secondary Data:

 To get answers regarding our research question as discussed above we will also employ the secondary data which can describe with the help of following figure.
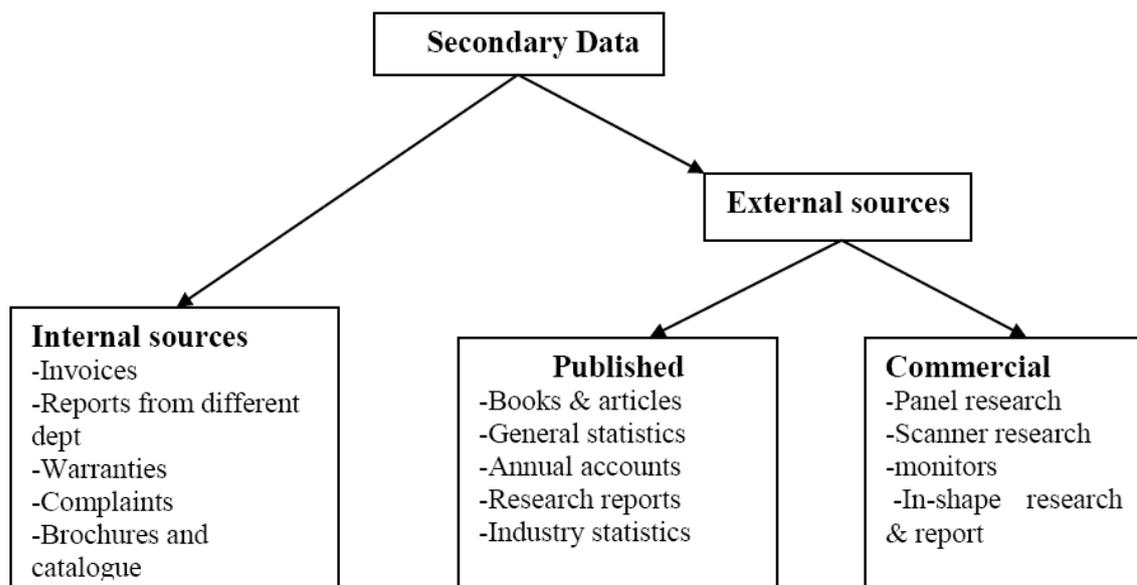
Figure 5: Sources of Data

Source: Ghauri, P & Gronhaug, K Ghauri, P. & Gronhaug, K. (2005).
The secondary data would be gathered through the use of peer reviewed articles, journals, books, previous dissertation, government publications having link to our study. According to Ghauri & Gronhaug (2005), "secondary data are useful not only to find information to solve our research problem, but also to better understand and explain our research problem." According to Ghauri & Gronhaug (2005), "key skill requirements in exploratory research are often the ability to observe, get information, and construct explanation that is theorizing."

3.6.2 Primary Data:

There are three different ways to collect the data for case study: interviews, documents and observations. According to Yin, 1994, Interviews are suitable when detailed information is required and that is the primary purpose of our research, and interview allows flexibility and closeness to the respondents which are important in qualitative study. Furthermore interviews allowed to researcher to focus directly on the case study topic. Interviews can be taken in three forms:

➢ Focused interviews
➢ Open ended interviews
➢ Structured interviews

In focused interview the structure of the discussion or topic is predefined. In open ended interview topic is discussed freely by respondent and not bound to any specific question. These interviews are open and free but in structured interviews the discussion is predefined and respondent are bound to answer the specific question.

In this thesis, we prefer to focus interview for required data. We will conduct telephonic interviews. Interviews are conducted in Urdu because Urdu is a mother tongue for both researcher and as well respondent. We will conduct Focused Telephonic Interviews to owner-manager/CEO of the company because CEO will explain us about the benefits of brand development. We will conduct the interview of Brand Manager, Director Business development & Planning and Advertising Manager (Punjab Province). They will describe about the image of the brand and past and current branding strategies in depth furthermore; they will tell that how they are using brand identity and positioning for their company.

3.7 Chapter Conclusion:

In research methodology chapter we have explained the different research methodology types, approaches and strategies and high lightened the selected ones which are used in conducting this research work. We have also explained the different data collection techniques and got the help from both techniques of primary and secondary data. Now, in next chapter we will discuss the empirical data collected and will provide the answers of our research question.

4-Data Presentation:

4.1 Chapter Introduction:

After discussing the ways of collecting relevant data for our research, this chapter will give a presentation of collected data. Telephonic interviews have been conducted in order to gather the data from the subject company. Here, we will take a start with the brief introduction of Eastern Products (Pvt) Limited and will also analyze the empirical findings on the base of porter's five forces and after that we will find ourselves in a better position to answer our research questions.

4.2 Tea Industry Introduction in Pakistan:

Pakistan, a country of tea-totallers due to the Islamic ban on alcohol, is one of the highest per capita consumers of tea in South Asia. Tea is Pakistan's most popular and cheapest beverage. The annual consumption, about 150 million kg, fluctuates at just less than 1 kg. Per person per year; this is the world's seventh highest consumption. 66% of country's population of 154 million lives in rural areas, where tea consumption is greatest. Sweetened black tea taken with milk is most common (Flores, 2006).
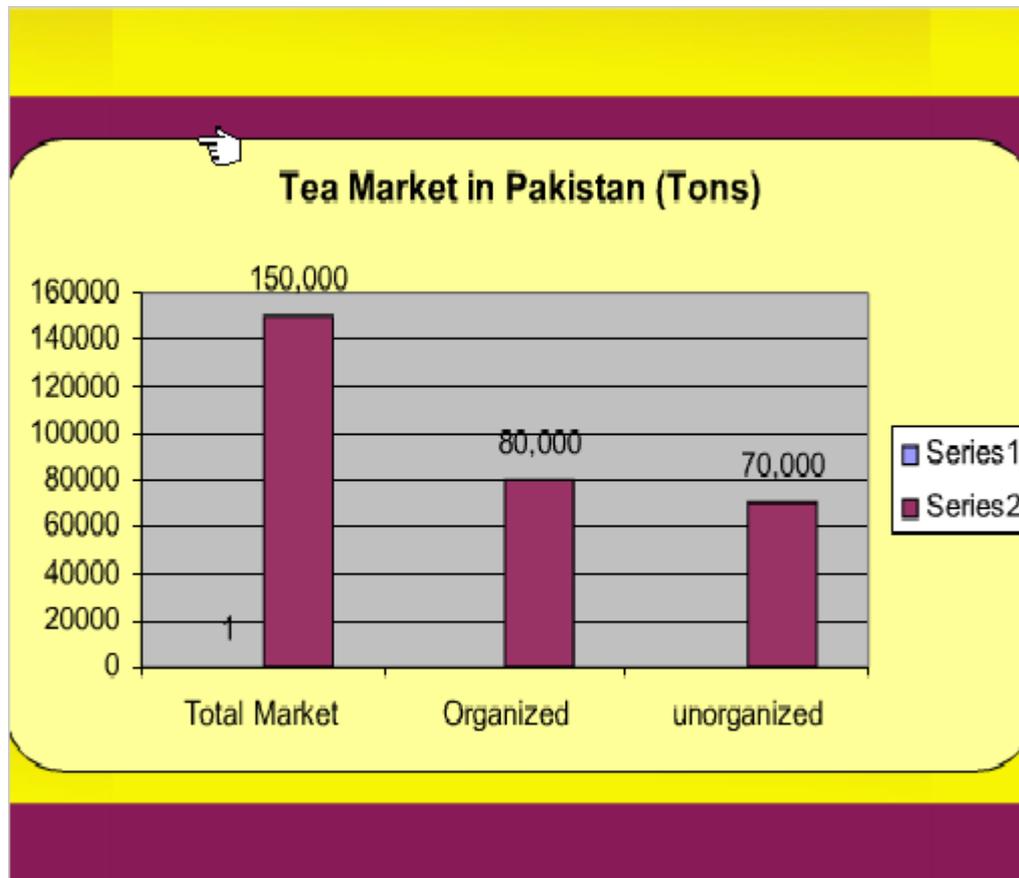
Figure: 6 Tea Market in Pakistan

Source: Tea Marketing Plan by Ali Hadi (Proactive Brand Solution Pakistan)

The above figure is reflecting the situation prevailing in the tea market of Pakistan. The graph is showing the usage of tea (in tons) in Pakistan. Total market is using the 150,000 tons among which 80,000 is used by the organized tea companies with the register brand names but the rest of the consumption is taken by the unorganized tea markets mostly coming from different countries through smuggling. As major part of total population of Pakistan is living in rural areas so, due to lack of education and awareness, unorganized tea is taking the major share from rural area's tea consumption which is mainly affecting the organized tea market.

4.2.1 Vital Tea Introduction:

A local company Vital Tea having registered name (**Eastern products Pvt Ltd**) but well-known by the name of **Vital Tea** which is the most powerful and famous brand of the company is the 3rd largest Tea manufacturer and seller in Pakistan started working since 1991 (Entered in National level environment in 2005) with 300 employees, 130 distributors and providing the different 5 high quality brands like:

- Vital Tea
- Dawn Classical Dust Tea
- Surhan Dust Tea
- Hot Cup
- Shan

In spite of intense competition due to multinational organizations and other local competitors in Pakistani market Vital Tea has a larger part of market share in rural areas especially due to high quality and richest taste as since establishment company mainly focused on the rural areas due to high population moreover this area was neglected by the multinational and big local companies.

4.2.2 Background:

Pakistan is truly a rare land, home to different civilizations and diverse cultures. It was here in the verdant plains of Punjab one and a half decade ago, that a small movement began to bring the wholesome purity of nature back into the home and heart. A movement that is Eastern products (Pvt) Ltd. processing, packaging and marketing of Pakistan Tea specialties has not

always been a Standardized affair. At least not until the Haji Mohammad Yasin founded the Eastern Products Pvt. (Ltd). In 1991 with a small tea factory that was to grow into a local giant on the bane of a single promise consistent quality. At the core of the group's success is the sincerity and dedication of its team of highly qualified technical, financial and marketing expert.

4.2.3 CEO's Message:

"I started this business in 1991 with the philosophy to satisfy our customer needs, by establishing strategic relationships with all our distributors, retailers and end buyers, and building core competence in blending and packaging technology, we have and will continue to have a strong competitive position in today's market place furthermore, in anticipation of future changes, a vertically integrated company will be our strategic aim thereby strengthening our company's capability to serve the tea industry".

4.2.4 Main quality processes of company:

Following are the three main quality process of the Tea in Vital Tea in order to assure the high quality product:

4.2.4.1 Tea Blending:

Vital Tea have much expertise in blending and having knowledge in packaging technology, company is able to fulfill its client's requirements for leafy, grades, dust grades and small grades Tea products.

4.2.4.2 Tea Packing:

Company believes that a critical success factor in the industry is gaining sustainable competitive advantage in packaging technology. That is the main objective of our research team besides those other objectives are continual development, modification and production of machineries to meet current market requirement for national market and future international business. Our engineers have designed and produced high precision filling machines, and fully automatic machines which will play an increasingly important role in the market as labor cost increase. Company providing products in a variety of different packing such as Sachet, Poly bags, 60 grams/ 125 grams/ 250 grams packet tea/ 400 grams tin pack etc.

4.2.4.3 Quality Control:

Company caters to the premium segment of the market and so must maintain exacting standards of quality. So stringent are the quality specifications at every stage, that they have become a habit rather than being mere procedure. The Group's plants have state-of art-technology and sophisticated equipment. Company believes that it is vitally important that we maintain our first class reputation as dependable manufacturer of high integrity. While we endeavor always to offer our customers a first class standard of service, we seek to develop a relationship with them more as a partnership than simply as seller and buyer. What company makes is Excellency and consistency in quality that support and marketing assistance, alongside the technical advice, that company can bring to its customer is of great help to them. It is company's intention to continue policy of becoming stronger players in tea trading.

4.2.5 Branding in Vital Tea:

Initially, company's brand faced a tough situation with regards to its competitor but with the passage of time through strategic planning, company is managing to overcome this competition environment. Due to the intense competition on national level company needs branding for its long term survival, getting competitive edge & communicates its message more widely to audience.

In the beginning of branding effort Company used external source because of insufficient knowledge within the organization .Vital Tea hired the services of advertising agencies (mainly Blitz Advertising) for branding and promotion of its brands but these advertising companies were not able to develop the image of company in proper way and couldn't provide clear picture of brand. Vital tea was totally dependent on these advertising agencies for promoting their products and their images.

To overcome these problems in 2007 vital tea developed its own branding department consisting of 4 employees under the supervision of Director Business Development. At this stage company have the sufficient knowledge about the market and branding activities for promoting their brand in a proper way so firstly, apart from doing branding their products company is also creating the awareness of branding practices and its benefits to their employees so that they could play a significant role in doing branding activities.

4.3 Porter Five forces:

In this section, we will describe the empirical findings in the context of porter's five forces.

4.3.1 Rivalry among Existing Firms:

The intensity of rivalry influences prices as well as the costs of competing in areas such as plant, product development, advertising, and sales force (Porter, 1985). Due to heavy usage of tea by Pakistani audience there is intense competition in tea companies which are providing different quality teas in order to make differentiation in their products apart from this multinational companies are also covering the market and getting their good market share by spending a lot of budgets on advertising, promoting and branding their products. Following are the list of main national and international tea manufacturing firms operating their businesses in Pakistan.

National Competitors:
- Tapal Tea
- Everlast food products
- Al Mehran Foods
- Qarshi Industries
- Maizona (Pvt) limited
- Haleeb Foods Limited
- Adnan Enterprises
- Pak Food Industry
- Mushroom

International competitors:
- Tetley Tea
- Unilever (Brook Bond , Lipton, Supreme)

4.3.1.1 Market Share of Vital Tea:

As the competition level among firms are much high and every firm is striving to arrest the maximum market share. Vital Tea as just entered in the national market so, doing efforts to make differentiation in its products by spending money on advertisement mainly on distributer, wholesaler and retailer level and on customer level as well. Company is also striving to make recognition of its products by doing different branding activities in order to

create the awareness among audience so that customers could get maximum awareness and got good image and identity about its brands and become loyal. We will describe the market share of vital tea among different brands.
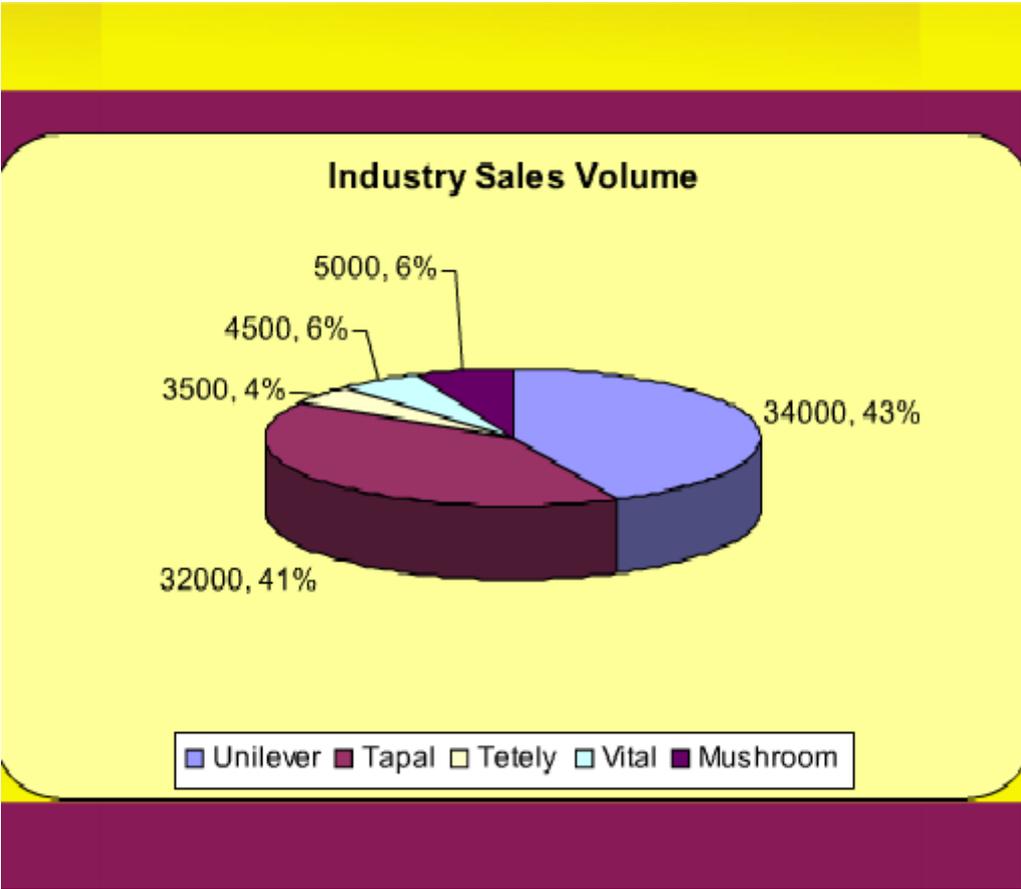
Figure 7: Industry Sales Volume

Source: Tea Marketing Plan by Ali Hadi (Proactive Brand Solution Pakistan)

Above illustrated figure is showing that total tea market share is mainly covered by the Unilever which is talking 43 % of the total market share. A well established national company Tapal Tea working since establishment of Pakistan is getting 2nd position in the market competition. After getting the healthy response and success in rural areas Vital Tea decided in 2005 to penetrate into the urban areas to cover the whole national market and in just 4 years they have managed to get 6% of the whole market share of national market with limited budgets in the presence of giant companies like Unilever and Tapal Tea. Furthermore, Tetley Tea and Mushroom are getting 4 % and 6% share from the market respectively.

4.3.2 Threat of New Entrants:

The threat of entry places a limit on prices, and shapes the investment required to deter entrants (Porter, 1985). As the market has much space in it for the new entrants just because of much use of tea in houses, offices, amusement places, restaurants etc. and relatively not much companies are providing the quality tea in cheaper price in Pakistan and people always seek such a tea which is according to their taste requirement as well as with cheaper price so there is always threat for our subject company Vital Tea from the new entrants and due to this core reason company started thinking to create awareness of its products and making branding strategy in order to overcome this threat.

4.3.3 Bargaining Power of Suppliers:

According to porter, 1985 bargaining power of suppliers determines the costs of raw materials and other inputs. Vital Tea is third big importer of tea in Pakistan and mainly importing tea leaves from two countries which are given below:

- Kenya
- Tanzania

The current monthly import of tea leaves is 400,000 kg [1] from these above two mentioned countries in order to fulfill the requirement of market. The bargaining power of these suppliers effect the competitive environment significantly as when the price of raw material increases in these countries company has to suffer in terms of profits because company purchase the raw material (tea leaves) on higher price but at the same time company has to sell its product on the same price without any increase because of its competitors which resultantly decrease the company's profit. On the other hand if the company has a grip over its suppliers then it is considered as a competitive edge for company and then it doesn't affect the growth and profitability of the company. Same is the case with the other suppliers like packaging material, stationary etc.

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[1] We got this information from Director Business Development in telephonic interview.

4.3.4 Bargaining Power of Buyers:

Bargaining power of buyers influences the prices that firms can charge. Cost and investment can also be influenced by the bargaining power of buyers because expensive services are always demanded by the buyers with cheaper prices (Porter, 1985). According to Mallon, 2005 there are two types of buyer power exist,

> ➢ The first is related to the customer's price sensitivity. The buyer takes his/her purchase decision on price if each brand of a product is similar to others. This ends up with the increment of competitive rivalry and resultantly in lower prices, and lower profitability.
> ➢ Another type of buyer power is negotiation. Buyers having large quantity of purchase always expect more leverage and usually negotiate on lower price. In case of small buyers of products, company normally used to charge high prices with high profit margins.

As it is very important to keep bargaining power of buyers into consideration, vital tea is taking an initiative to take into account the buyers powers to avoid the buyer's switching to other tea brands with the help of providing high quality and customer services along with lesser price. The major parts of vital tea's buyers are living in the rural areas those are quite illiterate as company has been focusing on the rural areas since its establishment way back in 1991. But now the vital tea is penetrating into the urban areas as well to capture the attention of literate buyers with the help of branding. The company is heading towards providing the better quality tea with good services (e.g. small prizes schemes, money back guarantee in case of bad taste, providing recipe of making finest cup of tea, free sampling door-to-door, proper feedback of customer complaint) in comparison with its national and international competitors.

4.3.5 Threat of Substitute:

According to Mallon, 2005 threats of substitute have been most damaging because the companies disregard its significance due to the element of strategic decision making. Overcoming the threats of substitute can only be possible if the companies not merely check the activities of the competitor but also take into consideration the options prevailing in the market for the buyers that he/she can purchase instead. Until the switching cost of the

customer is high, the threats of substitute can't be decreased or eliminated. Profit margins will remain to be low, when the threats of substitutes are high.

Vital Tea also faced the threat from other competitors since its early stages till now but due to intense competition currently so, in order to overcome this threat Vital Tea started keeping an eye on its national and multinational companies by doing different analysis of competitors activities regarding their promotion schemes (e.g. gift schemes like giving cups with tea packs & plastic strainer), branding strategy, advertisement policies, marketing strategies, customer switching ratio, quality standards, prices, customer needs and wants, feedback about its products with regards to its quality and specific taste and then analyze that where is the lacking and then decide that how they can remove it from the product in order to give the value to customer so that they could become fully aware about product and become loyal lastly.

4.4 Research Question 1:
Can a small company develop a unique brand for the national market?

A small company can of course develop its brand like in the case of our company (Vital Tea) started in 1991 with a very small setup with having not even a single distributor till 2002 and in early stages and first targeted their customers living in villages and consider rural areas as a target market. Initially, the company's main focus was to capture the maximum market share from the rural areas as most of the Pakistani population are living in the villages and people are unable to find the tea with good quality as the other multinational companies like Unilever, Tetley and big local company Tapal Tea were mainly targeting the urban areas these companies were not considering the rural areas their target market so, Vital Tea in order to fill this gap focused on particular area and started from the surrounding of Haroonabad where the factory is located.

After defining the target market company analyzed the competition environment in rural areas and did research on their developments, progress and found very few local companies were offering their products in the rural areas at that particular moment and enjoying the monopoly situation on the other hand people wanted to have a good quality tea with low price. After defining their competitors company started working on developing a brand with high quality and good taste along with the cheaper price and in order to developing a brand company first started doing branding within the company. Management of the company started creating awareness

among employees about the brand for which they all are going to do work in order to educate the employees. Company arranged training sessions and provided skills to promote the Vital Tea brand in rural areas. The uniqueness in product with premium quality was the main focus of the company since creation as this was the core requirement of the audience so for this purpose they didn't compromise on quality even over larger profits and formulated good systems like Tea Blending keeping in view of customer needs and wants, healthy and safe packaging in order to keep the quality sustainability and quality assurance until consumer access on all manufacturing levels.

As in start there was no any separate branding department so in next step company hired the expertise of local advertising consultant for the purpose of branding and advertising and started its advertising campaign in defined target market in rural areas and started analyzing the customer response or feedback about their product. As in start company did not have any single distributor; they were selling their products directly to retailers and created their own selling points on some locations. In order to manufacture products as per the demand and satisfaction level of Customers Company conducted surveys and got feedback from customers directly through their owned selling points as well as from shopkeepers or retailers.

After considering the quality as a significant key of the progress company started promoting the product as a premium quality product and launched the unique scheme with a motive that if customer doesn't satisfy with the quality of the product then he or she has a right to return the product and can get the money back but this scheme was made only if customer buys it from company owned selling points.

As per the CEO of the company after the journey of 15 years company succeeded in winning the trust of audience in rural areas locally and then management thought to enter and sell products in national market in 2005, this was the year when company took a step to arrest the market share from the urban areas as well and made business strategy for 4 years which is being communicated among all the employees upward to downwards. During this phase company is facing many challenges like as entering in the national market and competing with the national and multinational brands require much expertise of management and marketing staff, financial resources, human resources, huge market surveys e.g. Problems faced by the company were intense competition, awareness of brand among people, high cost, less profits, much advertising campaigns e.g. Another problem was the mentality of the employees even on the management

level were totally grown up to work for the local market so in order to change the mentality company is still doing training and development for employees. Resultantly while entering in the national market company is facing profits reduction due to high expenses especially on advertising media, branding and different promotional schemes which is the core requirement of capturing the national market in competition. According to the Director Business Development of Vital Tea, currently company is striving in order to create its brand image on national level and getting success gradually presently, the import of tea leaves is been expanded to almost 400,000 Kg in order to meet national market demand.

4.5 Research question 2:

How can Keller model of brand development guide the (vital tea) developing the brand?

The Keller brand development model enables firms to get complete awareness about the strategic brand management process which revolves around the designing, building and implementation of such marketing activities which could provide help to firms in order to get and manage brand equity which is one of major element in branding. In our case Vital Tea in its early stage company after defining the target market and proper analysis of competitors activities, created image by providing distinction in its product as a high quality tea with lower price among the audience residing in the rural areas and guide them about the benefits of brand and started implementing such a marketing activities like free sampling of tea, suggestions to audience to make finest cup of tea, Mohalla gathering schemes (representatives of company visits the residential localities and tell them about attributes vital tea brand and making them aware about the lucky draws in the boxes of tea made by Vital Tea) in order to win the trust of audience. This kind of schemes helps Vital Tea in order to build the brand equity which has significant importance furthermore, company used its brand Vital Tea and get it linked as a company name so in order to penetrate this name in the minds of customers.

Currently, company is conducting research and development in order to measure and interpret its brand performance after implementing the different branding activities that how effectively their brand penetrated in the minds of customers and how much they have invested on branding activities and on the other hand how much is return on investment on branding activities. According to CEO of Vital Tea, company reduced its profit from 40 % to 20% while entering from regional to national market where Vital Tea covering the rural as well as urban areas. As regards the last guidance of the Keller model of brand management Process, Company is still

striving in order to capitalize its branding strategies as well as making such marketing programs which could help in order to growth and sustainability of brand equity which is important objective of the company.

4.6 Research Question 3:

What unique core values can be identified in creating the vital tea brand?

Developing strong brand is always top priority for every company .Vital tea always have the strong focus for developing the unique feature, values and association with their all product and company communicated these values within the organization while building brand process and it should be clearly define in company mission statement.

Mission of the Company:

Company's main goal is to produce the most reliable and valuable products and services and in order to build core competency in blending and packaging technology. To increase sales in existing markets they focused on providing the customers with better value and to penetrate in new strategic business areas.

Apart from this company's core values are as follows:

➢ Mutual respect, honesty and integrity are cornerstones of company.

➢ Striving for high customer and employee satisfaction.

➢ Diversity among workforce.

➢ Promote open Communication and teamwork

Vital tea is also highly concern with these values because these values represent the belief of the company and become the basis when developing brand proposition. Because brand proposition can be changed with time or situation but core values would never changed

On the basis of these values the brand proposition should be formulated .brand proposition is a statement that describe about the promise of brand it describe that if you use our product and services we promise that this will occur.

The main goal of the company is to provide reliable and valuable products and services .In this regard company has acquired professionals for poly line-laminated pouch packing. To prevent damage from moisture, pets, insects and dust, products are also packed in attractive

cardboard laminated boxes. The result not only Eastern Products stand out vividly from the rest on the retail shelf, the products to reach the customer absolutely fresh.

4.7 Research Question 4:

How can the vital tea brand is differentiated from competitive brands?

Answer. In the world of competition, it is important for every firm working nationally or internationally has to differentiate its product or service from its competitor in order to achieve the market share. From the starting day of Establishment Company's goal is to differentiate its product with the help of providing quality product in low price for such particular market which was unable to get the attention of its competitors like Lipton, Supreme (the products of Unilever) and Tapal Tea (Local company) are the main competitors and mainly targeting the urban areas of the Pakistan only and not giving the much attention to rural areas of the Pakistan where above 60% of the Pakistani population is residing. So in order to differentiate its product company first started to provide tea with richest taste in low price that could meet the requirements of the specific audience from rural areas.

After analyzing the needs and wants of its target market Vital Tea started striving to attain the specific quality with richest taste in order to achieve the specific taste and implemented different quality systems in order to assure the supreme quality of product company made different blends of the tea to fulfill its client's requirements for leafy, grades, dust grades and small grades tea products. And the example of the adding value in product, company is in the process of getting ISO 9001 & ISO 14000. Moreover, company caters to the particular segment of the market and so must maintain exacting Standards of quality. The quality specifications are tough to attain at every stage so company acquired plants having state-of art-technology and sophisticated equipment in order to keep the quality sustainable. In the second step company started working on the project of providing tea with such packaging that is safe and healthy for consumers as well as keeps the tea fresh and usable for long time as compare to other competitor's brands. Company hired the services of engineers who have designed and produced high precision filling and fully automatic machines which will play an increasingly important role in the market as labor cost increase with this action but on the other hand it was the effective step towards progress in the national market moreover company used to give the practical demonstration as well as brochures at their places depicting the recipe of making finest cup of tea along with free sampling which was the great idea

to have the trust of audience as no any other company is doing same practice in Pakistan. Moreover, to capture the attraction & trust of consumers, Vital Tea has developed a relation with the Tariq Aziz Trust (working for the prosperity of poor people) by granting One Rupee on the sale of every tea pack of 1kg.

In third phase of making Differentiation Company focused on the price of product as this is also the main concern from customer point of view it was not much difficult to control sustain and reduce the expenditures in order to keep the price low as per the demand of audience on the other hand it is very difficult to reduce or control the price of products for international brands due to their high expenses in operations, marketing, advertising, branding, human resources, high salaries of experts in different departments and distribution channels e.g.

4.8 Chapter Conclusion:

In this chapter, we presented our empirical findings relevant to our research and theoretical framework in detail. We tried to focus on all those empirical findings which have significant value in doing the analysis of Eastern products (Pvt) Limited with regards to its branding awareness, practices and its implementation in competitive market. Now in next chapter we will present our analysis based upon our empirical finding.

5- Analysis:

5.1 Chapter Introduction:

In this chapter we will analyze the collected data from the subject organization about the current branding awareness within company and its practices in company from different aspects. We will conduct the analysis based upon the empirical findings and its comparison to previous relevant literature which is already been discussed in 2nd chapter. In order to make the analysis more effective we will link our analysis with our research questions and at last we will present the conclusion of research.

5.2 Analysis of Research Question 1:

According to Luongo, 2006 there is three core steps which company has to follow if it wants to develop unique brand which are as follows:

- ➢ Explore

- ➢ Crystallize

- ➢ Communicate

In case of our company Vital tea in its early stage just focused on providing the tea in rural areas where there was a gap and provided good quality tea with the taste as per requirement by people living in that particular areas. Company did not focus on branding their products in early stages but on quality and taste as a unique value of their product. Company did not consider the feedback mechanism as a important aspect in branding activities and did not explore that what is the feedback of their customers after using their product which is more important to make your product much better and as per the requirement of the audience so that they could be much loyal and feel value after having that particular product.

As regards to the crystallizing step company defined the product attributes as quality and taste as a unique value for its customers in order to win the trust of audience which has significant value in branding process and enabled our subject company to get much market share with good profits. In communication phase after company has defined the unique values company communicated its message of high quality tea with greater taste among the audience living in rural areas as they were demanding such product having great quality and good taste as per

their demand. In early stages company didn't have a good marketing channel so couldn't able to communicate its brand message in effective manners but in these days working efficiently on communicating brand message through the different marketing channels as well as taking into consideration the customer feedback which is necessary to make product as per demand of customers. It is also important from time-to-time to evaluate the unique value business provide to target market to ensure that it is continuing to positively impact on audience otherwise negative impact lead the audience towards loosing trust on product. Now the Vital tea has started to develop the systems which are helpful in evaluating its product quality, taste, customer response, object analysis and market share.

5.3 Analysis of Research Question 2:

There are four steps by Keller 2002 which helps companies in order to make brand strong and well known among audience like:

- ➢ Identify and Establish Brand Positioning and Values
- ➢ Planning and Implementing Marketing Programs
- ➢ Measure and Interpret Brand Performance
- ➢ Grow and Sustain Brand Equity

All of above mentioned steps are very important for company and needs to be done one after another in order to provide complete brand awareness among audience. In case of our company vital tea which has identified and established its product in specific market but did not pay much attention to making such marketing programs which are significant for winning the trust of audience and make them brand loyal but since2005 company have started doing planning and implementing such marketing actions which are providing value other than product like free sampling, lucky draws, customer feedback e.g.

Vital tea also did not consider the third step which is measure and interpret the brand performance but in order to compete in national market now company has taken a step by starting research and development in order to measure that what people perceive about its brand what should be added or removed from the product after conducting these analysis company would be able to grow in effective manners and sustain its growth efficiently and in last resultantly, company would be able to get brand equity which has much importance in brand management process.

5.4 Analysis of Research question 3:

In current scenario every business is involved in branding process and making their products as strong brands. According to Kristensen and Morsing, 2001 developing a strong brand is becoming a top priority of every organization. Product branding emphasizes brand recognition which states that to what extent is a product brand is familiar and recognized by customers and potential customers, and to what extent does a product brand make sense to customers. According to the Kent and Dominic, 2007, companies are now focusing on developing the unique features, values and association in their product which resultantly comes in a shape of strong brand All companies possess a core set of values that are used as working principles, have fundamental value to each company, and which everyone believes to be important are called as unique core values. Core values relate to the internal brand building process by linking the brand to the company's mission, vision and fundamental organizational values. Core values must be seen as durable, but also dynamic by nature and continually adaptable. These values should be developed so as to encourage a sense of challenge and adventure that is relevant both within and outside the organization. Such values also affect the brand architecture, product attributes, brand positioning and communications strategy which are the important concerns for all organization regardless large or small (Kent and Dominic, 2007), The brand took on a greater significance if their core values are unique and came to be realized as an intangible asset which is most important in today's scenario. Brand managers in company have consistently required adding value around the core of the brand, or brand essence, to create and maintain distinguishing positions in a market. To assist them, brand metrics have evolved to successively manage brand image, brand positioning and brand identity. These developments have been in response to two forces, the changing business environment, and recognition that the organization has a strategic influence in the branding process. Every brand have unique set of values that are relevant to its target market but it is the consistency of the perception of those values, as well as the nature of those values, that is an important characteristic of successful brands for which now a day's all companies are striving (Kent and Dominic, 2007).

According to Urde, 2003, Values can be seen from three different aspects like:

- ➢ Values that are related to the organization.
- ➢ Values that summarize the brand.
- ➢ Values as they are experienced by customers.

First value connects to the organization with its mission and vision. Organizational values are very significant and define the guidelines to workforce in company and having direct relationship with the processes of organization. Second value relates to the brand essence which is part of identity. Brand essence is a term for which companies are working since many years. Third value relates to the customers experience directly. Brand got value as it adds value to the customer. Added values include value proposition, functional and emotional discriminators. "Customer value" is the term use to express what the customer is prepared to exchange for a brand. Added value is also used in other contexts "added value" to explain durable competitive advantages from a strategic perspective. Adding value in a particular product is about the process of developing specific brands (Urde, 2003).

In case of our company vital tea always aimed at developing a unique brand for the national market and always emphasized on putting some unique value in product in order to win the trust of audience as well as to make a strong brand. Since Establishment Company values are to provide supreme quality with richest taste, honesty, diversity among work force, employee and customer satisfaction, open communication and teamwork support.

The main goal of the company is to provide reliable and valuable products and services .In this regard Company has acquired professionals for poly line-laminated pouch packing. To prevent damage from moisture, pets, insects and dust, products are also packed in attractive cardboard laminated boxes. The result Not only Eastern Products stand out vividly from the rest on the retail shelf, the products to reach the customer absolutely fresh.

Company mission is to produce the value added products and to build core competency in blending and packaging technology for its customers. In order to increase sales volume company focused on providing product to customers with better value as well as to penetrate in new strategic business areas in order to expand the business. Vital tea also highly concern with these values because these values represent the belief of the company and become the basis when developing brand proposition because brand proposition can be changed with the passage of time or situation but core values would never changed.

5.5 Analysis of Research Question 4:

As the competition among firms is getting high day by day and due to the intensive competition every company either big or small has to make differentiation in its products in order to compete in target

market. According to Fratto et al, 2006 it is significant for every business to be different from all other players in the market which depicts that a firm has to define limits on what it is trying to accomplish to become unique or different which is highly demanded by the business world in order to get the valuable position in high competition environment. When organizations are unable to make their products unique from their competitor's products then competition tends to high. . An industry may mature to this concept rather than initially compete on price. If an industry evolves and firms are having trouble in differentiating its products, firms may be more likely to competing price as a means of differentiation. The differentiation of the products is very important as rivalry get increased when firms are unable to differentiate their products from their competitor's products so it is very important to develop product with some unique attributes or with some differentiation. With the help of making differentiation small companies can get benefited. Involvement in activities such as frequent price cutting, frequent new product introductions, brand development of the products, adding value in product, intense advertising campaigns, and rapid competitive reactions to other firms' actions are characteristics of firms in a rival intense environment (Fratto et al, 2006).

Vital tea in this regards since establishment focused on making differentiation by targeting the particular market of rural areas where there was the less competition and that particular market was not mainly targeted by the other competitors. Company considered the quality as well as price in order to make the product different or unique from the other competitive products. In order to make the differentiation company also provide such taste which was required by the specific audience living in the rural areas as people from that area usually requires strong and richest taste of tea. Now as company is penetrating in the new market in urban cities as well so company is also striving to make the differentiation by involving such activities like seasonal advertising campaigns, branding of product, awareness about product, providing tea with supreme quality in cheaper price, free sampling, healthy and safe packaging, customer feedback mechanism.

6 Conclusion and Recommendations:

6.1 Conclusion:

In this chapter, we will present the conclusion of our study based on the theories and empirical data already presented in 2nd & 4th chapters and finally, we will provide the recommendations and suggestion for future study.

Companies either big or small in these days striving in order to make their product as a brand and involve in such kind of activities which are helpful in making the positive image of the brand, once image of the brand is positively created in the mind of customer he or she starts purchasing the particular product frequently which resultantly enable the customer brand loyal and brand loyalty enhances the profitability which is the ultimate goal of the business. Small companies usually think that it is very costly to do branding activities so mainly small companies avoid it and spend very little money on the advertising or promotion for the products. Usually small businesses focus on profits by selling quantity and don't like to indulge in branding activities as branding requires many things like, services of experts, strategic planning, finances, human resources and much more. Most of them are not well aware about the branding benefits especially in developing countries like Pakistan where there is very low rate of literacy. We studied the case of Vital tea which is in early stages just focused on targeting the audience in rural areas by selling the product with unique idea of selling good quality tea with specific taste and earned good profits without paying proper attention to the branding of their products but in order to expand in market they felt the need to do branding of their products due to the existence of well established competitors brands. So, company feels the need of branding after 14 years of its establishment when started working on national level and due to spending on branding activities Company reduced its profit from 40% to 20% but still company is spending in order to create the awareness among audience. Although this is costly process but with the help of proper strategic planning and its implementation these organization can cover the cost and get benefited equally as larger firms.

6.2 Limitations:

Here, we will describe our limitations during our present research study. While conducting a research here in Sweden, we found it very hard to gather primary data from the case study company which is operating its activities in Pakistan. The only thing, we can do, in this regards is to make telephonic conversation with the authorities or the conscientious personnel in the company. We could not use the following methods of data collection due to distance from the location as well as time limitation namely:

 ➢ Consumer survey,
 ➢ Distributor survey,
 ➢ Focus Groups with consumers,
 ➢ Market analysis,
 ➢ Survey with work force,
 ➢ Comparative analysis of tea products/ brands.

We also wanted to have more interviews with marketing, quality, and brand manager in order to have a look over the performance of the company but due to their busy schedules could not access them. This is awfully tough to make a continuous contact not merely from the vital tea company's senior managers, directors and CEO but of any company in the globe because of their busy schedules especially, when the interviewers and the interviewees are miles away. We just conducted the detailed telephonic interview of CEO, Advertising Manager (Punjab Province) and director business development who is supervising the whole branding department and business development as well. According our limited study and observation, we made our best effort to provide the quality research by valid and reliable data in order to answer our research questions. Furthermore, we also faced time constraint and due to having less span of time for our study so further studies, different market surveys and analysis are required in order to get deep understanding and analysis of problem in more efficient and effective manners.

6.3 Recommendations:

Here we would like to give some noteworthy recommendations to the company based on previous study and our analysis in the light of literature review and empirical study.

➢ First of all company should focus on the planning of the branding activities as planning is the foundation of any activity and if the foundation is strong then activity will provide maximum benefits so company should do well planning of the branding strategy.

➢ As the company is not having written branding strategy so here we would strongly recommend that Company should have well defined written instead of verbal branding strategy so that it could be wisely communicated to all levels within organization and it should be taken seriously as company's values and mission.

➢ Company should get complete guidance from the Keller brand development process by reviewing the whole process thoroughly and implement the strategies step by step in order to get the maximum utility.

➢ Company should provide better training and knowledge to their employees with regards to branding practices so that they could better perform in efficient manners.

➢ As company is spending less finances on such activities like advertising, brand awareness, marketing, brand promotion e.g. which lead a hurdle in progress in making brand recognition so company should allocate good budget especially at this time when they are striving to compete with multinational firms on national level.

➢ With regards to advertisement of its brands company is allocating major part of the budget to retailers, distributors and the whole sellers so we would recommend that apart from this company should also consider and spend good budget of advertising on customer level which leads customer trust on specific brand.

➢ In order to win the trust of audience in Competition, Company should focus on the customer satisfaction as well from all aspects relevant to customer satisfaction like, price, quality, healthy packaging, customer value other than the product, proper feed back to customer of their complaints e.g.

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