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The Impact of Brand Image on Consumer and Buying Behavior

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ABSTRACT

The concept “brand image” has drawn significant attention from academics and practitioners since it was put forward, because it played an important role in marketing activities. Although brand image was recognized as the driving force of brand asset and brand performance, few studies have elaborated on the relationship between brand image and brand equity. Based on the brand image theories, this study reviewed extant studies about the impact of brand image on consumer from perspective of customer equity. At their most basic level, brands serve as markers for the offerings of a firm. For customers, brands can simplify choice, promise a particular quality level, reduce risk, and on gender trust. The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of brand image on consumer buying behavior. It also presented the shortcomings of current research and pointed out the trends for future study.

Keywords: Brand Image, Customer Equity, Consumer Buying

1. INTRODUCTION

Brand image is the key driver of brand equity, which refers to consumer’s general perception and feeling about a brand and has an influence on consumer behavior. For marketers, whatever their companies’ marketing strate-gies are, the main purpose of their marketing activities is to influence consumers’ perception and attitude toward a brand, establish the brand image in consumers’ mind, and stimulate consumers’ actual purchasing behavior of the brand, therefore increasing sales, maximizing the market share and developing brand equity. Brand image is the key driver of brand equity, which refers to consumer’s general perception and feeling about a brand and has an influence on consumer behavior. For marketers, whatever their companies’ marketing strategies are, the main purpose of their marketing activities is to influence consumers’ perception and attitude toward a brand, establish the brand image in consumers’ mind, and stimulate consumers’ actual purchasing behavior of

the brand, therefore increasing sales, maximizing the market share and developing brand equity. Brand equity is the focus of both academics and practitioners; however, there is no paradigm among the brand equity studies by now. Most studies measure brand equity from perspective of consumer or from the company itself. On one hand, some researchers believe that consumers’ subjective perception (e.g., attitude, assessment, satisfaction, etc.) of the brand is the key to brand equity. Although the consumption decision will be influenced

by brand features and attributes, it is determined by consumers’ perception about the brand image in a deepersense. Despite the change of consumers’ life style and the way of information

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processing, brand image remains the dominant impact factor of consumption decisions. On the other hand, some researchers believe that brand equity should be evaluated in terms of market share, market value and cash flow.

2. BRAND IMAGE

Brand Image is regarded as a description of the offer of the company which includes the symbolic meaning associated customers through specific attributes of the products and Services. Not only that, the brand image may also reflect some of the strongest associations of a brand such attributes are intangible, abstract benefits and customer attitude at every. Different product categories. If a brand of product or service associated with products in diverse categories. Brand image is a perception in the mind of the customers a good impression a brand. The good impression could arise if the brand has a unique advantage, good reputation, popular, trustworthy and willing to provide the best service.

3. CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOUR

The consumer made the purchase decision is influenced by several measurements, namely

- The measurement of culture, which has the most influence and the most extensive in the behavior of consumers so that marketers need to understand the influence of culture, sub-culture, and social class of consumers.
- Social measurement, which need to be considered when designing a marketing strategy because these factors can affect consumer response.

4. BRAND IMAGE AND CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

Brand image has been studied extensively since the 20th century due to its importance in building brand equity. In the increasingly competitive world marketplace, companies need to have a deeper insight into consumer behavior and educate consumers about the brand in order to develop effective marketing strategies. In the following paragraph, we will discuss the relationship between consumers' cognition of brand image and consumer behavior.

5. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Schiffman and Kanuk (2010) [9], purchase behavior is the stage prior to purchasing decisions in the purchase decision process. In the theory of planned behavior proposed by Ajzen (1991), attitudes can be used to predict the behavior of interest. Marketers are always testing the elements of the marketing mix that may influence buying behavior, for example by testing product concepts, advertising strategy, packing or brand. Marketers should strive to measure intention to purchase by the consumer and determine the factors that influence these intentions. When consumers have a good attitude towards the delivered product or service, consumers tend to have a positive interest to behave so as to strengthen the customer relationship with the company. According to Park *et al.* (1986), the construction and maintenance of the brand image is prerequisite to the brand management [1]. Theoretically, all products and services could be demonstrated by functional, symbolic or experimental elements, through which brand image is established. Up to now, scholars haven't come to an agreement on the definition of brand image.

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6. IMPACT OF BRAND IMAGE ON CUSTOMER'S ATTITUDE TOWARD THE BRAND

Keller came up with the concept "customer-based brand equity (CBBE)" in 1993, which refers to the various reactions to the branding campaign from consumers who have knowledge of the brand in varying degrees. In other words, brand image and brand awareness are the basis and sources of brand equity. According to Keller (1993), positive brand image could be established by connecting the unique and strong brand association withconsumers' memories about the brand through marketing campaigns Following Keller (1993), Lassar *et al.* (1995) held the opinion that brand equity came from the customers' confidence in a brand. The greater the confidence they place in the brand, the more likely they are willing to pay a high price for it [18]. Specifically, this confidence stems from five important considerations: first, the brand performs its functions as designed; second, the social image is associated with purchasing or owning the brand; third, consumers' recognition and sentimental attachment with brand; fourth, the balance between the brand's value and its functionalities; fifth, consumers trust in the brand. Niemeyer *et al.* (2004) also approved the dominant impact of brand equity on customer response toward the branding campaign [19]. With the proliferation of brands in the market, consumers make their purchase decisions largely depending on the brand image rather than the product itself. Moreover, when the brand image is consistent with the consumers' self-concept, the consumers would give a preference to it [9]. According to the self-concept theory, one's self-concept is a collection of perception about himself that includes elements such as capabilities, characteristics, shortcomings, appearance and personality [20]. For marketers, examining the consistency between the brand image and consumers' self-concept is very important, because consumers might display various self-concepts in different social context. But whatever the context is, consumers would think better of the brand as long as the brand image is in line with the their self-concept [21].

According to Keller (1993), positive brand image could be established by connecting the unique and strong brand association with consumers' memories about the brand through marketing campaigns. In this regard, the brand knowledge should be built and understood before the consumers could respond positively to the branding campaign. If consumers have knowledge of a brand, the company could spend less on brand extension while achieve higher sales.

Brand Loyalty: Brand loyalty is a consumer's aware or unaware decisions that are expressed through the intention or behavior to repurchase a particular brand frequently. There are many set of definitions of brand loyalty. In general brand loyalty can be defined as the power of liking for a brand compared to other similar available option. Brand loyalty is a function of behavior as well as attitudes. It is a consumer's first choice to buy a particular brand in a product group. It occurs when consumers perceive that the brand offers the right product features, image or level of quality at the right price at the right time.

Product Quality: Product Quality encompasses the type and characteristics of a product or service that bears on its ability to satisfy stated or implied needs. In other words, product quality is defined as "fitness for use" or conformance to requirement.

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Price: Price is most important consideration for the average consumer. Consumers with high brand loyalty are willing to pay a finest price for their preferred brand, so, their purchase intention is not easily affected by price.

Promotion: Promotion is a marketing mix component, which is a kind of communication with consumers. Promotion includes the use of advertising, sales promotions, personal selling and publicity. Advertising is a non-personal presentation of information in mass media about a product, brand, company or store. It greatly affects consumer’s images, beliefs and attitudes towards products and brands, and in turn, influences their purchase behaviors.

Brand Image, Customer Satisfaction and Customer Loyalty: The relationship between brand image and customer satisfaction has been studied extensively. However, a majority of these researches were conducted in service industry, such as hotel, supermarket and bank, etc. Whether the results generated from the service industry can be applicable to other contexts However, some research results demonstrate that brand image exerts no direct influence on customer loyalty, but it can impact on customer loyalty via customer satisfaction. Future studies should further discuss the interrelationships among brand image, customer satisfaction and customer loyalty, and identify a more comprehensive indicator for consumer behavior.

7. CONCLUSIONS

Brand image has strong positive impact on consumer buying behavior as it’s an implied device that can change people’s buying behaviors positively and teenagers are becoming
more and more conscious for branded products to show off their personality symbol. This is a real picture of society that brand image playing a crucial role to change the people’s buying behavior. The aim of this thesis was to determine the impact that a brand as on the purchase decision making process of consumers as well as throwing some light on the theories surrounding a brand and consumer behavior. In conclusion, it has been found out that there is some correlation between a brand and the behavior displayed by consumers with regards to their purchase decisions. Consumers are very much enlightened about the various brands on the market and as such their mage is very crucial when it comes to making a purchase decision especially at first time. Again family, friends and reference groups do play a major role in affecting the purchase decision-making of consumers. This calls for massive improvement on the services rendered, innovation and differentiation as far as the brand (s) is concerned in the organization or company.

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