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A Study on Branding & Consumer Behaviour Studies

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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 studies about the impact of brand image on consumer from perspective of customer equity. It also presented the shortcomings of current research and pointed out the trends for future study.

Keywords: Brand Image, Customer Equity, Consumer Behavior

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 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 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 deeper sense. Despite the change of consumers' life style and the way of information 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. Also, studies take financial performance and non-financial performance as the manifestation of brand equity. Financial performance can be described as brand premium and market share; non-financial performance refers to the brand awareness, brand reputation, brand loyalty and brand association. Following the brand equity analysis in the perspective of consumer and perspective of non-financial performance, this study analyzes the relationship between brand image and brand equity by examining consumers' attitude and purchase intention.

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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.

IMPACT OF BRAND IMAGE ON CONSUMER'S BEHAVIORAL INTENTION

Looking through extant researches, the most widely used predictors of consumer's behavioral intention are customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. Customer satisfaction refers to customers' general evaluation of the overall shopping experience of some specific product or service. According to Oliver (1980), customers' performance-specific expectation and expectation disconfirmation are the key indicators of customer satisfaction Specifically, when the product performance exceeds expectation, customer satisfaction increases; when expectation exceeds the product performance, customer satisfaction decreases. Since product performance is an important component of brand image, companies could infer the potential influence of brand image on customer satisfaction by identifying the perceptual difference toward a brand between the existing customers and non-users of the brand.

Brand image has a significant impact on customer satisfaction especially across the E-banking, landline, mobile phone, bank and supermarket industries Chang. identified store infrastructure, convenience, store service and sales activities as the four components of store image, and they all impact customer satisfaction directly . Chitty *et al.* (2007) also empirically proved the dominant role of brand image in predicting customer satisfaction in the hospitality industry Moreover, the brand image and customers' self-image would enhance customer satisfaction and customers' preference for the brand Customer loyalty could be recognized as the extension of customer satisfaction. Earlier studies define customer loyalty as repeated purchasing behaviors in a narrow sense. Generally, customer loyalty stems from customers' approval of a brand, which leads to their continuously purchasing behavior of the brand and thus generates profits for the company . In the brand image literature, brand image is perceived as an important driving force of customer loyalty. Supermarket industry, favorable store image is very helpful to foster customer loyalty Even in the virtual context, the impact of brand image on customer loyalty remains significant, and Merrilees & Fry (2002) verified their relationship through surveys at e-Commerce companies.

BRAND IMAGE AND LOYALTY

Previous authors Keller (2003) and Biel (1992) stated that a positive Brand Image creates when a customer associate him/herself with a particular brand with unique association and that person could recommend that brand to another person and hold a positive attitude towards that brand. This brand Image has a direct impact on the purchase behavior of the consumer. He further stated that one can measure Brand Loyalty with the help of measuring purchase intension and recommendation. He further observed that brand equity largely focuses on two kinds of brand strength. One is brand loyalty, which is empirically captured by such measures as recommendation, preference, and purchase intention. Second one is customers' willingness to pay a price premium for a specific brand on the other hand claimed that brand loyalty has the ability to effect both positively and negatively on the quality of a brand.

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THE IMPACT OF BRAND IMAGE AND ADVERTISEMENT ON CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOR

According to Driessen, (2005) Advertisement is a tool, through which companies can create and adapt the image of themselves and their brands. He further noted that through advertisement, companies mostly target the teenagers and young adults because they accept traditional direct advertisement more easily than mature adults and they react on the companies' advertisement more positively and quickly. They also found that through public relations strategy of advertisement, companies create the image. Saeed, et al. (2013) studied the impact of brand image on brand loyalty. They researchers employed quantitative study by taking telecommunication sector with the help of 150 youngsters. They selected survey methodology and for getting the data, they used questionnaire as an instrument. They employed Pearson Correlation and Regression analysis for the data analysis. Results showa positive and significant relation exists between Brand Image and Brand loyalty.

The associations between the brand image, advertisement and purchase behavior. They selected 185 family members for their research study from different areas of Ayyampettai, Thanjavur. They found a relationship between advertisements of multinational products and consumer purchasing behavior. They found a positive relationship between the brand image and purchase intensions.
Investigated the impact of customer satisfaction and brand image on brand loyalty. The data acquired from the consumers of Ayyampettai, Thanjavur and questionnaire survey was carried out to get data from randomly selected universities of the Trichy for instance; Bharathidasan University, Indus Industries and local society consumers. They chose a sample of about 200 respondents. Results showed that the customer satisfaction and brand image both have a significant positive impact on the brand loyalty. Through convenience sampling method, sample of 100car users were selected. They found that Brand Image and Loyalty was highly insignificant with age group, level of education, point of purchase and repeat purchase duration. While brand image and loyalty was highly significant with brand choice of Toyota, level of satisfaction of the use of product and the repeat purchase frequency of the product.

Brand Image plays a critical job to enhance any business performance because brand image is an indirect instrument which can optimistically change people's purchasing behavior. They employed questionnaire survey in order to gather the data by utilizing non-probability convenient sampling technique. Sample size was 200 in which 175 responses were collected. Results after analyzing the data showed that Brand Image has strong positive influence and significant relationship with consumer buying behavior. As stated by Khan et al. (2012) that brand related factors (Brand knowledge, brand relationship, behavioral intention, brand advertisement and past experience about the brand) on the purchase intention of the customers. They further observed that behavioral intention, past experience and purchase intention is high in female then male customer. But male customers have stronger brand relationship then female customers.

2. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

But the next question rises, what is the significance of this study? So the answer of this question is that without knowing the importance of a brand how we can think that it is a part of consumer's personality. Although before this study many studies already done about brand and consumer relationship but still there are some point which were not covered by previous studies. Therefore this study is conducted. This research is conducting to provide the complete information about Brand Image and its impact on consumer buying decisions. In present era consumers rely much on

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brands and try to develop their personality according to the brands. Hence this study provides the information whether different classes have different brands or same brands for their usage

THE IMPORTANT ROLES OF BRAND

Brand is a name which is present in every consumer’s mind and it is categorized by a symbol or a name which can provide the importance and differentiate the goods and services. Hence brand is a combination of many things which are related to packaging, advertisement, products, promotion and its overall presentation. From the consumers’ point of view, brand is a name of reliability and quality of products (Roman et al., 2005). Consumers would like to buy and use branded products to highlight their personality in different situations. Successful branding can make consumers aware about the brand and can increases the chances of profitability for an organization and this is possible by buying the company’s products and services.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF SUCCESSFUL BRANDS

A brand can survive for long term if it maintains in a good manner that can satisfy consumers’ needs continuously. Successful brands can be totally different in nature but they share some common things, for examples consistent quality and well-priced products (Murphy, 1998).Quality can be further divided into service quality & product quality. Service quality is judged by its Empathy, Responsiveness, competence, reliability & Tangibility. While product quality is perceived by its seven dimensions; Features, Performance, Durability, Reliability, Conformance with specification and Serviceability (Aaker 1991).When consumer find all the above mentioned things in a brand then they show reliability with that brand. There are four elements for building a successful brand, namely tangible product, augmented brand, basic brand and potential brand as mentioned by Levitt (1983).

BRAND IMAGE

Since 1950s, “Brand Image” becomes a significant concept for customer’s behavior research. The brand image is a glass reflection of the brand personality. “brand image is stated as a set of associations, which are organized in some meaningful way”. Brand image is developed from consumer interpretation, whether emotional or logical. "a successful brand image allows consumers to recognize the needs that the brand satisfies and to distinguish the brand from its competitors, and increases the probability that consumers will purchase the brand" (p. 252). A company’s product or services can gain a better position in the market, sustainable competitive advantage, and increase market share. Hence several empirical findings have confirmed that a favorable image will lead to brand equity. Purchase behavior and brand performance. Reynolds noted that "an image is the psychological concept established by the consumer on the basis of a few particular impressions among the total impressions; it comes into being through an innovative process in which these selected impressions are expanded, exaggerated, and systematic". Defined image as "the set of impressions, beliefs and ideas that a person holds about an object" . Considered brand image as "a set of perceptions related with brand associations in consumer's memory". Proposed a similar definition to Keller; brand image is referred to as "a set of associations which are generally systematized in some meaningful way". Defined brand image as "a cluster of associations and attributes that consumers associate to the brand name". Past purchasing experiences and familiarity with the brand can generate consumer perception and can enhance their buying decision.

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SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE STUDY

Enrich the Connotation of Brand Image In the last decade, emotional branding has become a very influential manner of brand management. As suggested by Roberts (2004), brand emotion is the cultural implication embodied in a brand, and emotional branding is a highly effective way to cause customer reaction, sentiments and moods, ultimately forming connection and loyalty with the brand . Even the traditional brand management pattern based on customer perception now has incorporated emotional branding into it. In the unprecedentedly competitive marketplace, brand emotion is the bond between the brand and the customer, and the key to expanding the market. Future studies could explore the relationship between brand image and consumer behavior from a brand new perspective brand emotion.

3. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Hence the above discussions and results of analysis show that there is difference between the perceptions of both cities customers about branded clothes. Almost same questionnaires are filled from both cities and their results are also same. Result shows that males are more brand conscious rather than females. Hence Consumer Perception has more influence on Consumer Buying Behavior instead of Brand Image and Consumer Awareness. Researchers can do more study with more variables to know the influence of variables. Similarly marketers can work to build strong perception of consumers about their brands by using multiple ways i.e. advertisement, quality, availability etc.

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