



A Review of brand image and its impact on buying behaviour

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Abstract

Brand image play a crucial role to boost up any business performance as brand image is an implied tool which can positively change people's buying behaviours. Brands are one of the most valuable intangible assets that firms have. Brands serve several valuable functions. 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 engender trust. The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of brand image on consumer buying behaviour.

Keywords: Brand Image, Consumer Buying Behaviour

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 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 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, extant 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.

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.

Consumer Buying Behaviour

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

1. The measurement of culture, which has the most influence and the most extensive in the behaviour of consumers so that marketers need to understand the influence of culture, sub-culture, and social class of consumers.
2. Social measurement, which need to be considered when designing a marketing strategy because these factors can affect consumer response.
3. Personal measurements, which consists of the age and stage of life cycle, occupation, economic situation, lifestyle, personality, and self-concept affects the consumer on what is purchased.
4. Psychological measurement, include motivation, perception, learning and beliefs and attitudes also influence the selection of consumer purchases.

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.

Bondesson (2012) examined the associations between brand image, brand loyalty and price premium. The results showed that brand loyalty and price premium are two separate customer responses determined by unlike brand image elements. They further noted through survey research that connections to a brand's company reputation, service

relationship ability and product solution mainly build brand loyalty, while price premium is built exclusively by relationships to the brand's community.

Muhammad Mudasar Ghafoor *et al.* (2012) [8] investigated the impact of customer satisfaction and brand image on brand loyalty. The data acquired from the consumers of Gujranwala, Pakistan and questionnaire survey was carried out to get data from randomly selected universities of the Punjab for instance; Gift 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.

Shwu-Ing Wu & Wen-Hsuan Wang, (2014), "Impact of CSR Perception on Brand Image, Brand Attitude and Buying Willingness: A Study of a Global Café" The research found that a business undertaking a successful policy of CSR could lead consumers to purchase its products. Ultimately the business will have an opportunity to fulfil its goal of sustainability. Brand image is a key factor for enhancing consumers' attitudes towards a brand. Consumer's behaviours can be affected by their brand attitude, an attitude that leads to brand satisfaction, loyalty, and repurchasing.

Stahl, Florian, Heitmann, Mark, Lehmann, Donald. R., Neslin, Scott A. (2014) "The Impact of Brand Equity on Customer Acquisition, Retention, and Profit Margin" states that Brand equity has a predictable and meaningful impact on customer acquisition, retention, and profitability. The relationship stands even after controlling for a broad array of marketing activities, which impact customer lifetime value (CLV) both directly and indirectly through brand equity. The components of brand equity exert different effects on acquisition, retention, and profit, suggesting that brand equity indeed is a multidimensional construct.

Durrani Basee Ali, Godil, Danish Iqbal, Bai, Mirza Uzair, Sajid, San, (2015) "Impact Of Brand Image On Buying Behaviour Among Teenagers" finds that teenagers buying behaviour is correlated and influenced by advertisement, brand loyalty and brand image. There is a practical relation between brand image and teenager consumer's buying behaviour. Marketers can come up with various marketing strategies in order to target teenagers in more precise manner.

Branding Functions

1. The brand creates value for both the consumer and the firm.
2. The brand provides value to the firm by generating value for the consumers.
3. Consumers brand associations are a key element in brand equity formation and management.

Brand Loyalty

Brand loyalty is a consumer's aware or unaware decisions that are expressed through the intention or behaviour 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 behaviour 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. Brand loyalty has necessary conditions which are:-

The biased, behavioural response, expressed over time, by the decision-making units, with respect to one or more alternative brand out of a set of such brands, and a function of psychological process. Customer are loyal toward the brand because of high switching barriers related to technical, economical or psychological factors which make it costly or difficult for the customer to change and the other reasons is that the customer may be loyal because they are satisfied with the brand that why they want to continue the relation with the brand. Brand attributes are viewed as important factors in a consumer's decision-making.

Brand Name: Well-known brand names can broadcast product benefits and lead to higher recall of advertised benefits than non-famous brand names. Consumers may prefer to reliance major famous brand names. Brand personality provides links to the brand's emotional and self-expressive benefits for differentiation.

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.

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 behaviours.

Role of Brand Ambassadors

With the passage of time when the liberalization took place in the 1990s, we saw a spate of companies flowing into the country with a wide range of products for the consumer. These companies didn't want their products to fail in the market and so they had very attractive and enticing ad campaigns. But the need for more profits and market share made them spend more and more on their advertisements. There were virtual characters for some brands (Fido for 7Up), but for some they had to rope in household names to connect with the consumer and that made the companies reach out their arms to Bollywood for influential actors and actresses (Salman Khan for Pepsi) and so on. Depending on the ad campaigns that were created there were couples of ambassadors who worked wonders for a brand but couldn't revive their magic when it came to other brands.

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 with

Table 1: Brand Image Concept in the Brand Literature

Perspective	Definition of Brand Image
Blanket Definitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consumer’s general perception of a brand • Consumer’s perception of a product’s total attributes • Consumer’s general impression of the product or service
Meaning and messages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The symbolic meaning embedded in the product and service • Consumer’s perception and recognition of a product symbolic attribute • The symbolic meaning of purchasing the product and service
Personification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brand image reflects consumer’s characteristics and they purchase the brand to express themselves • The personification of a product, which can be manifested as “adult” and “children” • Image of the brand resembles human personality
Cognitive or Psychological elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brand image is consisted of consumer’s opinion, attitude and emotion towards a brand, which reflects the cognitive or psychological elements of the brand • Consumer’s overall impression about a brand or product, which includes recognition, feeling and attitude toward it • Consumer’s general perception and opinion of a brand total attributes • Consumer’s general perception about the brand features association

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.

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. 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. Netemeyer *et al.* (2004) also approved the do-dominant impact of brand equity on customer response toward the branding campaign.

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. 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. 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.

Conclusion

Brand image has strong positive impact on consumer buying behaviour as it’s an implied device that can change people’s buying behaviours 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 behaviour. It is suggested that companies that are targeting teenagers should focus more on developing their brand image because it was found that most of the teens were influenced by it.

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