

## **Brand & Consumer Perception**

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### **I. INTRODUCTION:**

Brand is a distinctive symbol or name created with the intention to identify and recognize the goods or services of one seller or a particular group of sellers. Another purpose is to differentiate such goods or services from its competitors.

Brand is essentially the sum of all experiences related to the product, service, and companies that make and deliver the product. Brand perceptions are shaped by

- functional experiences (i.e. speed, quality, reliability, ease of use)
- emotional experiences (i.e. make me feel better, improve my performance, make my life/job more gratifying or easier)

the customer associates with the product and company.

In many cases the competing products and services have very similar feature sets and price points that are available through comparable channels. Brand can often be the key discriminating factor in a customer's decision to select one product over another.

Brand experiences and perceptions are developed over time through a variety of sources, including:

- Previous experience with the brand
- Interactions with sales, customer service, and other employees
- Recommendations from friends and colleagues
- Reviews by reputable sources
- Advertising

As such a brand signals to its customers the specific source of product and attempts to protect both the producer and customer from competitors who ultimately endeavor to provide products that seems to be identical. The most valuable asset for a firm in increasing market productivity is the general awareness created about the brands in the minds of consumers from the investment by firm in previous programs of marketing.

### **II. OBJECTIVE:**

Branded ingredients provide a cue to product quality leading to improvement on a number of measures of consumers, product evaluations and acceptance.

The objective of this study is to gain an understanding about the effect of branding on the consumers. Another objective is to analyse how past brand related experiences and the present image of the brand affect the consumer's decision.

A product's physical appearance can often bring out affective reactions spontaneously as soon as consumers come across the product and consumers could use these reactions as a basis for both evaluations of the product and decisions to acquire it. However, a product's brand name could also produce affective reactions. This could occur for several reasons. For example, the brand may have high or low prestige value. Alternatively, consumers may have had positive or negative experiences with a brand in the past, and the affect that these experiences elicited may have become associated with the brand.

### **III. KEY FINDINGS:**

Gummerus, Korkman and Rindell (2011), "The role of brand images in consumer practices: uncovering embedded brand strength."

The research paper seeks to analyze the role of brand images in consumer practices for uncovering brand strength. It identifies and systematically categorizes consumer practices and proposes that consumers develop novel and personal practices related to brands.

The paper proposes that brand strength may be uncovered with the help of practices, and the role, images play in them. A practice relates to the unconscious dimension of consumer decision-making. The paper studies consumers' brand images based on two novel concepts, image heritage and image-in-use which are proposed to be embedded in practices. **Image heritage** embodies the consumer's past brand related experiences about a brand. **Image-in-use** stands for the consumer's current image construction process influenced by image heritage.

Brand strength is explored by using qualitative data on international retailing brand "IKEA", and a Finnish national retailing brand in Finland "Anttila".

Based on the data, the practice and image-in-use interlinks were found at two different levels of significance. In the case of Anttila, there is a link between the brand's images and the practices of buying economically. In the case of IKEA, the inter-link extends from the practice of buying and home decoration to a socio-cultural level, since some of the practices relate to a sense of being responsible and constructing a family.

Thus it was found that two different factors determine brand strength when images are explored as embedded in practices. The significance of the practice in which the images are embedded is of relevance and the brand strength may also be contributed to by the complexity of the myriads of interlinks between images and the practice. Practices reveal consumers' ways of "doing things" with brands, which can be interpreted as reflections of brand strength.

Srivastava (2010), "Understanding Brand Identity Confusion"

The research aims to unveil the consumer perception about Cinthol and to understand the importance of brand identity (Brand identity is the unique set of brand associations that the brand strategist aspires to create or maintain) of a product and factors influencing it. It also aims to gain an insight into the influence of soap grades if any on the buying behavior and brand identity of the soap, the effect of sales promotions and the pricing issues and the overall brand identity of the soap Cinthol.

The research was conducted by interviewing 1000 respondents. Most of the respondents identified Cinthol as a family soap closely followed by male soap, though the difference between the two was not significant. Nevertheless, the research claims that most of them regard it as soap for the entire family. The respondents identified attributes like freshness, good smell and cleanliness with Cinthol. It is mainly bought due to its good quality rather than extra promotional offers and advertisements. It was found that the brand enjoyed significant brand loyalty wherein the users are willing to pay even a rupee or two extra for it, after knowing that it is a grade I soap. Users were willing to buy Cinthol even if it stops promotional campaigns.

It suggests that brand identity and brand image study should help the brand to assess the impact of change in brand personality. Frequent changes may affect the brand image to identity crisis.

#### **IV. CONCLUSION:**

Based on the review of literature it can be concluded that:

- The frequent changes in the brand personality may lead to identity crisis for the brand as this creates confusion in the minds of the customers.
- If the consumer has inherent like for the product and is brand loyal then he/she may purchase it even if the company stops the promotional campaigns. The consumers buy a particular brand because they are satisfied with its quality and are even ready to pay a rupee or two extra to purchase it.
- The brand images do effect the consumer's decision to buy a particular product; however, these decisions are also influenced by a number of other factors like economical buying, socio-cultural level etc.
- Customers associations with a brand are the result of what they have felt learnt, seen and heard about the brand. This knowledge impacts the attitudinal and behavioral brand response of customers and vice versa. Therefore brands mean different things to different consumers.
- Brand trust is positively related to customer commitment and overall satisfaction especially in the cases of high involvement of the customers.

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