

6

## Influence of Branding on Consumer Buying Decisions

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### Abstract

*Customers all over the world now prefer branded products. This study is aimed at analyzing the effect of brand on consumer buying behavior. Along with finding the effect of brand on consumer buying behavior the purpose of the study is to have an in depth knowledge of what actually is branding and consumer behavior. To study the relationship between brand and consumer behavior the following methodology is opted: Consumer Survey on the effect of brands on their buying behavior through questionnaire. The key results of the study are: The degree brand of consciousness goes on decreasing in higher age groups; price & brand were the major attributes that customers gave most importance and 80% people believe that Brands in fashion industry have become a status symbol. The research paper is about the impact of branding on consumer behavior. Brand knowledge is a very important factor. As the consumer is more aware of the brand and he has all the knowledge about its price, quality etc., the more he will be attracted towards that brand. The loyalty level increases with the age. Family is the most influential reference group. The consumers, who are more social, are affected by their friends like on Facebook. The consumers who are more status conscious are more status conspicuous than those who are not status conscious. The next part is of methodology and analysis. According to the research, all the factors are statistically significant but just gender is the only variable which is not statistically significant and its value is different from the 0. In the reliability table, it is calculated that the research validity and reliability is 89.6% which is great. In the end, it is concluded that the branding impacts the consumer behavior in relation to the different dependent and independent variables.*

**Keywords:** Branding, Consumer, Consumer buying behavior

### Introduction

Branding is enormously important for any business. For instant recognition, it (brand) can change the consumer's decision firmly in favor of a product. Branding also plays an important part by aligning itself with the buyers' self-concept. Every individual has a certain image about himself or herself in their mind.

When they purchase something, they would like those items to conform to their self-concept. For instance a teenager has a certain sense of style developed through personal preferences and external influences. Now the teenager would seek to buy a brand that he thinks has the same personality as him. Brands need to first understand their target segment and then try to develop a personality that is similar to the self-concept shared by their target consumers.

### **Brands Create Buyer Aspirations**

Brands have an aspirational element about them. Prestigious and established brands also tend to have this reflected in their price. Superlative branding makes products an object of desire in unique ways. Our desire to own an expensive iPhone stays put, even though one could argue that plenty of phone perhaps could help us at much lower costs. Consumers attach a social token to products and services. A Porsche makes people view you in a different light. It also lets the brand charge you a higher premium.

### **Brand Alter Buyer Intentions**

A strong brand can sway consumer behavior favorably. For instance, there are two products with similar features and performance. One is a own brand and the other is not. Which one would you choose? Brands come with back stories associated with them. Brands have follower-ship and build trust over a time. You know about them, their founders, their history and often someone in your friend circle has used the products too. When you see their logo you instantly recognize the brand and remember other products of that brand that you used before (it's the Halo-effect!). Just like in the previous example we know all about Steve Jobs and instantly recognize the half eaten Apple in the logo which adds to the aura of the brand. There is an element of trust between you and the brand. The non-branded product on the other-hand does not enjoy this luxury.

### **Brand Association**

Brand Associations is everything associated in your mind regarding particular brand (Aaker1991). Brand associations provides differentiating in evoked set of products, hence provide competitive advantage. Brand association involves product features and customer benefits to become a consumer want and reason to buy and consume the brand. Brand associations are firstly discussed by Anderson. According to Keller, brand association is classified into three major categories benefits, attributes, and attitudes. Brand equity and brand association are strongly interconnected with each other. Brand association can be used as information gathering tool (Van Osselaer and Janiszewski 2001).

Highly effective brand associations act as leverage to boost the brand equity (James 2005). Yoo, Donthu et al. (2000) and Atilgan, Aksoy et al. (2005) discussed that brand loyalty is raised by effective and strong brand association. Brand associations contains all brand-related feelings, thoughts, perceptions, experiences, images, attitudes, beliefs Keller, Parameswaran et al. (2011) and is any single thing present in memory against the brand. Brand association is of two types of product association and organization association (Keller and Lehmann 2006). Functional and non-functional attributes are the product attributes.

### **Brand Image**

Consumers consider some attributes of the product before making decision. Keller (1993) stated that the brand image is the whole the reflection and understanding about the product that he has in his mind. Brand is as an image that public remembered & which makes a positive brand image and easily recalled by the people (Aaker 1997).

As make people to think about everything from business side, brand image was created as well defined brand image benefits the company in the long term (Morgan and Hunt 1994). Brand image is also referred to as the customer perception through more emotions towards selected brand (Assael 2005, Malhotra 2008).

Brand image is also stated as an explanation of company's offer that includes the symbolic meaning attached to customers through specific benefits and features of the products or services. Brand image is an understanding in customer's mind with fair history (Hawkins, Best et al. 2010). The fair & good impression can only be raised by brand's unique advantage, good repute, popularity, trust and willingness to provide the best service (Kotler and Keller 2006; Keller).

### **Brand Loyalty**

According to Aaker (1991), in brand equity consumer only makes purchase to same brand regardless of the demonstrated benefits (including quality, price, and ease of use). Customer loyalty means a brand has strong position in the market and the chances of customers to switch in another brand become low and customers are willing to purchase the same brand, they want to invest time and money in that brand. But Keller (2003) highlights the fact customers purchase the same brand continuously, is not brand loyalty, they just do it because of their common habits, that don't change or, they are being attracted by sales pitch or any other promotional tool.

Brand Loyalty Pyramid introduced. This brand loyalty pyramid represents major five brand loyalty stages. The basic first stage defines customers aren't questioning about brand loyalty. Switchers purchase the brand that is in sale whether to look at brand name, suggested that best marketing strategy that increase brand awareness.

The Habitual buyers are following:-

- Customers who purchase the specific brand habitually and do not want a need to change the specific brand
- Highest level of the customers is satisfied and pleased buyers with switching cost in this pyramid
- Such customers are highly satisfied but only switched to another brand due to more distance cost, additional cost and time wastage

Customers prefer the brands which satisfy his need and wants. The most of the loyal customers are called the committed buyers. The brand plays a vital role in their lives, and they don't raise any question about switching brand. A committed buyer purchases the brand because of close relationship between the brand and their personal values. Hence best marketing strategy to retain these customers segment is that suggested by him is loyalty program. This could efficiently be done by introducing loyalty points programs, loyalty cards program, and etc.

Every company desires to have loyal customer base and retain them. Brand loyalty is thought as the most important and vital asset for the company. Brand loyalty can help company in reducing marketing cost, as loyal customer tends to repeat purchase of same brand and it cost less to the company than collecting the new customers to purchase the same brand.

### **Advertisement**

Advertisements are a powerful tool for attracting people's attention and change their perception positively towards product. There is presence of moderate relationship between consumer purchase intention and environmental factors. The preference to purchase the product is attached with consumer emotion (Niazi, Siddiqui et al.). People also change their brands to check other brands. Advertisement also changes the purchase intentions (Rasool, Rafique et al. 2012).

Advertisement is marketing promotional strategies to attract the people towards specific product or service (Zain-Ul-Abideen). According to Driessen (2005) companies can create brand image and

recognition through advertisement. He also explained that by advertisement, companies mostly try to target teenagers and youth adult as they are attracted towards traditional advertisement direct more easily than adults those who are mature also they shows positive reaction and quick reaction to the company's advertisement.

Older person has more purchasing experience than younger one. As they have much knowledge about the market by their experience and consider diversify options. On the other hand, younger one has less experience and prefers brands and price premium. Schiffman and Kanuk (2000) stated, consumer behaviour is the decision making process on the basis of informational and financial resources. Gabbott and Hogg (1998) and Blackett (1993) provide a holistic view on consumer behaviour.

### **Consumer Behaviour**

In consumer behaviour consumer shows the attitude towards the product experience, ideas and services. Nation's economy is affected by the consumer behaviour (Engel, Miniard et al. 2006). To meet customer need marketing strategies are made (Engel, Miniard et al. 2006). Blackwell, Miniard et al. (2001) define that consumer behaviour is a combination of buying and using services or products. Therefore, seven steps for consumer buying decision are "need recognition, search for information, pre-purchase, evaluation, purchase, consumption, postconsumption evaluation and divestment (Engel, Miniard et al. 2006)".

In defining consumer behaviour, one may refer to consumer behaviour is accessed in planning, purchasing and using brands. Solomon and Behavior (1994) again explains further by defining it as consumer behaviour is the set of process involved when customers select, buy, and use products services and ideas to satisfy their requirements. Teng, Laroche et al. (2007) stated that purchase intention of the particular brand needs information of all alternative brands. Customer's cess the brand, features, prices, performance, quality, user convenience and friendliness before purchase (Khan, Ghauri et al. 2012)

### **Conclusion**

Almost every company has a brand promise that tells consumers what they can expect from their interactions with that company. This study found the relationship between the branding and consumer buying behaviour. Though, advertisements create the brand image and increase the preference and

suggestion towards purchase during purchase decision. Same the impact of the brand image, brand loyalty and brand association has the significant impact on consumer buying behaviour.

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