

What hit the Customer Mind the Most; Corporate Brands or Product Brands in Emerging Markets: A case Study on Pakistan market?

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DOI: 10.6007/IJARBSS/v4-i6/944 URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v4-i6/944>

Abstract

Purpose:

The aim of this research paper is to investigate do brands really matter and particularly the brands like corporate brands and product brands. The study is conducted on Customers of Pakistan market. This study investigated which brand (corporate or product brand) matters more for the customers and on what differentiating grounds.

Value

The research can play a significant role for those companies which are doing business in Pakistan either through corporate branding or product branding to think as which factors do appeal to customers considerably more while selecting their brand of choice. Therefore, those companies which are working around those factors will definitely stand out of the stiff competition prevailing at this point of time.

Methodology

Questionnaires have been filled out through respondents who are using different sort of daily use brands and luxurious brands of today. The sample taken was 100 in number. The statistical procedure followed frequencies, cross tabs, etc. The technique of Cronbach's Alpha also used to know the reliability of the questions asked.

Findings/Conclusion

Customers in Pakistan market have been asked through questionnaire methodology so as to know what appeals the customer most in selecting their desired brands and it is analyzed too as largely customers in Pakistan are whether inclined to corporate brands or product brands. One could easily figure it out as either customer emphasizes corporate brands or product brands. Suggestions have also been highlighted which can prove to be extremely important for companies to understand which thing to focus much while enhancing their business in Pakistan in terms of sales, customers' vast network and many more.

Future implication

The work could help the researchers to know about those factors which are quite important in playing role for organizations in services field. However, the factors would be somewhat different out there; even then the work for this research would definitely help them out to see through different situations.

Keywords: Brands, Corporate brands, Product brands, Trust, Culture, etc.

Introduction

The research question that is to be investigated entails as what actually hit the customer mind and his behavior the most whether corporate brands like Apple, Nike, BMW, IBM, Unilever products or product brands like Dalda food products, Gillette razors, etc.

For this reason, different authors' perspectives have been notified about both types of branding concepts i.e. corporate branding and product branding particularly in western part of world, arguing that corporate branding is a concept of branding that is based on far different and extensive grounds (Fetsherin, Usunier, 2010) and the said branding technique entails enormous range of concepts like company repute, its image, shapes of the brands, streamlined communication methods, augmented relations channelized towards customers (Balmer, Gray, 2003). Furthermore, it has been argued that the core concept of corporate branding stems from product branding (Appel-Meulenbroek, Havermans & Janssen, 2010). Product brands are traditional brands which keep their separate identity that seldom happens in corporate brands which are recognized by the company name to which they belong. Both branding concepts have their own advantage and disadvantage respectively. However, authors comes up with the facts that in western part of the world people are considerably inclined towards the purchase of corporate brands because of the trust they have upon them, the culture of the companies means a lot to them reflecting in those brands and many more. But at the same time, it is worth-knowing as if this situation also prevails in emerging markets particularly Pakistan market.

For this to know, after analyzing the research gap through reviewing the literature published before, we initiated this research keep in mind the segregation between corporate brands and product brands and the factors which make them strong enough to be bought by customers. Questionnaire method has been used and 100 customers are approached so that questionnaire forms could be filled out. Frequency tests has been applied backed with cross tabulation on different variable which gives glimpse of both corporate and product brands characteristics. The finding came quite interesting as majority of respondents went into the favor of using product brands while at the same time there are number of customer who showed their interest towards using corporate brands. These results have been highlighted through asking questions in different angles which turn out to be quite important to help us understand as what actually customer focuses while purchasing.

It has also been investigated through the research that whether corporate brands or product brands are socially responsible in the environment of Pakistan. Suffice to say that in the current arena people's preference does not limit them to think solely on features, utility of products but these preferences have now been shaped in the manner in which customer thinks out of the box and expects its brands to be socially mobilized.

Having said that now we may proceed forward and let the audience know different perspective of authors at different point about product branding/brands its significance and corporate branding/brands and why they are used along with different factors that revolve around both branding techniques.

Literature Review

Brand is a core thought about the product which is perceived by the customer (Ries, 1998). Branding is exclusively of immense importance as customers select numerous brands as they select their bosom friends (Vrontis, 2005). Some brands fail to spread out their presence in the market however some of them drive the customer loyalty while knowing the customers preferences. (Loanna, Vrontis, 2006). A well established brand keeps a lot of brand equity. Brand equity gives the glimpse of the market share of the brand (Fill, 2002). The techniques of branding do not confine the organizations to merely put names on different products rather this becomes the repercussion of the strategy used of methods like segmenting markets and of making differentiations to products. (Kapferer, 1992).

Companies are utilizing different corporate and product brands for the sake of competition across the globe. Product branding is one type of strategy to build distinguished identities for dissimilar brands (Henry, David, 2006). Corporate branding is also a type of strategy which transcribes that brand and the company are recognized in the same way. (de chernatony, 1997). Many of the corporate brands are into the market today as Apple, Nike, IBM, Sony, Nestle, Pepsi, etc. Company that wish to enter into emerging markets must streamline themselves to market prevailing situation for being successful out there (Dawar & Chattopadhyay, 2002). Companies are drifting away from exploiting product brands and are more concentrating over corporate brands. (Ward & Lee, 2000). Practitioner and academicians have found the corporate branding to be pursued the most today (Aaker, 1996, Balmer, 1995).

Emerging markets being fragmented are more complicated as product and services brands are copied very quickly therefore companies find it hard to sustain brand differentiation in the minds of customers. In this regard, positioning strategy is encircled with company's identity in contradiction of focusing on few product brands. (Henry, David, 2006). Company's identity, needless to say as being valuable asset for that company, entails the organization's values, culture, etc. and that's how give an opportunity to that firm to be ahead of competition (Balmer 1998). For that reason organization's image and repute is to be made integral element of strategies to stand out of the competition. (Hatch & Schultz, 2001). Moreover, corporate identity demands from its firm as not merely execute the conventional marketing methodology of four P's rather to include new concepts like philosophy, personality, people, performance, perception and positioning (Balmer 1998).

Corporate brand is very much different to a product brand in terms of its tactical importance which encompasses the organization's commitment, culture and values (Balmer 1995). Customer of today extracts meanings of a product brand by viewing its promotions, availability, etc. On the contrary, the customer assigns his/her meaning to corporate brand as he finally meets the company's employees himself with his physical outreach and as he is influenced by

the company's promotions (Henry, David, 2006). However, one thing is to be of great notice that invisibility and intricacy becomes an innermost property of a corporate brand (Ind, 1997). Even in service providing companies that own corporate brands are concerned with positioning strategies that in turn truly based upon the role of employees who are actually generating and discharging duties to the customers (Samli & Frohlich, 1992).

From the view point of corporations, research shows that corporate brands can play a pivotal role in creation of satisfaction for the customers and even the significance is growing more as to how the customers are thinking and reacting towards corporate brands nowadays (Tatiana, 2013). However, it is to be understood that corporate brands are established in line of product brands but that forces us to go into depth of marketing concepts that are concerned with associating organization's attributes to a corporate brand. (King, 1991).

In corporate branding, customer's inclinations are delivered to company in way as corporate brand stance is delivered to customers through company's self- built corporate brands (Tatiana, 2013). For example, General Motor usually channelized its products on the basis of quality and when customer wants to purchase its newly launched product he would adjoin this product with the range of quality product models offered earlier by General Motor. (Ming-Huei et al., 2004). There are certain levels that do lie between a customer acknowledged benefits and a brand. First level could be of utilitarian associations in nature. Next, comes to the point of symbolic association which transcribes the attachment that lies between the customer and the brand in social manner (Kapferer, 1997). Lastly, a level comes which is concerned with the emotional attachment of customer towards the brand. In the similar manner, corporate brands meet the customers' expectations by exploiting all the ways on an ever going process. (Round & Roper, 2012). Likewise, it has been estimated that personality of corporation affects the brand loyalty through satisfaction of the customers (Davies, Chun, 2002).

The power of brand also attracts everyone to it. For example, in a Business week listing of high value brands, Coke possesses high value by obtaining business of seventy billion dollars (Mark 2006). However, studies shows that there is no single line of action which makes a brand more stronger, there are certainly some alternate choices kept in mind while designing the strategy (Mark, 2006). For making the brand to perform successfully, managers needs to continuously focus the responses of the customers and they are to be highlighted as co-creator of the brand (Mcenally, de charnatony, 1999). Brands being strong are more powerful in nature do influence the customers as compare to the ability of customers being attracted to the competitors of strong brands (Mark, 2006). It is found that people of Japan seldom go for unfamiliar product brands rather they feel good while purchasing those brands which are equally backed up with corporate branding (Tanaka, Iwamura, 1996 and IKeo 1997, Aoki, 1997)

Neuro-marketing studies exhibit that Consumers reacts in better way when he has adequate knowledge of the brand for instance, when consumer is taking Coke or Pepsi brand as compare to the usage of a particular brand which consumer is ignorant of (Mcclure et all, 2004). Again, the strength of the brand lies upon the fact as to how much that brand is culturally and socially active and this is the thing which sets it apart from others. Even this is to be observed that

promotional activities and commercializing are not the sole things which do impact the consumer mind. These are the main challenges from customer perspectives kept in mind by the managers. (Mark, 2006). Corporate marketing is a venture, therefore, ought to own it (John, Stephen, 2006). Strong brands surely provides managers with opportunities in exclusive prevailing situation as when the customer is quite uncertain in choosing a product and even when the customer being unfamiliar of the product class wants to make his very first purchase; strong brands help them out (Mark, 2006).

Strong corporate brands are thought of quite unique as they entail the corporation values which are based upon creator’s philosophy for being socially responsible to people not merely by launching few specific programs that is to say giving away a chunk of their profitable earning as charity. Rather they want the organization to remain continuously responsible for the society which in some way affects their customers by changing their way of consumption (Mark, 2006). However, sometimes consumers face troubles by corporate brands as they think that launched promotional campaigns misguide them, being socially responsible, for the reason to increase their sale account (Mark, 2006)

Many companies understand the significance of their names and with that they are struggling to make a strong bond among corporate and product brands (Uheling 2000). Even in some cases independent product brands also depends on corporate brands (Nizar, Norizan & Heung, 2006).

After analyzing the whole literature we have come to investigate the following major question that is:

Q. What hits the customer mind the most corporate brands or product brands in emerging marketing like Pakistan?

Methodology

To better answer this major question we have prepare a questionnaire form that can be found in appendix investing different questions regarding corporate brands and product brands. SPSS software has been used and results are taken which then interpreted as well. So first of all we may check the reliability of the instrument used as below.

Reliability Analysis	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.689	13

Reliability statistics show the results of Cronbach’s Alpha that was used for checking the consistency and satiability of data collection instrument. Reliability results is 0.689, which is consider good and consider as acceptable so research instrument is reliable for research.

Objectives of Study

- To investigate customer mind thinking about the brand.
- Also investigate that what hit consumer mind mostly corporate brands or product brands.

Sampling Technique and Sample:

The Population of study was educational instructional. In which the sample size of 100 peoples (male /female) was taken for conducting the study by using random sampling in order to generalize the findings are not in a particular sector. Different sectors are used for generating data like Educational, Jobholder, General public and household wives.

Statistical Analysis of Data

On which of the following product you spend your income the most?

* Sex of respondent Cross tabulation

Question	Choices	Sex of respondent		Total
		Male	Female	
On which of the following product you spend your income the most?	Daily use products (Tea, washing powder, milk, etc)	28	36	64
	Luxury products (TV, Leds, Motor cars, Bikes, Mobiles)	18	18	36
Total		46	54	100

Interpretation: The results are highlighting that male and females both largely spend on daily use products that amount to be 64 in number while the rest of the respondents gave their answers in favor of using Luxury products that comes to be 36. Therefore, a trend is being seen that customers are much inclined to using routine products in their lives however there are certainly other people as well who aspire to make purchases of luxury products.

What you keep in mind the most while buying products of your choice?

* Sex of respondent Cross tabulation

Question	Choices	Sex of respondent		Total
		Male	Female	
What you keep in mind the most while buying products of your choice?	(a)Product name and its image in society	16	6	22
	Product price	6	0	6
	Product quality	18	36	54
	Company to which product actually belongs	6	12	18
Total		46	54	100

Interpretation: The results states that respondents came up claiming that they keep product quality into their minds while purchasing products that figure shows us are customers 54 in number. However, it's worth interesting to look at the figures and to know that after the significance of product name and its image in society which is supported by 22 respondents there are still 18 respondents that they keep the company in mind to which the product belongs to. It is also surprising to know here that there are only 6 respondents which keep price level into their minds while making purchases.

If your desired product is not available what line of action you will likely choose?

*** Sex of respondent Cross tabulation**

Count		Sex of respondent		Total
		Male	Female	
If your desired product is not available what line of action you will likely choose?	will buy the same product of another company	12	18	30
	will eager to buy the same from somewhere else	34	36	70
Total		46	54	100

Interpretation: The found results are stating that if the desired product of the customer is not available the customers that are huge in number that is 70 out of 100 respondents will try to buy the same product from somewhere else if not available at one point of place. However, there are also 30 respondent claiming that they would prefer to buy same product of some other company and that can be analyzed in the way that those 30 respondents are not much loyal to their product brands as compare to those 70 which are showing their extreme stance on loyalty towards their products.

Which thing you keep in notice while finally purchasing the product brands?

*** Sex of respondent Cross tabulation**

Count

		Sex of respondent		Total
		Male	Female	
Which thing you keep in notice while finally purchasing the product brands?	By asking your friends, family members	24	0	24
	Your association with the company profile (Like Apple, Sony, Unilever, Honda, Nokia)	10	24	34
	Features of the product brands (E.g. Camera quality, Surf that cleans better)	12	30	42
Total		46	54	100

Interpretation: Results are favoring those customers that are certainly large in number that is 42, who say that when they are to finally purchase a product they make this decision on the basis of the features of the products like camera quality of a mobile while there are 34 customers who give utmost preference to their association with the company profile like Apple, Unilever, etc. as a key element helping them through their buying process. On the other hand, customers that are 24 in number make final purchase by asking their acquaintances and family members in account.

To purchase a product or to receiving a service your knowledge about the product / service helps you in what manner?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Sometimes	42	42.0	42.0	42.0
	All the times	52	52.0	52.0	94.0
	Indifferent to knowledge of product/service	6	6.0	6.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Interpretation: Frequencies are showing that 52 respondents use knowledge all the times when to purchase product or service while 42 respondents stated that knowledge plays role in their

purchases only sometimes. On the contrary, 6 respondents were found to be indifferent to use knowledge in purchasing products.

How many times have you repurchased your concerned brand of choice?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Once	18	18.0	18.0	18.0
	2-5 times	34	34.0	34.0	52.0
	More than 5 times	48	48.0	48.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Interpretation: The concerning results are showing that 48 respondents out of 100 have repurchased their brand of choice for more than 5 times showing their strong resolve that they are pretty much satisfied with their brand of choice. Similarly, 34 respondents have repeatedly bought their brand of choice not more than 5 times.

Do you know that your brand of choice is acknowledging problems prevailing in society like education, social welfare works, health issues awareness programs, etc

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	42	42.0	42.0	42.0
	No (If your answer is no. please skip to question no. 8)	58	58.0	58.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Interpretation: Out of 100 respondents 58 of them stated that they actually don't know that their brand of choice is acknowledging problems prevailing in the society like education, social welfare, etc. while 42 out of 100 did know that brand is acknowledging these stated prevailing problems in society.

If yes what do you see amongst the following most practiced by that company?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Impacting Education	12	12.0	28.6	28.6
	Working against global warming	12	12.0	28.6	57.1

	Conducting health awareness seminar/walks	12	12.0	28.6	85.7
	you don't have adequate knowledge regarding this	6	6.0	14.3	100.0
	Total	42	42.0	100.0	
Missing	System	58	58.0		
	Total	100	100.0		

Interpretation: The result is found to be interesting that there is equal number of respondents who states that the company of their brand of choice is socially responsible while imparting education, working against global warming as well as conducting health awareness seminars/walks respectively. This is suggesting the state of situation that even in emerging market companies are socially responsible.

How much role of trust is involved when you are to buy any brand as you already have used it before successfully?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Always	90	90.0	90.0	90.0
	Sometimes	10	10.0	10.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Interpretation: 90 out of 100 respondents pinpoint that trust “always” play a significant role when to make a repeat purchase of a brand. While interestingly merely 10 respondents argued that the trust plays a role but just sometimes.

Suppose if you are very happy using a brand of a company and the company launches its another brand of some other nature (e.g. Nokia launches new mobile or Dalda launches new Ghee with some vitamin); what would be your stance:

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Would try to buy it also	54	54.0	54.0	54.0
	Keep using your own brand due to lack of income	12	12.0	12.0	66.0
	Depends on situation	34	34.0	34.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Interpretation: Here the result says out that 54 out of 100 respondents would try to buy the newly launched brand of the company as they were very happy using that company’s products successful before. Contrarily, 34 out of 100 were on the viewpoint that it depends on their situation as to buy that newly launched product or not. This is showing the resolve of respondents that they rely deeply on the company like Nokia and the product line offered by it in a timely manner.

If the price of two brands like brand (A) backed with company image/repute and brand (B) backed with its individual identity and features, is same, what would you do:

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	would buy only brand A	40	40.0	40.0	40.0
	Would buy only brand B	18	18.0	18.0	58.0
	Keep using A or B as before	24	24.0	24.0	82.0
	If using A before, would like to at least try B	18	18.0	18.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Interpretation: Results are exhibiting, 40 out of 100 respondents would prefer to buy only Brand A that comes under the umbrella of company reputé and image if the price of a product brand and corporate brand are same. However, in this case the result slightly comes out quite dissimilar as 24 out of 100 are pinpointing that they would not move in other direction and keep using Brand A or Brand B as before even if the price between both is same. Again, 18 out of 100 are still confining themselves to buy brand B which is a product brand and it can be analyzed that they are not likely to buy brand A that is corporate brand even both are being offered on same level of prices.

Findings

This has been a comprehensive form of questionnaire and proved to be quite helpful in deciding what people think to have a say about a brand, the basis upon which they want to purchase the brand and what compels them to finally buy the brand either product brand or corporate one. It is worth-mentioning here that the data has been gather from educated customers as well as mass public which was not pretty much educated. 100 respondents were approached and each one of them has been asked 11 different questions regarding product brands and corporate brands. For each question mostly frequency tests have been applied along with cross tabulation for knowing the number of females and males in couple of questions asked.

Through results we found that majority of customers do like to buy daily usage product while this also found that customers also buy luxury products as well. Further it is also analyzed that females who are using daily use products are much in number while male are not. However, the

number of male equates the number of females who use luxury products like TV, mobiles, etc. Again, customer showed their strong stance that they prefer quality as the base while buying a product, others claim product brand and its image in society while interestingly there are considerably many customers who make their purchases on the basis of company to which brand belongs to. In market like Pakistan where average income level is not too high, people don't give extra preferences to prices while what they keep in mind, quality as number one, product as number two and company to which it belong at number three in the list of their preferences. Customers showed their unchanging satisfaction level with the products they used before by telling us that they would buy the same product of their choice from somewhere else in case of its unavailability at one place. This can be taken in the sense that people are more brands conscious in Pakistan whether they chose product brand or corporate brand. The findings become more interesting when it is analyzed that from those who are much loyal to either of the brands are female which are comparatively more loyal against male customers. Amongst different questions asked, the finding come very surprising when to analyze the situation in which the customer says out that when they are finally to buy the product they give maximum important to the features of the product, while looking at the other side of the picture we come to know that there are huge number of people but certainly less than that we discussed before, do keep the company profile in their mind for instance, when they are to buy a mobile they would definitely give preference to camera quality, processing speed, etc but at the same time they would prefer to buy those brands which occupy international brand image and have company image on their back like Apple, Nokia, etc. This has happened not due to by chance but research tells us this is due to the level of trust, knowledge about the brand and how much it is socially responsible in the market, which are the core concepts which customer keep in mind while associating him or her toward the brand and it is also notified that if price of corporate brand and product brand is set to be equal the customer will likely to buy corporate brand as compare to product brand.

Conclusion

At the end, we may conclude that in country like Pakistan people being not so much educated buy product brands in huge quantity when it comes to fast moving consumer goods (FMCGs). This is due to the fact that corporate brands have not been strongly built in this market due to lack of awareness amongst the general public or through their unavailability in this far distant market. The marketing programs of corporate brands, except advertisements in form of TV commercials, are not supposed to be quite beneficial for the companies like Apple, BMW, etc. However, at the same time, through the recommendation of family member and acquaintances people are now found to be busier towards buying corporate brands due to their struggle in this market which is not enough as compare to product brands.

Limitations

The first limitation of this research is that corporate brands and products brands of FMCG in nature are analyzed but services sector has not been touched which entails some different factors around it. Secondly, the target market selected for having a sample of 100 was southern Punjab region of Pakistan not the opinion of whole Pakistan' customers. Thirdly, time and resources constraints left us behind not going in rural areas of southern Punjab.

Suggestions

This section of article emphasizes number of suggestions that could be very much handful for those companies which want to make them successful in this market. These suggestions are given as under:

- Corporate brands have to show strong resolve toward the availability of their brands in Pakistan market which could enhance their market share as there is a lot of potential in this market to be exploited.
- Product brand manager have to ensure their quality standard to the maximum extent in order to compete with corporate brands. This would come true if they re-energize their marketing plans and better target the customer. If failed then in future course of time, there is huge chances that people would give utmost preference towards corporate brands and feel reluctant to buy product brands.
- Product brands will have to focus on imparting self-image of their portfolios so that customers could own those brands as they own corporate brands.

Future implications

Those who takes interest in the concepts of corporate branding and product branding and how they are performing in emerging markets like Pakistan they may apply their research towards services sectors and to come to an idea as what are the factors which needs to be taken in account by the companies to deliver the ever-best because unflinching competition would never allow any company to be lagging behind than others. Therefore, it is to be investigated that how customer feels about corporate brands or product brands while availing different services of banks, telecommunication sector, postal services and many more.

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