Brand Association and Customer Based Brand Equity in Television Market

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Abstract
The purpose of this paper is identified the relationship of brand association with customer based brand equity and compare with the selected brand equity variables of brand awareness, brand trust and customer satisfaction. The structured questionnaire was distributed among the respondents by following the simple random sampling technique. Questionnaires were distributed among 550 respondents, out of which, only 517 were properly filled. Data was analyzed through SPSS and relationships between proposed variables were checked through pearson correlation method. The findings of this study show a significant positive relationship among the four factors of brand equity. The relationships among brand association, brand trust and customer satisfaction were found to be quite strong while the relationship between these three variables and brand awareness was relatively weaker. This research study highlights the area where companies should focus to gain a sustainable competitive advantage. Further research can be done to find out the root causes of the factors that weaken the relationship of brand awareness with other variables.

Key words: Brand association, Brand equity, Brand awareness, Brand trust

Introduction
The heart of a great business is a first class product or service and every business wants to be a customer’s ‘first choice’. Building and managing a brand can play a large part in making this happen and if you want to strengthen and manage the perceptions of your business, then a strong brand is needed. Good branding elevates and differentiates your like-for-like products or services and gives your customers reason to choose you over your competitors (www.eaurouge.co.uk). A brand is a set of mental associations, held by the consumer, which add to the perceived value of a product or service (Keller, 1998). These associations should be unique (exclusivity), strong (saliency) and positive (desirable). Brand association refers to consumer’s knowledge associated with a given brand (Aker, 1991). Brand association has been recognized as the “heart and soul of the brand” (Aker, 1991).

Aaker defines brand associations as the category of a brand's assets and liabilities that include anything “linked” in memory to a brand. Keller defines brand associations as informational nodes linked to the brand node in memory that contains the meaning of the brand for consumers. The associations related to the functions represent a greater degree of abstraction than those referring to the attributes, and so are more accessible and remain longer in the consumer's memory (Dean, 2004).

Brand associations are important to marketers and to consumers. Marketers use brand associations to differentiate, position, and extend brands, to create positive attitudes and feelings toward brands, and to suggest attributes or benefits of purchasing or using a specific brand. Consumers use brand associations to help process, organize and retrieve information in memory and to aid them in making purchase decisions (Aaker, 1991). Brand associations are fundamental to brand equity. According to the father of today’s most dominant brand equity model, Professor Kevin L. Keller (1993), brand associations link to brand preference, choice, and image. The pioneer of strategic brand management Professor David Aaker (1991) shares this opinion and argues that brand associations convey the attitude developed towards a given brand by consumers and “represent the bases for purchase decisions and brand loyalty” (Ibid). The argument that brand associations are fundamentals of brand equity.

Positive associations of a brand in a customer's mind are generally stronger and more sustainable than those of a product, assuming that sufficient investments are being made in appropriate
Brands with positive equity will consistently generate, maximize and grow cash flows. They achieve this by commanding a price premium, allowing for brand extensions and licensing, creating barriers of entry, attracting and retaining more valuable customers, and reducing the costs of customer acquisition.

According to MSI (Marketing Science Institute), brand equity is defined as “the set of associations and behaviors on part of the brand’s customers, channel members, and Parent Corporation that permits the brand to earn greater volume or greater margins than it could without the brand name and that gives the brand a strong, sustainable, and differentiated advantage over competitors”.

Aaker (1991) define brand equity as “a set of brand assets and liabilities linked to a brand, its name and symbol, that add to or subtract from the value provided by a product or service to a firm and/or to that firm’s customers”.

Customer based brand equity is defined as the differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to the marketing of the brand (Kamakura and Russell, 1991; Keller, 1993, 1998). This view of brand equity proposes that,

1. The brand creates value for both consumers and the firm,
2. The brand provides value to the firm by generating value for the consumers, and
3. Consumers’ brand associations are the key elements in the formation and management of brand equity (Rio, Vazquez, and Iglesias, 2001).

Positive brand equity drives customer value, which in turn drives shareholder value. To leverage positive brand equity, marketers must take a measured approach to identifying, developing and managing brand elements relevant to the corporation and its products.

**Research problem**

Due to the fast change in the global market and increasing competition, management of brand has become of importance. Building of strong brand equity is the top most priority of many products and service industries, but attaining this objective is not always an easy task. Price in the form of discount and brand equity is the only possible means by which customers can differentiate one brand from another. Indeed, price promotion has been one of the most important marketing strategy relied upon by products and this has leads to constant war price that have reduced revenue and weaken customers loyalty.

**Need and importance of the study**

While gone through the background and literature reviews, it is evident that enormous numbers of studies are available in the area of brand and brand equity but limited researches regarding customer based brand equity and most of them focus on the relationship between brand equity and firm performance using brand awareness and image as moderating effect. Also we noticed that most researches [Aaker (1991), Keller (1993), Lasser et al (1995), Yoo et al (2000), Yoo and Donthun (2001) etc] that surveyed these four dimensions of customer based brand equity (brand awareness, perceived quality, brand loyalty and brand image). But, we have chosen an innovative way to carry out a research to analyze the importance of another four dimensions of brand equity (brand awareness, brand association, brand trust and satisfaction) in television industry.

**Objectives of the study**

To identify the relationship between of brand association with customer based brand equity in television market.

**Hypothesis of the study**

\[ H_0: \text{There is no relationship between brand equity variables and customer based brand equity.} \]

**Research methodology**

The main aim of this paper is to identify the relationship of brand association with customer based brand equity in television market. To identify the various factors that affect brand equity, previous research studies have been gone through by researcher and identified the suitable variables...
that contribute to the study are Brand awareness, Brand association, Brand trust and Customer satisfaction. The important aspect of research design is the measurement of variables in the theoretical framework related to adoption of innovation. Measures used in this study are standard measures used by previous researchers and have been meticulously assessed for its validity and reliability. Some measures are developed by the researcher as per need of the survey to meet the investigation carried out.

A sample frame is the list of elements from which the sample may be drawn. The top three television brands in India (2013) are Sony, Samsung and LG (www.currentweek.com). In our research all the three brands of television are considered. For to collect the data the researcher choosing cuddalore district as a sampling area, the main reason for taking behind this particular district is it is one of the backward district in tamilnadu. Hence most of the customers they are not aware of the concept about the product as well as the brand. So the researcher can explain the concept and gathered an in depth and truthful information. Organization can also get benefit regarding these aspects. The target population for this study consisted of the customers those who are having television in cuddalore district and experienced of using particular brand for more than a year is considered as a respondent.

The sample of population would include 517. But we are distributed 550 questionnaires to respondents and we are unable to get back few questionnaires and few respondents are not properly answered (unfilled questionnaire) and very few of them are wrong answered. So neglecting these questionnaire and finally 517 questionnaires are considered as a sample size for our main study. The collected data have been coded and entered in to the software package SPSS 20. After entering the data it was thoroughly checked before conducting the analysis part. Based on nature of the frame work, questionnaire and with the statistics expert opinion the frequency and pearson correlation analysis were made.

Result and discussion

Table- 1: Respondent’s opinion towards brand association of the television brand

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Association</th>
<th>Mean (X)</th>
<th>SD (σ)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Characteristics comes to mind</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>1.171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quickly recall</td>
<td>3.92</td>
<td>1.212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No difficulty in imaging the brand</td>
<td>4.07</td>
<td>1.179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different from its competing brands</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>1.030</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary data computed.

Brand association is a special and unique character of a product that differentiates from competitors. It is play an important role in customer’s product evaluations and choices. It will be provide customers to a purchasing reason, because of the brand associations are related to brand attributes and the benefits brand for customers. So brand association plays a very important role in customers purchase decision making. Table-1 inferred that the respondent’s opinion towards the brand association statements are characteristics comes to mind, quickly recall, no difficulty imaging the brand and different from its competitors. The mean and standard deviation calculated for each statement.

From the mean score it is noted that majority of the respondent given their importance to there is no difficulty in imaging the brand (4.07). The corresponding standard deviation value is also noted that no much deviation within the group of respondents.

Quickly recall the logo or symbol secures the mean value of 3.92, followed by some characteristics comes to mind (3.88) and different from competitors brand (3.31). There is no deviation in the standard deviation value.

From the various brand association statement, no difficulty in imaging the brand obtained the highest mean value than others. From the maximum mean score it is concluded that customers are easily imagine their television brand.
Table-2: Relationship between brand equity variables and customer based brand equity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brand Equity variables</th>
<th>Customer based brand equity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>r- value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand awareness</td>
<td>0.797</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand association</td>
<td>0.943</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand trust</td>
<td>0.946</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer satisfaction</td>
<td>0.945</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary data computed; * Significant @ 1% level.

Customer based brand equity is most important factor for current business scenario which create a new way to market potential. Table-2 shows that the relationship between the brand equity variables with customer based brand equity.

Pearson correlation has been carried out to examine the above stated hypothesis. Table-2 explains the relationship among the brand equity variables. From with the r- values, it is inferred that the study variables are having relationship within itself, because r values are significant and also positive.

Hence the stated hypotheses $H_0$ gets rejected. The respondent have expressed that their experienced brand is having high level of relationship on brand awareness, brand association, brand trust and customer satisfaction with customer based brand equity. It is observed that brand trust has secured the highest r-value of 0.946 with customer based brand equity followed by customer satisfaction (0.945), brand association (0.943) and brand awareness (0.797). In term of customer based brand equity it is highly correlated with brand awareness, brand association, brand trust and satisfaction. The result has indicated that the respondent experienced good amount of positive relationship with the brand equity. The customer based brand equity has relationship with all brand equity variables based on cumulative customer experience. The entire value of the brand equity offers the expectation of customer experience. They feel that the brand is most suitable for them. Hence it is found brand trust is having the strong relationship with customer based brand equity.

George S. Low and Charles W. Lamb (2000) examined that brand associations for different products should be determined using different items. As confessed, dimensionality of brand associations was influenced by brand familiarity. Erfan severi and Kwek choon ling (2013) find out the brand association and other dimensions have mediating relationship on brand equity.

Harishcandra singh rathod (2014) investigated brand associations lie in the attributes of inspirational, consistency, uniqueness and credibility while studying the Brand Association Map plotted after considering the responses of both the group of respondents. Mohsen rasoulian and Pedram moradi javid (2015) investigated brand association directly and positively affected brand value and brand value positively influenced brand preference and customer purchase intention.

Conclusion
The findings of this study show thatamong the various brand association statements, no difficulty in imaging the brand obtained the highest mean value than others. It is concluded that customers are easily imagine their television brand and significant positive relationship among the four factors of brand equity. The relationships among brand association, brand trust and customer satisfaction were found to be quite strong while the relationship between these three variables and brand awareness was relatively weaker. This research study highlights the area where companies should focus to gain a sustainable competitive advantage. Further research can be done to find out the root causes of the factors that weaken the relationship of brand awareness with other variables.
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