

BRAND PREFERENCE AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION TOWARDS IMPULSE PRODUCT WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ACTIVE GROUP

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ABSTRACT

Impulse company supplies various range of products and in this study the researcher have studied the printed material products alone. This study aims in understanding the reason for preferring the Impulse brand and their opinion towards the satisfaction is also observed. Brand preferring is the identity to any company that the customers are willing to prefer their products, which may lead to brand loyalty and that's how a company shall increase their brand equity. In this research the factors attracting the respondents to buy the impulse are observed. This study shall the company to reframe their marketing strategy and to attract more new customers and delight the existing customers.

KEYWORDS: Brand, Customer Delight, Brand Loyalty And Brand Equity.

INTRODUCTION

The active group is the one of the major advertisement and distribution in Madurai, India. It's highly labor intensive and provides livelihood to about 6000 people directly. India is a first largest producer of impulse organization in the world. The company operates in two segments cigarettes and impulse products.

Impulse marketing was set up in 1999 as a direct marketing company taking products directly to the customer's home/ office. Today the company is India's no.1 direct marketers, especially for books and reference products.

Over the past 13 years, the company has built a strong & mutually beneficial relationship with international/ domestic publisher's our partners include "Oxford University Press, Penguin, Hache Tte, Replay, Dorling Kinderley, Parragon, Encyclopaedia, Britanica amongst others". The company successfully operates international market like Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Dubai, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia and Philippines.

The company commits to take high quality products to customers at an affordable price.

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The major divisions of Impulse are Book division, I GET IT, MAGAZINES and SMART READERS CLUB. The major business partners are Oxford (University press), Hachette (India), Ripley's, A & C Black, Encyclopedia Britannica, Dorling Kindersley (DK), Deagostini and Parragon.

The Active Group of Company was in need to understand the brand preference about the products among the target audience. Brand preference is the extent to which consumers are familiar with the qualities or image of a particular brand of goods or services. Brand preference refers to the extent to which customers are able to recall or recognize a brand. Brand preference is a key consideration in consumer behavior, advertising management, brand management and strategy development. The companies are finding out best means to create preference among their target audience and their products and services. To create preference they work strategically and invest huge amount.

Brand preference is a key consideration in consumer behavior, advertising management, brand management and strategy development. The consumer's ability to recognise or recall a brand is central to purchasing decision-making. Purchasing cannot proceed unless a consumer is first aware of a product category and a brand within that category. Preference does not necessarily mean that the consumer must be able to recall a specific brand name, but he or she must be able to recall sufficient distinguishing features for purchasing to proceed. For instance, if a consumer asks her friend to buy her some gum in a "blue pack", the friend would be expected to know which gum to buy, even though neither friend can recall the precise brand name at the time.

Different types of brand preference have been identified, namely brand recall and brand

recognition. Key researchers argue that these different types of preference operate in fundamentally different ways and that this has important implications for the purchase decision process and for marketing communications. Brand preference is closely related to concepts such as the evoked set and consideration set which describe specific aspects of the consumer's purchase decision. Consumers are believed to hold between three and seven brands in their consideration set across a broad range of product categories. Consumers will normally purchase one of the top three brands in their consideration set.

Brand preference is a key indicator of a brand's competitive market performance. Given the importance of brand preference in consumer purchasing decisions, marketers have developed a number of metrics designed to measure brand preference and other measures of brand health. These metrics are collectively known as Preference, Attitudes and Usage (AAU) metrics. There are few basic techniques to build brand preference, they are as:

1. Referral Programs,
2. Impressive Guest Content,
3. Infographics,
4. Freemium with Credit,
5. Local Partnerships,
6. Car Wraps,
7. Freebies,
8. Social Media Contests
9. Social Focus,
10. LinkedIn Publishing,
11. Pro Story Telling,
12. Unique Personality,
13. Podcasts,
14. PPC Advertising,
15. Remarketing Campaigns,
16. Paid Social Advertising,
17. Controversy,
18. Influencer marketing and more.

It is a big task to measure the brand preference among the audience. The techniques to measure the brand preference techniques are;

- **UNAIDED RECALL TESTS:** Where the respondent is presented with a product category and asked to nominate as many brands as possible. Thus, the unaided recall test provides the respondent with no clues or cues. Unaided recall tests are used to test for brand recall.
- **AIDED RECALL TEST:** Where the respondent is prompted with a brand name and asked whether they have seen it or heard about it. In some aided recall tests, the respondent might also be asked to explain what they know about the brand e.g. to describe package, colour, logo or other distinctive features. Aided recall tests are used to test for brand recognition.
- **OTHER BRAND-EFFECTS TESTS:** In addition, to recall tests, brand research often employs a battery of tests, such as brand association tests, brand attitude, brand image, brand dominance, brand value, brand salience and other measures of brand health. Although these tests do not explicitly measure brand preference, they provide general measures of brand health and often are used in conjunction with brand recall tests.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The brand preference of impulse product is attempted to measure in this research article. The company plans to take strategically measures to promote its brand and increase its brand loyalty.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

1. To study the level of brand preference among the public towards the impulse products.

2. To find out the best means to reach the audience and to create brand equity.
3. To suggest measures to improve the brand preference.

SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

The active group is the one of the major advertisement and distribution in Madurai. This study covers only the customer satisfactions and impulse brand preference from among the various brands. This study is restricted to collect information only from the customers of the active group in Madurai. The implication of this research is applicable to impulse products alone.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Ingavale, Deepa & Suryavanshi, Anil & Marulkar, Kedar. (2012) The marketer's principal objective is typically to build a relationship with buyers, rather than merely to make a single sale. Ideally, the essence of that relationship consists of a strong bond between the buyer and the brand. Outlines six strategies for building that relationship: linking the brand to a particular need; associating it with a pleasant mood; appealing to subconscious motives; conditioning buyers to prefer the brand through reward; penetrating perceptual and cognitive barriers to create preference; and providing attractive models for buyers to emulate. The choice of an individual strategy or combination depends mainly on the nature of the branded product or service. The success of the strategy depends heavily on the marketer's understanding of the preference building and bonding process attractive models for buyers to emulate. The choice of an individual strategy or combination depends mainly on the nature of the branded product or service. The success of the strategy depends heavily on the marketer's understanding of the preference building and bonding process. Branding has always been an important aspect of marketing. Brand is a

powerful differentiator in a highly competitive market place. It provides the company the power to deflect competitive moves. A strong brand rings trust, confidence, comfort and reliability in the customer's mind. Brands live in the minds of consumers and are much more than just a tag for their recognition and identification. They are the basis of consumer relationship and bring consumers and marketers closer by developing a bond of faith and trust between them. The promise of brand is consistent with reliable quality, service and overall psychological satisfaction.

Ingavale, Deepa & Suryavanshi, Anil & Marulkar, Kedar. (2012) Brand preference is the selective demand for a company's brand rather than a product; the degree to which consumers prefer one brand over another. Brand preference can be achieved by creating the positive brand image in customers mind.

Brand image is the consumer's impression about the brand's physical characteristics, its performance, the functional benefits, the kind of people who use the product, the emotions and associations it develops, and the imagery or symbolic meanings, it generates. The brand choice decisions are critical for marketer. Understanding how customers arrive at specific brand choice is essential for brand development.

The present paper focuses on the study of brand preference for mobile phones with reference to the management students. The primary objective of the study is to assess the brand preference for mobile phones among the management students of Kolhapur City. It also identifies the major features which a student looks in a mobile phone. The present study is the descriptive research. Brand preference analysis is done by conducting the survey which describes the preferences for different mobile phones of the surveyed management students.

Customer satisfaction is the most important variable in evaluating the performance of a product or service (e.g., Oliver, 1980, 1999; Vavra, 1997). According to the conformation/disconfirmation paradigm (Oliver, 1981; Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988), customers will be satisfied when the service/product they receive is better than they expected and will be dissatisfied if the perceived performance does not meet their expectations. However, customer satisfaction involves a customer's evaluation of a specific transaction focusing on the performance of a product or service (Bolton & Drew, 1991), while consumer attitudes involve the comprehensive evaluation of a brand (Holbrook & Corfman, 1985). Consumer attitudes are, thus, the global evaluation of brands of products or services (Bolton & Drew, 1991), a broader concept than customer satisfaction. For that reason, understanding consumer attitudes toward a brand/ product should help managers predict customers future intentions whether or not they repurchase/revisit (Voss et al., 2003). Furthermore, marketers can design and develop product positioning strategies based on consumer attitudes toward product brands (Park, Jaworski, & MacInnis, 1986).

Brand is a distinguishing feature of a product and is often important to customers purchasing the product. For example, although customers may be satisfied with the functional value of the product, if the brand is not their favorite, some customers may not purchase the product again (Aaker, 1996; Pitta & Katsanis, 1995; Steenkamp, Batra, & Alden, 2003). For that reason, many studies have examined diverse concepts of brand such as brand associations (e.g., Chen, 2001; Xu & Chan, 2010), brand attitudes (e.g., Chang & Chieng, 2006; Suh & Yi, 2006), brand credibility (e.g., Kim, Morris, & Swait, 2008), brand equity (e.g., Keller, 1993; Washburn & Plank, 2002), brand experience (e.g., Brakus, Schmitt, & Zarantonello, 2009;

Schmitt, 2009), brand identification (e.g., Bergkvist & Bech-Larsen, 2010; Kuenzel & Halliday, 2008), brand image (e.g., Martinez, Polo, & Chernatony, 2008; Meenaghan, 1995), brand loyalty (e.g., Kressman et al., 2006; Lee & Back, 2010), brand personality (e.g., Aaker, 1997; Louis & Lombart, 2010), and brand value (e.g., Chu & Keh, 2006; Johansson & Nebenzahl, 1986). Because brand preference is indispensable in highly competitive businesses, practitioners and researchers have long spotlighted the concept. Brand preference is the extent to which the customer favors the designated service provided by a certain company, in comparison to the designated service provided by other companies in his or her consideration set (Hellier et al., 2003, p. 1765). Customers form brand preferences to reduce the complexity of the purchase decision process (Gensch, 1987). The process of forming brand preference involves, first, being exposed to many brands, followed by a complex purchase decision process. Customers often delete some product brands from their memory; then, among remaining brands of products, customers memorize the brands of products they would consider purchasing in the future (Roberts & Lattin, 1991).

RESEARCH DESIGN

In this study the research design is simply the framework or plan for study. The design may be a specific presentation of the various steps in the process of research for this descriptive design is used. The sample designs used are non-probability sample designs. The population size of the target audience for this study is 400. Therefore the researcher has concluded to collect the data from 120 respondents. The primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire and secondary data were collected through the company websites, published records of the company and from the company brochures, journals,

magazines, books and related websites. In this research the researcher has applied descriptive statistics, Anova to analyze the variance, Correlation analysis, T-test.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

It is observed that 42.5% of the respondents are under the age group of 25-30 years, 33.3% of the respondents are under the age group of 30-40 years. 62.5% of the respondents are male and 32.5% of the respondents are female. Among the respondents 42% of the respondents fall under the category of rural area, 33% of the respondents come under the category of urban area, 25% of the respondents come under the category of semi urban. It is understood that 10.8% of the respondents make their decisions through TV advertising, 27.5% of the respondents make their decisions through news paper, 34.17% of the respondents make their decisions through direct purchasing, and 27.5% of the respondents make their decisions through company pamphlets. It was found that 3.33% of the respondents are school level, 19.7% of the respondents under the degree level, 50% of the respondents under the diploma level, and 27.5% of the respondents under the professional level. Among the brands available 20% of the respondents have preferred the brand of Oxford, 26% of the respondents have preferred the brand of Dorling Kindersley, 33% of the respondents have preferred the brand of Hachette, 21% of the respondents have preferred the brand of others. Based on the respondents' opinion it was observed that 12% of the respondents are using impulse product through category of free offers, 35% of the respondents are using impulse product through the category of low price, 29% of the respondents are using impulse product through the category of High quality. It is observed that above table shows that 42% of the respondents are highly satisfied, 33% satisfied, 25% of the

respondents have opined moderate towards the quality of impulse product. Similarly 35% of the respondents were highly satisfied, 52% of the respondents were satisfied and 16% of the respondents have opined moderate towards availability of the impulse products. It is found that 37% of the respondents were highly satisfied, 32% of the respondents were satisfied towards the price of impulse products. 12% of the respondents are strongly agree, 35% of the respondents agree, 29% of the respondents are neutral, 15% of the respondents are disagree, 08% of the respondents are the strongly disagree for the statement that "they are satisfied with the quality of impulse products. It is observed that 67% of the respondents says the content in the impulse products were sufficient and 33% of the respondents have opined that the content were insufficient. It is clear from the study that 33% of the respondents have opined that impulse company quickly responses to the complaints, 45% of the respondents have opined that the impulse company respondents slowly to the complaints. By applying One way Anova it is observed that there is relationship between price and quality of the product and customer satisfaction were as factors like availability of the products and durability of the product and quantity of the content in the impulse product do not have much impact.

SUGGESTION

This is the first research that has been carried out on this topic of brand preference at impulse product, there has been some other researches been done at the shop on customers satisfaction. Lots of information was gathered from the respondents with respect to their opinions on what the cooperative should do to strengthening its brand, broadening its appeal on its brand identity and image, develop a strategy to satisfy its customers by improving on the service qualities. Though the

cooperative has been conducting researches, there is still room for more because the cooperative is new and needs more information in order for them to better understand the market. The cooperative needs to continue researching on this topics and others so as to be aware of the factors which influences the market in any given time and place, this continuity will help gather more information and therefore position the cooperative in a good and sound position to judge and strategize when planning.

CONCLUSION

To determine the answers to this question a well-structured questionnaire comprises of thirty four questions, the first eleven questions were general questions about the background information of the respondents, the second ten questions were about the personnel, goods and services, prices, competition, quality, reputation, business practices and support services of which respondent need to disagree or agree in a scale of one to five, the third questions were about the availabilities of goods and services, interior design and relaxation, communication, appearances, knowledge and professionalism of employees, complaint handling and managerial practices, on these questions in a scale of one to five respondents were asked if they were satisfied or not satisfied with the management handling of the business and of the goods and services provided to the customers.

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