

STATUS AND IMPORTANCE OF BRAND IN CONTEXT WITH ONLINE SHOPPING - A CONCEPTUAL STUDY

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• **Abstract:**

A brand is a name and/or symbol that uniquely identifies the products or services of the seller and differentiates them from those of its competitors. In this investigation conceptual study of brand in context with online shopping was done. Particularly brand experience, brand extension, brand relationships, brand loyalty, social media in branding, corporate branding and brand community were investigated. This study is also important to know the status and importance of brand in online shopping.

Keywords: Brand, Online shopping, brand loyalty, brand community

• **Introduction:**

The Internet invention and related technologies have dramatically changed the world of global branding. New generation has increased the use of social media for brand marketing (Kaplan et al., 2010). This social media becomes a hub for market intelligence as marketers begin to understand consumer's purchasing behavior about certain brands. These opportunities allow the marketer to create communication and maintain the brand's presence in online market places (Balakrishnan et al 2014). In twenty-first century brand management is more complex than ever before due to modern technology (e.g., online businesses), faster innovation, competition and more demanding consumers (Abratt et al., 2012; Balmer, 2012; Kaufmann et al., 2012). Due to business globalization, corporate branding becomes more essential than marketing (Balmer 2010, Hatch et al., 2009). Today, consumers may not necessarily buy a product due to product brand alone rather, the values given by the organization (corporate brand value) become very important in the consumers' decision-making process and buying behavior (Harris et al., 2001; Knox, 2004) for example, consumers will consider the organization's good name and reputation. Corporate brand value is the brand promise of an organization (i.e., the covenant aspect of the corporation), which provides sameness and credibility about its organization to all its stakeholders (Knox, 2004). In present study we have reviewed conceptual background of brand in online shopping.

• **Research Methodology:**

The secondary data were collected from journal articles, newspapers and internet. Thorough study of literature is done to collect various parameters on brand. Results were synthesized and analyzed.

relationships emerge from positive experiences with a brand and this relationship is the long lasting bond between the brand and the consumer that can be clearly distinguished from other concepts, such as brand attitudes, satisfaction and involvement. The relationships begin when customers and brands interact; as the frequency and duration of the interaction increases, the relationships become stronger and more sustainable (Kollmann et al., 2008).

• **Brand loyalty:**

Loyalty is a core dimension of brand equity. Brand loyalty defined as the attachment that a customer has to a brand. Gremler and Brown (1996) describe different levels of loyalty. Behavioural loyalty is linked to consumer behavior in the marketplace that can be indicated by number of repeated purchases or commitment to rebuy the brand as a primary choice. Cognitive loyalty which means that a brand comes up first in a consumers' mind, when the need to make a purchase decision arises, that is the consumers' first choice. Brand loyalty can be conceptualized as the final dimension of consumer brand resonance symbolizing the consumer's ultimate relationship and level of identification with a brand. As brands gain exclusive, positive, and prominent meaning in the minds of a large number of consumers, they become irresistible and irreplaceable, and win the loyalty of the consumers. Brand loyalty, in return, brings sales revenues, market share, profitability to the firms, and help them grow or at least maintain themselves in the marketplace. Marketers have utilized various means to maintain the brand loyalty of their customers, including brand elements, classical marketing mix variables, and new methods of marketing such as events, sponsorships, one-to-one marketing activities, Internet marketing and social media marketing (Erdogmus et al 2012; Laroche et al 2012). The aim of Erdogmus et al 2012 study was to identify the effect of social media marketing on brand loyalty of the consumers, given that the concept is receiving increasing attention from marketing academia and practitioners. The results of the study showed that brand loyalty of the customers is positively affected when the brand (1) offers advantageous campaigns, (2) offers relevant content, (3) offers popular contents, (4) appears on various platforms and offers applications on social media.

• **Brand Community:**

A brand community is a "specialized, non-geographically bound community, based on a structured set of social relations among admirers of a brand" (Muniz et al., 2001) and it represents a form of association embedded in the consumption context positioned around one product. These communities are composed of its member entities and their relationships and are identified by their commonalities which help people share essential resources, i.e. cognitive, emotional or material in nature. Social media based brand communities are communities initiated on the platform of social media. Brand communities based on social media (a special type of online brand communities) have positive effects on the main community elements and value creation practices in the communities as well as on brand trust and brand loyalty. The results of structural equation modeling show that brand communities established on social media have positive effects on community markers (i.e.,

shared consciousness, shared rituals and traditions, and obligations to society), which have positive effects on value creation practices (i.e., social networking, community engagement, impressions management, and brand use). Such communities could enhance brand loyalty through brand use and impression management practices. We show that brand trust has a full mediating role in converting value creation practices into brandloyalty (Laroche et al 2012).

- **Social media and branding:**

In 21st century social media has effectively promoted brands loyalty and product purchase intention through company website and social media platforms. The study by different workers indicates to marketing managers that social media marketing medium has become an important marketing tool to reach emerging younger generation consumers. It also indicates that cyber world play an important role in modern marketing, enabling marketers to reach customers faster and more efficiently. This research provides a guideline for global brand players in considering applying social media marketing activities to promote their product, and brand (Balakrishnan et al 2014).

- **Corporate brand:**

This study explores the dimensions and components of corporate brand experience in an internet setting. Corporate brand experience is an effective way to position a corporate brand in relation to the overall corporate marketing strategy. Corporate brand is important because of corporate brand equity (e.g. corporate image, brand loyalty) and product value (Hamzah et al 2014).

- **Conclusion and future improvement of the research:**

The present investigation shows that online brand experiences depend on the receptions of the usefulness of the brand, trust and indirectly, on its reputation. Positive experiences lead to satisfaction, behavioral intentions and in turn, to emotional ties with the brand. Online environments are, by their nature, information-based service environments that are fundamentally linked with technology and technological innovation. In this crowded and ever changing market-space, branding emerges as a key weapon in fight for consumer attention.

Future research should address the dynamics and complexity in brand marketing. The large sample size and the demographic representativeness of the sample provide some assurance of validity but the responses are limited to a narrow geographical area. Future studies could use the internet to collect data from larger populations. Although such a design does not provide a probability sample, the large sample size would further increase confidence in the generalizability of findings.

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