

Original Research Article

A STUDY ON THE BRAND IMAGE OF A HYPERMARKET IN COIMBATORE CITY

Abstract:

This research project had the purpose to discuss the impact of the Brand Image of the hypermarket among the customers in Coimbatore city. Retailer's brand image is the key factor that help them to engage with customers and influence their buying behaviors. The concept of the brand image draws vital attention from the practitioners as it plays a significant role in marketing activities. In this study, the concept of brand image of a hypermarket in second largest city of Tamil Nadu had been discussed. A convenient sampling with a sample size of 200 has been used in the hypermarket for the present study. Percentage analysis and Relative Importance Index are the tools that are used in the study for the analysis of samples. The purpose of this study is to find how the store's brand image had reached the customers and the reason for its reach. Finding and discussion were about Impact of Brand Image on Consumer Purchase Behaviour in hypermarket, brand image factors and how it helps the company to influence customers purchasing behavior.

Keywords: Brand Image, Consumer purchase behavior, Hypermarket

Introduction:

Due to the increased competition among service firms as a result of new entrants, it is crucial for service-oriented businesses to place a major emphasis on maintaining the high level of customer satisfaction and to change its marketing strategies from exclusively considering the attraction of new customers as a priority aim. Customer loyalty is one of the deciding factors in strong corporate competition, one of the subjects most extensively researched, and one of the marketing tactics most frequently employed by practitioners.

People unknowingly form relationships with the stores and the brands, the stores represent in addition to the interpersonal relationships that exist between the salesperson and the eventual customer in the retailing paradigm [Dodds 1991].

The food and grocery business is the second-largest retail trade sector, accounting for 60% of all private consumer spending and 70% of all retail sales [www.ibef.org]. In addition, it is anticipated that food and consumables made for 48% of total household income in 2011–12. Fast food establishments, MNC convenience stores, department stores, supermarkets, specialty stores, and hypermarkets have all grown significantly as a result of a number of obvious factors, including demand, supply, sociocultural, demographic, psychographic, economic, technological, and governmental policies.

By 2025, consumer expenditure is anticipated to rise from USD 1.0 trillion in 2010 to USD 3.6 trillion, according to the Indian Brand Equity Foundation (IBEF). According to the research, the retail market will increase from its current value of USD 51 billion to USD 86.6 billion. The majority of this market is currently controlled by neighborhood kiranas and conventional restaurants, with organized food outlets and supermarket shopping making up a pathetic 0.9 percent. [www.ibef.org]. Additionally, due of the severe competition from traditional eateries and organized Indian shops, modern MNC retailers had to develop an innovative marketing strategy to draw in and retain mysterious clients. Because of the

growing pressure on modern commerce to deliver on time and every time, marketers have recognized the growing significance of the marketing mix components in order to best meet the needs of the market and potential clients.

Researchers have therefore suggested a number of strategies, components, and crucial areas that must be quickly taken into account in order to succeed in today's intensely competitive and complex market if the customer is to be drawn in, won, and satisfactorily supplied, as well as permanently retained.

Brand Image

According to [Park. C 1986], "establishing a brand image is a quite important marketing function as it is sometimes directly associate with sale. Brand image does not only convey the goodwill of brand to the customers but also implicitly persuades them to buy your product again and again". Furthermore [Dobni 1990] researched that "brand image plays an important role in consumer buying behavior as the customers of the modern era give importance to this particular factor. People just not buy the brand for its physical product or attributes but behind the scene there is self-esteem and worth is bought by them". [Gwinner 1999] also said that "sponsoring an event give a big breakthrough to the brand image as the brand got a huge frequency of attention in a small time frame. It also falls in the social context when you organize the event with such a social cause so that you can easily get a soft corner in the heart of your potential customers". Moreover,[Roth 1995] said that "product performance plays a key role to generate a good brand image as most of people believe in performance than words of mouth. While placing the global scenario, the company should realize the social and cultural values of a particular locality to gain a position in the minds of local customers". Another researcher [Graeff 1997]also discussed that "the consumption patterns also speak about the image of the brand as it shows the degree of association of customers with a particular brand in terms of usage".

"One can easily evaluate the goodness or badness of a brand image by just changing the consumption situation and checking out the response of normal users". [Faircloth 2001], told that "the brand attitude and brand image construct brand equity which is mostly concerned to managers. A brand having a good image in the market will logically attract better sale than the others so contribute a lot to the brand equity". Furthermore,[Padgett 1997] researched that "the advertisement can be efficiently used for developing a brand image as it will get a space in the mind of the audience. Experiences regarding services also construct a major portion of brand image as the belief generated after the experience is more vivid and strong than before". According to[Meenaghan 1995], explained that "the advertisement is a very useful source to provoke brand image at the company, retail, and product levels". "Advertising makes people aware of the basic functionalities of any brand in the best possible and controlled way".[16]

Objectives

- To assess the customer's brand Image on a hypermarket
- To identify the strategies for improving customer's brand image on a hypermarket

Research Methodology

The study was conducted in the Coimbatore city of Tamil Nādu. The city was selected purposively which is one of the cities among the fastest-growing cities. For the study, 200 respondents were recorded who were the consumers of the

Hypermarket retail outlet of Coimbatore city. The primary data were collected through consumers using the well-structured pre-tested personal interview schedule. The factors used to determine the brand image are Good deals, Low Prices, Value for Money, Product perceived quality, Innovative, Affordable products for everyone, Convenient, Easy to find, and Respect the environment. The tools which are used are percentage analysis and the Relative Importance Index.

PERCENTAGE ANALYSIS

Percentage analysis [Guan JZ 2008] was used to study the general characteristics of the sample customers which include age, gender, education level, occupation, Annual income, etc.,

$$\text{Percentage analysis} = \text{Number of respondents} / \text{Total sample size} * 100$$

RELATIVE IMPORTANCE INDEX

To capture the important aspects governing the brand image of the hypermarket by the sample customers, the relative importance index was used. The sample customers were asked a series of questions related to Gooddeals, Low Prices, Value for Money, Product perceived quality, Innovative, Affordable products for everyone, Convenient, Easy to find, etc., [Florence kremer 2012] to understand Knowledge about the hypermarket on a five-point scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree and number coded them from 5 to 1 as given in the following Table 1.

Table 1 : SPAR brand on a five-point scale

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

After collecting responses from 200 customers, the following formula was used to calculate the RII.

$$RII = (5n_5 + 4n_4 + 3n_3 + 2n_2 + 1n_1) \div (A * N)$$

Where,

n5 = number of sample customers who Strongly agree

n4 = number of sample customers who Agree

n3= number of sample customers who was Neutral

n2= number of sample customers who Disagree

n1= number of sample customers who Strongly Disagree

A (highest weight) = 5

Results and Discussions:

The socio-economic profile of the customers gives an indication of the types of people or social groups who visit and purchase from the stores. Age, Gender, Marital status, Income, and Education level are also included in the socio-economic profile, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Socio-economic profile of customers

S. No	Particulars	No. of. Consumers	Percentage of total
1	Age (Years)		
	Up to 30	82	41%
	31-40	65	32.5%
	41-50	33	16.5%
	Above 51	20	10%
2	Gender		
	Female	95	47.5%
	Male	105	52.5%
3	Marital status		
	Married	135	67.5%
	Unmarried	65	32.5%
4	Annual income (in Rs)		
	Up to 200000	55	27.5%
	200000-400000	18	9%
	400000-600000	58	29%
	600000-800000	35	17.5%
	Above 800000	34	17%
5	Education level		
	Illiterate	0	0%
	Primary	0	0%
	Secondary	5	2.5%
	Higher secondary	5	2.5%

	Undergraduate	129	64.5%
	Postgraduate	48	24%
	Others	13	6.5%

Table 1 revealed that nearly 53% of the respondents were males rather than females 47%, indicating that male customers are more likely interested to visit Hypermarkets than female customers.

Among the 200 respondents, 41% of them come under the age group of up to 30, and 32.5% of them are between 31-40 years of age. This shows that three-quarters of the respondents were up to 40 years of age and this age group people mostly prefer to visit Hypermarkets.

Among the 200 respondents, nearly 68% of the respondents are married rather and nearly 33% of respondents were unmarried. This implies that married people mostly prefer to visit the hypermarket. The majority of the respondent's annual income was up to 2,00,000 with a percentage of nearly 28%.

Relative Importance Index

The data regarding the Brand Image of the hypermarket were collected by using the following 9 statements on a five-point likert scaling technique and analyzed using the Relative Importance Index method.

Table 3. Brand Image of Hypermarket

S.No	Factors	RII Value	Importance
1	Good deals	0.737	I
2	Low Prices	0.634	VIII
3	Value for Money	0.688	IV
4	Product perceived quality	0.707	III
5	Meet the consumers' needs	0.673	V
6	Innovative	0.633	IX
7	Affordable products for everyone	0.667	VI
8	Respect the environment	0.719	II
9	Convenient, easy to find	0.65	VII

From above Table 2, it could be inferred that the preference for good deals, Respect the environment, Product Perceived quality, Value for money and meet the consumer's needs were the relatively most important parameters that influence the brand image of the hypermarket. The relatively least important parameters were Affordable products for everyone, Convenient, easy to find, Low prices, and Innovative. Therefore, it can be concluded that the hypermarket offers good deals to their customers, and their way of respecting the environment by providing jute bags and paper bags for packaging and carry-away purposes was good, comparatively their products were superior in quality, comparing to other

retail stores their products valued for money, this hypermarket meets the consumer's need in all the possible ways. Hypermarket should deeply focus on Affordable products for everyone, Convenient, easy to find, Low prices, and Innovative, which would increase the brand image of the hypermarket.

Conclusion

The suggestions regarding increasing the brand image of Hypermarket's ineffective way to influence the customers purchasing behaviors have been discussed below.

To recommend a strategy for Hypermarket to strengthen their brand image, it can be suggested that hypermarket should hire a graphic designer to collaborate with on creating ideal logo and brand media suite which includes brand color palette, acceptable fonts, letterhead, and thumbnails formatted for social media, etc. brand ambassador plays a major role in influencing the minds of the customers in social media, hiring a famous brand ambassador give a good reach among the customers. Hypermarket need to keep a collection of products that can be relevant for every generation of customers. Additionally, to increase its brand value, the company should hire the right employees and communicate their organization's vision and mission as well as expectations regarding the customer's experience, especially in terms of focusing on environmentally friendly products [12]. It has been seen that hypermarket has less focus on online portal which is affecting their brand image. Therefore, hypermarket should focus on strengthening their websites and their social media participation was not active enough, they need to focus on advertising and promoting their brand in more ways. It can make their digital application more users friendly to influence the customers purchasing behaviors via the digital medium[13]. Additionally, they should promote the notion that they manufacture pioneering products by which hypermarket can able to cultivate the customer's perception of expertise.

Limitations of the study

Due to time constraints, the study was limited to hypermarket customers in a single location. Such a study may be carried out in the future in other areas. The study's findings were thus restricted to the one hypermarket that was chosen, and they might not have an impact on Tamilnadu's other hypermarkets as a whole.

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