



IMPORTANCE OF BRAND AWARENESS IN BRAND CHOICE

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ABSTRACT

According to theory, customers choose a brand they recognize, before an unfamiliar brand. If the consumers do not choose according to theories, what are the factors that have a greater effect on the buying behavior?

There is not much research about the effect of brand awareness on brand choice, which is why this subject is investigated. One of the purposes of this paper was to do a research about brand awareness; to see to what extent it matters when purchasing the first time in an unfamiliar environment. One of the objectives was to determine if there were any differences in buying behavior between the chosen or different cultures. The research group is limited to students from china, India and Iran.

The Conclusion of research paper was that all investigated factors had some importance for choice of brand, while quality had a greater effect on brand choice than brand awareness. Further, there was no difference in buying behavior between the cultures.

Keywords:- brand, brand equity, brand awareness, buying behavior, India

INTRODUCTION

We are all interested in marketing and how it is affected by cultural differences. The aim of this research paper was to discover the determinants for consumers 'brand choice. While living in a metropolitan city, we face a situation in which we have to chose between a familiar brand and one of us unknown brand.

Further, nowadays people have a demanding lifestyle. They do not have time for a moment and feel their own will. They want to be as efficient as possible; want to save as much time as possible. They feel that time is not enough and that they do not have the required energy. All the different choices buyers make when purchasing can be stressful and the possibility and demand on how to act and what to say can be an extra burden. Sometimes, consumers want someone to give them a proposal of a project. Or just take a product among many, without even bringing the product into line with their needs. It can be difficult to make choices, especially at the first purchase in an unknown environment. Therefore, needed to know to what extent people are using brand awareness when choosing brand.

Purpose

The main purpose was the research about brand awareness; to see to what extent brand awareness matters when purchasing for the first time in an unfamiliar culture. According to the theories, consumers chose a brand they recognize, before an unfamiliar brand. If consumers do not choose according to theories, what are the factors that have a greater effect on the buying behavior? I also wanted to see if there are any differences in buying behavior between the chosen culture groups.

METHOD

Research Approach

When choosing the research approach, a selection between deductive approach and inductive approach can be made. Deductive approach is when theory and hypothesis are built up after reading literature and then the hypothesis is tested: testing theory. Inductive approach is when the theory is developed from the analysis of collected data: building theory. The chosen method is a deductive approach. I started to read the literature to find theories. Further, a selection of the most well known and suitable theories was made. Out of the theory the research model was created, which was used when finding the answers to the research questions.

Research Philosophy

Research philosophy is formed by the way of thinking when it comes to the development of knowledge. There are three sides that can describe research process : positivism, realism and interpretivism.

The positivism view is when an adoption of the theoretical stand of a natural scientist has been made. It explains the truth of the social appearance and a result of a positivistic research can be compared with laws or rules. The method is highly structured and those who do the research are independent from the topic of the study.

Realism is when the belief of reality exists and is free from human thoughts and beliefs at same time as there are significant effects on human people from social forces and processes. Realism shares some theoretical characteristic with positivism, for example the view of an exterior objective nature but in a social framework.

Interpretivism is opposite of positivism, and stands for that business world is too complex to define, by theory. "Laws" in the same way as physical Science. According to the literature, interpretivism does not stand for the importance of generalisability, and there is no objective reality, only subjective reality where it is important to understand participants, purposes, behaviors and goals.

DATA COLLECTION

Secondary Data

External secondary data from public sources was used. I started by reading about brand and brand management followed by brand equity. Then I focused more on brand awareness. There have not been much published about brand equity from the consumers' point of view. Concerning the cultural part, I used theories and models of Geert Hofstede and Fons Trompenaars. After studying the books, I continued to study articles and internet sources for more specific information.

Primary Data

A survey was made by handing out questionnaires to the students in the target group. The purpose of the questionnaire was to see if brand awareness was the main reason to choose a brand when purchasing everyday commodities for the first time in an unfamiliar environment. One of the objectives was to determine while the other factors were and how much they affected the choice of brand. Received answers were 85 out of sample of 108 students.

Qualitative and Quantitative Data

Primary data can be either qualitative or quantitative. Qualitative research can be seen as data based on meanings expressed through words, intended to provide insight and understanding and the resultant data should be classified into categories. A quantitative research methodology includes seeking data based on meanings deduced from numbers which result in mathematical and standardized data.

The quantitative method was used before we wanted to use a questionnaire to reflect the sample's feelings and to analyze the answers, which are numeric. Statistic tests and diagrams were performed to easier see the significance of the results: differences and similarities between the culture groups and consumers

Analysis

When analyzing the data from the survey the statistic computer programme was used. There were two types of scales in our questionnaire, nominal scale and ordinal scale. For example, the question about gender is nominal scale and the question about the importance of different factors an ordinal scale.

The analysis starts by analyzing which brands of each product (Shampoo, toothpaste, yoghurt and Rice) most students recognized.. Further in the analysis only the products that most students recognized and did not recognize were analyzed. The other products were excluded since they are not needed when answering the research questions. The first question to answer was : How much brand awareness matters when purchasing in a new culture compound to other factors? To know how much brand awareness matters, the students have to be aware of the brand and that is why the product that most students recognized was chosen. The second question to answer was; if you do not have brand awareness which factor is it then that decides the choice of brand ? Therefore, the product that most students did not recognize was also included in the analysis.

CONCLUSIONS

We believe that choosing a brand because it is familiar, is a sign of security and safe decision making. When applying this result to the cultural theory by Hofstede, the sample did not match with Hofstede's cultural diversities. In a culture with high uncertainty avoidance, people are looking for more security and want to make safe decisions.

According to Kotler, innovators tend to take more advantage of special promotions and samples. So it is not possible to statistically prove that there were any differences between the culture groups.

Further on, there were no differences in buying behavior, concerning shampoo. For both the cultures ,quality was the most important factor while brand awareness was the second most important.

The Research was made on students, which also means that the respondents have certain preference and economical limits that do not match people that are working and have an income. A research can be done on "White collars " and see if they have different buying behavior than our sample.

The factors are changing if the products in the survey are not everyday commodities. A person is more loyal when buying a car than a package of rice. A research on luxury goods, instead of everyday commodities, could be done.

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