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Consumers recall and recognition for brand symbols

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Abstract

Brand Symbols are important for any brand in helping consumers to remember one's brand at the point of purchase. In advertising different ways are used to grab attention in consumers' mind and majorly it's through brand recall and recognition. This research captivates the Brand Symbol concept and determines whether symbols play an important role in creating a differential impact with other brands. Secondly, it also answers that whether brand symbol is the cause of creating positive association and familiarity with the brand. Brand power has prevailed in Pakistan for years now and brand competition is extremely strong in here. As one talks about brands then one has to create a mark able difference in wanting consumers' attention to purchase. This research is an intriguing answer to brand managers/marketers about the use of brand symbols in their new or existing brands. Questionnaire (18 International brands questions were asked to recall and recognize) was used gather the data from an un-restricted random sampling of 250 consumers using different brands every now and then in Karachi. Gender, age and education are the prime factors in judging the remembrance (recall) and identification (recognition) of the brand symbols. Recall and Recognitions of brand symbols in selection of a brand was tested by applying multiple linear regressions (OLS model). It was found that gender does not play a significant role in the association of recall of brand symbols but gender has an association with brand symbol recognition. For the recall of brand symbols, age plays an important and positive role whereas; education has a negative relation with the recall of brand symbols. Recognition of brand symbols is quite weak as no association has been found with education and age.

Keywords: brand recall, brand recognition, brand symbols, age, gender, education, consumer behavior.

1. Introduction

Brand symbols are the one of the elements which makes up a brand or basically creates the point of disparity between brands. Brand symbols has been a significant part of the representing the organization's brand and its meaning to the consumer and the world. Since the inception of pedagogy of brand management and marketing brand symbols has been very effective in communicating and associating the brand/service to the consumers. Brand symbols have forms of representation for instance they can just be a pictorial, pictorial with text, text in a symbolic form or both ways.

Brand symbols have been researched by far in different time zones but this era has evolved a lot more than the previous years hence, to study the consumer behavior from the perspective of brand symbols with defined and specific variables such as age, gender, education occupation, family size, religion, nationality, race, sect, household income will ascertain the marketing managers to understand its dominance in relevance to recall and recognition (brand awareness) of the brand symbols.

2. Literature Review

Presence and being the centre of attraction are two different things and when one discusses about brands, there core purpose is to be the centre of attraction than the competition as being just the presence. It's very difficult in this fuddle environment to grab the customers and keep them coming back. Brand Awareness should be steadfast to generate frequent and favorable associations with the brand. One has to constantly make the consumers mind recall and recognize the brand at various buying situations.

Being restricted to brand symbols in this study, symbols that attract the consumers, are always being shown via media/hoardings/different forms of advertising, a consumer tends to the remember and recognize a brand/brand's firm in a certain product category if the brand name is associated with the symbol for instance, some of the well-known brand symbols with the brand name such as Pizza Hut, WalMart, Coca-Cola, Master Card):

The associations of these brands are strong and favorable because customers can easily relate the brand in the particular category for e.g. Pizza Hut connects with Pizza Company, which was originally a small hut sort of Pizza place and gradually it has made its mark. Coca-Cola connects with cola drinks, Wal-Mart simply connects to a mart and Master Card connects with a debit or credit card. Also, there are some brand symbols that at first look identifies its product category like NBA and NASA. Beside these, the product category of some logos can also be identified by seeing it because of their symbols represent their product category. For example (NASA, PAZO, NBA etc) are included in this type i.e. one can identify easily that the first name NASA is related with astronomy and NBA is a firm, which is related to sports i.e. football.

MacInnis, Mani, and Shapiro (1999), has worked on the four aspects that helps creating brand awareness, which are memorizing brand awareness, brand name, product category and brand names explaining the product benefit. It has been known that brand symbols connect quite well in communicating the brand's message and understanding to the consumers. It is also true, that if a brand logo also has the brand name with it then it's more catchy and memorable for the consumers to recall and decipher. It is known to all that brand knowledge has two basic elements as brand awareness and brand image as introduced by Keller(2003) and brand symbols, which is a sub-part of defining a brand plays an important role and opportunity for the brand to speak to their consumers.

Decades have passed and we all know about brand, brand power, value, personality and brand equity. Similarly, different research studies related specific to brand symbols and brand knowledge has been carried out and associations have been acknowledged such Subhani and Osman(2011) ; Moore and Reid (2008) ; Radder and Wei Huang (2008); Kinsky and Bichard (2011) etc.

This research newness is in the key of the connection of brand symbols creating any recall in relation to the demographics, social, political, economical and technological wise.

3. Conceptual Model Frame work and Hypotheses

On the basis of the conceptual model accentuated above the following propositions hypotheses have been formulated to evaluate the research question.

P1: Brand symbol recall is predicted by level of age, level of education, and gender difference.

H1: Brand symbol recall is predicted by level of age.

H2: Brand symbol recall is the most predicted by level of education.

H3: Brand symbol recall is the most predicted by gender difference.

P2: Brand symbol recognition is predicted by level of age, level of education, and gender difference.

H4: Brand symbol recognition is predicted by level of age.

H5: Brand symbol recognition is the most predicted by level of education.

H6: Brand symbol recognition is the most predicted by gender difference.

3. Research Methods

3.1 Method and description of data collection and variables

In order to interrogate the propositions of this paper the responses of 1000 respondents (which includes the respondents of age bracket from 15 to 65 years, education bracket 0 to 20, and gender bracket, male= 1 to female= 2) in connections to the brand symbol recalls and recognitions were registered through the self administrated personal survey method via opting the unrestricted non probability sampling. The main part of survey was comprised on two charts; one represented brand symbol recall, in which 8 brand symbols (as shown below) without name have been shown which people have seen before in ads or outdoor advertisement and it was asked from them to identify brand names.

Second chart represented brand symbol recognition, which is consisted of 10 brand symbols with brand names and respondents were requested to recognize the product category by seeing of that brand symbols. The brand symbols which are not so popular in Pakistan have been selected deliberately and carefully.

The responses of the respondents in relevance to brand symbol recall and brand symbol recognition were gauged in relative terms while for the age and educations the higher ranks were assigned to higher brackets of age and education whereas, the male and female genders were defined dichotomously i.e. male= 1 and female =2 as addressed before.

3.2 Econometrical Model

For finding the effects of age, education and gender on brand symbol recall and recognition, the multiple linear regression (OLS-Model) have been deployed as shown below:

$$\begin{aligned}\text{Brand Symbol Recall} &= \alpha_1 + \beta_1 (\text{age}) + \beta_2 (\text{education}) + \beta_3 (\text{gender}) + \text{ET1} \\ \text{Brand Symbol Recognition} &= \alpha_2 + \beta_4 (\text{age}) + \beta_5 (\text{education}) + \beta_6 (\text{gender}) + \text{ET2}\end{aligned}$$

4. Findings and Results

The findings of this paper suggest that out of the all outlined predictors they are the age and the education of the customers which explain and affect the brand symbol recall significantly, as beta coefficient for age and education are significant at $p < 0.05$ as shown in table 1 thus, we fail to reject H1 and H2. It is notable here that as the customer's age increases to the age bracket of 50 to 60 years, the recall for brand symbol gets increased whereas, as the level of education increases it results a decrease in recall for brand symbols. Moreover, the gender of the customer is the only predictor which somehow matters for brand symbol recognition at $p < 0.1$. Hence, we fail to reject H6.

The findings of this paper suggests that the both of the propositions have not been accepted fully but yes we fail to reject their few components as shown in hypotheses assessment summary (i.e. table 2).

5. Discussions and Conclusion

As it is mentioned earlier that brand symbol recall is predicted by age and education but gender does not predict it. This will have a look in three elements. First, the positive relation between age and brand recall by symbol is mean that elder people can recall the brands more than younger people. Reason could be when they go for shopping or when they watch television so they memorize brand symbol but young children or youth do not care about it. Second, the negative prediction between education and brand recall by symbol show that PhD Doctors and postgraduates recall brands less than youth. It means that people those are graduates and intermediates are interested in brand symbols and they have some knowledge about it. Whereas people those are highly educated, do not try to memorize brand symbols. Third, result indicated that gender is insignificantly predicts the recall of brand symbol. So there is no relation between brand symbol recall and gender. It means that male and female recall the brand in a same way or both equally predict. Brand recall does not vary weather males are respondents or females.

Brand symbol recognition does vary from male to female (i.e. it is there in female), while Brand symbol recognition is not affected due to age difference and level of education. Here it is noted that it is impossible for customers to recognize product category of a brand by after seeing brand symbol mo matters they belong to any age category or have any education level.

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Table 1: Regression Estimations

Dependent Variables	Predictors		
	Age	Education	Gender

Brand Symbol Recall	Beta	0.012	-0.21	-0.020
	T-Stats	2.407	-3.498	-1.569
	Sig.	0.017	0.001	0.118
Adjusted R- Squared	0.053			
F-Statistics	4.585			
Dependent Variables	Predictors			
		Age	Education	Gender
Brand Symbol Recognition	Beta	-0.007	-0.002	0.025
	T-Stats	-1.152	-0.321	1.698
	Sig.	0.250	0.748	0.091
Adjusted R- Squared	0.029			
F-Statistics	2.471			

Table 2: Hypotheses Assessment Summary

P1: Brand symbol recall is predicted by level of age, level of education, and gender difference.	
HYPOTHESES	EMPIRICAL CONCLUSIONS at p<0.05
<i>H1</i> : Brand symbol recall is predicted by level of age.	Accepted
<i>H2</i> : Brand symbol recall is the most predicted by level of education	Accepted
<i>H3</i> : Brand symbol recall is the most predicted by gender difference.	Rejected
P2: Brand symbol recognition is predicted by level of age, level of education, and gender difference.	
HYPOTHESES	EMPIRICAL CONCLUSIONS at p<0.10
<i>H4</i> : Brand symbol recognition is predicted by level of age.	Rejected
<i>H5</i> : Brand symbol recognition is the most predicted by level of education.	Rejected
<i>H6</i> : Brand symbol recognition is the most predicted by gender difference.	Accepted

Figure 1: Brand Symbols with the Brand Names



Figure 2: Brand Symbols depicting clear product categories with respective Brand Names



Figure 3: Conceptual Model Framework

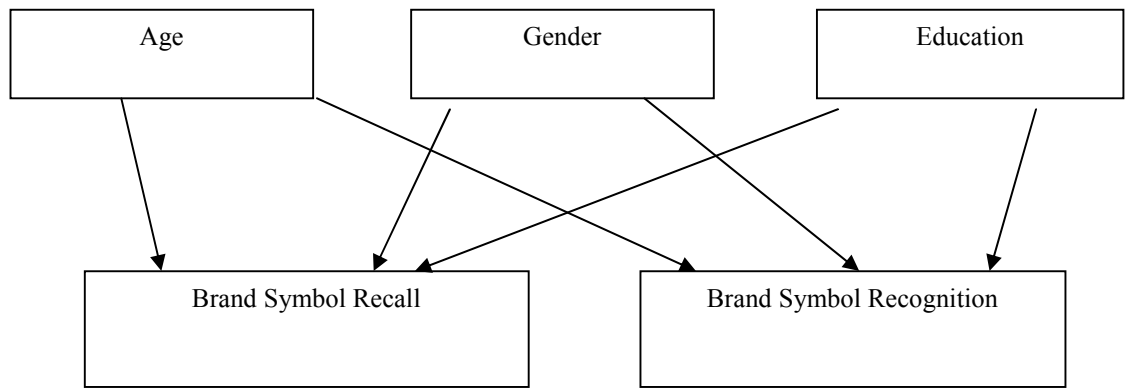


Figure 4: Brand Symbols without names for respondents brand name recall identification

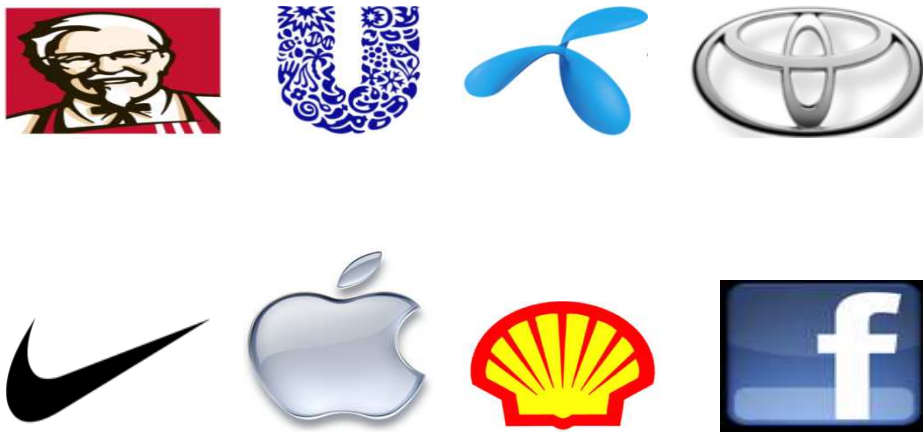


Figure 5: Brand Symbols with names for respondents product category recognition





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