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RATIONALITY AND EMOTIONALITY IN CUSTOMERS' ADVERTISING AND BRAND ELEMENT RECOLLECTION: A STUDY ON LOYAL CUSTOMERS OF CERTAIN BRANDS

VINOD URATH
ASST. PROFESSOR
GURUVAYURAPPAN INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT
NAVAKKARAI

N. R. NARAYANAN
ASST. PROFESSOR
GURUVAYURAPPAN INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT
NAVAKKARAI

ABSTRACT

There is always a connect between the patronisation or loyalty towards a brand and the extend as well as the nature of images that befall on the mind of customers of those brands is the view point of theorists' and they call such an effect as Exposure-familiarity effect and this type of an effect is noticed in the low involvement product purchases. The said imagery could be well recognised by the nature of the recall by the respondents' and thus one can find out the patterns of such recollections and come to a fair amount of meaningful conclusion on what constitute a brand. This study uses unaided recall to find out the pattern of imagery existing in the mind of the customers of a low involvement product among a segment of Management students. The study is exploratory in nature and is consequently not elaborate in the sample selection. The schedule used for the study is an open ended one which extract whatever associations formed in the mind of the respondent about the brand. Result shows clear cut differences in the way the images are formed for different brands in this product category along cognitive and affective lines.

KEYWORDS

Brand Association, Recall, Rationality and Emotionality, Advertising and brand elements.

INTRODUCTION

A Brand and Advertising element recall study was conducted to find out the brands used prominently by the customers in the Toilet soap category in the district of Coimbatore. The profile of the customer population selected were students in the post-graduation level. The recall study by its very nature is used when the researcher wanted to find out what constitute a brand in the mind of the customer.

This is achieved by an instrument which facilitates an unaided, voluntary recollection of the Advertising and brand elements which has got imprinted in the mind of the customers. The result of this process will give one a set of brands patronised and the advertising or marcomm related communication elements, benefits and attributes that the customers will be having in their mind about each of the brands to which he is loyal to. In this study the customer is made to voluntarily recollect those elements of the Advertisement and that of other brand related ones. Since this being a spontaneous recollection in an environment which is devoid of any aid /help from any sources ; it is termed as unaided recall; this could also be theoretically termed as " top of the mind recall" of the brand and it's elements .

THEORETICAL BACK GROUND OF THE STUDY

The advertising world is replete with the instances of studies which assesses the effectiveness of the advertising and its impact. The advertising theorist has come up with such terms as the evoked set, inept and inert set to denote the extent to which the customer seems to keep a brand in his mind and act on it.

"Evoked set" is termed as those few brands well entrenched in the mind and got potential of being bought. The graduation from this is the brand patronization or brand loyalty, the term indicating the level and extend of loyalty or repeated purchase behaviour towards certain brand.

The recall study that helps in getting the names and other associations of the brands entrenched in the mind of the customer, through an open ended querying method is found to be effective in assessing not only the brands patronized but also in knowing the elements of the advertisement and brand elements which is sketched in the mind of the customer with regard to the said brand⁶. When we speak of the nature of these elements one could find certain consistent communication cues, benefits, Attributes, personas, uses, occasions etc..and it could also be seen that these elements will be those which were consistently been falling in the mind space of the customer. By finding out the nature of the Ad and brand elements in the mind of the patronizing customer as also assessing the content of these elements we may come to know the nature of influences and meanings which is created in the mind of customers regarding each of the brands he patronises in a specific category⁷.

The theoretical literature also delves into and comes up with the differing nature of communication and Ad: influence on the customer³. It classifies the product categories into low and high involvement and states that the low involvement product category purchases are influenced more by the passive learning that happens with the exposure of the customers consistently to ads which is beamed to them through medias like Television. The theory also stresses on the passive nature of this media called TV and shows that the Ad: elements are assimilated by the customers watching these medias in a passive manner and is acted upon by recollection at the time of actual purchase¹. This model is termed as the Exposure-Familiarity Model in Advertising Parlance.

So in order that one may know the possible images the customer possess with regard to each and every brand, in a low involvement category like a toilet soap a recall study to get to know the brands being used was done. This study could also be used to find out the brand and advertising elements with respect to different brands for one to figure out the possible passive learning that had happened and the consistent imagery which is possessed in the mind of the customer regarding each brand. The Resultant recall outcomes are being classified into rational and emotional in order to find out the effect of cognition and affective-ness in the product evaluation².

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To find out the image that is held by prominent brands (most patronised by user) of toilet soaps among student community
2. To assess and classify the brands with regard to Rational (functional, benefit, usage)and emotional orientation it possess in the mind of customers as emanated from exposure to Advertising and other brand element communication.
3. To find out some of the consistent such meanings that is encrypted in the customers' psyche, if any.

METHODOLOGY AND THE INSTRUMENT

The study was conducted among the post graduate management students in Coimbatore .A Sample College was selected looking into the regional profile of the students and the selected college had a fair mix of students from two neighbouring states. A sample of 70 students were served the schedule and responses elicited.

The instrument used was an unaided recall schedule which asks for the" Top of the mind" recall of the elements which constitute most patronized brand in the mind of the customer; ie, what comes to mind with regard to those brands (which are already their most preferred brands) and also what meaning they give to the said brands assessed in terms of the image and associations recollected by the customers of the said brand. For this purpose the questions are put to the customer asking him to recall the elements that comes to the mind with regard to

1. Specific customers' most patronised brand and the Ad elements and Brand elements which comes to the mind.

The queries extracted information on what important thoughts and images comes to the mind of the customer for that brand (see the questionnaire for more details).

Questions also extracted recollections on the Ad and Brand element which the person can recollect with regard the brand which is used prominently by him. Brand elements and Ad elements recollected for each of the specific brands patronized was found out and the results are tabulated.

STRUCTURING OF QUESTIONS AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE

The questions are purportedly ordered in a sequence wherein the 1st question asks the receiver to spell out the most patronized brand and it is followed up with the question on the Advertising elements which had fallen on him and could be retrieved from the mind by the respondent for the said brand. This question is followed up by the query on what brand elements (whatever could be remembered from the packing details of the product) are remembered of the said brand.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The sample is quite lean to extend the results to any larger population and the findings could only be indicative and is meant to serve as an exploratory attempt to throw light on some possible mental dispositions of certain patronisers of the brands. It is a much skewed population that the study has attempted and thus the study is only meant as an inspiration for further studies along these lines which only can bring actionable results for the managers.

ANALYSIS

The Analysis is structured as follows:

1. Table 1 shows the Percentage loyalists of prominent brands
2. Table 2 shows the Ad element recollection- rational and emotional classification
3. Table 3 shows Ad element to brand element recollection comparison for Lux brand
4. Table 4 shows Ad element to brand element recollection comparison for Lifebuoy brand
5. Table 5 shows Ad element to brand element recollection comparison for Pears brand

Though there were many other brands recollected as Dettol, Medimix, Cinthol, Dove and Santhoor, it was seen that very few patronisers were there for these comparatively and so very few recall numbers. So the tabulation was not done for those brands.

TABLE 1: MOST PATRONIZED BRANDS BY THE RESPONDENTS (in Percentages)

lifebuoy	19%
lux	38%
pears	13%

Dove, medimix, sandhoor make up the rest

From the table 1 above it can be seen that 38% of the unaided recallers', recalled Lux as their first brand (loyal brand) while 19% and 13% revealed that they are using Lifebuoy and Pears soap brands respectively. Rest 30% told a mix of brands like Dove, Medimix, Sandhoor etc.

TABLE 2: AD: RECOLLECTION FOR THE RESPECTIVE BRANDS: REAL TO OTHER BENEFITS-CONSOLIDATION OF ALL BRANDS (in percentages)

Brand	Rational/ benefit recollection	Emotional recall	Total
Lifebuoy	100	0	Total of 14
Lux	67%	Not recollected/others	33 Total of 28
Pears	0	emotional level recall	50 Total of 9
Medimix,Dove,Sandhoor	100	Emotional recall	Total of 14
Others	100	Emotional recall	Total of 5
Grand Total			70

When the query on what Ad: elements they could recall about their most preferred and used brands is put forth, and analysed, it was found out that there exist differences between the Ad elements along Rational and emotional lines. From above table 2, it can be seen that for Lifebuoy, Medimix, Dove and Santhoor 100% of the users of these brands recalled some real rational benefits and none any emotional reasons. While opposite is true for Pears (100%) and partially emotional for Lux (with 67% rational recollection).

TABLE 3: AD: ELEMENT TO BRAND ELEMENT RECOLLECTION-A COMPARISON FOR LUX BRAND

Lux	Ad: element recollection											% of the total	
	beauty	%of TTL	Col%	Silky smoothnes and fairness	% of TTL	Col%	rose and sweet fragrance is seen in ad	%of TTL	Col%	nk	%of TTL		Col%
red & white,rose and white price,manfcturng date,place	6	20	50										20
pink, aiswarya's face ,badham,milk	5	18	50										18
Rose ,pink-lux orchid				3	11	100							11
rose color									5	20	67		20
white, badam flavor									3	11	33		11
actress photo on pack, variety colors							6	20	100				20
Total	11	(38)	100	3	11	100	5	20	100	9	31	100	

TABLE 4: AD: ELEMENT TO BRAND ELEMENT RECOLLECTION-A COMPARISON FOR LIFEBOUY BRAND

Lifebuoy	Ad: element recollection						% of the total
Brand element recollection	Keep health, protect germs	% of total	kill germs	% of total	give refreshment, 24 hr protection	% of total	
red, white colour, price details	5	37.5					37.5
Flavors like orange, cool(blue),red color			5	37.5			37.5
red, white color, manufacturing date, price, weight, contents					4	25	25
Total	5		5		4		100

TABLE 5: AD: ELEMENT TO BRAND ELEMENT RECOLLECTION-A COMPARISON FOR PEARS BRAND

pears	Ad: element recollection						% of the total
Brand element recollection	child tells to mother-not clear	% of total	love	% of total	others	% of total	
white, orange, gold	4	44					40
light maroon, date, manufacturing, ingredients			3	33			40
others					2	23	20
Total	4		3		2		100

AD: ELEMENT AND BRAND ELEMENT

A distinction was put into the survey with regard the elements which was remembered from the Advertisements as against the different brand elements (consisting of logo, colour combinations, other information on package, the attributes of product, the personas etc) recollected other than what was done from exposure to Ads.

AD: ELEMENT RECALL- THE RATIONAL AND EMOTIONAL SIDE

The recollections are classified into rational and emotional wherein the rationality aspect is identified as health oriented recall, mildness on skin, protection from germs, approval from health experts/doctors/associations, baby skin softener etc. In a nut shell all elements and benefits which was real and utilitarian as against emotional or Affective.

While the emotional aspect is love, silky, fairness, sweet fragrance etc.

BRAND ELEMENT RECOLLECTION - THE RATIONAL AND EMOTIONAL SIDE

Similarly the elements which are identified from the Ad: or any other consistent communication touch points are also analysed in these two dimensions. They are the significant illustrations, pictures, information on the packing.

The recollections here also could be classified as

1. Rational and 2. Emotional.

Thus we may say that price, manufacturing date, place ingredients, lime logo, weight, contents, batch no.; ingredients as purely rational while many varied, different colours, Face of popular actress, model, actress on the pack are emotional.

INTERPRETATION OF TABLES ABOVE

For lux brand users they could recollect an Ad: element, beauty most (39%) and other elements recollected include silky smoothness and fairness (11%), rose and sweet fragrance (20%) from the Ad.; the 1st being rational and last emotional while the second one being a combination of both . 30% or more could' nt recollect anything at all even when they prefer Lux as their first brand.

Here it is noted that a generic benefit on which the brand building effort and brand's meaning has been created is the one which is mostly recollected as compared to some more later elements added.

While the brand elements recounted from the pack are red, white rose, the price, manufacturing date, place, model appeared, pink, badam flavor,.in different combinations. Here also 20% noted red & white, rose and white, price, manufacturing date, place; of which we identify the rational aspects like date and price being noticed by 20%, while rest of them noticed overwhelmingly emotional aspects (see table above)

There is a tendency on the part of customers to look for some real time information like manufacturing, price etc still a good percentage notices some affective elements even on the pack of a product like soap.

In the next table 4 above, which concerns the brand Lifebuoy(recollection of brand and Ad: elements of loyal brand) ,the full extent of Ad: recollections included only rational aspects as "keep health, protect from germs", kill germs, give refreshment, 24 hr protection and the brand elements noted by them were "red, white colour, price details", "Flavours like orange, cool(blue),red colour", "red, white colour,manufacturing date,price,weight,contents" .They also almost followed the rational tinge.

For table 5, where pears brand patronisers' recalled elements are shown, it is seen that Ad elements recalled were "child tells to mother-the actual matter was unclear" was the recollection by many, as also "love" and for brand elements it was "colours like white, orange, gold", "light maroon colour,date of manufacturing, ingredients". Ad: element recollection shows emotional orientation in the nature of recollections while for brand element recall it is more rational.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Among this set of students the prominently used brands are Lux(38%),lifebuoy(19%) and pears(13%),rest of it equally divided between Medimix,Santhoor,Cinthol,Dove,Dettol brands.
2. When the rational and emotional aspects of recollections are considered Lux brand had the unique "benefit recollection" of "beauty" with 67% recalling one or the other rational aspect while rest 33% could' nt recall anything rational
3. For Lifebuoy brand, real, rational recollection was 100% with none "not recollecting".
4. For pears brand, 100% of the patronisers recollected emotional aspects from Ad's and none any rational aspects.
5. The Ad: elements recollected for Lux brand separately are "beauty"(38%), "silky smoothness and fairness"(11%), "rose and sweet fragrance is seen in Ad"(20%) while 31% could not recollect any Ad: element at all even when they patronize the Lux brand.
6. he brand element recollections for Lux were "red & white,rose and white,price,manufacturing date,place"(20%), "pink, prominent Model's face, badham, milk"(18%),"rose, pink-lux orchid"(11%), "rose colour"(20%), "white, badam flavour"(11%), "actress photo on pack, variety colours"(20%).

The above 2 points elaborate the Lux brand having the impression of being a brand with beauty and related associations in the mind of the patroniser while the 'brand element recall' finds the customers of Lux recalling a variety of flavors, colors and attributes seen on the pack of the brand. This could be the result of a long saga of extensions of the brand and its likely impact on the customer. Also the model is prominently recalled here indicating a large penetration of that Ad: element.

7. For Lifebuoy brand, Ad element recollections are separately identified as "keep health, protect from germs"(37.5%), "kill germs"(37.5%), "give refreshment, 24 hour protection"(25%).These are all rational recollections and no emotional ones are seen here.
8. For lifebuoy, brand element recall were "red, white, price details"(37.5%), "Flavours like orange, cool(blue),red colour"(37.5%),"red, white colour, manufacturing date, price, weight, contents"(25%).
From points 6 and 7 above, we may deduce that Lifebuoy and its Ad's managed a very rational communication impact on the patroniser and when the brand elements are checked as colour combinations of red and white predominate showing a continuity effect of these Ad: elements from the earlier eras of the brand's Ad's . A good percentage seems to note other brand elements as price, quantity and content details as compared to Lux brand.
9. For the Pears brand, Ad: recollections were "child tells to mother- were not clear what is told"(44%), "love"(33%), "other aspects"(23%)
10. For the pears brand, the brand element recall were "white, orange, gold"(44%), "light maroon, date of manufacturing, ingredients"(33%), " other aspects"(23%).

Pears seems to give an image of "mother's love for the child" association as a unique element not told for any other brand .

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that the brand wise Ad: and Brand element recall shows pure rational recall for a brand like Lifebuoy and pure emotionality for a brand like Pears. But when it comes to the brand Lux the rational aspect of Beauty is supported by a slew of associations which could be termed affective. It seems that the benefit plank beauty is built on a fair amount of emotional associations being used on course of the brand building exercise of the Lux brand.

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ANNEXURE

ANNEXURE -1

SCHEDULE

1. Tell which soap brand is mostly used by you
2. Tell what is said in TV ads of the brand
3. Tell colour combo of pack and other details on pack

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