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EMOTIONAL BRANDING AS A TOOL TO SALVAGE TRUST AND CONFIDENCE OF CUSTOMER IN INDIAN PACKAGED FOOD INDUSTRY

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ABSTRACT

The brand preference and buying decisions of modern customers are not influenced by rationality alone rather their decision making process is greatly influenced by emotional needs. Even the big established brands try to knot the customer with their brands at an emotional level. Acquiring a new customer is not sufficient for the marketer the key to success lies in retaining the current customers through long lasting relationship and gaining new. Some changes in the external environment cause distrust among customers towards specific brands, that results in a great loss in the form of falling sales and profit of such organizations. In order to regain that lost trust and confidence, brands need to generate emotions towards the actual product that they offer. This paper is an effort to find out the association between demographic factors (age, gender & education) and emotional attachment with the brand advertisement. Further the paper will try to explore the relevance of emotional branding as a tool to counter negative repercussion and regain customer trust & confidence in the brand (Specific case of Maggie noodles is taken here to represent packaged food industry in India.)

KEYWORDS

emotional branding, customer loyalty, packaged food industry

INTRODUCTION

A strong brand association exists in various industries. People buy a specific brand not just because it performs outstanding on rational criteria, but just because of the reason that the brand is attached to them at an emotional level. "The purpose of emotional branding is to enable people to form emotional connections with brands in a subliminal way" (Gobé 2009, xxix). Many companies are trying to design their communication message to trigger the emotions of customers, to name a few; mobile brands like Apple and Samsung, automobile brands like Maruti-Suzuki, Hyundai, Honda, Toyota and many more. The prime question here is, does this strong emotional knot exist only for fashion, Mobile and Automobile brands or it also covers the packaged food industry. The importance of this study increases after the several controversies come into existence from time to time starting from the case of Cadbury in October 2003, when worms were found in their chocolates. After this, in 2006 pesticide issue hits the base when the Centre for Science and Environment said that Pepsi and Coca Cola contained pesticides and insecticides much beyond the prescribed bounds. In May 2014, one of the most trusted noodles brand Maggi was in controversies because of the reports of Food Safety Regulators from Uttar Pradesh, India, which confirmed the existence of high levels of monosodium glutamate (MSG) and lead content in Maggi much beyond the permissible limits. Consumption of monosodium glutamate (MSG) and lead beyond the permissible limits can cause long-term damage to almost every organ, including liver, kidney, brain, and bones. In June 2015, the Uttar Pradesh Food and Drug Administration reported that detergent was found in the milk samples produced by Mother Dairy. The list of controversies does not end here, many big brands like McDonalds-Burger, KFC chicken, PepsiCo's Lay's potato chips, Subway sandwich etc. have been accused of adulteration and misleading the customers through false claims and inadequate labelling.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept of branding is not new to anyone, it has been discussed widely in literature for decades, and it has attracted attention of a lot of marketers from past three decades. Emotional branding is a complex concept and can be viewed as a blend of several marketing theories. "Emotional branding is defined as the engagement of consumers in a deep, long-term, intimate emotional connection with the brand, which is beyond the benefit based satisfaction, and which creates a special trust based relationship for the development of a holistic emotional experience" (Morrison and Crane, 2007). "It is highly evident that intense psychological bonds with the brands referred as emotional brand connections lead to higher levels of firm performance and competitive advantage" (Malar et al., 2011). The concept of emotional branding has been studied from several angles in branding literature Wyner, G.A. (2003) elucidated emotions in building brand associations. In 2005 Yoo, C., & MacInnis explained emotions in brand attitude formation and emotions, Tsai, S-P described comprehensive model of brand purchase value and intention and Thomson, MacInnis, D.J., Park, C.W. studied the relationship between people and the brands and found that customers build up long lasting emotional relationships with a few selected brands. DeWitt, T., Nguyen, D.T., and Marshall, R. (2008) studied emotions in customer loyalty. Past studies have put a light on emotional branding as an instrument of, customer attraction, attitude formation, purchase intention and so forth. No study was directed to find out whether emotional branding can contribute in salvaging trust and confidence of customers in Indian packaged food industry after the brand dented badly due to negative publicity based upon various agencies reports. Here the specific case of Maggi for which, India was the second largest market in term of Sales revenue in 2014 is taken to represent the Indian packaged food industry. Maggi is making hard efforts to develop emotional ties with its customers to regain the confidence and loyalty of its customers for the brand after the MSG and lead content controversies.

IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

Marketers require to build a bond between its customers and brand for long term success. Emotional branding is gaining importance globally and brands are being humanized to trigger customers at emotional level. This study is an attempt to explore another dimension of emotional branding as a tool to salvage customer trust and confidence.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The customers may feel very uncomfortable when they come in conflict with what they believe. Though the emotional branding creates a relationship between a brand and its customers, but can it prove as a life saver in the situation when the brand gains 360-degree negative publicity.

HYPOTHESIS

- H₀ 1: There is no significant association between age and emotional attachment with brand advertisement.
- H_a 1: There is a significant association between age and emotional attachment with brand advertisement.
- H₀ 2: There is no significant association between gender and emotional attachment with brand advertisement.
- H_a 2: There is a significant association between gender and emotional attachment with brand advertisement.
- H₀ 3: There is no significant association between education and emotional attachment with brand advertisement.
- H_a 3: There is a significant association between education and emotional attachment with brand advertisement.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To find out the relationship between age and emotional attachment with brand advertisement.
2. To find out the relationship between gender and emotional attachment with brand advertisement.
3. To find out the relationship between Education and emotional attachment with brand advertisement.
4. To find out the role of Emotional branding in regaining the trust and confidence of customer in Indian packaged food industry

METHODOLOGY

The methodology for the study is quantitative in nature. The study includes packaged food buyers specifically Maggie noodles. Structured questionnaire was developed in Google forms with Likert type scale rating, from strongly agree to strongly disagree. A non-probability, convenience sampling technique was used to order a consumer survey. A total of 150 questionnaires were administered; responses to 110 were received and found to be fit for analysis.

DATA ANALYSIS

Respondents Profile: Among the total respondent's majority of the respondents i.e. 61.8% lies in the age bracket of 18 to 25 years and only 9.1 % respondents were of 35 years above age. In the gender distribution out of total respondents 55.5 % were female respondents whereas remaining 44.5% respondents were male. In the education distribution a 44.5% respondents were Post Graduates and remaining 55.5 % were under graduates.

TABLE 1: DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS

Demographic Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
AGE	18-25 Years	68	61.8	61.8
	26-30 Years	19	17.3	79.1
	31-35 Years	13	11.8	90.9
	Above 35 Years	10	9.1	100.0
	Total	110	100.0	
Gender	Male	49	44.5	44.5
	Female	61	55.5	100.0
	Total	110	100.0	
Education	UG	61	55.5	55.5
	PG	49	44.5	100.0
	Total	110	100.0	

(Source: Primary Data)

In order to identify association between demographic factors and emotional attachment with brand advertisement cross tabulation was performed.

AGE V/S EMOTIONAL ATTACHMENT WITH THE ADVERTISEMENT CAMPAIGNS

Emotional attachment of customers with the brand is very crucial for the marketers and they are striving hard to achieve the same. The question of prime importance is whether there is an impact of age on the emotional attachment with the brand.

H₀ 1: There is no significant association between age and emotional attachment with brand advertisement.

H_a 1: There is a significant association between age and emotional attachment with brand advertisement.

TABLE 2: AGE V/S EMOTIONAL ATTACHMENT WITH THE ADVERTISEMENT CAMPAIGNS CROSS TABULATION

			I found myself emotionally attached with the advertisement campaigns of the Maggie Noodles.			
			Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Total
AGE	18-25 Years	Count	28	27	13	68
		Expected Count	22.3	30.3	15.5	68.0
		% within AGE	41.2%	39.7%	19.1%	100.0%
	26-30 Years	Count	6	7	6	19
		Expected Count	6.2	8.5	4.3	19.0
		% within AGE	31.6%	36.8%	31.6%	100.0%
	31-35 Years	Count	1	7	5	13
		Expected Count	4.3	5.8	3.0	13.0
		% within AGE	7.7%	53.8%	38.5%	100.0%
	Above 35 Years	Count	1	8	1	10
		Expected Count	3.3	4.5	2.3	10.0
		% within AGE	10.0%	80.0%	10.0%	100.0%
Total		Count	36	49	25	110
		Expected Count	36.0	49.0	25.0	110.0
		% within AGE	32.7%	44.5%	22.7%	100.0%

(Source: Primary Data)

TABLE 3 : CHI-SQUARE TESTS

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	12.417 ^a	6	.053
Likelihood Ratio	13.389	6	.037
Linear-by-Linear Association	3.979	1	.046
N of Valid Cases	110		

As table 3 indicates that calculated value of chi-square (12.417) is less than the tabulated value (12.592) at degree of freedom 6 and 5% significance level. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. It means age is significantly associated with emotional attachment with brand advertisement

GENDER V/S EMOTIONAL ATTACHMENT WITH BRAND ADVERTISEMENT.

H₀ 2: There is no significant association between gender and emotional attachment with brand advertisement.

H_a 2: There is a significant association between gender and emotional attachment with brand advertisement.

TABLE 4: GENDER V/S EMOTIONAL ATTACHMENT WITH THE ADVERTISEMENT CAMPAIGNS CROSS TABULATION

			I found myself emotionally attached with the advertisement campaigns of the Maggie Noodles.			
			Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Total
GENDER	Male	Count	0	28	21	49
		Expected Count	16.0	21.8	11.1	49.0
		% within GENDER	0.0%	57.1%	42.9%	100.0%
	Female	Count	36	21	4	61
		Expected Count	20.0	27.2	13.9	61.0
		% within GENDER	59.0%	34.4%	6.6%	100.0%
Total		Count	36	49	25	110
		Expected Count	36.0	49.0	25.0	110.0
		% within GENDER	32.7%	44.5%	22.7%	100.0%

(Source: Primary Data)

TABLE 5: CHI-SQUARE TESTS

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	47.820 ^a	2	.000
Likelihood Ratio	62.272	2	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	44.923	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	110		

As table 5 indicates that calculated value of chi-square (47.820) is much more than the tabulated value (5.991) at degree of freedom 2 and 5% significance level. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted. It means gender is not significantly associated with emotional attachment with brand advertisement.

EDUCATION V/S EMOTIONAL ATTACHMENT WITH BRAND ADVERTISEMENT

H₀ 3: There is no significant association between education and emotional attachment with brand advertisement.

H_a 3: There is a significant association between education and emotional attachment with brand advertisement.

TABLE 6: EDUCATION V/S EMOTIONAL ATTACHMENT WITH THE ADVERTISEMENT CAMPAIGNS CROSS TABULATION

			I found myself emotionally attached with the advertisement campaigns of the Maggie Noodles.			
			Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Total
EDUCATION	UG	Count	12	37	12	61
		Expected Count	20.0	27.2	13.9	61.0
		% within EDUCATION	19.7%	60.7%	19.7%	100.0%
	PG	Count	24	12	13	49
		Expected Count	16.0	21.8	11.1	49.0
		% within EDUCATION	49.0%	24.5%	26.5%	100.0%
Total		Count	36	49	25	110
		Expected Count	36.0	49.0	25.0	110.0
		% within EDUCATION	32.7%	44.5%	22.7%	100.0%

(Source: Primary Data)

TABLE 7: CHI-SQUARE TESTS

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	15.673 ^a	2	.000
Likelihood Ratio	16.182	2	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	2.492	1	.114
N of Valid Cases	110		

As table 7 indicates that calculated value of chi-square (15.673) is more than the tabulated value (5.991) at degree of freedom 2 and 5% significance level. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted. It means education is not significantly associated with emotional attachment with brand advertisement.

TABLE 8: MAGGIE NOODLES ADVERTISEMENT IS SO CLOSELY RELATED WITH MY PAST EMOTIONAL INCIDENTS THAT IT BRINGS A TEAR/SMILE IN/ON MY EYES/FACE

Particulars	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	12	10.9	10.9
Disagree	12	10.9	21.8
Neutral	48	43.6	65.5
Agree	25	22.7	88.2
Strongly Agree	13	11.8	100.0
Total	110	100.0	

(Source: Primary Data)

Table 8 clearly shows that 11.8% of the respondents are strongly agree with the statement that Maggie Noodles advertisement are so closely related with my past emotional incidents that it brings a Tear/smile in/on my eyes/face and 22.7% agreed with the same. Around 43.6% of the respondents found their selves in neutral state and 21.8% respondents disagreed with the statement.

TABLE 9: I BUY MAGGIE NOODLES NOT JUST BECAUSE OF ITS TASTE BUT DUE TO OF THE ATTACHMENT WITH THE BRAND AT EMOTIONAL LEVEL (CONNECTION, MEMORIES ATTACHED ETC.)

Particulars	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	12	10.9	10.9
Disagree	48	43.6	54.5
Neutral	25	22.7	77.3
Strongly Agree	25	22.7	100.0
Total	110	100.0	

(Source: Primary Data)

Table 9 shows that only 22.7 % respondents buy Maggie noodles not just because of its Taste but due to the attachment with the brand at emotional level. A clear majority (54.5%) disagreed with the statement and 22.7% are neutral on the same. Although only 22.7% customers take buying decision due to emotional appeal but this number cannot be ignored by the marketer.

TABLE 10: I BELIEVE THE EMOTIONAL KNOT WITH THE BRAND MAGGIE CONTINUOUSLY OPPOSING THE NEGATIVE PUBLICITY THE BRAND SUFFERED IN PAST.

Particulars	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Disagree	12	10.9	10.9
Neutral	36	32.7	43.6
Agree	37	33.6	77.3
Strongly Agree	25	22.7	100.0
Total	110	100.0	

(Source: Primary Data)

Table 10 clearly indicates that 56.3 % respondents believe that emotional knot with the brand Maggie continuously opposing the negative publicity the brand suffered in past. Only 10.9% respondents believe that the emotional knot does not oppose negative publicity. So it can be said that emotional branding can be used by the marketers as a tool to counter negative repercussions

TABLE 11: EMOTIONAL ATTACHMENT WITH THE BRAND MAGGIE CONTRIBUTED A LOT IN REGAINING MY TRUST AND CONFIDENCE IN THE BRAND AFTER LEAD AND MSG CONTENT REPORTS BY SEVERAL AGENCIES

Particulars	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Disagree	12	10.9	10.9
Neutral	24	21.8	32.7
Agree	62	56.4	89.1
Strongly Agree	12	10.9	100.0
Total	110	100.0	

(Source: Primary Data)

Table 11 indicates that 67.3% respondents agreed that their emotional attachment with the brand Maggie contributed a lot in regaining their trust and confidence in the brand after lead and MSG content reports by several agencies. Only 10.9 % respondents disagreed with the same and 21.8% respondents kept their response in the neutral category. A marketer can't ignore the power of emotional attachment as a tool to salvage trust and confidence in the brand.

CONCLUSION

Maggie planned its comeback in a different way, they tied up with Snapdeal to register request for the home delivery of Maggie noodles as it was not possible to make Maggie noodles available everywhere in India in such less span of time. Suresh Narayanan, Chairman & MD, Nestle India on behalf of all employees of Nestle gave a thank message to all suppliers, distributors, retailers and consumers for their support. Later on all their Advertisement campaigns including '*Khushiyon ki recipe*', '*Independent, Mom's Maggie*', '*Dhabe ki Raunak laut kar aa gayi*'-Welcome back', '*Princess*', '*same taste – nothing has changed*' senior and junior conversation Hostel ad and many more are targeted to trigger consumer emotions directly. The finding of this study indicated that age is significantly associated with emotional attachment with brand advertisement. Gender and education have no significant relationship with emotional attachment with the brand advertisement. 34.5% customers accepted that Maggie noodles advertisement is so closely related with their past emotional incidents that it brings a tear/smile in/on my eyes/face. 22.7% respondents accepted that they buy Maggie noodles simply because of emotional knot with the brand. Although 22.7 % seems a small number but the marketer can't ignore it as in totality it may have a great impact on the sales of brand. 56.3 % respondents believe that emotional knot with the brand Maggie continuously opposing the negative publicity the brand suffered in past. All this data clearly shows the role of emotional branding in retaining and regaining the trust and confidence in the brand.

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