

The Power of Emotional Branding Towards Brand Identity

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Abstract: Emotional branding helps firms and organizations to enhance their marketing strategies and competitive advantage towards consumer behavior and customer appeal. This approach helps marketer to position their brand in a deeper way that will impact the emotions of their valued consumer. Different brands now a day's need brand identity because it gives the product and or services its unique personality and character. By studying emotional branding, this will give firms the unique identity where consumer is able to associate the brand towards its unique image and representation. Across the globe, many products and services were introduced to us by marketer. Many of them started to have their local versions if not editions that are adjusted to their culture, taste and preferences. Emotional branding is a new paradox in the marketing field unlike consumer behavior, the term was considered to be in his adolescence. This gives emotional branding certain degree of characterization as to its attachments to the brand and its image. By studying the emotions of the consumer, this will give marketer relevant data that can be converted into marketing plan and activities that will attract customer and consumer.

Keywords: emotional branding, consumer behavior, cultural differences, brand identity.

I. Introduction

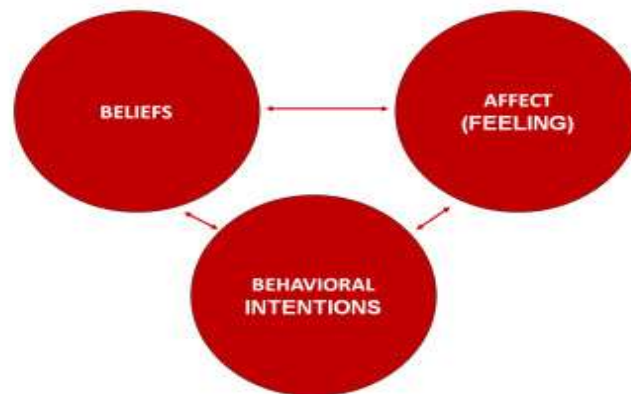
Emotional branding helps firms and organizations to enhance their marketing strategies and competitive advantage towards consumer behavior and customer appeal. This approach helps marketer to position their brand in a deeper way that will impact the emotions of their valued consumer. Different brands now a day's need brand identity because it gives the product and or services its unique personality and character. By studying emotional branding, this will give firms the unique identity where consumer is able to associate the brand towards its unique image and representation. Across the globe, many products and services were introduced to us by marketer. Many of them started to have their local versions if not editions that are adjusted to their culture, taste and preferences. Emotional branding is a new paradox in the marketing field unlike consumer behavior, the term was considered to be in his adolescence. This gives emotional branding certain degree of characterization as to its attachments to the brand and its image. By studying the emotions of the consumer, this will give marketer relevant data that can be converted into marketing plan and activities that will attract customer and consumer.

Different brand have their own unique personality as it shadow each consumers/customers perspective. Brand identity can be attributed to emotional branding because it was the medium that results into brand identification and brand image. For example we want to buy a soft drink (a cola) because we want to refresh our feeling after long and tiring work in the office. With that we can view emotional branding as to the desire, wants and needs of our body. To other consumer water can be a good option or even juice. It only explains that consumer/customers have their own tastes and preferences as to their choice of beverage/drink. There are many known factors that affect brand choices among consumer/customer. Those factors can be family, relatives, friends, colleagues, coworker's product endorser, icons and more. Over the years, this factor affects emotional brand attachment and identity because consumer/customer already established their own brand loyalty and brand engagement. Emotional branding once capture the heart of consumer/customer it is very difficult to break because it's like marriage wherein consumer/customer already signaled their symbol of love and affection to the brand they like. Perhaps it can only be separated if new brand, products or services will be offered in the market that will give them more value to money and quality emphasis.

Theoretical Framework

There are many known marketing theory behind successful marketing strategies that will challenge existing brand identity. However, we have to take a look about its roots in order for us to see what lies beneath towards consumer attitude that will leads to emotional branding as a result of its intentions and reactions. Perner (1999) proposed in the model (See Figure 1) that consumer attitude has 3 major components such as: (1) Beliefs (2) Affect (Feeling) and (3) Behavioral Intentions. These components are highly interrelated components that represent forces that influence how the consumer will react to the object or their desired products and or services.

Figure 1: Consumer Attitude



Adapted from Lars Perner 1999-2008 http://www.consumerpsychologist.com/cb_Atitudes.html

Beliefs. The first component is *beliefs*. A consumer may hold both positive beliefs toward an object as well as negative beliefs. The influence of beliefs is very strong than the influence of others. An example in the Filipino culture is that “Don’t buy black shirt as it signifies bad luck”. This old belief still carries thru generations and generations to come. However, due to modern concept of fashion and fad, this old belief was already modernized. Western influence in this stage is rampant as its culture was introduced to Filipinos during their Philippine occupation after the Spaniards. These beliefs are very strong as many western principles and influence are still in the mind of most Filipinos which has become a part of their culture. Another example in Chinese culture in choice of color wherein they always wants white or pure solid color. This has been passes over the generation if not dynasty to dynasty and it was still a belief now a days. With regard to Emotional branding as far as beliefs is concern; those customers can select consumer/customer goods based from their way of life. Emotional branding is part of the belief process because it stay in their mind overtime and difficult wipe out.

Affect (Feelings). Consumers also hold certain feelings toward brands or other objects. Sometimes these feelings are based on the beliefs (e.g., a person feels nauseated when thinking about a hamburger because of the tremendous amount of fat it contains), but there may also be feelings which are relatively independent of beliefs. The influence of family has always been strong ties for most Filipinos. In typical Filipino family, the parents (father and mother) are the ones who hold the money of their children. In some instances, they are also the advisers in terms of buying things for personal effects. Modern approaches to consumer buying lead to a more successful buying power for marketers. An example is when there is an ultimate sale; the marketers usually put the timing on the first or last week of the month. Moreover, the Philippines have a lot of holidays wherein the marketers can take advantage of these opportunities. Another example in British culture, if there are many items on sale they still think that the price may go down if not reduces. Because of that they may hold their budget for the mean time until such time that there will be new offerings. In an unpopular culture, it affects their feelings toward an item they want to buy. Perhaps for teenagers they can’t even sleep for the new toys they want to buy. It is applicable in this scenario because they already have the feelings and emotions toward the product they want to have or possess. The influence of the person affects the feeling of the person there emotion is a factor in buying decision. In terms of emotional buying, feeling towards the products or services tends to affect persons decision because of many psychological factors and one of them is emotion. Another example is when the child is crying and for parents it’s difficult not buy the items that was hold in their hands especially if the general public saw it. When it comes to consumer attitude, emotional branding plays vital role when the product or services affect (feelings) of the person. It could be positive or negative feelings towards products or services. In Canadian culture, if the teenager wants to buy new stuffs they tend to work hard and improve their grades and show to their parents their marks. With that they can ask for a reward for their good academic standing. While in American culture teenager are going for a part time work just to buy their new stuffs because American culture is more on independent while others maybe dependent to their parents.

Behavioral Intentions. The behavioral intention is what the consumer plans to do with respect to the object (e.g., buy or not buy the brand). As with affect, this is sometimes a logical consequence of beliefs (or affect), but may sometimes reflect other circumstances. For Filipinos, this intention may or may be applicable as to its psychological behavior in buying things. One of the common denominators of behavior pattern of Filipino consumers is that they look for alternative brands and comparing the prices then weighs things. They want products that will last even if the product is expensive. They believe that in the long run, they will save a lot than buying more cheaper or alternative things as compared to the original. Practicality is now the name of the game especially consumer goods started to became expensive and therefore consumer/customer look for value of their money in all aspect. Emotional branding can also create backlash especially if the brand image is not acceptable within groups. For instance, make ups or beauty products for teens where the mother doesn’t want their teen ager girls to buy such products because they are afraid for their grownups. There are some mothers who even discourage the buy such product.

One of the pioneering studies incorporating emotions in the marketing research has been the Bagozzi, et al (1999) where emotions are defined as “mental states of readiness that arise from appraisals of events or one’s own thoughts”. This explains that emotions are always part of the process in brand selection and choices. Speaking of brand, it can define as a set of idea that define a product or service that distinguish a company against its rivals. They are the one who gives lasting

impression to them. 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). Meanwhile (Thompson, et al, 2006) mentioned that emotional branding focuses on brand meanings that interact with consumer lives and inspire their passion, life stories, memories and experience.

Similarly, there are many consumer researchers that investigate brand personalities, brand communities and meanings that anchor strong consumer-brand relationships arrive at conclusions and recommendations that are consistent with emotional-branding tenets. (Aaker 1997) (Brown, Kozinets and Sherry 2003)

Emotional Branding in different perspective

There are many definitions available that defines emotional branding wherein different authors have their own point of view and opinions. Emotional branding can be cross cultural because the influence of the country who conquer or colonizer is still present in the modern times. There are many countries that have been colonized by many countries and therefore their culture is all mixed up. This attitudes, behaviors and values are carry over in the next generations however it varies to people on how they react in certain things. In terms of emotional branding, customer tends to look for historical perspective of the brand as it gives them idea about the brand test of time experience. This is very much present in watch industry, for example in the brand ROLEX with a new corporate slogan of *"It doesn't Just Tell Time. It Tells History"*. That message says it all and the company has a very striking logo which signifies the "king". Another example that are unique to watches brands includes they put the sign "Since or EST (established) which gives customer the peace of mind in buying their watches. If a person owned "Rolex" watch then other people saw them having a high status symbol in the society and it gives brand identity to them that is synonymous to luxury and prestige.

In the beverage industry where Coca Cola and PEPSI dominates the market in many regions across the globe, their formula is simply it refreshes everyone it touches. Both brands are leading in many countries and tie-ups with other leading brands. Emotional branding is a consumer-centric, relational and story-driven approach to forging deep and enduring affective bonds between consumers and brands (Roberts, 2004). In the example above, those brands are using iconic endorser for their products due to the fact that it is becoming into a popularity contest. Coca Cola nor PEPSI will give its customer refreshing experience that is when they open a can or bottle of their favorite drinks. Some people saying that Coca Cola is for older generations while PEPSI is for next generation as their former corporate slogan mentioned before.

Another benefit of emotional branding strategies includes brand identity where the product is seen and endorsed by a popular iconic actor or sports personalities. People tend to buy such products because they idolize such people. In some cases, emotional branding can be viewed as "the ways that consumers can experience brands as relationship partners that help them accomplish personal goals and resolve dilemmas in their everyday lives. Rather than being generated through skillful marketing, Fournier (1998) contends that these relational meanings (that is. Love/passion, self-connection, trust, and intimacy) emerge only when brands become integrated into consumer's lives and identity projects.

The quest for authentic cultural experiences has been discussed as a prominent motivator of global travels (MacCannell, 1989) and excursions to historic sites, museums, and reenactments (Grayson and Martine, 2004); (Penaloza, 2000). This is very eminent in many iconic cities around the world where people wants to experience something different in their lives. For example, Paris (France) known as the "City of Lights" where people seen the place as a romantic getaway and place for arts and cultures. That distinct and unique tagline of slogan became iconic to tourist and travelers visiting Paris, France.

Emotional branding can be a work-life balanced especially for those people who are conscious to their health. For example: Nike and Adidas are two rivals in the sports and apparel industry. The products they introduce in the market signifies sporty and athletic attitude to its valued customer. In the case of NIKE, "Just do It" give strong message to customer to be involved in sports and outdoor activities. Work-life balanced is what the brand wants to deliver as a message for their customer. Meanwhile ADIDAS is more into competitive line of sports apparel as they serve as official uniforms in many sports events and competition. Emotional branding in this example simply gives customer their choice of brand which is very difficult to decide with. It's like BARCELONA and REAL MADRID where the two competing brands are the official supplier of team uniforms where people loves to own a piece of their jersey and show it to everyone.

Emotional Branding: The Filipino Culture

The marketing concept emphasizes that profitable marketing begins with the discovery and understanding of consumer needs and then develops a marketing mix to satisfy these needs. Unfortunately, there is no single theory of consumer behavior that can totally explain why customers behave as they do. Instead, there are notions that have been influenced by a variety of other disciplines such as sociology, psychology, anthropology, and economics, and must be integrated to understand consumer behavior.

The Filipino consumer behavior is one of the most influential buyers in the world today. Their needs, wants, wishes and desires should be understood in order to accommodate them. It can be noted, however, that consumers often do not behave consistently with their attitudes for several reasons:

Ability. He or she may be unable to do so. The buying power or the purchasing power of the individual maybe be lacking due to financial constraints. Even if they have the means they don't have that eagerness to buy such. The price of products and services often influences whether consumers will purchase them at all, if so, which competitive offering is selected. In terms of price of goods, a typical Filipino will still buy things they want as long as it is within their budget. Even if the product is not in their favorite shop, this will not discourage them to look and find another shop. There are also

products that can only be sold in a certain region or places but a typical Filipino buyer will find means and ways in order to get that stuff.

Filipino consumers prefer to buy branded things as they know it came from a reputable brand of quality. It is also one way of showing people around how proud you are wearing and carrying that brand. In some cases this may be a way of boasting to fellow and common friends that you have something new. Most brands especially for apparel, Filipinos want the brands to be exposed so other people will recognize that such is expensive or it can be seen as a status symbol as the case maybe.

Competing Demands for Resources. Many products and services are out in the market today but it is the consumer's choice that will prevail the most. There is a saying in marketing that "Consumers buy products because they *need* them. They buy products because they *want* them. They buy products they *wish* for because it's a status symbol. They buy products they *desire* because it makes them separate from the crowd. Needs, wants, wishes, and desires." They are all part and parcel of why people buy. They are all critical to understanding how to keep your current customers and attract new ones. For most products and services, we have choices that are far beyond the simple fulfillment of basic needs. We have moved to a point where uncovering and exploiting what might have been a significant need or want several years ago is now a basic to just being competitive.

Because of that competition, marketing mix plays an important role in developing consumer decision making in terms of its holistic approach. Marketing strategies are designed to influence consumer decision making which will lead to product purchase and exchanges. As many brands offered in the market today, Filipino consumer buyers usually look around for price canvass and then decide whether or not to buy. In some instances due to the need, they buy the item instantly because they don't want to risk to get the same item in other malls or shops maybe of out stocks.

Social Influence. Factor such as family, societal and the like. Behavioral scientists have become increasingly aware of the powerful effects of the social environment and personal interactions on human behavior. In terms of consumer behavior, culture, social class, and reference group influences have been related to purchase and consumptions. Culture is one of the most basic influences on an individual's needs, wants, and behavior, since all facets of life are carried out against the background of the society in which an individual lives. In the case of Filipino consumers, they can easily be identified as to upper, middle or lower in social class. Aside from that, it has a corresponding interval which will differentiate its class in the society. Filipino class can be classified to class A to E in terms of its society status. It is very common to Filipinos to visit malls and different shopping centers as it became their habits to visit such place. It is a common place to stopover as it was a good meeting place for different occasions such birthdays, anniversaries, dates including business activities.

Family influences among reference groups are common to Filipino buyers which are handed on from generations to generations. In some instances, during payday the family members are being asked for the stuff they want to buy. This practice is very common to typical Filipino families. The influence of the family is very strong in terms of purchasing power and buying behavior. Sometimes, the parents are the ones who decide whether to buy or not. For the children, they usually ask for things that their parents can buy them as a good reward for their accomplishments such as good grades, awards and even good deeds. As noted, the family is generally recognized to be an important reference group, and it has been suggested that the household, rather than the individual, is the relevant unit for studying consumer behavior.

Because family wants and needs affect the buying behavior of each family member including the budget. There are some brands that even family members suggest to fellow brothers and sisters including mother and father. These products are tried and tested brands that stand thru the years. Once this product has already spread thru word of mouth among family members, this brand becomes a family (house) brand which can be easily referred to common friends, officemates, schoolmates and same. This kind of social influence is widely spread for most Filipino consumer in taking their buying decisions.

Measurement Problems. Measuring attitudes is difficult. In many situations, consumers do not consciously set out to enumerate how positively or negatively they feel about mopeds. When a market researcher asks them about their beliefs about mopeds, how important these beliefs are, and their evaluation of the performance of mopeds with respect to these beliefs, consumers often do not give very reliable answers. Thus, the consumers may act consistently with their true attitudes, which were never uncovered because an erroneous measurement was made.

The use of visualized and multimedia marketing are common approaches in terms of IMC which has a good appeal to the mass public. Commercials, sales promotions, advertisement and other marketing gimmicks can influence and trigger into successful sale. The typical Filipino consumers always look for good product or service information that is available on the market. They usually ask for things that will last longer thru wear and tear usage. Integrated marketing communication approach can also be applied to Filipino consumer as it creates product awareness. Transpo-marketing is also an effective means of marketing products and services that are relatively cheaper. Basically the trend right in now in terms of products and goods mobility is convenience. Most products that are available in shopping malls and supermarket can also be found in different shops elsewhere as it increases the chance of buying products.

In order to stand the stiff competition in the Philippine settings, you have to offer different products and services that are new to consumers. The typical Filipino consumers always go and look for items that are very different in nature. They will find the product they want wherever and whatever it takes, this culture is typical of Filipino and only for Filipino.

Typically Filipino consumers look for items that are on sale. They usually scrutinize such items for defects and the like. Most common applications and perks of marketers are sale items which are old stocks if not stocks that are sacrificially sale as they cannot be return to the distributor. Filipino buyers also look for sale items such as bundled products which are common in supermarkets. Filipino consumers usually knew that this mode of sale can make or break their needs of buying

new things that are offered for sale. Most shopping malls and shopping centers usually invest a lot in terms of information awareness such as leaflets, brochures and the like.

This traditional marketing strategy is the most common and popular approaches that triggers psychological decision making. They usually put the announcement and advertisement of sale items in a big signage or tarpaulin that is very visible to the general public. Moreover, the calendar of the sales gimmicks is usually put during paydays or public holidays. As the typical Filipino usually goes to the malls by groups, this marketer knows how to twist the sale items as it encourage them to buy things based on their stimulus. Filipinos are emotional buyer therefore marketer needs to be careful in dealing with them.

They are smart buyer who always wants more value to their money because of their hard earned money they are considered to be as "BUDGETARIAN". The term can be defined as customer who is always looking for bargains and quality products available in the market. A customer who loves to buy things for a lower price that they can ask for seller. A typical buyer that thinks on savings rather than spending hard earned money to something.

Budgetarian as the next marketing buzz as it signify the actual struggle and problems being face by ordinary consumer. We have to view consumer/customer in a perspective as buyer wherein budget and money plays vital role in buying decision. With budgetarian, the smart buyers think of more options and possibilities before rendering his/her decision. During trying times consumer tends to hold their budget until such time they are able to find a better offer that will give them more saving and more value to their money. Budgetarian will be in place for a longer period of time because there are many consumers across society that really belongs to different classes. They are the primary target of companies with regard to their products and services and only consumer/customer will be the one to decide.

II. Conclusion And Future Studies

Understanding emotional branding requires extensive research and study for marketer. It requires adoptability in terms of taste and preferences including budgets and buying power of ultimate consumer/customer. Overall, emotional branding can be summarized in the following details below:

- Emotional branding creates relationship between the products/services to customer/consumer by virtue of emotions, feelings and other similar thoughts.
- Emotional branding is a bridge between consumer/customer as to their attachment to their valued favorite brand.
- Emotional branding is relevant to consumer/customers in terms of buying decision.
- Emotional branding provides brand identity.
- Emotional branding leads to brand loyalty.

Emotional branding creates relationship between products/services to customer/consumer by virtue of emotions, feelings and other similar thoughts. This can be achieve overtime once there is attachment to it personally. This leads to giving sentimental value to the products/services in possession.

Emotional branding is a bridge between consumer/customer as to their attachment to their valued favorite brand. People are brand oriented because they want to show their status in the society or at the same time they view brand as their way of life. For people who are brand oriented they always look for this whatever it takes.

Emotional branding is relevant to consumer/customers in terms of buying decision. People with good or bad experience to a product/service make a difference in marketing. This is because it leads to buying decision.

Emotional branding provides brand identity. This true in any person as we always wants to be associated with our favorite brand which serves as a status symbol and prestige. Normally people wants to be in remember because of specific brand being wear or use.

Emotional branding leads to brand loyalty. We have loyalty and speaking of brand it is always remain to be the case. This is because we always find comfort and satisfaction to our brand of choice.

Overall we can conclude that emotional branding varies across individual or can be viewed in different cultural perspective. It is very important that companies must recognize the feelings, the emotions of customers/consumers towards the products/services offered to the general public. Emotional attachment to a certain product/services gives value on the brand as it gives the person emotional fulfillment and accomplishment. Future studies in emotional branding can be comparison of Asians and European customers. Cross country comparison including buying decision can be a good research area in emotional branding.

And lastly, emotional branding in a cultural perspective is very relevant nowadays as marketer/enterprises started to adjust their products/services to the host nation. This trend will continue overtime and will serve as their competitive advantage over other brands competing for dominance in the market.

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