

A study on impact of Brand Elements on Brand Equity with special reference to 'Sony Corporation'

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the study was to understand the effect of brand elements on brand equity creation. Brand equity consists mainly of all different product or service aspects that distinguish a company or brand from its competitors. This research mainly focuses on the effect of brand elements of the 'Sony' brand on the development of a brand equity. Branding has improved the insight into the factors that help to build brand equity and help organizations or brands to achieve strategic rewards. Brand equity was often referred to by its name as an increase in the brand value. Researchers have argued for a long time that the ultimate criterion for success in brand management is to understand the contribution of brand equity to long - term sales and long - term profits. Brand equity is the value the brand holds in consumer's minds, which ultimately leads to brand loyalty. The dimensions of brand equity that has been used in the study are brand salience, brand resonance, brand imagery, brand feeling, brand performance and brand judgement which influences in opting for brand 'Sony'. There are different elements that constitute the brand namely, brand name, logo, colour and typography, slogan/jingle, tagline, packaging, symbol and signage etc. The study emphasizes on the importance of brand elements in building strong brand for creating brand equity. The main purpose of this research is to reveal the most important determinants of consumer brand equity (CBBE) in order to provide managers with useful insights into some of the most important elements that they should consider in order to increase their brand equity. The findings were summarized based on the study. The brand elements, i.e. brand name, logo, tagline and packaging, were found to have a positive impact on brand equity factors namely brand salience, brand resonance, brand imagery, brand judgment, brand performance and brand feelings.

1. Introduction

Brands are important drivers of choices for consumers. They are among the most important intangible assets that companies possess and can often distinguish between very similar products. The image of a brand can influence the consumer in consumer situations and can be a means of conveying positive or negative attributes, for example, related to the quality of products or related values.

The problem identified for research is that the market is a multitude of brands, and marketers have become very challenging to think out of the box. It is also difficult to identify the factors and the extent to which brand equity has a decision to make a purchase. The objectives of the study were made from the conceptual framework that was designed for this study. The hypotheses were framed from the framework having the dimensions of brand elements and brand equity.

Based on the study, it was recommended that marketers pay extra attention while designing a brand and selecting the different elements of the brand that help to define a strong brand. This is important because the brand must be able to inform its customers of its personality. The marketers must understand that they are far more than the brand's visual appearance. Thus, brand elements influences the creation of a brand equity.

2. Objectives

The objective of the study is to determine the impact of brand elements on brand equity. The factors of brand equity have been taken up from the Brand Equity Pyramid proposed by Keller.

- To study the impact of Brand Elements on Brand Equity of Sony Corporation
- To study the impact of demographic variables on Brand Equity of Sony Corporation

3. Literature Review

Brand means familiarity and credibility to customers as they experience certain contacts in their daily lives; therefore, they use brands as an indicator to try and decide to buy new products (Keller, 2008). The name of the brand has become a common feature for each product on the market (Belen, 2001). Marketers see the importance of strong brands, and this is demonstrated in every effort to build a strong brand. In this context, brand equity plays a predominant role in the management of the brand, which can help to improve the organization's performance (Steenkamp, 2003). Brand equity is the result of a company's marketing effort, which ultimately influences the process of consumer brand assessment and the decision to purchase. (Keller, 2008). Customer based brand equity has been defined as the differential effect of brand

knowledge on consumer response to the marketing of the brand (Kamakura, 1991).

A successful brand name creates a resonance or connection in the mind of the consumer with the product or service of a company. Over the years, Sony has introduced several new communications products to the development. In some cases, the products have been truly revolutionary in terms of design and planning (Beamish 1999). The sub brands of Sony such as Trinitron, Walkman, PlayStation, Vio, Bravia, Xperia etc. have been included in the public lexicon of terms for consumer electronics. However, several of these products are more than just products and have led to a profound change in the lifestyle of the consumer. This has, above all, contributed to a profound change in the lifestyle of consumers and it has contributed more than anything else to Sony's brand Equity (Gershon, 2002).

The following components imply the brand elements to the customer in order to obtain the desired brand image: logo, brand name, symbol, tagline, packaging, character, jingle, color and typography (Farhana, 2012). The brand name is the name given by the manufacturer to a specific product. It is the information the consumer most sees, and it helps to create brand awareness and to communicate with the brand. It also helps to create a brand image for a new product as desired by the organization (Nandan, 2005). Brand name recognizes a product and distinguishes it from its competitors. URLs are used to specify locations of web pages and are also commonly referred to as domain names and must register and pay for the name with a service in order to own a specific URL (Alnsour, 2018).

The logo is the most important element of the visual identity of a brand. This helps to create awareness and brand awareness. Logos may be written in different forms or in abstract designs. Brand colors are another important factor in brand elements (Bottomley, 2006). Most customers relate to the brand due to its colors. Each color is related to a certain attribute. Taglines and Slogans is just as important as brand names (Bottomley 2006). They are often used in advertisements and in different marketing programmes (2008 Keller). Slogans are a key element of a brand's identity, and contribute to a brand's equity. In today's marketplace, almost all brands employ slogans; they enhance a brand's image, aid in its recognition and recall, and help create brand differentiation in consumers' minds (Kohli, 2007). Packaging helps to transmit the brand's meaning to the consumer. The color of the product depends on the target group; the color of the package should be dark when it is for premium customers, whereas the packaging of the product should be light (Ampuero, 2006).

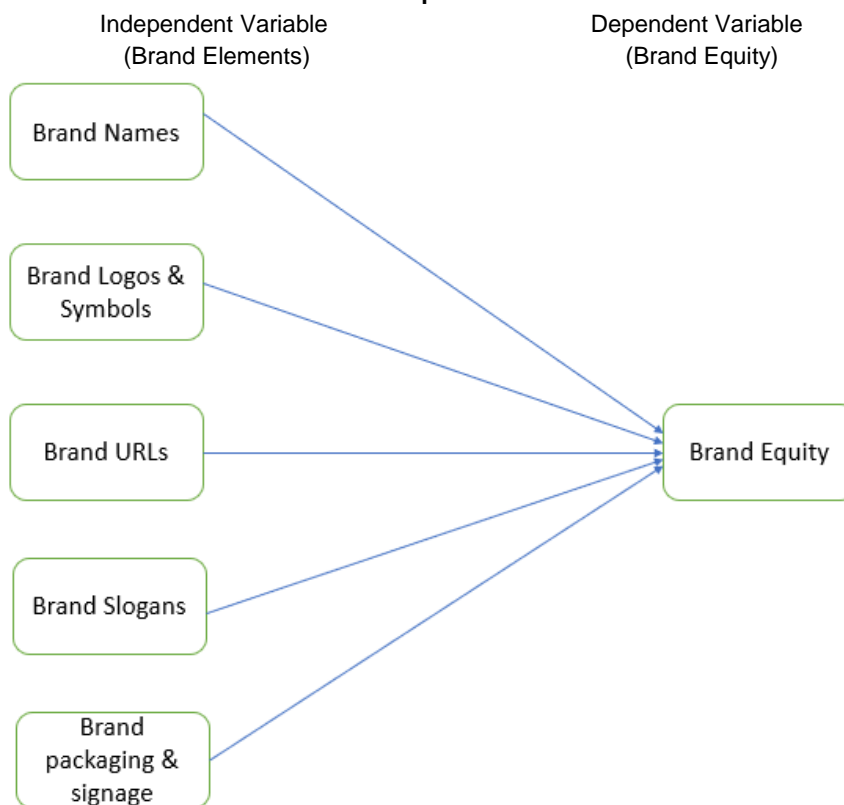
Aaker (2009) Defined brand equity as a set of assets and liabilities to the name and symbol of a brand that adds or removes the value of a product or service to a firm and/or a firm's consumers. The reason why brand equity occurs and

how marketers can create this is captured in Keller's (1993) as Consumer-based brand equity occurs when the consumer has a high level of awareness and familiarity with the brand and holds strong, favorable, and unique brand associations in memory. Customer based brand equity is defined as the differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to the marketing of the brand (Keller, 1993). This view of brand equity proposes that, (1) The brand creates value for both consumers and the firm, (2) The brand provides value to the firm by generating value for the consumers, and (3) Consumers' brand associations are the key elements in the formation and management of brand equity (Belen, 2001). Customer value is driven by positive brand equity, which in turn drives shareholder value (Ampuero, 2006). Marketers must adopt a measured approach to identify, develop and manage brand elements relevant to the company and its products in order to leverage positive brand equity (Aaker, 1996). The brand equity pyramid helps to build brand equity by understanding our customers and implementing accordingly strategies. There are four stages in the development of the brand, each stage refers to the customer's questions, namely:

- Who are you? (Brand Identity)
- What are you? (Brand Meaning)
- What do I think or feel about you? (Brand Responses)
- What about you and me? (Brand Relationships)

There are six building blocks in which a substantial brand equity is created if the brand reaches the top. Keller (2001) defined brand salience as a brand identification capability for customers. The right brand identity must be achieved by creating brand salience. Customers can respond differently to different brands based on their brand knowledge. In this study, brand salience was mainly measured by the awareness and recognition of the brand's customers. According to Keller (2001), brand performance refers to the brand's inherent product or service characteristics that define the product's functional performance as expected by all customers. Brand imagery deals with the extrinsic properties of the product or service, including how the brand seeks to meet the psychological or social needs of its customers. Brand imagery is how people abstractly think of the brand instead of what they think the brand does. According to Keller (2001), brand judgments are personal opinions and brand evaluations of customers. Keller defined four brand assessment types, namely brand quality, brand credibility (trustworthiness and liability), brand considerations and brand superiority. Brand feelings measure the emotional responses and responses of the customer in relation to the brand. Brand feelings are the internal state of mind of the customer that can be positive or negative. Six types of brand feelings were defined by Keller (2001), namely warmth, firmness, excitement, security, social approach and self - respect. Brand resonance is characterized by the intensity or depth of the psychological connection that customers have with the brand and by the loyalty level of activity.

**Figure -1
Conceptual Model**



Source: (Keller, 2008)

4. Research Methodology

The data was collected for the Indian market, from the followers of the Sony Center community in social media. Descriptive research was used to understand the problem statement and to select analytical and interpretive instruments. The primary data were collected via a structured closing questionnaire and the pilot survey carried out prior to the research. Secondary data were collected through case studies, magazines and different articles. The questionnaire had general questions, brand specific questions and consumers’ perception about the brand equity and brand elements of brand ‘Sony’ which were rated using Likert scale. Simple random sampling has been used to select the sample size of 341 respondents from a population of 2929. The data was collected and analyzed using SPSS (Social Science Statistical Package). The data analysis includes regression to find the similarity between brand elements and brand equity factors while ANOVA was used to link demographic factors with brand equity.

5. Results & Analysis

Regression Analysis and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was carried out to study the relationship between the independent and dependent factors. The relationship between the Brand Elements and Brand Equity was tested using Regression analysis. The impact of demographic profile of customers on Brand Equity was tested using ANOVA. In demographic profile, the Age of Respondents and Qualification of respondent were taken as the independent variables and Brand Equity as the dependent Variable.

5.1 Relationship between Brand Elements and Brand Equity

A Regression Analysis is carried out to study the relationship between Brand Elements and Brand Equity. The independent variable is chosen as Brand Elements and dependent variable as Brand Equity.

H0: There is no significant relationship between brand elements and brand equity.

H1: There is significant relationship between brand elements and brand equity.

Table 2
Relationship between brand elements and brand equity (ANOVA^a)

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	8932.466	1	8932.466	786.100	.000 ^b
Residual	3863.512	340	11.363		
Total	12795.977	341			

a. Dependent Variable: Equity
b. Predictors: (Constant), Elements

Table 3
Relationship between brand elements and brand equity (Coefficients^a)

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	3.451	.482		6.864	.000
Elements	1.078	.041	.836	24.162	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Equity

Since, the significance value is less than 0.05, null hypothesis will be rejected. Therefore, it is proved from the analysis that there is a significant relationship between brand elements and brand equity.

The regression equation is $y = 3.451 + 1.078 x$

5.2 Analysis of relationship between Age of respondents and Brand Equity

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) is carried out to establish the relationship between Age of respondents and Brand Equity.

H0: There is no significant relationship between age and brand equity.

H1: There is significant relationship between age and brand equity.

Table 4
Relationship between Age of respondents and Brand Equity

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Group	841.873	3	280.624	6.597	.001
Within Groups	14376.658	338	42.534		
Total	15218.531	341			

Since, the significance value is less than 0.05, null hypothesis will be rejected. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between Age of respondents and brand equity.

H0: There is no significant relationship between qualification and brand equity.

H1: There is significant relationship between qualification and brand equity.

5.3 Analysis of relationship between Qualification of and Brand Equity

Table 5
Relationship between Qualification and Brand Equity

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Group	482.342	3	160.780	3.818	.019
Within Groups	14233.389	338	42.110		
Total	14715.731	341			

Since, the significance value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis will be rejected. Therefore, it is found from the analysis that there is a significant relationship between Qualification of respondents and Brand Equity.

6. Conclusion

In the current global scenario of rapid expansion in the market, it is difficult for brands to compete in order to create strong convictions in the minds of their target customers and potential customers. The study found that the most frequently used brand elements of Sony Corporation are name, logo, symbol and signage, which have a positive impact on the creation and maintenance of brand equity. Based on the

findings, Sony Companies should pay more attention to branding and brand elements because they have a positive influence on brand equity. Companies are aware of the importance of branding, but they must give it more attention because branding is a very important subject and has a huge impact on brand equity. A strong and recognizable brand will help a company to be more successful, which is why effective brand elements must be created. As the brand elements represents the brand's visual appearance and personality, it helps to evoke feelings in consumer's minds. So, designing effective brand elements will help in building loyalty and trust in the brand, thus customers will be able to connect between the product and the firm.

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