

AN EMPIRICAL STUDY BASED ON BRAND IDENTITY WITH REFERENCE TO BRAND ZARA

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ABSTRACT

Brand identity conveys a firm's philosophy and aids in generating the ideal impression in the eyes of customers. The brand identity must be cohesive for better communication since it guarantees that all of a company's stakeholders have a same understanding of the brand. Additionally, it perfectly communicates the brand's narrative. All stakeholders will support a brand that makes the appropriate investments in the components of its brand identity. An attempt to study this concept in brief with reference to a brand ZARA as a case study was undertaken. This study is based on the empirical research conducted among respondents who were ZARA consumer or well acquainted with the brand.

Keywords: Brand Identity, Branding, Kapferer model.

INTRODUCTION

In a sense, brands are similar to humans in that they have personalities. Realizing your branding is critical, but it's especially important when you're launching it. It is critical to be aware of your brand identity since the brand image does not exist at this point in time.

When you think of brands like Coca-Cola or Pepsi, the colors blue and red likely spring to mind. That identity was developed by the brands. For these brands, recognizable imagery includes the marching man from Johnnie Walker from KFC, the mermaid from Starbucks, and others like Colonel Harland Sanders. They are engaging with the customers at various touch points and building a connection with the brand. In fact, this is the way brand identity functions.

Brand Identity:

It is the true reflection that an organization portrays to its customers which includes the promise of the brand from the company to the customers assuring them of true value delivery. It's how customers look at the brand and how to identify the brand. It aids in differentiating the features and traits of various businesses. In actuality, it serves as a link between the business and the customer, founded on reputation and trust.

Understanding a particular brand and perceiving its value can be achieved by building a strong brand identity of the product. In order to avoid any misconceptions about the company and its products, it is very important to create an identity that is in par with its image and to produce a perfect brand identity it is imperative that an organization takes stock of the following- The company's strength and weaknesses, The various opportunities it can cash into, The market towards which the company is working at & their own goals & values.

As the brand identity will reflect the character and worth of the product, it is essential to associate a specific mood with it. For instance, when you think of a specific brand, like Pantene, you automatically picture long, thick hair. The company sells hair care products, and the brand's identity is closely applicable to the advantages it projects through its image. For instance, the image of Tiger Woods, a well-known athlete, immediately brings to mind Gillette. Similar to how MRF comes to mind when someone mentions Sachin Tendulkar (his bat). Michael Schumacher conjures images of Ferrari in our imaginations. These memories go hand in hand into building a brand identity and hence result in better sales and revenues.

Advantages of Brand Identity are as follows: It drives the Vision of the Company; improves the work culture of the company; improves brand personality; maintains the positioning and even improves it and immediately connect with customers

Disadvantages of Brand Identity are as follows: if a company is unable to form a favorable brand identity, it may lose its market positioning; brand identity plays a crucial role in any organization and if not handled properly, it will showcase that the company is not in touch with the realities of the market and its current trends; and the failure to comprehend market sentiments might have unfavorable outcomes and result in fewer sales and income.

Brand identity vs Brand Image

Identity is how you want to be perceived by your clients. Customers view you realistically when they think of your brand image. Therefore, focusing on brand identity aids in developing a strong brand image. Consequently, your brand image will suffer even more if you are representing the incorrect brand identity.

After one brand's identity has cemented itself in the minds of consumers, it is quite challenging to remove the perception. The main drawback of a brand identity is that, if for any reason, it does not resonate with consumers, it could have negative effects and make it difficult for the business to move past its identity crisis.

The ability to provide consumers a sense of familiarity and reliability is the main benefit of creating a brand identity. It can take the shape of well-known colors, such as how red is connected to Toothpaste Colgate and blue is connected to Pepsi, or it can take the form of a unique slogan, such as "Thumbs up" soft drink "Taste the thunder" and "Kit-Kat" and "Take a break" for chocolate.

Why having a Good Brand's Identity is Important?

Every brand in the market has its own brand identity of its own depending on its offerings and the way of dealing with the customers, employees, vendors, and stakeholders. The primary problem is that a strong brand identity can do wonders for a company, helping it stand out from the competitors.

- 1) Sustainability in Brand Identity: In a market where competition is escalating and consumer tastes are changing, the strongest will always prevail. A strong brand identity demonstrates the brand's stability, progress with the market's repetitive nature, and innovation commitment in order to provide its customers with the best possible goods and services.
- 2) New markets & products can be tapped by Brand: Create a robust brand identity and foundation in one market automatically inspires trust in the brand and the management of the company to tap new markets by expanding their reach to untapped regions and new target markets with the aim of establishing their presence and identities.
- 3) Increased Sales: The company's primary and most important goal of generating leads and achieving closures is accomplished thanks to improved customer loyalty and a strong brand identity and image in the market.
- 4) Launch New Designs and Products: Achieving a strong Brand Identity aim by providing a particular range of goods and services offers the business the necessary impetus to expand by introducing new goods and services to the existing in addition to the new demographic markets.
- 5) Differentiation: There are always specific elements that set one brand apart from another, ensuring that no two businesses or brands share a similar identity in the eyes of customers and the general market. When a company has a strong sense of its brand identity, people can easily distinguish between which brands are beneficial to them and which are not, allowing the former to benefit from factors like heightened awareness, customer loyalty, increased revenues, etc.
- 6) Increased and Consistent Brand Awareness: When a company achieves the goal of a robust Brand Identity, there is widespread knowledge about the brand and the services and products it offers on a national and international level, enabling the business to enter new and unexplored markets with enthusiasm and trust.

Therefore, having a solid and effective brand identity is extremely important for the company to have a distinctive position in the market despite the industry's dynamism and shifting consumer preferences.

Kapferer Brand Identity Prism Model:

This structure, known as a prism, maps a brand's identity over six dimensions or features. These six aspects are: Physique, Personality, Relationship, Culture, Reflection and Self-image.

First is the element of Physique. It symbolizes the outward characteristics of your brand and the tangibly added value. For example, in the case of Coca-Cola, the unique shape of its bottle, the distinctive taste, the red color, and the distinctive font from the brand's physique; or, in the case of Flipkart, it is the blue and yellow logo, the UI, and the delivery service.

The next component is Relationship, which describes the manner in which your brand interacts with its target market. For instance, the contact is cordial and warm in the instance of Coke. With Nike, it's the way the company inspires you to up your game.

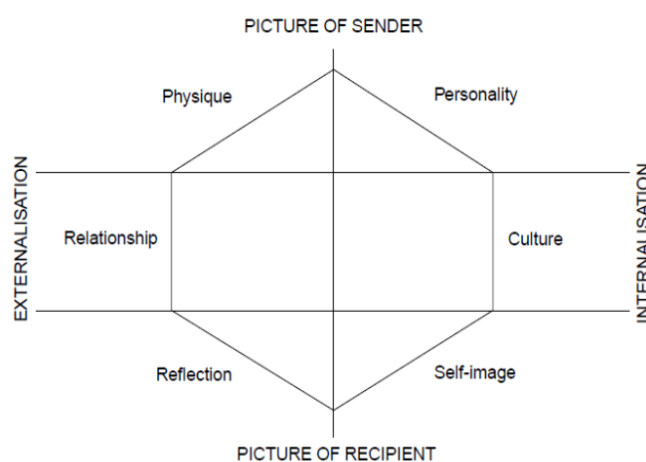


Figure 1 Kapferer Brand Identity Prism Model

Source: <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/460493130635678204/>

The third element is reflection, which pertains to the brand's most evident user. Typically, this is the brand's most stereotyped consumer. Youth, in the case of Coke, or fit and active individuals, in Nike case.

The fourth element, Self-image, is what customers see themselves as when they interact with your brand. For instance, when a customer drinks Coke, they feel younger and livelier. Similarly, even if a person is not sporty, they nevertheless feel that way while they wear Nike products because of the brand association.

The fifth factor, Culture, stands for the ideals that your brand promotes, or what you strive for and hold dear. In many circumstances, it might also stand in for the heritage of the brand's country of origin. For instance, Coke supports the individualism-based American value system, whereas the TATA group promotes the trust, solidarity, and rituals that are fundamental to Indian society. Conversely, Nike promotes a sporty culture.

The sixth factor Personality, the collection of characteristics or characteristics that distinguishes the character of your brand, is the final piece. It is the result of all the characteristics and aspects that make up your specific brand. For instance, Coke's enjoyable, generous, and kind demeanor can be linked to it. But sportive, trendy, and athletic could be the personality traits of Nike.

You may have also noticed that corporations frequently work with celebrities whose personalities mesh well with their own. For instance, Alia Bhatt and Preity Zinta were chosen as brand

ambassadors for the chocolate company Perk since their characteristics are akin to its own, which is energetic, bubbly, and slightly cheeky.

Brand identity and image are thus made up of all these 6 identity prism components, 3 external and 3 internal and are crucial for a brand manager to comprehend that position a brand appropriately.

Brand ZARA:



Figure 2 Logo image

Source: <https://www.zara.com/in/>

ZARA is a Spanish multi-national retail clothing chain; founded in 1975; 47 years ago (as Zorba) in Spain. Amancio Ortega & Rosalía Mera are the founders of this brand. It sells clothing, shoes, accessories, cosmetics, and fragrances and focuses on selling rapid fashion. It is the largest member of the Inditex family of companies. Over twenty new product lines were being introduced annually in 2020.

Men's, women's, and kids' apparel can all be found at Zara stores (Zara Kids). European retail locations carry Zara Home products. Customers that shop at Zara are typically between the ages of 18 and 35. It takes 10 to 15 days for things to reach retailers after they are designed. The distribution facility in Spain processes all of the apparel. Inspected, sorted, labelled, and put into trucks are new items. The delivery of the garment typically takes 48 hours. Over 450 million pieces are produced annually by Zara. Zara also includes accessories, shoes, swimwear, beauty and perfumes. In May 2021, Zara launched its first beauty line, ZARA Beauty.

Under its Zara Home line, Zara launched what is believed to be the first detergent that reduces the abrasion of textile microfibers during washing. It is claimed the solution, jointly developed by Inditex and BASF Home Care and I&I Solutions Europe in Spain and Germany, can reduce the release of microfibers by up to close to 80% based on the type of cloth and laundry circumstances.

Inditex Trent's annual report, the joint venture it has with Tata, which manages 21 Zara stores across India, saw sales increase to Rs1815 crore in the previous fiscal year. On net sales of Rs. 1,126 crore from the previous year, it had a shortfall of Rs. 41 crore. According to the annual report, Zara's incremental store openings "continue to be calibrated with an emphasis on presence solely in very elevated retail stores."

LITERATURE REVIEW

In 1985, Coca-Cola introduced "New Coke" as a new offering. To compete with Pepsi and its other rivals, they had modified their hundred years Coca-Cola recipe. After extensive research and blind taste tests, the product—which was meant to be superior and have better taste—was released. However, not even Coca-Cola could have anticipated the magnitude of the criticism they encountered. Users had trouble connecting the novel flavor to their favorite Coke. Because they cherished Coke's original flavor and felt deceived when it was modified, there was a strong response. Coca-Cola eventually had to stop selling the drink and bring back the original recipe.

In 2011, with the introduction of its Snickers chocolate bar, the confectionery company Mars ventured the Indian space. In the international market, this specific chocolate brand had always been promoted as a snack replacement and a hunger bar. Snickers pitched itself as a replacement to 4pm snacks in the Indian market here too, staying loyal to what it had always stood for. The brand hasn't, however, been able to capture a large market share. The reality that Indian customers do not view chocolate as a substitute for snacks is one of the main factors contributing to its failure. Snickers is a strange food item to us that is intended to sate our sweet appetites rather than our appetite.

Because their brands weren't properly positioned, both of these companies suffered brand image and brand identity didn't align.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To study the concept of Brand Identity & Kapferer prism model in brief.
- To analyze the determinants of ZARA's Brand identity.
- To suggest elements to boost Brand Identity in general.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

- The study has an Empirical research design.
- The data collected for this research is purely Qualitative in nature.
- The required secondary data has been collected from various sources like research papers, journal articles, various publications and blogs.
- The primary data collection method is structured questionnaire floated as Google forms having Kapferer Prism elements based multiple choice questions
- Reference Analysis used is Kapferer Brand Identity Prism Model.
- The sample respondents involved are 42 belonging using Stratified Random Sampling Method.
- Sample strata of MBA students belonging to 18 to 35 years chosen for this study as they have studied Kapferer model & also belong to ZARA target audience age group.
- The study has following research limitations:
 - a. Halo Effect affecting responses collected for the study from the respondents.
 - b. Tenure of Study is comparatively small to other related researches

ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION

The analysis below interpret various elements of Kapferer Brand Identity Prism Model showcased as one word association & multiple choices question in the Qualitative survey in order to capture customer perspective towards ZARA.

1. Majority respondents associated brand Zara's Physique element with options like Rapid reaction, High flexibility & Market orientation.
2. Majority respondents associated brand Zara's Relationship element with Trustworthiness, Quality, Fair exchange of Values.
3. Majority respondents associated brand Zara's Reflection element with options like Style & Individualism.
4. Majority respondents associated brand Zara's Personality element with options like Confident, Mature, Stylish, Aggressive & Unpretentious.
5. Majority respondents associated brand Zara's Culture element with options like European (Spanish) culture, International and Good relationship with customers.
6. Majority respondents associated brand Zara's Self-image element with options like Confident, Fashionable & Unique.

FINDINGS

1. Brand Zara's Physique element reflects customer perceiving the brand as someone who has fashion on point, has array of product lines & category extensions and work to cater to ever changing market trend and needs.

2. Brand Zara's Relationship element reflects customer perceiving the brand as someone who can be trusted for what they promise to deliver as per marketing; whose quality is not compromised and whose culture is well defined meaning brand's goal are clear.
3. Brand Zara's Reflection element showcased customer perceiving the brand as someone who makes stylish products & which are designed to reflect strong individual self.
4. Brand Zara's Personality element reflects customer perceiving the brand as someone who makes products that reflect Confidence, Maturity, Style, Aggressive & original.
5. Brand Zara's Culture element reflects customer perceiving the brand as someone who can European (Spanish) culture since it has its roots there; it is a global brand and works on customer relationship management.
6. Brand Zara's Self-image element reflects customer perceiving the brand as someone who is Poised, updated trend & Differentiated.

SUGGESTIONS

- Articulating a proper brand name is the most important of all the brand identity elements. As they command huge respect and recall value for the brand.
- Work on the Logo of your brand as it gives a visual identity to a brand. It is the first thing that pops up in the consumer's mind when they hear or read about a brand or vice versa.
- Get creative help to frame sturdy & catchy Tag Line for you brand as this will instantly connect customers & later contribute to fond memories of association with the brand.
- Like Ferrero Rocher shaped chocolates or a car modeled on Beetle are instance of unique brand identity using well though shape as this will take your brand identity to the next level.
- Graphics can attract attention to your brand identity such as Disney fonts are world recognized.
- Choosing colors trigger the mind of the consumers and help them to connect with the brand instantly.

CONCLUSION

This research is a humble attempt and identified the various variables that associate well with all elements of Kapferer model for brand. This help us understand the brand Identity of brand ZARA more practically. Suggested elements can be used by any brand for creation or upgradation of its brand identity. However, building a brand identity is difficult and requires a lot of time as well as investments in promotional and brand building activities. The brand teams up with many well-known figures in an effort to attract customers. By giving the items a distinctive brand identity, these celebrities aid in influencing people's perceptions of the brand immediately. The foundation of a brand's existence and how its customers perceive it is its brand identity. Don't compromise on that, then. Make sure you have all the components needed to strengthen brand identification. A distinctive brand name, tagline, graphics, logo, shape and color will help you reach your target audience.

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