

A Study on Perception of Brand Identity Among Customers

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Abstract

In the present days people's trust and loyalty depends on their experiences, and, also, on the effects of media on the public. Airline business has increasingly established its name to attract the interest of people and try to create a symbolism out of its brand. Due to a fierce competition in the industry, its competitors have increased people's initiative to make their own choices on one's favor either by means of pricing or offering better facilities and services, and so on. Thai Airway International Public Company Limited needs to seek the opportunities from customers' personal interests that can help company to grow and develop their loyalty, which is central to the survival of the company in this business. However, as many suggest, Thai Airways has been providing one of the best services, and customers have recognized this image of the company. Besides, most of the premium customers still choose to travel by this national carrier and trust the quality of services.

However, the quality of brand is the most important factor in identifying brand identity, and creating a strong brand is the most important for creating brand identity, and initiating the brand loyalty development.

Keywords

Brand Identity, Perception, customers, Brand Image

I. Brand Identity

According to Wheeler, "Brand identity is tangible and appeals to the senses. You can see it, touch it, hold it, hear it, and watch it move. Brand identity fuels recognition, amplifies differentiation, and makes big ideas and meaning accessible. Brand identity takes disparate elements and unifies them into whole systems." Since it is tangible and appeals to the sense of consumers by the creation of company- which wants a brand's name, a logo of company, communication style and other creation elements to be perceived by consumers. If consumers can recognize the identity of the brand of a company then a company has closed the brand gap, which means a company is in touch with market sentiment, which will make selling its products easier. Brand Identity is the unique set of brand associations that the brand strategist aspires to create or maintain. These associations represent what the brand stands for and imply a promise to customers for the organization members (Aaker 1996, p.68).

II. Perception Value and Trust

Perception value of brand from the customer is related to brand loyalty. Customers have perception from brand value and the function of their perception and a particular brand has various values from different people's perspectives. When consumers have perception on brand, the customers may trust the brand.

III. Customer Satisfaction and Trust

As same as the perception value the customer satisfaction is related to brand loyalty. When the customer is satisfied with the identity of brand the consumers may trust the brand. The customer satisfaction is an emotional response to a purchase opportunity. When purchase yields a positive reaction, trust on brand is an immediate outcome.

IV. Trust and Loyalty to Brand

Trust and loyalty have close relationship with each other. The more customer trust to a particular brand, the more they will consume that kind of product. Trust and loyalty of customers to the brand will reach to the position of the brand in the market place.

V. Objectives of the Study

- To investigate brand identity with special reference to Thai Airways' customers for better understanding of its impact.
- To find out the relationship between brand identity and brand loyalty and between consumers and the company.
- To identify the company's image perceived by the consumer.

According to Aaker (1996) the identity of a brand is the way a company wants to be perceived by their target audience. The identity of a brand is something the company dynamically aspires to, and it states what they want their brand to stand (Aaker&Joachimsthaler, 2000).

De Chernaton (1999) suggests passing from brand management to identity management by placing special importance on the internal aspect of brand building. He states that more importance needs to be placed on brand identity. "Identity is all about ethos, aims and values that present a sense of differentiating the Brand". He derives the brand's identity in terms of vision and culture, which impel positioning, personality and any other consequent relationships. In this scenario, employees and staffs' vision and culture affect the brand building process. He therefore made a note that more attention should be placed on internal aspects of branding.

Before building the visual expression and graphics of a brand it is vital to define an explicit definition of the brand identity, Kapferer states that many companies unnecessarily constrained their brand because they did design their graphic charter before defining their identity. In Kapferer's framework on brand identity he highlights the question; why speak of identity rather than image? It would be fair to argue that this question is of high relevance when it comes to exposure and development of brand identity as well as the company's overall image. Looking into the terms of brand image and brand identity, brand image depends on the receiver's side whereas identity is on the side of the sender. Brand Image research focuses on ways people perceive products, brands, people etc. and in that connection the image refers to the way these people decode the signals emanating from a given product or service or the communication covered by the brand. In this connection it would be fair that the companies must think watchfully what accurately they want to project before considering the image.

VI. Methodology

This study used purposive sampling; purposive sampling is a type of non-probability sampling technique. A purposive sample, also known as judgmental, selective, subjective sampling relies on the judgment of the researcher when it comes to selecting the units (e.g. respondents) that are to be studied. Usually, the sample being investigated is quite small.

The main goal of purposive sampling technique is to focus on particular characteristics of population that are of interest, which will best enable researcher to answer their research questions. The sample being studied is not representative of the population, but

for researchers pursuing qualitative or mixed methods research designs, this is not considered to be a weakness. Rather, it is a choice, the purpose of which varies depending on the type of purposive sampling technique that is used. The researcher chooses a sample size of 150 Thai Airways customers out of several from Thai Airways customers. A purposive sample is simply one where the units are selected based on their having similar characteristics because such characteristics are of particular interest to the researcher. Since the aim of purposive sampling is to access a particular subset of respondent based on purpose, we may purposely select particular respondents from Thai Airways customers to send questionnaire request through their emails where it would be easy to access the particular customers that respond to take part in the research.

VII. Results

The appropriate research methodologies used to satisfy the objectives and derive a proper result. The objective of this research is to study the perception of brand identity on consumers and to know the impact of brand identity on brand loyalty development and to find out the relationship between brand identity and brand loyalty, also between consumers and the company. The Survey has done with special reference to Thai Airways' customers to get their respective perspective. Findings and conclusion are made with results of the survey.

VIII. Findings

1. The main discovery from survey analysis is that visual brand identity has high impact on the consumers.
2. A majority of the respondents find that it is helpful for them to recognize or recall the brand with the logo and color exhibited in online advertising.
3. Any change in identity of consumer's favorite brand reflects the consumer's attitude towards the brand.
4. Visual factors like name, logo, color, and slogan altogether form sensory drivers of a brand identity.
5. Logo or symbol of a brand are considered important and connected to a product or service.
6. Self-image of the consumers towards brand is reflected by its consistency.
7. Visual identities in online advertisements help in effective recall of the brand, and are partially effective in reaching out to the specific target audience.
8. Brand identity of the company reflects self-image of the consumer, and affects company loyalty.
9. Quality of brand also reflects brand identity, and generates loyalty of consumer to company.
10. Specific customers have strong loyalty to the brand, and trust it by their image and identity display.
11. Consumers appreciate Thai Airways and satisfy with the quality that the company provides, as well as their treat on customers.
12. The company creates trust on consumers, which is an important tool to create an effect on consumer's decision to consume the brand.
13. Personal identity is used to describe the ego-defensive function of loyalty.

IX. Suggestions

1. Brand image perceived by customers must be reflected in brand identity for loyalty.
2. Customers do care about logo and physique besides the

quality for greater attention. Visuals should be designed in such a way.

3. Logo and color used in online advertisement helps to recognize but not to convey a message. Placement and what message to deliver are to be considered.
4. The quality of brand first comes to consumers' mind so the identity of brand should be created in a proper way to reflect the quality and need more investigation on relationship between brand identity and the quality of the brand.

X. Conclusion

In this study, I have considered the impact of brand identity on increasing customers' loyalty to Thai Airways. The proposed study was conducted on Thai Airways consumers by choosing 150 customers, and analyzed by using survey questionnaire. This study demonstrates that the brand identity in customers' perception is applicable and relevant to consumers' loyalty. The result indicates that the identity is created through the use of brand elements to capture the essence of the brand. Visual identities are exposed to consumers' eyes to help recall the brand and its image, and there are consistently visual elements, such as, name, logo, color, and slogan, altogether considered important in consumers' perception. Even though the self-image, personality and relationship which brand derive in its identity vary from people and judged only on the quality or service and not the visual identity or the logo as such. Change in the identity of brand reflects the consumers' attitude towards the brand, and there is a direct positive relationship between brand and loyalty, and a powerful brand could help setup a long-term relationship between customer and firm, which leads to brand loyalty. In other words, brand identity influences customers' value perception, customer satisfaction, brand trust, while value perception influences customer satisfaction and brand trust. In addition, customer satisfaction influences brand trust, brand trust influences customer loyalty, and finally brand identity indirectly influences customer loyalty.

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