TO INVESTIGATE HOW BUILDING A BRAND MAKES CUSTOMERS RECALL AND ENHANCE MEMORY OF A BRAND. A STUDY WITH REFERENCE TO TELECOMMUNICATION RETAIL SHOPS IN MASERU, LESOTHO.

SANDILE GILBERT NZEKU

Ph.D. Research Scholar, Department of Commerce and Management Studies, Andhra University, Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh, India. Email: masandinzeku@gmail.com

KRISHNA MOHAN VADDADI

Registrar and Professor in the Department of Commerce and Management Studies, Andhra University, Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh India. Email: vkmohan1958@gmail.com

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of brand building on consumer recall and brand enhancement on telecommunications retail outlets in Maseru, Lesotho. Investigators interviewed 506 Maseru area residents who used either Econet Telecom Lesotho or Vodacom Lesotho network. The data were gathered by google form and face-to-face interviews, and then analysed using SPSS 20.0 (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences).The findings revealed that the respondents recognized how building a brand makes customers recall and enhance memory of a brand and that customers are confident that their privacy and personal information will be kept safely and shall not be shared. Moreover, it is concluded that customers like the branding of their network operator because it leads to repeated purchase and can relate the networks brand image with my lifestyle and personal preferences.

Keywords: Brand Building, Customers recall, Brand recall, Retail Shops

INTRODUCTION

There are two telecommunications companies in Lesotho, namely Vodacom Lesotho and Econet Telecom Lesotho. These service providers sell similar products and services to their subscribers, including voice calls, data services, mobile money platforms,(ecocash and M-pesa). The purpose of this study is to determine the extent to which customers are able to recall and enhance their company brands.

Nowadays every business wants to connect with its target market like a pop song. Gaining such brand loyalty has become more difficult than it used to be due to the fierce competition and clutter in practically every industry. Today's consumer is significantly more knowledgeable and educated, so it takes much more work from the business to win their loyalty. While different marketers have found different ways to get over this problem, many think coming up with strategies to improve brand recall is the most effective strategy of activity.

Given that customers are inundated with marketing communication messages, recent studies have underlined the importance of recalling a brand Keller, (2009). This study investigates brand recall in telecommunication products and services in response to Keller's call. Brand recall is crucial for both academics and practitioners, there is no

denying that. What eventually causes customers to recall companies is less evident, but this should naturally encourage them to buy and repeat those products, especially in the area of how emotion contributes to brand memory.

It is commonly known that brand recall corresponds with a consumer's exposure to and experience with a brand because of the extensive research that has been done on how consumers engage with brands in various contexts. (Nedungadi et al., 2001; Shapiro and Krishnan, 2001; Warlop et al., 2005). Contrarily, experience is a subjective term that refers to a consumer's actual use of a brand or product. (Brakus et al., 2009). Prior exposure to a brand or product improves brand memory. Delgado-Ballester et al. (2012), Mikhailitchenko et al.

This study expands on earlier research by Krishnan (1996), Korchia (2006), and Park et al. (1994) who distinguished between familiarity and awareness, indicating that exposure and experience do not have the same effects on consumers. Brand recall, or unassisted awareness of a particular brand in particular, is defined as "a consumer's ability to retrieve a brand when given the product category, the needs fulfilled by the category, or some other type of probe as a cue Keller, (1993).

When prompted with a category time, parent brands that are in the forefront within their product category are more likely to be called on again. (Herr, Far- quhar, and Fazio 1996).

Brand Building

In the past ten years, there has been a significant change in the primary concern of brand-building literature. Traditional definitions of branding and the role of brands were frequently modified and altered. A brand was once described as "the name, associated with one or more items in the product line, used to identify the source of character of the item(s)" (Kotler 2000, p. 396).

A brand is defined as "a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors" by the American Marketing Association (AMA). (p. 404). According to this perspective, any time a marketer invents a new name, logo, or symbol for a new product, he or she has created a brand, according to Keller (2003a). (p. 3). Nevertheless he appreciates that today's brands are much more than that. As can be seen, brands had a straightforward and obvious purpose as identifiers in accordance with these definitions.

Branding is described as "a major issue in product strategy" by Kotler (2000). (p. 404). Since the brand was only a small component of the final product, the communication approach focused on exposing the brand and developing a strong brand identity. According to Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2000), creating a strong brand image was the objective of the old branding strategy; this tactic is what produces immediate effects. According to Kapferer (1997), "the brand is a sign—therefore external—whose function is to reveal the hidden qualities of the product that are inaccessible to contact." (p. 28).

Before the 1980s, brands were approached differently, according to Kapferer (1997), who observes that "companies wished to buy a producer of chocolate or pasta: after 1980,

they wanted to buy KitKat or Buitoni. This distinction is very important; in the first case firms wish to buy production capacity, and in the second they want to buy a place in the mind of the consumer" (p. 23).

Brand Recall

Brand awareness depends primarily on brand memory. Along with recognition of the brand, it performs. In simple terms, brand recall refers to how consumers feel and perceive the business. It can be characterized as a tendency for a buyer to recall the brand name when presented with a niche-related product. In other words, it's an indicator for how well the customers can recall the business's name. One must comprehend the two main types of brand awareness—aided brand awareness and independently brand awareness—in order to quickly understand what brand recall suggests.

Brand recall in the context of a certain specific product category is essential for customers when making purchasing decisions, and brand awareness increases the likelihood that the brand will be included in the consideration set. Even in the absence of any brand associations in customers' feelings, awareness influences choices regarding brands in the consideration set. A little level of brand awareness may be sufficient for the choice to be made in low engagement decision cases. The brand associations that make up a brand's image can be affected by awareness to affect how consumers decide to purchase a product. (Keller, 1998) The accessible attitude Farquhar (1989) refers to has to do with how quickly a consumer may recall the brand features that are stored in their minds.

Understanding how brand value is formed in the minds of consumers is necessary for building brand equity (Farquhar, 1992). Learning brand names is crucial because consumers need to associate a name's value with the brand. According to Alba, Hutchinson, and Lynch (1991), "naming is a very basic form of familiarity and may be regarded as the 'gateway' to more complicated types of learning and memory." In the current study, we investigate the effects of both the words chosen to serve as brand names and the images used on memory. Research has shown that brand name memory is strongly correlated with indicators of brand preference, including market share (cf. Hutchinson, Raman, and Mantrala, 1994), which supports the significance of naming. In the current study, two experiments were run.

The associative network model's use is supported by recent marketing research. The associative network model served as the theoretical framework for Schmitt, Tavassoli, and Milliard's (1993) investigation of memory for print advertisements. Advertisements with associated brand names, copy, and images should be easier to remember than those without them. Their findings were consistent with the framework because ad recall was higher when there were linkages between the elements as opposed to when there weren't any. Accordingly, Macklin (1996) recently demonstrated the value of supplementary visual cues in enhancing preschoolers' brand name memory. According to her findings, kids remembered brand names better when they were provided with visual cues that had previously been connected to them in their memory structures.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The "father" of modern management, Peter Drucker, asserts that marketing and innovation are the two core purposes of business (Drucker & Maciariello, 2008). He emphasises that branding is the goal of marketing, which makes selling unnecessary and makes the brand itself desirable. In other words, it is the power of the brand that enables certain products to be sold without the need to try to persuade clients via methods of marketing. Branding is everything in marketing. Aaker (1991), Aaker & Biel (1993), Keller (1993, 2001), Simon & Sullivan (1993), Shankar, Azar, & Fuller (2008), Vázquez, del Rio, & Iglesias (2002), Washburn & Plank (2001), Yoo & Donthu (2001) all discuss the notion of brand equity. As a result, much attention has been given to it.

The three aspects of criterion for "performance and imagery" elements, according to Keller (2001), are strength, favorability, and distinctiveness. Strength is defined as "how strongly the brand is identified with a brand association" (p. 18), whereas favorability refers to how much people value a particular brand. The distinctiveness of the brand and uniqueness are complementary. Strength is more likely to be related to the level of brand awareness (Keller refers to this as "salience" because it deals with recognition (or identity) among brands) according to the definition of the three dimensions. Recalling a brand is important in order to recognise it. It is reasonable to assert that recall strength varies amongst brands.

Keller's first definition of brand image, from 1993, was based on "associative network models of memory." This method was based on the idea that customers' memories of brands were related to the informational nodes they knew. Keller (2001) came up with a consumer-based brand equity model with six factors that help build a brand. The four parts of the model—judgments, feelings, behaviour, and images—were supposed to be a new way to define brand image. That is, the four things make up a brand's image. His description isn't perfect, though, because its parts are limited by the way it's thought of. To establish brand equity, marketers seek to establish a brand image. Biel (1992) asserts that brand image is a central driver of brand equity.

An overview of Retailing Sector

Retailing encompasses the business activities involved in selling goods and services to consumers for their personal, family or house-hold use. It includes every sale to the final consumers ranging from cars to apparel to meals at restaurants to movie tickets. Retailing is the last stage in the distribution process from supplier to consumer. Retailing is one of the oldest business of mankind. As development of human civilization took place, the business transaction from producer to consumer gave way to direct marketing. In the modern business world, any business to consumer interaction can be termed as retailing interaction and can be termed as retailing. Retailing is the final stage of any economic activity.

The Retail Products

A retail product represents the total bundle of benefits offered to consumers through a channel of distribution. It comprises shopping location and parking, retailer ambience, the

level of customer service, the product/brand carried, product quality, the retailer's in-stock position, shipping, prices, the retailer's image and other elements. As a rule, consumers are concerned with the results of a value chain, not the process.

Customers can see some components of a retail value chain, such as display windows, store hours, sales associates, and point-of-sale technology. Other elements, such as credit processing, corporate warehouses, and numerous merchandising selections, are not visible. In the second scenario, a variety of cues serve as stand-ins for value, including a posh setting and a large sales staff for high-end merchants and shopping carts and self-service for discounters.

Retailing innovations in less developed countries frequently require being sensitive to particular regional factors (Goldman 1974; Kaynak and Cavusgil 1982; Minten 2008). For instance, due to a combination of their low income levels and a thin network of bank offices and ATMs, a significant portion of consumers in a number of less developed nations in Africa do not have bank accounts. Although ownership of mobile phones was the first to systematically address changes in retailing, mobile phone service providers have made significant strides in this area. To the best of our knowledge, however, there is a lack of literature that provides a comprehensive overview of aspects of innovations in retailing, especially in the context of environmental factors that retailers are confronted with in the global arena in which they operate. This is despite the fact that innovations in retailing have been extensively studied over the years.

Retail Structure

Before developing the overall retail strategy, it is important for a retail firm to analyse the retail structure of a particular market. (Palmer, 2008). The retail structure of a market is the product of the other factors, regulations, the economy, society and culture. The nature of the structure will depend on the ability of commercial enterprises in a market to meet the customer's needs, which in turn are determined by social and economic conditions within regulatory framework and cultural context. The retail structure will be indicative of other developments in the market. Developed markets will share similar characteristics, as will undeveloped markets; however they will also have distinct characteristics that may prove problematic for incoming retailers who do not pay attention to them.

Econet Telecom Lesotho Products and Services

Products and Services

- **EcoCash Spache Fono** is a mobile money transfer service offered by Econet Lesotho that enables you to pay bills, transmit and receive money from anywhere in

the country. Subscribers can send funds to any Standard Lesotho Bank account or vice versa.

- Pay salaries

- Save money in the wallet

- Pay Econet bills

- Send money

- Pay airtime and bundles

- Econet Telecom Lesotho offers *EcoSure EcoSure Re Bolokehile* as an insurance product to its subscribers. Lesotho National Life Assurance Company underwrites this coverage. The product enables Econet subscribers to register their complete family under an affordable funeral plan with a single premium. A subscriber of Econet between the ages of 18 and 70 can register as the primary member and add dependents between the ages of 0 and 70.

One can register for EcoSure Re Bolokehile straight from their phone – no paperwork required. It allows customers the freedom to add dependents with premiums paid using their airtime or EcoCash which can automatically be debited.

Mobile

- **Buddie**

A prepaid voice package that is more than a service; it's not just a friend – It's a Buddie. Available in 2 options

1**. Per Second**: Calls are charged per second. A great option for those quick phone calls.

2**. Student CUG**: Designed for tertiary students under the Council of Higher Education in Lesotho. Call other Buddie Student subscribers at preferential rates

Vodacom Lesotho Product and Services

Products and Services

- **Prepaid services**

Airtime Advance Loan Airtime, pay it back on next recharge. The pre-paid airtime advance is a self-service option that allows Vodacom prepaid customers to receive airtime in advance and pay for it later. This means that customers can get access to emergency airtime when they really need it most.

It is like the customer is getting a loan, get airtime now and pay later. The benefit of this service is that customers can stay connected and continue making calls when they are unable to recharge or buy more airtime.

Who is airtime advance available to?

All Prepaid and Top Up customers who: Have been on the Vodacom's network for a minimum period of 3 months prior to the date of request for a pre-paid airtime advance Have recharged with a minimum of M20 per month on average for the last 3 months Have re-paid any prior airtime advances and Service Fee (in the case of a returning customer)

Free Change

Flexibility to migrate from one prepaid package to another. Free-Change allows customers more freedom to change across tariffs. The first two Free Changes will let customers try out new tariffs, and if they're not happy, give them a chance to change back at no cost Vodacom Lesotho has three prepaid tariff plans: ***Prepaid per Second***, ***Prepaid Anytime*** and ***Prepaid Bua.*** The default tariff is the Prepaid per Second, but customers can migrate to other tariffs using the Free Change service, via self-service *111# or 1181.

- **Mokhatlo Savings Account**

It is a saving account for groups of people saving towards a common goal, where multiple M-Pesa registered customers can have access, in a controlled manner, to a shared account that allows for: Gathering/saving of funds together. Use of funds to buy/pay for good/bills to the benefit of the entire group.

- **M-Pesa loyalty funeral cover benefits**

Requirements

Get paid up to M4, 000 Cover starts from M1, 000/($51.72) for natural death and M4,000 (206.87$) for accidental death Free funeral cover of 1 month, subject to waiting period of 1 month.

METHODOLOGY

The study was quantitative descriptive design. The sample size of the study was 506 respondents from two telecommunication service providers namely Vodacom Lesotho and Econet Telecom Lesotho. The data were specifically collected from the retail shops of both Vodacom Lesotho and Econet Telecom Lesotho in Maseru district. Simple Random Sampling technique was used where each member of the population had an equal chance of being selected.

Data Analysis.

Data were analyzed by the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.0. The findings were presented in tabular form involving frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study investigated how building a brand makes customers recall and enhance memory of a brand on telecommunication retail shops of both Econet Telecom Lesotho and Vodacom Lesotho in Maseru, Lesotho.5 points Likert scale was used to reflect opinions of respondents: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Slightly Disagree, 4 = Slightly Agree, 5=agree. For purposes of interpretation of the findings, means ranging from 3 and above were considered to reflect agreement while those below 3 were considered to reflect disagreement. Furthermore, standard deviations of less than 1.000 were taken to imply that respondents did not vary in their opinions, while those from 1.000 and above were taken to imply respondents have variation in opinions.

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by opinion on Trust

Trust (N=506)	Mean	SD	Decision
I have a concern that other operators might not work as expected and I don't want to deal with any	3.11	1.226	Agree
I am confident that my privacy and personal information will be kept safely and shall not be shared	3.99	1.148	Agree
How satisfied are you with your mobile operator	3.91	0.992	Agree
I am satisfied with Network coverage of my network operator	3.65	1.216	Agree
I like the branding of my network operator because it leads to repeated purchase	3.68	1.086	Agree
I am attached to the brand's value of my service provider	3.67	1.087	Agree
The slogan of my network provider is unique	4.00	1.079	Agree
Their products and Services do not have features and functions I need	2.34	1.257	Disagree
I like the branding strategies that my network operator uses.	3.84	0.986	Agree
The mobile operator I use has good branding and can be spotted easily	4.25	0.739	Agree
Overall	3.64	1.082	Agree

Source*: Field data 2022

The findings in **Table 1** indicate that the respondents considered building a brand made customers recall and enhance memory of a brand on telecommunication retail shops in Maseru since the overall mean was 3.64. The standard deviation ranged from 1.226 to 0.739 and the overall was 1.082 which reflects variation of opinions among respondents. Specifically respondents agreed that brand building makes customers recall and enhance the memory of the brand in terms of the following attributes: (mean= 4.25): The mobile operator I use has good branding and can be spotted easily. (Mean=4.00): The slogan of my network provider is unique. (Mean=3.99): I am confident that my privacy and personal information will be kept safely and shall not be shared. (Mean=3.91): How satisfied are

you with your mobile operator. (Mean=3.84): I like the branding strategies that my network operator uses. (Mean=3.68): I like the branding of my network operator because it leads to repeated purchase. (Mean=3.67): I am attached to the brand's value of my service provider. (Mean=3.65): I am satisfied with Network coverage of my network operator. (mean=3.11): I have a concern that other operators might not work as expected and I don't want to deal with any. (mean=2.34): Their products and Services do not have features and functions I need.

CONCLUSION

The respondents recognized and acknowledge brand building, brand recall and memory enhancements on their telecommunication retail shop as well as the products and services they provide and that customer considered themselves to be loyal to the network they use. Furthermore, the respondents like the brand image of their telecommunication service they use; they further mentioned that they would recommend their mobile operator to their friends, family and colleagues. Moreover, this study has been extracted from previous studies that, building a brand enhances customer recall and memory of a brand. Therefore, by establishing the basis for measuring the idea in future investigations, this study anticipates opening new horizons on memory enhancement literature.

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