



ROLE OF BRAND IDENTITY IN DEVELOPING GLOBAL BRANDS: A LITERATURE BASED REVIEW ON CASE COMPARISON BETWEEN APPLE IPHONE VS SAMSUNG SMARTPHONE BRANDS

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ABSTRACT

This paper has focused on reviewing brand identity as an integral strategic component in developing global brands via figuring out literature sources along with the case practices on apple iPhone and Samsung Smart Phone Brands. Researchers followed an approach as literature review along with case review to connect theory into practice by sourcing the formally published evidences. Paper provides the insights on how empirical findings being shared in literature reviews connecting the concept of Brand Identity into brand related concepts and models whilst special reference is made on how the said two global brands being reviewed as cases in the literature sources. Researchers suggest propositions along with a conclusion in the forms of teaching and learning notes par with the essentials of the case-based piece of work.

JEL Classification

M31, M37, M16

1. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

It has found that different thoughts being empirically developed in investigating how the strategic shift takes place with reference to global branding across the different markets and cultural contexts. Matanda and Ewing (2012), have studied the content of global brand strategy development and regional implementation referring to the said. It has further referred that cognitively anti-global consumers have a positive affections on global brands. As per the fast growing global mobility of the users perceptive, the role of global brands may be demanded high degree of global presence along with needful differentiations as in requires. Adding to the said, Strizhakova et al. (2012) highlighted the fact that how “glocal” cultural identity of the young adult market on global–local identity beliefs (belief in global citizenship through global brands, nationalism, and consumer ethnocentrism) referring to the emerging markets like Russia and Brazil.

In today’s context, Smartphones are found as one of the leading brand stories in global market whereas some researches have highlighted the role what they do such as computer, making it possible to do a lot with this small hand held device. Further, its broad usage has been exhibited referred as sharing information, paying for products, browsing, and shopping saying how virtually every activity has a Smartphone application for it Mackenzie (2011). As per the global statistics, provided in International Data Corporation (2014), Samsung and Apple lead the market in smartphone category whereas Samsung hold the market leadership as how statistics reveled (*See Table 1*) . The head-on

competition of these two brands in terms of branding perspective is worthy study along with set theories and concepts found in branding as the main stream as far as it is concern.

Objectives of the paper are in three folds; review and discuss the theoretical contribution found in the context of brand identity as an integral component of “branding strategy”; reviews how Apple iPhone and Samsung Smart Phone brands have been referred in literature based discussions as living cases in the context of global brands; and constrictively evaluate the practices followed by Samsung and Apple iPhone brands to contribute case-related insights for the practice

Followed by the given background, reserchers have organized the paper content with objectives, methodology along with therotical reviews on the said two cases under specific sgements to provide clear discusions and finnaly it has provided a conclusion before presenting the propositions for future studies and practices.

2. METHODOLOGY

Researchers used the deductive methodology as to investigate the concepts, theories and practices followed by those two living cases in developing this paper. The paper has been developed as a mix of strategy. It has followed the template of case review as well as synopsis format of a literature review to organize theoretical content along with case related highlights. It has used the secondary sources as the method in the selected research approach, and authors have proposed propositions for highlighting the essence of the paper to be used as learning and teaching note followed by a conclusion remark.

2.1. Theoretical Review on Brand Indenty and Approach to the Case of Samsung vs Iphone Brands

Brand identity plays a significant role in constructing a brand and in building brand equity. Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2002:43) refer to brand identity as “a set of brand associations that the brand strategist aspires to create or maintain”. This statement encompasses a much wider meaning. Brand identity means much more than a symbol, a tagline or graphical and visual attributes used by brand owners and should have depth and richness, Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2002). Naomi Klein in her book “No Logo” attributes her discontent towards brands to the fact that organisations are producing brands and not products, despite such thinking; she accepts that, companies that have built effective brand identities have been very successful. Such is the strength of branding that her title “No Logo” received many offers to be developed as a brand, an offer if accepted would have made her quite wealthy (Klein, 2010).

“Brand literature has tended to define brand identity as an internal construct that emanates unilaterally from the organisation-what managers want the brand to be... this understanding has evolved” (Aaker 1996; Kapferer 2008, as cited in Silveira et al. 2013:28), it is no more only an inward point of view but includes an outward view that encompasses the consumer and other, wider stakeholders. It is understood that “the notions of brand identity, brand image, and brand positioning frequently overlap, in the literature and in practice “ (Silveira et al. 2013:29). Brand Identity plays a major role in

constructing an image for a brand and also dictates terms on how a brand should be positioned.

This paper aims to evaluate the significance of brand identity for the Apple iPhone compared to Samsung’s range of smart phones, by critically evaluating the brand identity constructs, making an effort to link theoretical aspects of brand identity to actual brand strategy of iPhone and Samsung Galaxy range of smart phones. These two brands are arguably the top two sellers of smart phones in the market place, as depicted in the Table 1.

Table 1: Worldwide Smartphone Market Share

Worldwide Smartphone Vendor Market Share (Share in Unit Shipments)						
<i>Period</i>	Samsung	Apple	Xiaomi	Lenovo	LG	Others
Q3 2014	23.7%	11.7%	5.2%	5.1%	5.0%	49.3%
Q3 2013	32.2%	12.8%	2.1%	4.7%	4.6%	43.6%
Q3 2012	31.2%	14.4%	1.0%	3.7%	3.7%	46.0%
Q3 2011	22.7%	13.8%	-	0.4%	3.7%	59.4%

Source: International Data Corporation, 2014 Q3

2.2. Dichotomy of Single Brand Identity or Multiple Band Identity

In evaluating the significance of brand identity for companies it is important to understand whether an organisation should retain a single brand identity spanning all products and markets or should they engage in multiple brand identities (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2002). While many intellects argue that it is advantages to possess a single brand identity for all products and markets, Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2002: 61) states that “departures from the base identity should be as few as possible and convincingly justified by theory and data”. Alternatively Silveira et al. (2013) is of the opinion that brand identity should be reconceptualised in a dynamic environment.

Although, Spiggle et al (2012) found out that brand extension authenticity to be less applicable for functional brands the main reasoning being that “consumers value functional brands primarily for their problem-solving abilities”(Park; Jaworski & MacInnis 1986,as cited in Spiggle et al 2012: 980), being functional brands both the iPhone and the Samsung have successfully extended their cooperate identity to multiple identities. Apple is a corporate brand and it is rarely that anybody states that he or she bought an Apple, it is always an iPhone, iPod or iPad that is mentioned, similarly a customer purchasing a Samsung smart phone will not refer to the purchase as a Samsung, but instead would say I bought a Samsung Galaxy S5 or Samsung Galaxy Note-4 , note the referral to the corporate brand prior to the extended brand in Samsung and the extended

brand only in Apple. Kaul (2013) states that Apple has been successful over Samsung in earning superior profits by embarking on multiple brand identities, Ries (ascited in Kaul, 2013) feels that Samsung's multiple brand strategy would be short termed, sighting that Samsung is profitable due to the space it enjoys as No. 2 brand to iPhone which is more profitable than Samsung. Despite these views both brands continue to enjoy the attention of the consumer through their respective brand identities backed by consistent innovation in terms of functional capabilities and technological advancements. Apple has been successful in retaining its core identity and creating multiple brand identities such as iPhone, iPod and iPad. Even within these brands Apple has created sub brands such as Safari, iTunes, iBooks etc, thereby enabling it to successfully differentiate from Samsung and other competitors.

2.3.Assessment of the Brand Identity in application of Apple and Samsung Smartphones

It has given the diferent literature based overview on brand identity and the degree of applications refern to the two cases of Apple and Samsung smart phone brands in the following content.

2.3.1. Inward Perspective

Although, the definition of brand personality prima facie seems an inward perspective of the brand identity construction i.e. a responsibility and task of the company and the brand manager, it is no more the same, as consumers wants and needs become more complex, Apple nor Samsung cannot afford to ignore the consumer and other stakeholders. Though for the purpose of discussion we bifurcate brand identity construct as inward and outward looking, it is important to understand, that these two intermingle and overlap in most instances.

Diamantopoulos et al (as cited in Ahamed & Thyagaraj, 2014) researched the effect of brand extension on brand personality and found out that brand identity extensions to be harmless to the core brand personality as successfully illustrated by Apple and Samsung with their iPhone and Galaxy smartphone. Brand personality defined as "the set of human characteristics associated with a brand" (Aaker , as cited in Bree et al. 2005: p 69) could be viewed through strong affiliations a brand may have to a single person such as the founder or brand ambassador, as in case of iPhone whose corporate brand personality was defined by its founder, Steve Job's personal characteristics such as vitality, imagination and passion was associated with Apple and whenever Jobs was present at a product launch there was tremendous hype and anticipation (Taylor, 2009) and when his health deteriorated and took him away from leading Apple, the companies' stocks plummeted . Samsung is protected from exposure towards fallibilities associated to a single personality, as, although Samsung was founded by a Korean by the name of Lee Byung- Chul in 1938 his association with the Samsung brand is little known.

iPhone has successfully built a sense of genuineness and feelings of energy to the personality of their brand Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2002) , Whereas Samsung has an edge over it sense of ruggedness through its functional dimensions. With functionalities such as replaceable batteries and free mobile apps the brand Samsung is more appealing

to a certain segment of consumers who are risk takers and do not believe in paying for software. As such the Samsung brand is “[linked] to a compelling functional benefit whenever possible and generates deep consumer insight in the construct of their brand” (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2002:51)

The creation of brand personality is a complex task (Bree et al., 2005). Research conducted by Azzawi and Ezeh (2012) indicates that out of 217 respondents consisting of university students, apple ascribed to 76% (agreeing) to competence personality trait (see illustration-2), 66.2% (agreeing) to Sophistication and 61.1% (agreeing) to excitement in comparison to Samsung. In understanding the role of personality in the construct of brand identity it is important to understand that self-congruity is a determinant of brand personality and is “the match between the product’s value –expressive attributes (product-user image) and the [consumers] self-concept” (Johar & Sirgy, as cited in Klipfel et al, 2013:130).

Laforet (as cited in Branding and Communication, 2013:40) refers to brand culture as the “set of values that inform and inspire the brands raison d’être [reason for existence]”. Brands have a direct association to the culture it originates from, and on some instances have reflections of the culture it is associated to (Azzawi & Ezeh, 2012). Azzawi and Ezeh (2012), indicates that 38.7% of the respondents strongly disagree that they associate Samsung smartphone to Korean culture, Conversely 19.3% of Apple users associate the iPhone to American culture. This research indicates that Apple has a stronger cultural association to its country of origin compared to Samsung. It is interesting to link culture from a consumer perspective and understand why it is important to consider incorporating cultural aspects in the makeup of a brand’s identity. Kotler and Armstrong (2006: 137) said that “Cultural factors exert a broad and deep influence on consumer behaviour by the buyers culture, subculture, and social class”. Kotler and Armstrong (2006) go on to explain the cultural values that are instilled in a typical American child, identifying “achievement and success, activity and involvement, efficiency and practicality, progress, material comfort, individualism, freedom, humanitarianism, youthfulness, and health.

The sixth facet of brand identity augments brand self-image (Ponnam, 2007) it is also an internalised facet of the brand identity prism. According to Kapferer (cited in Ponnam, 2007) self-image has been found as the target’s own internal mirror when s/he interacts with the brand. It has said that consumers wish to acquire the characteristics of a brand by using them, for e.g. user of an iPhone is associated to eliteness although actually he may not belong to the elite class (Ponnam, 2007), and the same image cannot be drawn by Samsung as it is not perceived to be identified in that position. The strength of the iPhone’s self-image is illustrated by a study conducted where it was revealed that “Apple’s iPhone remains the smartphone with the greatest appeal for shoppers in North America” (Change Wave Research, 2012).

Aaker discussed linking a brand’s identity to compelling functional benefits (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2002) Samsung has been successful in achieving an edge over iPhone in this aspect. They dominate the mass market by providing wider functional benefits at a

lower price compared to iPhone and continuously compete to outnumber iPhone in terms of functionality and pre-emptive introductions to the market.

However, on certain occasions, Samsung has failed to ensure that there are no dents to its brand identity in following this aggressive strategy, “Samsung Galaxy note -4” in competing with Apple introduced the biometrics finger scanning access security feature which was very sluggish and disastrous compared to “iPhone 6” and “6 plus” , Samsung would have been better off without this feature unless otherwise they overcome the technical glitches. Apple is more adept at limiting their features to what is best and by “ignoring constructs that are not helpful” (Aaker & Joachimsthaler 2002:51). Failure such as this experienced by the Note-4 automatically elevates the consumer’s perceptions of its closest competitor as such the iPhone 6 and 6 plus received credit over the aforementioned functionality and to its overall brand identity.

2.3.2 Outward Perspective

The physique is the first impression that comes to mind when evaluating the outward nature of a brands identity. Kapferer (2006) identifies brand physique as “The salient objective features which define the product, including it’s packaging and physical appearance. Franzen et al, (2009) describes the brand physique as an important cog in the construction of the brand wheel, “as, it forms raw material for brand experience” .As such the brand physique provides an outward expression of the brands identity. Apple through its unique design and feel of the iPhone has been successful in developing a mental brand in the consumer’s memory (Franzen et al., 2009) as a result; iPhone has direct and literal attachment to the brand, Apple. David Aaker and Jennifer Aaker (cited in Bree et al, 2005 :69) “proposed the idea of interdependence between the physical attributes of the brand and its personality”, this idea is authenticated by Cambell (as cited in Jiang, 2011) who stated that the “ physical appearance of the mobile phone represents network membership and send messages about the *self* “. It is evident that the physical appearance of the iPhone has contributed immensely towards establishing its brand personality in comparison to Samsung, the software (iOS 8) of the latest iPhone 6 has been optimized to enhance the physical design iOS swipe gestures have been designed to flow seamlessly making it easy to navigate with one hand thus linking traits of human characteristics to physical design.

“In short, Reflection can be defined as perceived target with which the customer wants to be identified with” Kapferer (as cited in Ponnam, 2007). Ponnam (2007) identifies following two factors that could influence brand reflection

- Target segment appearing in the brand communication; and
- Placement of product with respect to others in the retail outlet/market space

iPhones targeted towards the high end customers although it was widely expected that Apple would introduce a cheaper lower-end product with the 5C model to capture the emerging markets, the pricing did not reflect this expectation and iPhones remains to be identified and reflected with the affluent class. This view is illustrated by Reis (2014) who is of the opinion that “Getting an iPhone, for instance, is a symbol of moving up in the world, a status symbol. In many countries, including the U.S, an iPhone is a symbol of

wealth. Conversely, Samsung's Galaxy range has targeted their brand to the mass market with a phone to fit any customer's budget. iPhones are sold mainly through their branded stores or authorised resellers, in 2003 Apple spent \$293 million to open 73 retail stores to create excitement for the brand, the logic behind this investment is to allow more customers to touch and feel the Apple product (Keller & Kotler, 2006). Comparatively Samsung is distributed freely and is available readily in most markets. In essence, iPhone is reflected to be identified with the affluent and limited in availability thus earning superior profits which no doubt enhances brand equity, the way Samsung is positioned and reflected it is a revenue driver and is associated with affordability, and value for money but includes high-end product options as well. When it comes to "understanding competitors" (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2002) both Apple and Samsung have been equally successful, Apples success though is limited to a niche high-end market, whilst Samsung has a deep understanding of the mass market.

4. ROLE OF THE CUSTOMER AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS IN BRAND IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION

It is widely accepted that brands have a prominent place in society; this is due to the fact that consumers demand for brands and not merely because of brand identities built by the manufacturers (Carpentier et al, 2011). At the same time there is a section of society who intellectually and literally rebel against brands, Naomi Klein and Cayce Pollard are two such intellectuals who disdain brands (Klein, 2010). So morbid is Pollard towards semiotics of the market place that she refrains from wearing branded clothes (Klein, 2010). Further, Silveira et al. (2013) states that competition, industry and environment conditions, and partners' actions as main inputs to brand identity construction. Evaluating iPhone and Samsung it is evident that both brands are customer centric and takes into account views of social constituents. Listening to the customer is something Apple does on a daily basis (Denning, 2011). This is quite contrary to what is found in things said to The New York Times, writing in a biography of Steve Jobs in which he claimed that its Jobs "own judgment and perfectionism and gut that resonates in the brands identity (Streitfeld, 2013).

5. COMPARISON OF PRACTICES AND LITERATURE REVIEWS ON THE ROLE OF BRAND IDENTITY IN BRAND DIFFERENTIATION

Brand identity contributes significantly to successfully differentiate and manage brands (Silveira et al. 2013) The plethora of brand choices available makes it increasingly difficult for the consumer to decipher specific attributes of a given brand Kapferer,(as cited in da Silveira et al., 2013). This fact affects both the iPhone and Samsung thus making differentiation and brand identity, dynamic variables in creating equity. A strong Brand Visual Identity (BVI) contributes immensely to differentiate a brand, whether it is a symbol, such as Nike's swoosh or LG's tagline Life is Good the BVI plays a major role in building brand value (Chapman, 2014). Although, Naomi Klein expresses her ambivalence and disbelief for brands and symbols, and sees brands in a way, as "symbols over substance" (Klein, 2010: XXVI) she indicates that "every transformative movement in history has used strong graphic design, catchy slogans and, yes fashion to build its base". (Klein, 2010: XXV). When compared to Samsung, Apple has gained an edge over its visual

identity, the logo of the bitten Apple fruit signifies, and successfully differentiates the brand from the rest, as does its packaging. Further, apple advertising has successfully built a differentiated image in the consumers mind (Carpenter & Tybout, 2006). Success of Apple also encapsulates strong functional dimensions, technological evolution, superior quality and distinct product features.

6. HINDSIGHT OF BUILDING AND SUSTAINING BRAND IDENTITY: LITRATURE REVIEW AND COMPARISION OF CASE PRACTISES

The role of marketing communications in building a strong brand is immense and it is hard to successfully build a strong brand without properly planning and executing an integrated communications strategy that takes into consideration the marketing mix and the desired positioning (Carpenter & Tybout, 2006). In evaluating the iPhone and Samsung through the brand resonance pyramid, it is evident that aspects of the "rational route" such as strong identity, meaning, response and relationships as well as the emotional route e.g. deep, broad brand awareness, strong favorable & unique brand associations, intense [and] active loyalty" (Keller & Kotler 2006:280) as per the reviews found in this scenario, it is clear that the "emotional route" is strongly evident in the iPhone compared to Samsung and this no doubt provides an edge to Apple. Connecting to the early discussed multiple brand identity perspective, iPhone has been following image and experiential branding intermingles in the iPhones make up, whilst Samsung is more aligned towards being a functional brand with limited tenants of experiential branding associated to the same.

A commonly understood conviction was that brand identities should be sustained in the long term and in line with a clear brand purpose, as how it has been verified by Silveira et al, (2013) referring the importance of stabilize the identity of the brands over time. Both Apple and Samsung have maintained their core brand identities but have not been afraid to experiment with change, compared to manufactures such as Nokia.

7. REVIEW ON STRATEGIC GAINS AND LIMITATIONS: AN ABSTRACT REVIEW ON BRAND BUILDING MILSTONES OF APPLE AND SAMSUNG BRANDS

The iPhone customer segment is identified as affluent and highly connected, (see *illustration-3, in appendices*) most of the iPhone market share accrues from developed countries such as Australia and United States, the main reason being price and the fact that Apple has placed the iPhone to a niche market segment through facets of brand identification and brand image, and by doing so, the company has enjoyed sustained profitability. As mentioned earlier there have been expectations of Apple introducing a more affordable iPhone to compete with the android market as the current strategy limits its ability to reach out to a wider market segment, but the company has not yet embarked on such a strategy and instead continues to benefit from superior margins by following the current strategy. In comparison, Samsung continues to penetrate the market by offering phones to all market segments from their high end Samsung Galaxy S5, the Galaxy duo S to the middle layer and low priced models to the lower spectrum of the market. By following this strategy Samsung has enjoyed a multiple brand position encapsulating the top, middle and the bottom of the pyramid, however their profitability ratios are not in the league of

Apple. In order to be enduring and sustain the brand position Samsung is compelled to be more dynamic and flexible than iPhone in their identity construct (Silveira et al, 2013). This is mainly due to the fact that Samsung's customer base is scattered with varying personalities and self- image linkages, in comparison to Apple iPhone. This notion is further endorsed in Effie worldwide in which, it is stated that "In positioning the product, Samsung faced the challenge of marketing to an audience that was overwhelmingly broad and varied" (Effie Worldwide, 2013:3). It is evident that iPhone is compelled to continue with its current pricing and positioning strategy or risk damaging its identity construct which may also negatively affect the core brand identity of its corporate brand, Apple.

8. CONCLUSION

The evaluation of iPhone and Samsung indicates that constructs of brand identity has been successfully utilized to create an image of the brand in the customers mind thereby positioning the iPhone in the high-end, earning the brand superlative profits and Galaxy range to the masses making it a revenue driver for Samsung. Facets of brand identity such as culture, personality, self- image and reflection (Kapferer, 2006) have been used to good effect by iPhone in creating a niche and differentiating it from the rest of the competition, while Samsung has been largely successful in linking the brand to "compelling functional benefits generating deep insights into what the consumer wants and by understanding the competitor well" as said by (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2002:51). iPhone brand identity does not remain static, the company continues to improve and progress its brand identity tenants while ensuring that the core values of the brand are retained. As such, iPhone has an edge over Samsung in the way it has built its brand identity and image, resulting in it being one of the most sought after and aspired mobiles phone brands the world over.

9. PROPOSITIONS FOR THE FUTURE RESERCH WORKS

Having said, researchers propose the proposition notes for the future studies and to associate for learning and teaching notes as highlighted below;

P1: Brand Identity has been reviewed and discussed in different literature sources to understand its integral relationship into brand equity that could be developed via brand building strategies. This provides a teaching note to navigate searching related models and theories related to brand identity.

P2: Being leading brands in global scope, Apple iPhone and Samsung keep brand differentiation followed as a gravity of growth strategies and competitive strategies; integrated to their main business models. This provides a learning point to explore the excellence on how theoretically connected models and content being practiced in real life realities.

P3: Different authors have reviewed those two brands as to connect theoretical content into practice realities so that readers could understand how brand building has to be followed by formal models and concepts along with the excellence of implementations proving a case based approach to understand hands-on side of theoretical models.

P4: The insights of the literature review and case practices said in this paper could be further studied in future researches to understand how planning brand building strategies

in both local and global contexts should be managed by highlighting branding related aspects as holistic view rather limiting to a functional niche.

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