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Relationships of Brand Awareness, Logo Associations and Prior Shopping Experience: A Pre-test Study

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ABSTRACT

Branding is instrumental in achieving success in today's highly competitive markets. Successful brands are those that differentiate themselves from competition in the minds of consumers even though they satisfy the same needs. Brand name, logos, jingles, slogans, brand personalities/characters, URL of a web site, signs and packages, letterheads, business cards are some of the tools that companies and organizations use as part of their external branding efforts. Companies typically spend considerable sums in their logo design activities. Some of them even try to revive their brands by changing their logos over time. Despite the importance of this research topic, little academic research exists with regard to the impact on consumer behavior of logo design or other visual aspects of branding.

Because of the need called for research in the literature on the effects of logos on consumer associations and sentiments of the brand, the objective of this pre-test study is to investigate how (1) brand/logo awareness; (2) prior consumer shopping experiences with a retailer, and (3) consumer sentiments (attitudes) of logos and associations affect one another. Eight logos of top 100 retailers that did not disclose company brand names were selected for the study. Data for this pre-test study were collected using an online survey from a student sample of 107 participants. Brand awareness based on logo is measured by determining which of the top 100 US retailer logos are recalled by the respondents correctly without any aid. The measurements for five types of prior shopping experience (purchased, made inquiry, visited store, visited web site, and seen advertising), the nature of experience, sentiments, and eight bi-polar adjectives for logo associations were developed.

According to the survey results, brand logo awareness had significant differences in two of the logo associations being tested. The respondents who recalled the brand logos correctly showed significantly higher positive sentiments, overall shopping experience, purchased, made an

inquiry, visited store, visited web site, and seen advertising at $p < .01$ level. Prior shopping experience significantly enhanced brand logo awareness, sentiments of logos, and logo associations. Sentiments were significantly and positively correlated with the five types of prior shopping experience and the nature of experience at $p < .01$ level.

A convenience sample of business students at one university is a limitation in this pre-test study. Future research would benefit from including more than one location and a probability sample of more diversified consumer market. To increase the contribution and enrich the findings, a future study should include more variables such as purchase intentions and brand loyalty. The results and implications are further discussed.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Tulay Girard (Ph.D., Florida Atlantic University) is an Associate Professor of Marketing at Penn State Altoona. Her research focuses on product classes, retailer attributes, perceived risk, Internet security/privacy, trust, and brand equity in banking and higher education. The list of her articles can be found at www.tulaygirard.com. She received several best paper awards and grants.

M. Meral Anitsal is an Associate Professor of Marketing in College of Business at Tennessee Tech University. She holds a Ph.D. in Marketing from The University of Tennessee, Knoxville. Dr. Anitsal has published numerous articles in multiple journals and serves on the editorial boards of several scholarly journals.

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