

Psychological Impact of a Brand Mascot in Customer's Purchase Decision

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Abstract: *This research is based upon the use of mascots in advertising or promoting goods and services by various brands. The primary objective of the research is to appraise the contemporary situation of using animated mascots to influence the purchase decision of the buyer. Another focus is to analyse how an animated mascot can help to reduce costing of advertisement communication. This has been done through primary data collection through a structured questionnaire and secondary data analysis through study of various ad campaigns. Also, data is taken by studying the research papers, websites and articles based upon ad campaigns. The study targets at evaluating the brand ambassadors in moulding the procuring choice of buyers and finding the scope of using animated mascots with the hope to be advantageous as an orientation for explicit solicitation in the animation industry.*

Index Terms: *Psychological impact, Brand Mascots, Brand Spokes, Brand Identity, Brand Recall, Brand Recognition.*

I. STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The study was conducted to find out the rationale of using brand mascot for creating positive relationships with consumers. It is always a challenging task for the marketers to design a brand mascot which can be used to establish an emotional bonding with the consumers and are also suitable as per the need of the product of a brand.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To recognize the impact of a brand mascot in customer's purchase decision.
- To recognize the acceptance of a brand mascot in promotion.
- To understand the influence of a brand mascot rather than a brand ambassador in customer's purchase decision.

III. INTRODUCTION

The national and international businesses have different strategic plans to promote their products and services through advertisements. Mascots have been found most important and relevant, cheap and best way for the marketing of the product. Usually, brand value is measured by the success of the product which includes logo, and

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product packaging. A brand always seeks to develop the trust of the consumer through trust and loyalty. The consumer has the close connect and emotional bonding with the mascots. Mascots have different target audience which has more positive approach than the brand ambassador. A brand ambassador is always a famous celebrity or person and brands tries to encash his/her fame through promoting their product or services by the personality. Millions of fans of the personality will start using the product because their favourite celebrity is endorsing it. But when that celebrity's fame is burnt out or the celebrity becomes aged then these brands spend more money on some other famous personality to promote the products. However, if it is a mascot then there is no need of changing the ambassador again and again and further it will reduce the cost of ad campaign. Moreover, mascots these days are becoming most favoured tools of marketing for instance, Zoo Zoos for Vodafone, Polka girl for Amul, Ronald McDonalds for McDonalds and interesting fact is these mascots are easily recognizable and famous among people of any age.

A. About Mascots

Designing a brand mascot is an effective way to grab public attention and to generate brand's recall value. A brand mascot can provide uncountable prospects to draw customer's interest [3] The design of the mascot plays a vital role in making the product successful. "To make the brand mascots visually effective, it should be carefully crafted so it is satisfying both the viewer's preferences and perceptions" [7] A mascot is an imaginary illustrated image (person, animal or cartoon) which strengthens the value of the product. The boom in social media marketing has also helped to increase the reach of brands in everyone's pocket through a smart phone. Every age group is using smartphones and are well familiar with social media. Moreover, people are following bigger brands on these social media platforms which has led to transform the marketing strategies adopted by brands. Every company these days is busy in endorsing their product and services to be visually active and virtually as well in customer's mind. Daily posts on social media has helped the customer to be directly associated with the brand. These companies always share their message on social media through their own brand ambassador or brand mascot. So that is why mascots are easily recognized and are popular with customer of any age group.

B. Idea for choosing mascot as brand face

It is always an obvious question, that why do a brand needs a mascot when logos and brand name is already meeting the requirements? Brand mascots contributes to build visual recognition amongst the customers and also leads the target audience to recall the brand. Brand mascots helps to showcase the sociable image of a brand. Mascot is a friendly medium to grab the attention of the viewer and persuade him to buy the product. A consumer of any demographic profile can be connected with the product through a mascot. Especially children get attracted with mascots which further persuade them to buy the product. For the better understanding of ideation Amul India has done the best experiment with Polka girl [01] [7] Till date Amul India is having same mascot which is immortal and has never fading impact on the customers. It has been noticed that Amul India is daily posting their posts based on social media on current affairs in a witty manner to grab the attention of the customers and on the other hand people take it hand to hand because Amul India always picks the hottest topic from current affairs. The caption of the post is so funny and is presented in such a beautiful manner that it automatically grabs the attention of the followers on social media platforms.

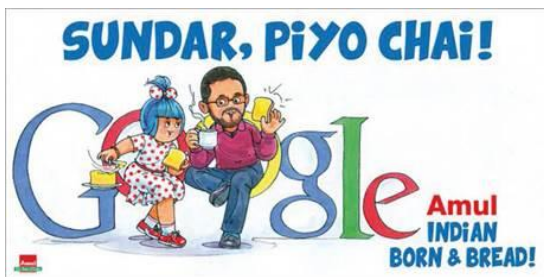


Figure 1: Polka Girl mascot for Amul India with witty social media post

C. Brand Consciousness and recognition

Brand consciousness defined as the forte of a brand's occurrence in the consumer's mind [1] Brand consciousness is how much people are aware about its identity like logo, colours, theme etc. These days' children are regarded as an attractive market segment, both by the promotion experts, and the schools [8] Children of age group 8-14 see an average of 20,000-40,000 advertisements annually. [7] In this age children starts to understand the market very well and they possess a very vast knowledge about various brands [10]. So, it is the ability of the consumer to recognize the product having a particular brand identity. About the ability of children to relate the graphic signs to the product, Zuckerman and [1] in a study with children of 4 to 10 years old, found that children have an amazing capability of perfectly relating the brand mascot to the specific product. As far as reminding of the different hints is concerned, according to [12] children of 2/7 years old focus on concrete clues, and from that age on, they develop the capacity of focusing on more motivations and more associated with the functionality of the products. Brand awareness is the most important factor which allows the

consumer to choose the product from the other competitive products available in the market. Brand endorsers always choose effective way of marketing by various tools such as: Ad campaigns, one to one selling, direct marketing etc. It is always believed that famous celebrities have their own reliability and fame, but brand mascots do not have. However, many brand mascots have become the celebrities themselves amongst peoples of all age groups for instance, Polka girl for Amul, Fido Dido for 7up etc. Mostly it is being observed that children are the perfect gateways for the brands to persuade the parents to buy the products of their liking. Many companies or brands include children in their ad campaigns to make it touchier and grab the attention of the viewer. Not only the companies selling the products but the companies selling their services or providing utilities have also been using the brand ambassadors or mascots as their marketing tools. It has been observed that these days it has become so common to have a brand mascot or ambassador to become favoured brand within the consumers. Not only private sector but the public sectors are using mascots for endorsing their services or utilities for example Indian railways is using "Bholu the Guard" [2] as their brand mascot.



Figure 2: Bholu The Guard, Mascot used by Indian Railways

D. Keller method of brand consciousness:

Brand consciousness consists of brand acknowledgement & brand reminiscence value: Brand appreciation communicates ability of a consumer to approve from the past experience of the brand when it is given as a clue [5] Moreover, if the consumer can differentiate the brand as previously heard or seen.

IV. LITERATURE REVIEW

From the beginning according to the geographical and psychological analysis from the different studies and authors; mascots are deeply rooted with the human psychology. It has played an important role in connecting the sensitive attachment with the brand. As per [6] to develop



association among consumer and brand, advertisers don't trust on assertions of the paybacks of their products or services instead, they utilize different strategies to engross consumer's emotions. Brand mascots are the proven examples of such strategies to build the trust of a brand in consumer's mind. Beirão Lancaster, et.al. has proven that a brand mascot makes a favourable impact especially on children's mind. A brand mascot establishes a special bond with the children emotionally and also persuades them to buy the product through memorization. [3] Brand Mascots make a product unique and different from its competitive product. By becoming different, companies attempt to provide an exclusive experience to their customers which cannot be copied by any competitor. The practice of using a mascot is a strategic move named as guerrilla marketing tactics. Amul in 1966 introduced "Polka Girl" to compete "Polson butter girl" used by company's competitive brand. Having a unique brand mascot is an important factor to build a positive image of the brand. Farquhar's approach towards brand equity in 1989; the consumption attitude of the customers related to how quickly a consumer can recall brand elements stored in his/her memory (brand awareness). One of research done by Gorn in 1982 observed the influence of musical sounds in advertisements on customer's optimal behaviour by adopting the technique of a classical conditioning model. Classical conditioning proposes that affirmative approaches for any promoted product or service (accustomed motivation) might cultivate through the product's relationship with some other motivations that customers share to certainly (undefined motivation). Eye-catching colours, amusing musical sounds and laughter act as the impending undefined motivations in advertisements or commercials. [8] Earlier study on product inclinations stresses that the related structures used in commercials were only connected to product inclinations when negligible product statistics was offered. The influence of promoted product evidence on views and approaches would naturally be understood within an information-processing context. It is recommended here that a traditional training model can be considered for the probable influence of contextual topographies on product approaches. In fact, traditional habituation can clarify the outcome of numerous factors on variations in customer approaches. For instance, the outcome of statement may be linked to a spectator's relationship of the approach item with an affirmative approach concerning the correspondent.

So many researchers have stressed that such related and interlinked tools seem to graft through the norm of higher-order traditional habituation otherwise, an unrestricted motivation (more or less module of promotion replica) that causes an unrestricted reaction (affirmative enjoyable feelings) is constantly combined with a habituated motivation (the company title) until the habituated motivation alone prompts the unrestricted reaction (preferred sentiments for the company) [5][7][2] In the study of stimulation, an expressive plea might subordinate the artefact with a chosen state of energy and vigour while evading the limits of lethargy or over-stimulation [5]

In advertising, traditional habituation is frequently cited and mostly recognized as a procedure related to publicity [4] On

the other hand, slight practical study occurs on whether or not customer likings for products can actually be typically accustomed. In psychology, where traditional habituation has been examined more broadly, there is inadequate proof to prove that approaches can be typically habituated ([5] In calculation, the partial fame of traditional habituation may be because of some problems related with classic habituation try-outs. [5] revealed that effective habituation should include consciousness of the association among the defined and undefined motivations. Readings on traditional habituation are vital to determining the role of consciousness in traditional habituation, and by observing that actual habituation can befall over shortest affect transmission or by intellectual faith evidence. Till now, psychologists and customer investigators have tried to examine the role of possibility consciousness. [6] Claimed that information-based details of the belongings of traditional habituation measures on approaches were built mainly on the supposition that consciousness of the CS/US possibility was required for habituation effects to befall (p.410). Eventuality consciousness can be a significance of habituation as well as the product of a thought unreasoning method [5]. Scholars that examine traditional habituation emphasize that reasoning aspects clarify traditional habituation when mortal topics are used. Few scholars have also examined if or not habituation can befall in people without consciousness. The research on the topic inspects the amount to which consciousness of the CS/US likelihood shows a role in traditional habituation. It can be stated as the individual plans or actions to purchase of a brand. [5] and purposes are different from the approaches [5]. Purposes represents "the motivation in the sense of an individual to go for a brand" [5][2][6] had done research in buying objectives. Among these, [5] stated purchase intention as "The intention of an individual to act in an assured manner is dependent upon the approach".

V. METHODOLOGY

In this study a questionnaire is intended and overseen to draw reactions therefore; the study is both investigative and expressive in nature. The primary data is gathered through the questionnaire and secondary data is analysed through studying various advertising campaigns on internet. To find out the importance of brand mascot in creating awareness and developing brand preference and independent t-test is used. Following are the hypothesis of the study:

H1: Brand mascot plays a vital role to gain popularity amongst the target audience.

H2: Brand mascot plays a vital role to influence customers to buy a product.

H3: Brand mascot can be good alternative for brand ambassadors.

A. Sample Size

Total 150 samples are recorded out of which 120 samples were useful as remaining were incomplete so those are not considered for the analysis.

VI. RESULT

Educational level of most participants was under graduate level or higher. Participants are either students or professional working in private companies. It is evident from the first measure that mostly participants agreed that brand mascots influenced them to buy the product. The results from second measures suggested that brand mascots can be a good alternative have a great influence on participants' intention to purchase the products.

**Table 01
Demographic Data**

Variables	Items	Number	Percentage
Age	20-25	59	49.16
	26-30	33	27.5
	31-35	28	23.3
Education	Under Graduate	76	63.3
	Graduate or higher	44	36.6
Occupation	Student	88	73.3
	Private Job	32	26.6

**Table 02
Decision and to purchase the products having brand mascots or brand ambassadors**

Variables	Items	N	%
Decision making (A influenced by mascot B influenced by ambassador out of 120)	a. Using Brand Mascot as stimuli	63	52.5
	b. Using Ambassadors Mascot as stimuli	57	47.5
	a. Brand mascots influence on purchasing	63	52.5
	b. Brand Ambassadors influence on purchasing	57	47.5
Intention to purchase the product (Influenced by either mascot or Ambassador)	1. Influence on purchasing particular product	102	85
	2. Influence on purchasing particular brand	111	92.5

VII. DISCUSSION

Since the use of brand mascots or brand ambassadors is linked to consumer’s decision to buy a particular product or service offered by a brand, the advertisers should consider the use of brand mascots instead of brand ambassadors for endorsements. It is a fact that brand mascots are cost effective to use instead of brand ambassadors because the production cost is very less which will be charged by the designer on the other hand a celebrity will charge a hefty amount to promote a product or service. Moreover, shooting

dates with celebrity is always a problem for the advertisers but mascots are readily available with the advertiser for the production.

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