

Chapter 32

Examining the Brand Communication Tools That Impact Brand Preferences of Women Consumer Buying Intentions: Empirical Investigation of Middle East

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ABSTRACT

The chapter aims to design a model of constructs of brand communication tools (direct and indirect) and test the impact of the same on brand preferences of women consumer buying intentions from Middle Eastern countries with specific evidences from Sultanate of Oman. The survey was conducted among 200 women consumers with reference to identifying the influence of brand communication tools on their buying intentions. The results revealed that both the communication tools found to have a significant impact. It is found that the direct brand communication tools have a higher impact over women buying intentions.

INTRODUCTION

The role of communication tools is becoming very prominent in today's competitive business world, as the companies spend billions to build brands, identify, target, reach and influence target consumers to buy products/services. The availability of huge array of communications tools to communicate and reach to target consumers leave the companies in a deep dilemma, to identifying the appropriate communication

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tools that would influence and impact the brand preferences of target consumers buying intentions (Keller 2005; Dolekoglu et al, 2008; Choi et al, 2010) . Moreover, the companies depend on these communication tools, to build brand in order to ensure the mind share among the target consumers, to get the money (wallet) share. In this scenario, a serious research is called for to identify the appropriate communication tools that would build brand, and communicate the same to the target consumers, in order to create a brand preference in their minds while choosing products/services to make purchase. The increasing role of women consumers to involve in family decision-making made them an attractive target to corporate world (Venkatesh, 1980; Firat, 1991). Hence, the companies intend to identify and use the appropriate communication tools that would build brand and attract the women consumers towards products/services. So, it is imperative to do a serious study to identify the brand communication tools (direct and in direct) that would influence brand preferences among women consumers (Nedungadi and Hutchinson, 1985; Balabanis and Craven, 1997; Jamal and Goode, 2001). Therefore, the researcher identified a problem definition to identify the brand communication tools that would have significant impact on brand preferences of women consumer buying intentions. The reason behind the selection of women consumers to investigate is to provide a much needed direction to the companies that would primarily target women consumers, to sell the products/services. Moreover, the women are increasingly involved in family decision making of buying different products/services (Sakkthivel, 2013). Therefore, the researcher chose two major constructs viz. direct brand communication tools (tools which are used by the company) such as (advertising, public relations, sales promotion, events, shop decoration, celebrity, personal selling, direct marketing, internet etc (Sakkthivel, 2011a, 2011b; Sakkthivel and Babawale, 2011; Abideen and Saleem, 2011; Sakkthivel, 2012) and indirect brand communication tools (tools used by outsiders) such as influence of peer groups, opinion/reference groups, society, social network websites, blogs etc. (Rapp et al, 2013; Goh et al, 2013), in order to test and identify the impact of the same on influencing brand preferences of women consumers. With reference to finding the role of different communications tools in conveying brand message to target consumers, we found several studies were conducted with respect to interpersonal communications (Peres et al, 2010), impact of social networking websites, online interaction, integrated marketing communication strategy (Sreedhar et al, 2005; Jothi et al, 2011; Brodie et al, 2011; Mihart, 2012; Onditi 2012; Karunanithy and Sivesan, 2013; Saeed et al, 2013; Adetunji et al, 2014), celebrity endorsements and sales promotion (Vitor et al, 2013; Buil et al, 2013; Johnmark et al, 2014). Such studies have provided a vital direction to develop a theme for the study. With reference to studies related to Arab world and women consumers, several studies were attempted to examine the role of women consumers, brand and advertising aspects including shopping motivations. (Al-Olayan & Karande, 2000; Jamal et al, 2006; Khraim, 2011). Such studies were not directly pertinent to brand communications, however, focused on the areas related to brand loyalty, advertisements, and role of brands in influencing the consumer behavior. Therefore, it is imperative to state that the research works towards the women consumers from the Arab world has begun and elicited interest among the researchers. Al-Olayan & Karande (2000) found the gap in the literature related to Arab world, and embarked on a study in 2000s to fill such gap. The aforesaid studies have provided a vital direction to us to build a theme which led to this study. Albeit, few studies have been attempted in Arab world with related to brand communications, such studies were vital to give us the direction to conduct a comprehensive study with reference to brand communication tools. Whilst choosing brand communication tools, it is imperative to acknowledge the role of social media and external influence over consumers towards choose preferred brands. Therefore, we have included the in direct brand communication tools primarily consist of social media and related aspects. Having build such a vital theme intends to fill the gaps found from the above

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