



Brand Resonance: Comparison of FMCG Brands with Durable Brands

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Abstract

Despite the growing literature on brand equity, there is little attention given to research on brand resonance; which is one of the most important building block of brand equity. The power of a brand depends on what resides in customers' minds (brand resonance) and includes behavioral loyalty, attachment, sense of community, and engagement. The aim of the present study is to measure Durable brands resonance and FMCG brands resonance and compare them with each other. Factor analysis and the findings show that among FMCG category, mineral water is the foremost resonance (60%); and TV is the foremost resonance in Durable category (75.3%). Further, Durable brands resonance and its four dimensions are in higher level in comparison with FMCG brands resonance.

Keywords: Brand Resonance, Behavioral Loyalty, Attachment, Sense of Community, Engagement.

1. Introduction

Nowadays, Brand contains diverse information which is different from previous years and it is something more than the means of identification. Modern brands include different sets of meanings that generate specific associations or emotions for any consumers. Brand can be defined as an important marketing mean for both business owners and consumers. Thus, on the one hand, the brand for consumer is not just a static combination of different attributes allowing an identification of goods, but also the physically implicit emotional factor determining the final decision (Ruževičiute and Ruževičius, 2010).

The power of brand depends on consumers' idea, about what they have experienced and learned about the brand and their responses to it over time (Keller, 2000).

Powerful brands create meaningful images in consumers' minds. Brand image and reputation increases the differences and consequently, will have a positive influence on buying behavior. Branding in marketplace has been shown to increase company's financial performance and long term competitive position (Kuhn et al., 2008)

Keller (2003) developed brand resonance to provide a higher understanding of consumer based brand equity, which is a tool for marketers and brand managers for further understanding of the meaning of brand and considering it as the extent to which a consumer develops strong behavioral, psychological, and social bonds with the brand he or she consumes.

A brand with a good resonance allows consumers to feel that they are part of the brand itself, and they can identify with the brand (Keller, 2003). The literature shows that few brands actually achieve complete brand resonance (Keller, 2003; 2008). For example, Apple and Harley-Davidson are such brands that succeed in creating a strong and lasting bond with its customers. Harley-Davidson customers are loyal with over 45 percent of ownership and more than 600,000 members in the global Harley Owners Group (Vinodhini and Mohan Kumar, 2012).

Although brand resonance is an important issue, there is little attention given to brand resonance. Therefore, the aim of the present study is to measure Durable brands resonance and FMCG brands resonance and compare them with each other in Iran.

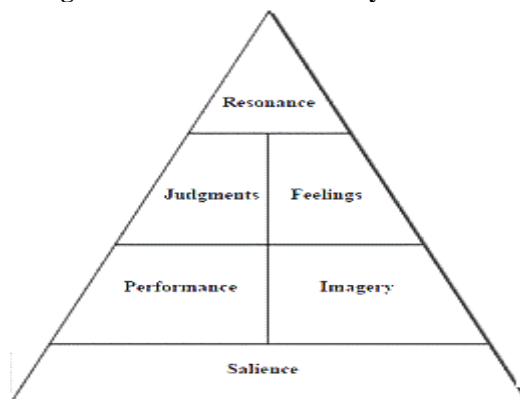
2. Literature Review

2.1. Brand resonance

The most important and popular concept in marketing which has been extensively discussed by both academicians and practitioners over the past decade is brand equity (Atilgan et al., 2005).

Creating significant brand equity, requires reaching the pinnacle of the brand pyramid, which occurs if the right building six blocks are put into place. Six blocks in Brand resonance pyramid includes (Vinodhini and Mohan Kumar, 2012): Source: Keller et al. (2002)

Figure 1. Brand Resonance Pyramid



Brand Salience: how often and how easily customers think of the brand under various purchase or consumption situations.

Brand Performance: how well the product or service meets customers' functional needs.

Brand Imagery: describes the extrinsic properties of the product or service; also, the way in which brand attempts to meet customers' psychological or social needs.

Brand Judgments: focuses on customers' own personal opinions and evaluations.

Brand Feelings: customers' emotional responses and reactions with respect to the brand.

Brand Resonance: nature of the relationship of customers with brand and the extent to which they feel they're "in sync" with it.

The most important building block of brand is brand resonance. Power of a brand resonance resides in the minds of customers; and the challenge is to ensure them to have the right types of experiences with products and services. Further, marketing programs should create the right brand knowledge structures which include thoughts, feelings, images, perceptions, attitudes, identifies of strength and weakness, and provides marketing activities guidance (Vinodhini and Mohan Kumar, 2012).

In various markets, brand resonance could help predict repurchase intention, future earnings and firm value. Brands attract customers, mainly because they "forge" a deep connection with the culture. In a sense, brands compete for culture share (Wang et al., 2008).

Brand resonance can be measured through four dimensions; behavioral loyalty, attitudinal attachment, sense of community, and active engagement (Keller, 2008). Each of these measures have been examined individually within the marketing literature, however Keller is the first to combine these four measures, to create the concept of brand resonance.

The branding literature states that brand resonance represents a hierarchy of consumer-brand connections that begins with repeat purchasing (i.e., behavioral loyalty) and ends with deeper levels of brand commitment in the form of self and communal brand connections (Keller 2003).

2.2. Behavioral loyalty

Customer loyalty is a concept that has been evolved over time. In its earliest iteration, prior to the mid-1980s, it was defined solely by product quality. The quality-driven movement slowly transformed into a customer-driven one in the late 1980s and early 1990s, when companies began focusing on what customers wanted and responding to their complaints. This was still an embryonic era in the timeline of relationship management, as value to the customer was still absent from the equation. It emerged in the late 1990s, when market concentration shifted to competitors. Only by meeting the critical needs of customers through creating new and unique benefits for them. The customer relationship management process evolved to its current stage, when relationships and loyalty became critical important for business success. Now, the focus rests with attracting and retaining profitable customers, and with creating relationships through trust and commitment (Gonring, 2008).

However, in brand loyalty research and many different types of loyalty, the term loyalty in Brand Resonance Pyramid is behavioral loyalty. Brand loyalty is defined as an intention to repurchase a preferred brand in the future (Oliver 1999).

Keller (2003) examines brand loyalty under the term “brand resonance” which refers to the nature of customer-brand relationship and the extent to which customers feel that they are “in sync” with the brand.

2.3. Attachment

In representation of the affective component of consumer-brand relationships, Brand attachment can be considered as a particularly important emerging construct (Belaid and Behi, 2011).

Two approaches in brand marketing have supported the relevance of brand attachment. One approach has provided the evidence of the symbolic benefits of brands by investigating brand associations and brand personality. The second approach is based on a marketing paradigm which focuses on determinants of long term relationships and more particularly on defining the key construct of brand commitment (Belaid and Behi, 2011).

Brand attachment is the strength of the bond connecting the brand with the self. Consistent with attachment theory, this bond is exemplified by a rich and accessible memory network (or mental representation) that involves thoughts and feelings about the brand and the brand’s relationship to the self (Park, 2010).

2.4. Sense of community

Researchers believe that brand community can reflect an important social phenomenon whereby customers feel a kinship or affiliation with other people who are associated with the brand. The connections may involve fellow brand users or customers (Hoeffler and Keller, 2002).

Based on the definition of Muniz and O’Guinn (2000) “brand communities” are as specialized, non-geographically bound communities, based on a structured set of social relationships among users of a brand. The authors note that, similar to other communities, a brand community is marked by: a shared consciousness, rituals and traditions, and a sense of moral responsibility.

Brand community is defined as identification and connection with others who use the same brand (Keller, 2003).

2.5. Engagement

Since 2005, the term “engagement” has been increasingly used in the broader academic marketing literature. Recent business practice discourse, including reports on conferences, seminars, roundtables, blogs, and organizational reports, also provides evidence of the increasing usage of the term “engagement” in the context of business relationships and branding (Brodie et al., 2011).

Relationship marketing activities have been found to positively impact a variety of specific marketing outcomes such as intention to repurchase and relationship continuity, positive word-of-mouth referral, and perhaps most importantly, attitudinal and behavioral loyalty, which ultimately contributing to the company’s overall profitability (Bowden, 2009).

Active brand engagement is viewed as potentially the strongest substantiation of brand resonance, the final stage of brand development in the consumer-based brand equity pyramid proposed by Keller (2001; 2009).

Hollebeek (2011, p. 6) describe “customer brand engagement” as “the level of a customer's motivational, brand-related and context dependent state of mind characterized by specific levels of cognitive, emotional and behavioral activity in brand interactions.”

Also it should be mentioned that perhaps the strongest insistence of brand loyalty is when customers are willing to spend time, energy, money, or other resources into the brand beyond those expended during purchase or consumption of the brand. For instance, customers may choose to join a club centered on a brand and receive updates, exchange correspondence with other brand users or formal or informal representatives of the brand itself (Hoeffler and Keller, 2002).

Based on literature review, the present study relies on the assumption that some kind of products can affect consumer’s perceptions about brand. Thus, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H₁: Durable Brands resonances are in higher level in comparison with FMCG brands resonances.

H₂: Behavioral loyalty in Durable Brands is in higher level in comparison with FMCG brands.

H₃: Customer attachment in Durable Brands is in higher level in comparison with FMCG brands.

H₄: Community senses of customers in Durable Brands are in higher level in comparison with FMCG brands.

H₅: Customer engagements in Durable Brands are in higher level in comparison with FMCG brands.

3. Research Methodology

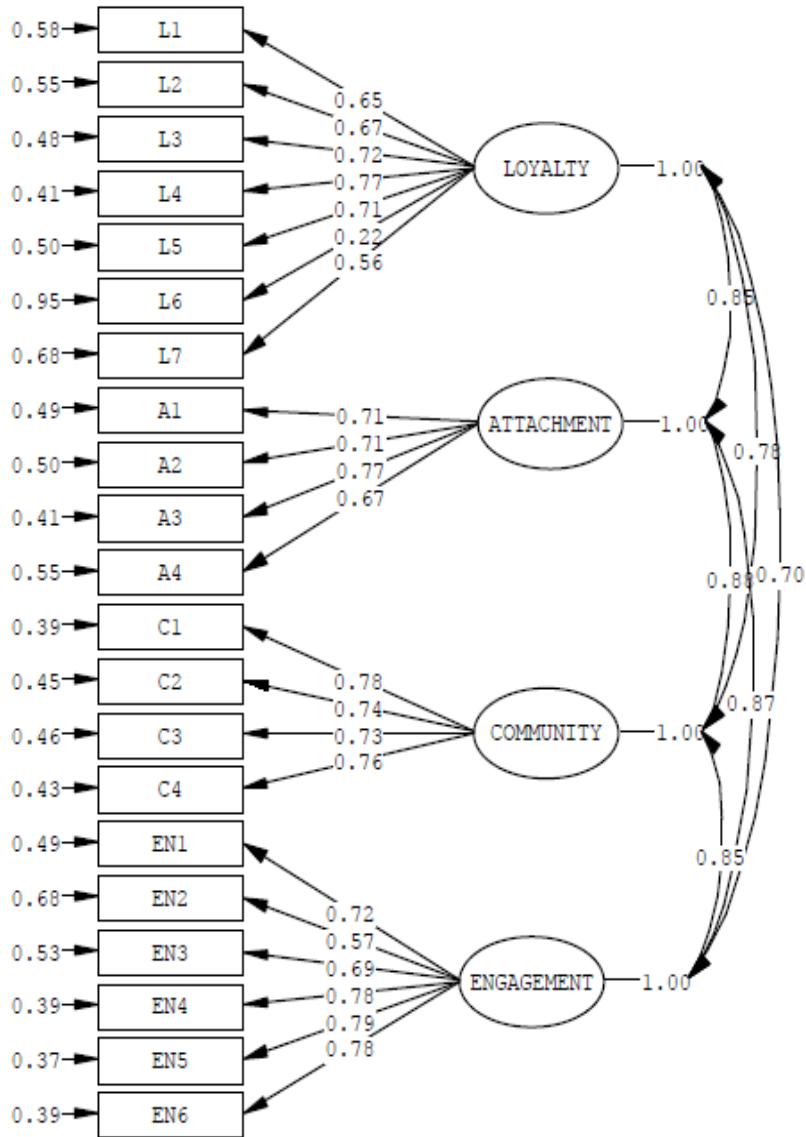
The consumer market (FMCG and Durable goods) in Iran has been selected for conducting of this study. 10 products have been selected from consumer market. 5 products in FMCG: Cheese, Ice cream, Mineral water, Toothpaste and Shampoo. And 5 products in Durable: Sports shoes, Wristwatch, Mobile, Refrigerator and Television.

For measuring brand resonance, the authors used 21 items scale developed by Keller (2001). Further, 23 items scale was used for measuring behavioral loyalty (7-items), attachment (4-items), sense of community (4-items) and engagement (6-items). All items were measured using 5-point Likert type scale ranging from “1 = Strongly disagree” to “5 = Strongly agree”.

For determining reliability of the questionnaire, Cronbach's alpha was used by using SPSS. Cronbach's alpha for the items are as follows: behavioral loyalty (0.836), attachment (0.806), sense of community (0.839) and engagement (0.866).

Further, for determining the validity of questionnaire, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was used by LISREL (Heidarzadeh and Taghipourian, 2012). The results of CFA show that only one item (L6) should be removed from the construct because the amount of factor loading was less than 0.5.

Figure 2. Confirmatory Factor Analysis



Statistical sample of this research includes Iranian consumers who were over 16 years old. In FMCG, from 450 questionnaires that had been distributed, 12 of them (2.66%) were not returned and 21 of them (4.66%) were not completed and 417 of them were completed which were suitable for _ 92.66 percent that is a good rate. Further, in the durable goods, from 460 questionnaires that had been distributed, 409 of them were ready for analyzing.

The samples of 826 respondents, includes 49.4% male, and 42.8% with an average income in FMCG. Further, 50.04% were male; and 52.3% with an average income in Durable.

4. Results

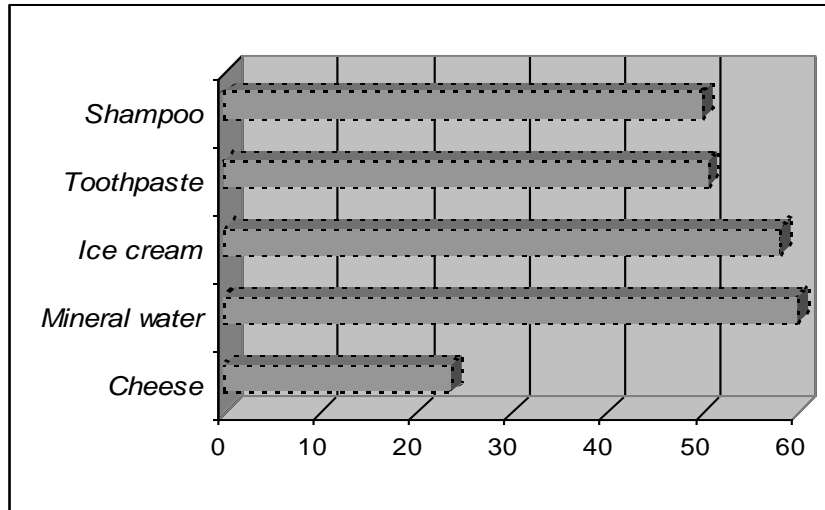
The proposed hypotheses were tested using nonparametric tests via SPSS16. To determine that what kind of test should be used, the authors used Kolmogorov–Smirnov test. If a significant amount of test were less than 0.05, then Non-Parametric tests can be used. As significant amounts of KS test for both were less than 0.05, Non-Parametric tests had been chosen for this study.

To Measure brand resonance of consumer goods the author used binomial test that shown in tables (1) and (2). In FMCG brand resonance sector, the results of the binomial test show that the level of brands resonance is in Mean level. Further, the two dimensions of loyalty and attachment are more than Mean. And the two other dimensions are less than Mean. Among products, the sequence of resonance related to Mineral water (60%), Ice cream (58.2%), Toothpaste (50.6%), Shampoo (50%), and Cheese (23.8%).

Table 1. Results of brand resonance measurement of FMCG

	Category	N	Observed Prop.	Sig.	Mean	Std. Deviation
LOYALTY	<= 3	143	.34	.000 ^a	3.3804	.78185
	> 3	274	.66			
ATTACHMENT	<= 3	242	.58	.001 ^a	3.0204	.88727
	> 3	175	.42			
COMMUNITY	<= 3	272	.65	.000 ^a	2.8285	.85957
	> 3	145	.35			
ENGAGEMENT	<= 3	234	.56	.014 ^a	2.9973	.85444
	> 3	183	.44			
FMCG brand resonance	<= 3	214	.51	.624 ^a	3.0874	.71513
	> 3	203	.49			

Figure 3. Brand resonance measurement of FMCG

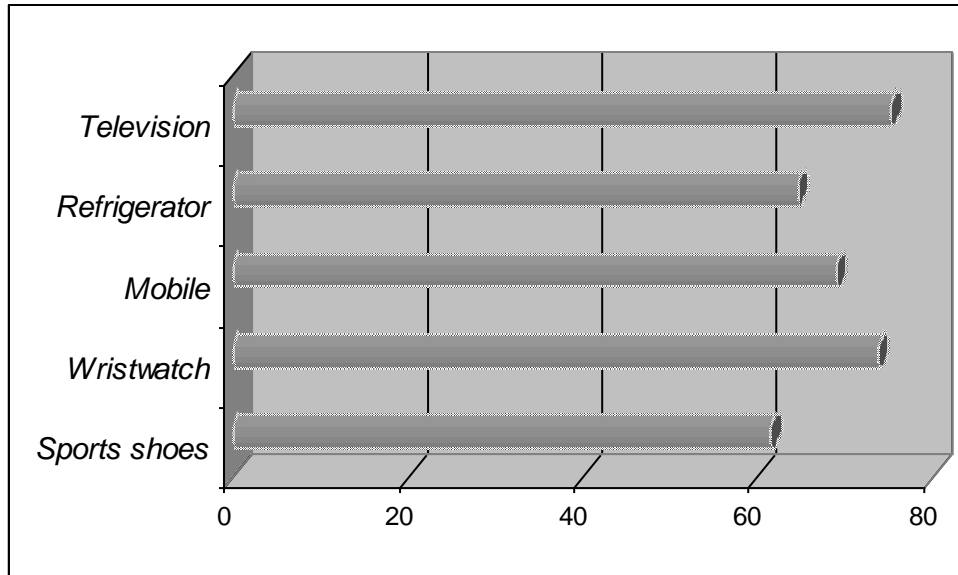


In durable brands resonance sector, based on the results of the binomial test, the level of brands resonance is more than Mean. Further, all the dimensions (except community), are more than the Mean. Among products, the sequence of resonance related to Television (75.3%), Wristwatch (73.8%), Mobile (69%), Refrigerator (64.6%), and Sports shoes (61.5%).

Table 2. Results of Brand Resonance Measurement of Durable Goods

	Category	N	Observed Prop.	Sig	Mean	Std. Deviation
LOYALTY	<= 3	100	.24	.000	3.4343	.75775
	> 3	309	.76			
ATTACHMENT	<= 3	177	.43	.008	3.2061	.93862
	> 3	232	.57			
COMMUNITY	<= 3	224	.55	.060	2.9393	.84672
	> 3	185	.45			
ENGAGEMENT	<= 3	165	.40	.000	3.2674	.76876
	> 3	244	.60			
Durable brand resonance	<= 3	127	.31	.000	3.2457	.67697
	> 3	282	.69			

Figure 4. Brand Resonance Measurement of Durable Goods



The authors used Mann-Whitney Test (as shown in Table 3) to test the hypotheses of this study. The results of the hypotheses test show that only one hypothesis was rejected. Further, based on the results of this study, Durable Brands resonances are more than FMCG brands resonances and the levels of customer attachment, Community senses of customers, customer engagements in Durable Brands are in higher level in comparison with FMCG brands.

Table 3. Results of Mann-Whitney Test

	Grouping	N	Mean Rank	Sig	Mann-Whitney U	result
LOYALTY	Durable	409	426.09	.133	8.0134	Not supported
	FMCG	417	401.15			
ATTACHMENT	Durable	409	442.50	.001	73417.500	supported
	FMCG	417	385.06			
COMMUNITY	Durable	409	438.63	.003	74998.000	supported
	FMCG	417	388.85			
ENGAGEMENT	Durable	409	456.59	.000	67653.500	supported
	FMCG	417	371.24			

RESONANCE	Durable	409	447.71	.000	71283.500	supported
	FMCG	417	379.94			

Conclusion

In today's competitive warfare, modern corporates are exploring into innovative approaches to identify, understand, define and delight the needs and desires of the target customers. As a part of building brand equity, new dimension known as "brand resonance" is adopted in customers which is a position to express customers' loyalty through continuous purchases or through interaction with others about their brand (Vinodhini and Mohan Kumar, 2012).

Based on this important issue, the article measured brands resonance and compared Durable Brands with FMCG brands in consumer market of Iran. From a total of 10 categories of products i.e. Cheese, Ice cream, Mineral water, Toothpaste, Shampoo, Sports shoes, Wristwatch, Mobile, Refrigerator and Television and after analyzing 826 questionnaires, the results show that the levels of FMCG brands resonance is in Mean level; and in durable goods sector, it is more than Mean. Also, the results indicate that there is no difference between behavioral loyalty of Durable Brand and FMCG brands.

The results of this study could serve as a decision making tool to assist managers in consumer markets to maximize the value of their brands and to reach Brands with a higher resonance. The current study investigated 10 categories of products in consumer markets of Iran. Thus, future researches should attempt to consider other categories and even in service sector to expand and refine this study.

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