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Title of the Thesis: Brand Personality and its Relevance as a Determinant in Consumer Decision Making Process

Brand personality is one of the concept has emerged as a popular metaphor for representing the way a consumer easily represents his or her identity, thus strengthening the concept of symbolic consumption.

A number of brands in the Indian marketplace have been using brand personality as a means of attracting the customer in different product categories. This research has studied the construct of brand personality. Many different facets have been explored and examined from the perspective of Indian scenario and Indian consumer. This work had been initiated as the concept of Brand Personality and its functioning as a tool for consumer self-expression, was found intriguing, interesting and did not have precedence in the Indian contextual settings.

the premise of this research is that when a brand's personality is congruent with the self-concept of the consumer and it enables purchase, what is the effect of brand personality of the different stages of decision making and thus, on consumer behaviour.

A brand personality contributes to brand equity through three routes. First is the Self Expression Model, Second is the Relationship Basis model and third is the Functional Benefit Representation Model.

In the self-expression model for a certain group of customers brands can become vehicles to express a part of themselves. By ascribing personality traits to a brand the marketer facilitates this self-expression process.

- When consumers search for brands in a specific product category, they tend to search a brand whose brand personality is congruent with their self-concept. Consumers prefer or search for products that have images compatible with their perception of self.
- Attitude formation (cognitive, affective and conative components) towards a self-congruent brand has a very significant effect when buying under conditions of congruence. This conclusion has been supported by earlier researches as well.
- It can be said that the Indian consumer somewhat has an idea, (if not a strong one) of the positive effect of the congruence between brand personality and consumer self-concept.
- Consumers appear to prefer brands that are similar to their own personalities, and they prefer brands that project a personality that is consistent with their self-concepts.
- While advertising and communication has projected Pepsi as a youthful brand the consumers also had the same perceptions. But interestingly, the Pepsi consumer is more orthodox than the brand. But on a number of other traits he is exactly like his brand. Similarly, the Coca Cola consumers considered themselves less dominating as compared to the brand. Also, they consider themselves more indulgent than the brand personality itself. The Thumbs-Up consumer considers himself less dominating, less rugged and less excitable when compared to the brand's personality.
- In the network service category, the consumers of Airtel were of the view that the brand is more dominating than themselves and less indulgent than its consumers. The consumers of Vodafone, considers the brand to be more organized and more youthful than him. This reveals that at times there is similarity between personality perceptions of consumers' and advertising expressions of the brand.

