Brand Image and Competitiveness in Indian Paint Industry

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Abstract
This research article provides a critical analysis of marketing performance of five major Indian paint companies vis-à-vis competitive brand image. The analysis focuses on marketing performance of the companies from two perspectives. First, Brand preference attributes and weights. Second, Average Ranking attributes. The analysis serves the most fundamental changes in marketing performance of the paint companies vis-a-vis superior competitive brands and is the way in which competitive brand advantage is sought to be created in the dealers and consumers mind.

Key words: *Brand Image, paint industry, competitiveness*

I.   Introduction:

Superior brand image is clearly the best way to survive in today's competitive turbulent market. The companies are realizing that maintaining status-quo is the biggest trap for any brand is biggest strength is turning out to be its biggest weakness. So, the only solution is putting brand under the scanner on a periodic basis. The focal point of any such exercise is to gain an intense understanding of the customer's relationship with the brand.

Brand

The American Marketing Association (AMA) defines a brand as a "Name, Term, Sign, Symbol or Design. Or a combination of them intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of other sellers".

Brand Image

Brand image refers to perception of product formed in the mind of the consumer which is the result of the symbols and meanings associated with a particular brand.

Competitiveness

Competitiveness refers to the ability to retain the competitive position of an organization by satisfying the expectations of customers while constantly eliminating threats and exploiting the opportunities, which arise the competitive environment.

II.   Review of Literature

Brand values determine what customers buy and what they reject, the preference and expectation of customers is the expression of value. Brand perception Audit discerns three levels of values: Instrumental, Direct Expressive and central.

Feurer and chaharboghi 1994 Business strategies are formulated to determine the way in which organizations can move from their current competitive position to a new stronger one. Competitiveness is relative and not absolute; it depends on two factors. One, the shareholder and customer values, financial strength, which determines the ability to act and react within the competitive environment. Second, it also depends on the potential of the human resource and technology in implementing the necessary strategic changes.

Competitiveness can only be sustained if an appropriate balance is maintained between these two factors which can be a conflicting nature

Indrajit Gupta 1996 Instrumental values can best be described as functional benefit. Direct expressive values reflect the character of the brand and frequently the user the central values relate to the aspiration: confidence, security or freedom. Whenever certain values become so intensely and inseparable associated with a brand, customers refer to them as the core values.

Trucker 2001 Competitiveness is increasing in emerging market context. The competitiveness is a multi-dimensional concept, enterprise wise innovation is the key to operational discipline, like technological and global change, the commoditization of product lines technological and industries, the convergence of marketing strategies are essential principles for competitiveness

Richard 2007 implies that core competitiveness of firms are supported by the major three factors such as foreign technology, government support and excellent performances of enterprise in implementing the proper technology strategy.

Natarajan and Thripurasundari 2010 Brands occupied and important role in marketing and formulation of business strategy. The advantages cherished by local brands can be dominated by the enormous advantages enjoyed by global brands are not more flexible than global brands in terms of their marketing activities when they compete with foreign product category due to cultural behavior of customers being associated with the product category

Objectives of the study
1.   To study the competitiveness of Indian paint industry
2.   To evaluate the brand image of Indian paint industry

Profile of Paint Companies
        The five major market leaders of paint industry are chosen for studying the brand image and competitiveness among the companies viz:
1.   Asian Paints India Limited (APL)
2.   Kansai Nerolac Paints Limited (KNPL)
3.   Berger Paints India Limited (BPL)
4.   Imperial Chemical Industries Limited (ICIL)
5.   Shalimar Paints Limited (SPL)

        Asian Paints (India) Ltd. Was set up in 1942 as a partnership firm by chokseys. It is one of the few backward. Integrated paint producers in India. Kansai Nerolac (India) Limited was started in 1999 as a whole owned subsidiary of Kansai paints company limited, Japan. This company is the second largest paint company in India, the market share of the company is 19% by value and 15% by volume. Berger paints (India) Limited was incorporated in 1923. The company is involved in decorative and industrial paints account for the remaining sales. Imperial Chemical Industries (India) Limited is a subsidiary company of the global paint major, Imperial chemical industries, started its paint business in 1994. The paint business operation of ICI (India) Ltd. Contribute more than 60% of the total turnover of ICI. Shalimar paints limited was the first paint company set up in India in 1902. The company has its presence in protective and packing coating.

III.   Methodology
        To assess "the impact of availability or non-availability of brands of points on the competitiveness" the methodology followed comprises assessing the attributes or qualities which customer expect from the paints in order to get maximum satisfaction. To evaluate the attributes or qualities which customers expect from the paints the relevant information has been collected from experts from paint industry. Paint dealers and paint customers.

A.   Instrument
        A structured questionnaire for was prepared and administered which covered different aspects of quality as represented by brands of products which included attractive paint finish, Shade consistency, product portfolio convenient packing, price, durability, washability and perceived quality, which are significantly contribute for brand building.

B.   Data Collection
Primary data were collected through the structure questionnaire. The questionnaire has eight attributes and the respondents were asked to rate each of the attribute in the descending order from "eight" to "one". The respondents were requested to assign "eight" members to the extremely important attribute and the same way 'one' to the least preferred attribute.

C.   Analysis and Discussion
Level 1. In this level an attempt was made to assess the attributes which help in brand building. Average of rankings as given by respondents was calculated and ultimately rankings were expressed. This ranking is therefore average rankings given by 25 respondents. The total weights were added and this comes to 36. The weights assigned to the attributes were converted to unitary value and indicated as one.

Brand preference attributes and weights
        The rankings given by the experts were averaged and for each of the attributes are indicated in the following table 1.

TABLE- 1
BRAND PREFERENCES ATTRIBUTES AND WEIGHTS

Sl. No	Attributes	Average Rating	Weights
1.	Attractive paint finish	8	0.222
2.	Shade consistency	6	0.167
3.	Product portfolio (Range/Choice of shade)	5	0.139
4.	Convenient packing	2	0.55
5.	Price	1	0.28
6.	Durability	7	0.194
7.	Washability	3	0.083
8.	Perceived quality	4	0.111
Total Scores		**36**	**1.000**

        Table 1. Indicates the weights assigned to the attributes of point brands as per the experts. According to the experts, "Attractive paint finish is of utmost important followed by durability, shade consistency, product portfolio, perceived quality, washability, convenient packing and price. Accordingly, they have assigned "eight"," seven"," six etc. in the descending order to all the eight attributes. The ratings of all the attributes are added and the total of which is "36". Then each of the rating of the attributes are divided by 36 to express the values as fraction of "one". The rating 08 is divided by the total i.e., 36 which is equal to 0.222. The weight 0.222 is the relative weight given to attribute "attractive paint finish". 0.194 is relative weight assigned to "durability". The same way the other values are obtained for each of the attributes.

Level 2
In this step actual performance of each of the paint companies with respect to the brands was to be studied. The parameters which were indicated by the paint companies' conclusions.
After fixing the weights for each parameter there was need to connect the same with the expectations of the customers with respect to the brands of the top five sample paint companies. Therefore 50 dealers from Bangalore city were selected randomly and the responses were collected from each of them. They were requested assign their ratings on a five-point scale for each of the parameters. The dealers dealing with different paint company brands were selected and explained the procedure. They were asked to assign 'five' points to the extremely important attribute technique, asked the respondents to assign the rating to all the attributes in respect of each sample paint company which have covered for the study.

TABLE – 2
Average Ranking of Attributes by Dealers
No of dealers (50)

Sl. No	Parameters	APL		KNP		BPL		ICI		SPL	
		Total Score	Avg	Total Score	Avg	Total Score	Avg	Total Score	Avg	Total Score	Avg
1.	Attractive point finish	210	4.20	175	3.50	145	2.90	115	2.30	105	2.10
2.	Product consistency	226	4.53	162	3.23	154	3.08	118	2.35	92	1.83
3.	Product portfolio (Range/choice of shade)	215	4.30	162	3.23	168	3.35	89	1.78	118	2.35
4.	Convenient packing	208	4.15	163	3.25	155	3.10	127	2.53	99	1.98
5	Price	95	1.90	193	3.85	172	3.43	192	3.83	197	3.93
6	Durability	183	3.65	149	2.98	165	3.30	143	2.85	110	2.20
7	Washability	194	3.88	153	3.05	178	3.55	117	2.33	110	2.20
8	Perceived quality	208	4.15	193	2.85	174	3.48	115	2.30	114	2.23
	TOTAL		**32.19**		**24.87**		**25.81**		**19.57**		**17.62**

The table 2 indicates that with regard to "Attractive Paint Finish" stands first with 4.2 average score on a 5-point Likert scale followed by KNP, BPL, ICI, and SPL with 3.5, 2.9, 2.3, and 2.1 points respectively. The averages thus obtained are listed in the above table. This indicates that APL's paint finish is more attractive than other in the industry. KNP and BPL are closely fighting to BPL with regard to satisfying the customers regarding the attractive paint finish. The aggregate score with respect to all the eight attributes that helps to build a brand is 32.19 out of 50 for APL, 24.87 for KNP, 25,81 for BPL, 19.57 for ICI and 17.62 for SPL. These aggregate scores of the eight parameters which were used as factors to assess the attributes by the dealers of sample companies.

IV.   Conclusion

As assessed by the paint dealers, it is clear that APL has the advantage over other paint companies. This clearly indicates that APL has been increased concern about competitive attributes such as- Attractive paint finish, Shade consistency, product portfolio, convenient packing, price, durability washability and perceived quality. To conclude one of the most important components to meet sustained competition is to attempt to satisfy the attributes specific requirements of customers.

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