Effect of Attachment-Aversion Relation of Brand on Behavioral Intentions Hierarchy and Marketing Related Outcomes

Mina Ghaseminejad, Shahnaz Nayebzadeh, Hasan Dehghan Dehnavi, Erfane Rategh

Department of Management, Yazd Branch, Islamic Azad University, Yazd, Iran Safaieeh, Shoahadegomnam Road, Zip code: 89195/155, Yazd, Iran

ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is investigating of Attachment- Aversion relation of brand on Behavioral Intentions Hierarchy and Marketing Related Outcomes. The method of research in this research from the view point of goal is objective and from the view point of method is cohesion. The statistical population of research is sony's product consumers in Isfahan city in Iran, and 384 questionnaires were issued. For determining the reliability of questionnaires, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used and for analyzing data SPSS18 software and Lisrel 8/72 were used. With the use of variables of Brand – self connection, Brand Prominence, Marketing related outcomes, Motivational strength, Behavioral intentions hierarchy of research model is formed; the results are as, relation between self- brand connection and brand prominence by motivational strength, on behavioral intentions hierarchy and marketing related outcomes is obtained.

INTRODUCTION

With entry into third millennium, we not only faced with changes but also with increasing momentum; today understanding and anticipating customers’ needs are essential for economical enterprises, so paying attention to customer satisfaction and quality from the customer's perspective and creating loyalty are the key for success of organization. Brand is the raised issue in product mix strategy. The market power of any manufacturer arising from creating brand for their products that is perceptible for economical enterprise and also for customers.

Brand and it's relationship with customers is one of the most important and most common concept in marketing that is widely investigated between students and entrepreneurs. The role of brand and brand management is critical for organizations in turbulent world of rapidly changing business. Brand management includes products, price, packing and etc. While in the case of service brands, tangible property is customer's experience intangible properties include emotional bond with the product and service [10].

Park and his colleagues [7] develop the concept of attachment- aversion model based on self concept. They showed in this model that when a person like a brand, and feel that is close to it, and find this brand as a way for developing his identity, this relationship is attachment to brand; when a person know the brand as a treat for his identity, person oppose to brand and avoid of this sense, this relationship is called aversion to brand. Due to cultural, social and psychological differences in different countries, the study was designed to evaluate the attachment- aversion relation of brand on Sony brand.

Research literature:
Attachment- aversion relation of brand:

Attachment- Aversion relation of brand is developed base on the concept of self and states that, the distance between self- brand, and brand prominence is indicator of customer's attachment- aversion of a relationship with a brand. [7], a person like a brand, and feet that is close to him, when he find it as a way for developing his identity, this relationship is attachment to brand. When a person know the brand as a treat for his identity, person oppose to brand and avoid of this sense, this relationship is called aversion to brand.
Attachment to brand, and aversion to brand are the head ends of attachment-aversion model at any point in time, at the same time moving from one end to the other end is possible during the time (Johnson et al., 2011). Relationship which is located somewhere in the middle of these two ends is called in difference to brand; in such cases the relationship is neutral and has no motivational and driving force for a brand or against a brand [7].

The relationship A-A has 2 components or feature:

1. Brand- self connection
2. Brand prominence.

So the relationship A-A, is a hidden structure of person's sense of self and relationship with self- identity that is based on these two components.

Brand- Self Connection:

Self concept includes various attributes associated with the person (individual's perception of himself), moral features, individual perceptions of past or present experiences, social roles and person's attitude toward himself [5]. Researcher interpret the brand-self connection as interpersonal relationship in social context that shows, brand-self connection likely includes cognitive beliefs and emotional connection with the brand that finally influence the customer's behavior toward brand [1].

In fact brand- self connection is the extent to which important aspects of individual's concept, values and goals are shown by brand. Such things suggest that brand can strengthen the customer's identity for doing their goals and so customers are using brand as a means to deliver value and identity [4]

So tendency to brand shows the amount of person's confidence and his assessment of a brand. In tendency to brand the order of severity is the customer's judgment about goodness or badness of brand, and is not the severity of brand-self connection. Assessment of brand, without reference to self, can be positive or negative [8]. As a result brand- self connection that is something related to self-concept is defined as perceived distance between brand and self. It shows the type of relationship (in near relationship, this is positive and in distance relationship this is negative). The kind of relationship is determined by the fit between self and memory of brand [7]. Brand- self connection is a field in which brands reflect the person's self- concept.

Brand prominence:

Brand prominence is defined as "the amount of features that are designed for the appearance of brand to put it in the audience's center of attention [9].

In fact the mean of self concept of brand prominence is that to note the attention of the people that shows the identity of brand and its devious feature [6]. When the memories are not readily available, psychologically perceived distance is not prominent. The scientific definition of brand prominence is "the amount of the availability of perceptual page of a brand for each person": so as much as thinking of a brand comes to mind easier and more frequent, prominence in relation to self- concept of brand is more affected [7].

Motivational power of attachment- aversion model:

Where the consumers know the characteristics of brand as a part of themselves and have prominent thoughts and feeling about brand, they should be more interested in use of more resource of themselves; resources that need to reinforce trouble some behaviors for maintaining their relationship with brand. The greater the dependence, the costumers are more willing to strengthen their behaviors to preserve their relationship with the brand [8]. Since a brand have the benefits of self- expanding or disadvantages of self-contracting, as a result, with regard to referring to self, attachment or aversion of brand is inherently motivational [7].

In fact, it can be concluded that the motivational strength is a hidden component in self- brand relationship; indeed a brand inherently has power of motivation or power of deterrent.

Attachment- Aversion Relationship and Behavioral Intentions Hierarchy:

Behavioral intensions can be grouped into two categories: economical behavior and social behavior. Examples of behaviors that is influenced by financial aspect, are repeat purchase, willingness to pay, behavior change; plaintive behavior, recommended to others are among social behavior [2]. Of supporting or opposing behaviors toward brand have different purposes, that depends on the level of difficulty (showing difficult behaviors, relatively difficult behaviors and easy behaviors) in doing such behaviors (behavioral hierarchy). Because the attractive- aversion relationship is motivational, is directly connected to motivational strength of approach toward a brand. The stronger the attachment (aversion); the desire to display difficult behaviors (doing agreement or disagreement) become more powerful [7].

If a brand has practical usefulness, pleasurebleness, the power of expression personal pleasures, a person feel closely to it and he shows behaviors such as sense of loyalty, satisfaction, commitment to brand, strengthening brand and etc. the opposite is also true, the stronger the aversion, consumers show more anti-
brand behavior such as frustration, hate, invasion, dissatisfaction and lack of commitment. Therefore it can be concluded that as much as the amount of aversion (attachment) toward a brand, costumer's behavior go to relatively difficult behavior or easy behavior including more cost to by brand products, purchase other products with the same brand or recommend the brand to others and etc. So in the current study the following assumptions have been investigated:

Hypothesis 1: self- brand connection influence on behavioral intentions hierarchy by motivational strength.

Hypothesis 2: brand prominence influence on behavioral intentions hierarchy by motivational strength.

Attachment-Aversion Relation and Marketing Related Outcomes:

As the purposes of doing behaviors, depending on the difficulty of displaying them, are different, as the actual behaviors in the level of their difficulty in viewing themselves, are different (hierarchy of behavior). While the behavioral intentions can be measured based on wide range of behavior, but not never happen, but actual behaviors can not be measure based on a set of similar behaviors, because some of these behaviors which are used for measuring behavioral intentions, don't happen in real word or rarely occurs. So it is necessary to rely on a series of behaviors with different difficulty levels [7]. 3 kind of behaviors are investigated in this study, that not only didn't happen in the real world, but also their levels of difficulty are different; these are the relevant output marketing of attachment-aversion model:

1) Costumers whether buy a brand or not, that is called Brand Purchase [7];
2) the share buy of a brand relative to all other competing brand, that is called the Brand Purchase Share (Ibid., 235); if competing brand, in certain categories of products that consumers buy, are zero, share buy of central brand is 100%. When costumers are strongly favored a brand, other competing brands aren't important for them and they have little to do with. Therefore it is less likely that they find competing brands as an alternative for that brand [8].
3) The Need Share is share buy of a brand toward other products in alternative categories that includes brands that are directly competing, it is said share need [7]; for example a customer who is strongly in favor of a certain kind of drink, not only it is less likely to buy it from another brand, but also it is less likely to buy another kind of drink (tee, coffee, juice,…); also, customers who are dependent on the brand is likely to allocate more funds to it [8].

In fact the actual behavior such as behavioral intentions, are divided in two groups, social and economical, and this marketing related outcomes shows such behaviors of customers toward the brand. So in current study the following assumptions are investigated:

Hypothesis 3: self- brand connection influences on marketing related outcomes by motivational strength.

Hypothesis 4: brand prominence influences on Marketing Related Outcomes by motivational strength.

Fig. 1: Conceptual model [7]

Methodology:

As achieving the relation between variables that in a multivariate model effects on customer-brand relation is the aim of research, therefore the research is correlation and no experiment method. In this method, the effect among variables is analyzed base on the research aim. According to research category base on data collection, or
in the other hand research proposal is descriptive that describes sample features and then generalize them to population. According to the aims and topic nature and executive equipments the research is descriptive survey. Population in the research is Sony costumers in Esfahan. Also SPSS software and LISREL is used to analyze data. In the research sample size evaluated by Cochran formula and estimated for 384 people. Cronbach Alfa method is used to define questionnaire reliability. In order to understand the relationship between variables, there are suitable statistical methods which one of them is regression analysis. The linear regression analysis is a tool through which we can measure the extent a variable impacts on other variable in terms of linear.

Model 1: Sub-model in the coefficients standard.

Model 2: Model in case of meaningful numbers (t-value).

Approval of model:
To verify proper fit of the model, estimated parameters in Table 1 were used (indices of confirming the model).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value reported</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>140.53</td>
<td>Chi-square</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>Degrees of freedom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>Chi-square /Degrees of freedom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.066</td>
<td>RMSEA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>GFI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>AGFI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>NFI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>NNFI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>IFI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>CFI</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The test of assumptions:
After reviewing and approval of model 1, assumptions of this model were evaluated, and in this section, the assumptions are tested with regard to the model and by SOBEL test.
Hypothesis 1: Brand – self connection influences on Behavioral intentions hierarchy by motivational strength.
H0: Brand – self connection dose not influence on Behavioral intentions hierarchy by motivational strength.
H1: Brand – self connection influences on Behavioral intentions hierarchy by motivational strength.

With regard to above table for route (1), absolute value of statistic is $T$ times 2.50 and is bigger than 1.96, so there is a meaningful relationship between brand prominence and motivational strength; on the other hand, for route 2 absolute value of the statistic is $T$ times 9.53 and is bigger than 1.96, so there is a meaningful relationship between motivational strength and Behavioral intentions hierarchy.

On the other hand, according to Sobel test statistic (2.419) and significant level (0.16) which is lower than 0.05, the hypothesis zero is rejected and therefore with regard to lack of significant in direct relationship between brand – self connection and behavioral intentions hierarchy in this model, motivational strength variable plays a key role of mediator in full and its indirect effect is equal to 0.256. As a result brand- self connection influence on Behavioral intentions hierarchy by motivational strength.

Hypothesis 2: brand prominence influences on Behavioral intentions hierarchy by motivational strength.
H0: brand prominence dose not influence on Behavioral intentions hierarchy by motivational strength.
H1: brand prominence influences on Behavioral intentions hierarchy by motivational strength.

With regard to above table for route (1), absolute value of statistic is $T$ times 2.99 and is bigger than 1.96, so there is a meaningful relationship between motivational strength and Behavioral intentions hierarchy.

On the other hand, according to Sobel test statistic (2.864) and significant level (0.004) which is lower than 0.05, the hypothesis zero is rejected and therefore with regard to lack of significant in direct relationship between brand prominence and motivational strength in this model, motivational strength variable plays a key role of mediator in full and its indirect effect is equal to 0.305. As a result brand prominence influence on Behavioral intentions hierarchy by motivational strength.

Hypothesis 3: Brand – self connection influences on marketing related outcomes by motivational strength.
H0: Brand – self connection dose not influence on Marketing related outcomes by motivational strength.
H1: Brand – self connection influences on marketing related outcomes by motivational strength.

With regard to above table for route (1), absolute value of statistic is $T$ times 2.50 and is bigger than 1.96, so there is a meaningful relationship between Brand – self connection and motivational strength; on the other
hand, for route 2 absolute value of the statistic is T times 11.01 and is bigger than 1.96, so there is a meaningful relationship between motivational strength and Marketing related outcomes.

**Table 7:** Results of SOBEL test of Hypothesis 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Z</th>
<th>S.E</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>Indirect effect</th>
<th>Indirect effect standard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.438</td>
<td>0.144</td>
<td>0.015</td>
<td>0.350</td>
<td>0.349</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On the other hand, according to SOBEL test statistic (2.438) and significant level (0.015) which is lower than 0.05, the hypothesis zero is rejected and therefore with regard to lack of significant in direct relationship between brand – self connection and Marketing related outcomes in this model, motivational strength variable plays a key role of mediator in full and its indirect effect is equal to 0.349. As a result influence Brand – self connection on output- related market marketing related outcomes by motivational strength.

Hypothesis 4: brand prominence influences on marketing related outcomes by motivational strength.

H0: brand prominence dose not influence on marketing related outcomes by motivational strength.

H1: brand prominence influences on marketing related outcomes by motivational strength.

**Table 8:** Results of testing hypotheses Hypothesis 4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard coefficient</th>
<th>S.E</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>The estimated coefficient</th>
<th>Path</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>2.99</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>brand prominence → motivational strength</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>0.091</td>
<td>11.01</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>motivational strength → Marketing related outcomes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With regard to above table for route (1), absolute value of statistic is T times 2.99 and is bigger than 1.96, so there is a meaningful relationship between brand prominence and motivational strength; on the other hand, for route 2 absolute value of the statistic is T times 11.01 and is bigger than 1.96, so there is a meaningful relationship between motivational strength and Marketing related outcomes.

**Table 9:** Results of SOBEL test of Hypothesis 4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Z</th>
<th>S.E</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>Indirect effect</th>
<th>Indirect effect standard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.894</td>
<td>0.145</td>
<td>0.004</td>
<td>0.420</td>
<td>0.417</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to SOBEL test statistic (2.894) and significant level (0.004) which is lower than 0.05, the hypothesis zero is rejected and therefore with regard to lack of significant in direct relationship between brand prominence and marketing related outcomes in this model, motivational strength variable plays a key role of mediator in full and its indirect effect is equal to 0.417. As a result brand prominence influence on marketing related outcomes by motivational strength.

**Discussion and conclusion:**

Building a strong and affective brand and improving its performance is one of most important factors of creating company's key ability and long last sustainability. Brands can be seen as symbols which customers can trust them over time or connect to them. Brand orientation is defined as an approach in which organization's processes are in continuous interaction with target customers around creating, developing and maintaining brand identity in order to reach to sustainable competitive advantages in the form of brand [3].

Using brands correctly as starting point in formulating strategies of company can be a prerequisite for brand orientation that improves companies' abilities for competing in the context of growth and profitability. Brand orientation is the result of strategy selection which not only can be a determinant of competitive level of each company but also can be result in saving company's future in the long term [12].

In fact strong brands can improve customers' loyalty thereby increasing in companies' income in the long term [11].

Therefore in this study the impact of attachment- aversion from customer- brand relationship Behavioral Intentions Hierarchy and Marketing Related Outcomes.

The results from first and second hypotheses show that brand – self connection and brand prominence affect behavioral intentions hierarchy through motivational strength and thereby it is consistent with findings of Park et al [7] and Schmitt (2013).

Third and fourth hypothesis have shown the direct impact of brand – self connection and brand prominence on Marketing related outcomes through motivational strength which is consistent with results from Park et al. [7] work and Schmitt's (2013) prediction. In fact findings show that attachment- aversion model is motivational in the nature and has impact on consumers’ economic and social behaviors.
Suggestions:

- It is suggested that commercial firms should identify their target customers in terms of behavioral intentions and apply proper strategy for capturing and retaining customers in stages of designing, manufacturing and offering product to customers in the long term.
- It is suggested that companies for creating loyalty and improvement of relationships with consumers should analyze them in terms of social and economic behaviors in the market and produce products fitting their needs and wants.
- In the future researchers should investigate real market situation to find whether credible relationships can survive under other variables (market composition, promotional activities, competitive activities etc.).
- One of factors affecting improvement of relationship between customer and brand is brand strategic management which prior research in this context is quite a few. Therefore it is suggested that researchers investigate this topic in their future studies.
- It is better to carry out a survey between company's retailers and wholesalers who are large in number about this construct in addiction to final customers.

Study limits:

In the process of scientific research there are a set of conditions and cases which are out of researcher's control and they potentially can have impact on results and create difficulties for its extendibility. Current study is not an excerpt:

- Because of cultural, social, psychological and demographic and geographic differences, this study can result in different findings.
- One of study's limits is newness of this topic; except few numbers of papers in the context of attachment-aversion model and its variables. There are not many research carried out in this context in Iran. So, it is natural that doing a new work is with difficulties.
- Lack of collaboration from some consumers and sales agents of Sony products brought up some difficulties for researcher.
- Collecting data using questionnaire has many benefits and it is the most effective method for collecting data in this research. Nonetheless, using observation and interview can provides other valuable and supplementary information which unfortunately could not be executed because of time and official limits.
- Other limits in this research, is related to sample size and statistical sample. Study findings are limited to only a few numbers of consumers in Isfahan city. Opinions of other consumers in other provinces and other countries definitely can help to comprehensiveness of study findings which unfortunately doing this was not practical because of geographical expansion.

REFERENCES