



Cover Page



BRAND MANIPULATION - A BOON FOR MARKETERS

¹Dr. Varsha Agarwal and ²Sahil Chamarthi

¹Associate Professor and ²BBA

^{1&2}Atlas SkillTech University

Mumbai, Maharashtra, India

ABSTRACT

The paper attempts to clear the notion of the manipulation tactics used by the marketers and the circumstances for the toleration of those manipulative tactics. Not all marketing strategies are manipulative, it is up-to the consumers and marketers whether they ask themselves how to assess if a particular marketing approach is manipulative or not. A vast collection of alternative products is available in the market today, it is up-to the brand whether it tries to manipulate the customers into purchasing their specific product or not. The study also presents the consumer buying behaviour and the consumer purchase decision process. Companies primarily focus on marketing in using manipulation techniques as the key to create an image and a desire in consumer purchase. The research tells us about the aspects of manipulative advertising in the RTE food sector. Manipulation through language is also effective if there is a certain target audience from a particular part of the globe.

Keywords: Manipulation Tactics, Consumer Behaviour, Marketing Strategies.

INTRODUCTION

Non-informative market is always debated upon whether it is manipulative or not. There is a belief that there are both kinds of markets, manipulative as well as non-manipulative. Whether the market is manipulative or non-manipulative is depended upon the marketers as well as the consumers to figure out as to which is what and also understand the ethnicity of the marketing if it is termed as manipulative. Brand manipulation depends on a few factors such as, consumer buying behaviour, deceitful advertising, misleading information about the product, faking, exaggeration of the product. Psychological manipulation is also a method which involves indirect, dishonest methods that attract the customers of that specific product. The product Coke Zero can be taken as an example of brand manipulation as it terms 'Zero Calories' but the fact that it contains a few calories is ignored by the consumers as they are psychologically manipulated by the marketers.

The sole purpose of marketing and advertising in business is for the brand to gain awareness and significance and to generate brand value for the item specified respectively. All of this is centered to only one purpose, that is, for the advantage of the brand's consumers, owners, and the respective stakeholders (Singh et al., 2020).

The goal of marketing is to somehow manipulate us to buy the product or the service. 'Discounts' is another fabulous way of psychologically manipulating the customers towards purchasing as the price is reduced. But the trick tactic is smart as the price is reduced to some percent. The customer purchases increase significantly and generate more sales and profit, this happens because when the original price is high, the sales are less but when the price is reduced to any percent, it draws more customers compared to that of the original price of the product before. This is also termed as 'Price Perception Manipulation'. The Internet influences opinions. TV advertisements, NEWS, promotional sites, clickbait, tend to tame our minds and draw our attention and for a split second each one of us gets a thought of checking the product/service out. A study suggests that 82% percent of the customers buy the product/service in the promotional offers given by the marketers and the rest of the 18% ignore those promotional offers.

Individuals may not even realize that he/she is being unconsciously intimidated towards purchasing or at least checking out the product/service. Publicity and advertising are the two main essentials that impact the show-off of the product. Whether the product has the calibre to do what it claims to do following up with it comes the quality and the sustainability of the product (Rangasamy et al., 2021).

Finding out the preferences of the brand is the first area of neuromarketing. Neuromarketing is a way of marketing that focuses on the measurement of the psychological and the neural signs that gains insights of the customer preferences, decisions, and motivations. This helps to understand the product development, pricing and other marketing areas and further leads to gaining information about creative advertising. Neuromarketing leaves a print on the customers. 'The Pepsi Challenge' is an excellent example of neuromarketing in which the consumers were told to taste both (Pepsi and Coca-Cola) without letting them know which is



Cover Page



what. 57% of the participants chose Pepsi while the other 43% chose Coca-Cola. The following results were used in boosting up the sales regardless of the increase of the company's market sale (Singh et al., 2020).

Literature Review

The customers should be educated about the various tools of marketing so that they gain sense to utilize those tools. Every individual should be given the tools they require to evaluate the research. The media and the general public were urged by the researchers to demand all the research reports. Quality of service is one of the fundamentals aspects in the field of marketing. Word of mouth, or the reputation of the brand due to its previous products, well known for other reasons like impeccable services etc. All of the above-mentioned factors may come out with a negative outcome (Guo & Zhai, 2019).

Manipulation of the stock price of small businesses is very easy as the market analysts do not monitor them as closely as they monitor larger businesses. Deception in the market is not always a negative factor. If manipulation in marketing is done responsibly, it can be one of the strongest tools for increasing brand awareness. Emotional bonding is a strong tool, the brand can emotionally manipulate the customer and can mean more than a brand, name, logo, or slogan. Humans have a rational nature and hence tend to process marketing communication stimulus through analysis and logic (Choudhury, 2022).

The online forms marketing, such as social media marketing has gained importance as a result of the growth of digitalization. Developing market competence by identifying digital interactions ideas and methods is the main goal of online marketing. Four levels of Social Media marketing have been discovered namely, connecting, engaging, coordinating, and cooperating. Many businesses must indulge in cultivating long-term relationships with clients and establish customer loyalty as the competition in the world we live in today is getting fierce day by day. Not all the methods have a significant impact on consumer loyalty, and also, most of the targeted customers' loyalty habits change frequently (Niboria et al., 2021).

This study consists of strong evidence that manipulation in advertising specifically used in the food sector tends to highly influence consumers emotionally. The paper also discusses the important models of the decisions made by the consumers based on the literature of consumer perception of advertising (Khurram, 2019).

Attracting customers through the mode of language is an impeccable method of manipulation. Seduction of the customer through advertisements or intended messages in their own personal language enables marketers to manipulate the customer on an emotional level. The consumers don't even recognise it (Danciu, 2014).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Secondary Data has been used for this study. Data published by the (IJCRT) and different authors. All the following data was retrieved from various articles and sources which talk about the brand manipulation tactics that marketers use to get more clients.

ANALYSIS and DISCUSSION

MEDIA PLATFORM FREQUENCY

Media Platforms	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Social media	19	10.9
Social media, radio	2	1.1
Television	14	8.3
Television, others	1	0.6
Television, Print media	1	0.6
Television, print media, others	1	0.6
Television, radio	3	1.7
Television, social media	102	58.6
Television, social media, others	3	1.7
Television, social media, print media	22	12.6
Television, social media, radio	2	1.1
Television, social media, radio, print media	2	1.1
Others	2	1.1
Total	174	100

A survey response analysis was also done by the age, gender, and the profession of the respondents.



Cover Page



Demographic variables		No. Respondents	Percentage
GENDER	Female	89	51.1
	Male	85	48.9
	Total	174	100
AGE	20-30	63	36.2
	31-40	52	29.9
	41-50	48	27.6
	50-60	11	6.3
	TOTAL	174	100
EMPLOYMENT STATUS	Unemployed	10	5.7
	Homemaker	4	2.3
	Student	16	9.2
	Working Professionals	144	82.8
	TOTAL	174	100

Expectations from a brand or a particular product

A conducted study suggested that 58.8% of the responses expected for the product to be trustworthy and genuine enough so that it can be chosen instead of other options.

Study suggested that 50% of the respondents thought that the product should be durable enough to stand the use and of appreciable quality. 34.4% also agreed to the following.

Whereas 50.6% of the respondents agreed that no matter the quality or durability as long as the product does its job and fulfils their needs, they're happy with it. 35.6% agreed to the same.

A study also suggested that 66.9% of respondents strongly agreed that the product should be a value for money, whatever it costs.

Hike in the prices and the impact on the public

56.9% of the responses stated that the consumers are ready to wait a while till the hike settles back to its original or discounted price.

Study suggested that 52.5% of the respondents were ready to shift to other brands.

47.5% of the respondents decided to stay loyal to the same brand even in the case of a hike in the price.



Cover Page



Advertisement of a product and the reality about it

61.9% of the respondents agreed to this as they found the product doing its job as it was advertised to do.

51.3% of the respondents that the product actually differs in reality and in the way hoe it was hyped in the market.

Study suggested that 58.8% of the respondents agreed their decisions depend on the positive/negative reviews and mouth publicity.

A survey was conducted through google forms by Dr. Satish Kumar Sagadevan, Dr. Easwaramoorthy Ramaswamy, Dr. Nishad Nawaz, and Mr. Muthukrishnan Rathinasamy in which they gained a significant response. The responses they got showed the amount of media platform frequency. The various measures of media platforms and their impact on consumers. It was observed that from the total of 174 responses either one or more platforms were chosen in which 102 respondents had chosen television and social media that roughly accounted for up-to 83.3%. Other media platforms were chosen with respect to the lifestyle and other interests of the respondents such as print media namely newspapers, magazines and so on. That accounted for up-to 22 in numbers that is 12.6%. Hence the majority of the respondents had chosen social media and television.

CONCLUSION

Innumerable types of practices are being carried out in order to deceive the consumers and trick them into purchasing the product/service. These practices can be termed as 'unethical' but they are not illegal. A consumer always expects from a brand to be trustworthy, designed to carry out the work easily, and above all that, a value for money. A strategy is formulated by the brands based on the understanding of the impact that social media has on their target audience. The companies are smart enough to understand the purchasing patterns of the consumers and they manipulate accordingly with the help of factors like price hike, discounts, and marketing campaigns. Such companies rely on brand loyalty to mislead the market hype in-order to sell other products in their line which are categorized as 'unwanted', and not intended to be bought so as to cover the cost and increase the sales.

References

- Brand Manipulation Tactics That Marketers Employ to Get More Clients. (2021, August 5). Oman Essay. Retrieved November 14, 2022, from <https://omanessay.com/brand-manipulation-tactics-that-marketers-employ-to-get-more-clients/>
- Bukhari, S. Z. (n.d.). What Manipulation Techniques do Brands Use to get more Customers.docx - Istanbul Aydin University Institute of Graduate Studies What Manipulation. Course Hero. Retrieved November 14, 2022, from <https://www.coursehero.com/file/80353657/What-Manipulation-Techniques-do-Brands-Use-to-get-more-Customersdocx/>
- Choudhury, R. G. (2022, February 26). Influence of Marketing Mix Decisions on Emotional Branding and Its Effect on Customer Appeal,. Retrieved November 24, 2022, from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/330481875_Influence_of_Marketing_Mix_Decisions_on_Emotional_Branding_and_Its_Effect_on_Customer_Appeal
- Danciu, V. (2014). Manipulative marketing: persuasion and manipulation of the consumer through advertising. Theoretical and Applied Economics. Retrieved November 21, 2022, from <https://store.ectap.ro/articole/951.pdf>
- D.S. Sundaram, & Webster, C. (n.d.). The Role of Brand Familiarity on the Impact of Word-Of-Mouth Communication on Brand Evaluations | ACR. Association for Consumer Research. Retrieved November 14, 2022, from <https://www.acrwebsite.org/volumes/8342/volumes/v26/NA-26/full>
- The Effect of Brand Attitude and Brand Image on Brand Equity. (2015, December 8). Taylor and Francis. Retrieved November 14, 2022, from <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10696679.2001.11501897>
- Goswami, P., & Srivastava, D. U. (2021, August). Impact Of Manipulation by Brand on Customers: A Powerful Tactic to Gain and Retain Customers. guestjournals.org. <http://www.questjournals.org>
- Guo, X., & Zhai, R. (2019, January 17). A Study on the Effect of Haidilao's Brand Marketing Strategies on Brand Image and Loyalty. ... - YouTube. Retrieved November 24, 2022, from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/357613267_A_Study_on_the_Effect_of_Haidilao's_Brand_Marketing_Strategies_on_Brand_Image_and_Loyalty
- Khurram, M. (2019, January 17). Impacts of Manipulative Advertising on the Consumer Perceptions of Ready-To-Eat Foods Market in London. GRIN. Retrieved November 21, 2022, from <https://www.grin.com/document/489410>
- McGovern, G. (2018, September). Brand Manipulation, Customer Experience. CMSWIRE. <https://www.cmswire.com/customer-experience/branding-manipulation/>



Cover Page



-
- McGovern, G. (2018, September 17). Branding Manipulation. CMS Wire. Retrieved November 22, 2022, from <https://www.cmswire.com/customer-experience/branding-manipulation/>
 - Niboria, T., Shukla, D. B., & Singh, S. N. (2021, December). Manipulation Tactics Used by The Brands to Attract Customers. ResearchGate. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/357017389_Manipulation_Tactics_Used_by_the_Brands_to_Attract_Customers
 - Rangasamy, D. E., Sagadevan, D. S. K., Rathinasamy, M., & Niwaz, D. N. (2021, October). Manipulation Tactics and Consumer Behaviour: Creating a Desire to Purchase. Tianjin Daxue Xuebao. <https://tianjindaxuexuebao.com/KNavi/JournalDetail2.html>
 - Singh, A., Sahu, D., Bairagi, N., Gawade, P., & Singh, S. (2020, April). Marketing or Manipulation? Manipulation Tactics Used by Brands to Attract Consumers. ijert.org. www.ijert.org