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CORPORATE BRAND IDENTITY AND IMAGE OF INDIA TOBACCO COMPANY

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ABSTRACT

Research on Corporate Brand Identity and Image brings out the perception towards corporate brand in the mind of consumers. This paper deals with measuring the brand image of India Tobacco Company(ITC). Corporate brand identity or image is shaped by the perception of consumers. Empirical research are very few in the area of corporate brand identity. Thus the paper focuses on testing the relationship between corporate brand identity dimensions and consumer profile, The results reveal that ITC on the whole exhibits a good corporate identity and image among the consumers.

KEYWORDS: Corporate Brand Identity, Brand Image, Brand Recall, Knowledge

INTRODUCTION

Brand Research is a great concern in Marketing Management. Corporate Brand identity and image has an influence on brand decisions. Since corporate brand identity may not have a direct impact on product brand image, only a few research works are being carried out in this area. But the indirect effect of corporate brand identity and image is manifold on the branding decisions. Hence an attempt has been made to analyse the corporate brand identity/image and the factors influencing the image.

A **corporate identity** is the overall image of a corporation or firm or business in the minds of diverse publics, such as customers , investors and employees. It is a primary task of the corporate communications department to maintain and build this identity to accord with and facilitate the attainment of business objectives. It is usually visibly manifested by way of branding and the use of trademarks.

Theory suggests that firms intentionally determine which features are most beneficial to communicate as part of the corporate brand identity on account of their probable influence on corporate reputation, and performance. The importance of aligning corporate brand identity to represent corporate history, ownership, management, and culture are emphasized since this is considered essential for the successful communication of the corporate brand to Outside parties. The focus is also on the alignment between internal and external corporate images (cf. Hatch and Schultz, 2008).

Prathap Oburai et al (2005) in a study on corporate brand image have found its significant direct impact on the expectations of stakeholders. It is imperative to maintain and/or to enhance brand image, and the managers will have to address the variety of antecedents that affect corporate brand image. Anna Blomback and Marcela (2010) indicate that the corporate brand identity formation process is more complex, incorporating external as well as internal drivers for feature selection.

India Tobacco Company(ITC) is one of India's foremost private sector companies with a market capitalisation of US $ 45 billion and a turnover of US $ 7 billion. ITC is rated among the World's Best Big Companies, Asia's 'Fab 50' and the World's Most Reputable Companies by Forbes magazine and among India's Most Valuable Companies by Business Today. ITC ranks among India's '10 Most Valuable (Company) Brands', in a study conducted by Brand Finance and

published by the Economic Times. ITC also ranks among Asia's 50 best performing companies compiled by Business Week. ITC has a diversified presence in FMCG, Hotels, Paperboards & Specialty Papers, Packaging, Agri-Business, and Information Technology. While ITC is an outstanding market leader in its traditional businesses of Cigarettes, Hotels, Paperboards, Packaging and Agri-Exports, it is rapidly gaining market share even in its nascent businesses of Packaged Foods & Confectionery, Branded Apparel, Personal Care and Stationery. (Source : www.**itc**portal.com/).

The Corporate brand image of ITC impacts the brands that are introduced by the company. The main objective of study is to identify how the corporate brand 'ITC' is perceived by the consumers and the influence of consumer profile on brand identity and brand image.

DATA ANALYSIS

A descriptive research design is adopted in the study to collect primary data from sample respondents residing in South, North and Central Chennai locations. The sample size of 140 is considered sufficient to draw preliminary conclusion on the brand identity and image of ITC. The data obtained through structured questionnaire is analysed and the analysis reveals the following :

Table 1: Estimation of Mean Values of Brand Identity Dimensions

Dimensions	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
Like the company	140	3.00	5.00	4.4643
Reliability	140	2.00	5.00	4.0000
Reputation	140	4.00	5.00	4.3214
Know the company	140	2.00	5.00	4.3571
Uniqueness	140	3.00	5.00	4.0000
Recall logo	140	3.00	5.00	3.8857
Comes to mind	140	3.00	5.00	4.2000
Delivers promise	140	3.00	4.00	3.6786
Proud to buy ITC products	140	3.00	5.00	3.7643
Great value	140	2.00	5.00	3.6357
Valid N (list wise)	140			

The corporate brand image is built through several phases in consumer mind. The knowledge about the company, liking towards the organization and the performance of the company has a great impact on building corporate image.

Higher mean indicates strong agreement towards the dimensions and hence the respondents have a liking towards the company. The organization is also highly considered as reputed, reliable and unique.

The knowledge about the company among the respondents is also positive. The brand is on the top of mind of the consumers. But the logo recall and value propositions are slightly on the lower side based on the opinion of the respondents.

The need to analyse the relationship among the brand identity dimensions is very high. Such an analysis help to know the closeness of certain dimensions and gives a clue to the company to approach building brand image in different angles. The correlation analysis is used to establish the relationship among the variables.

Table 2: Correlation among the Brand Identity Variables

Variables		Know thc Company	Like the Company	Reliability	Reputation	Uniqueness	Recall Logo	Comes to Mind	Delivers Promise	Proud to Buy	Great Value
Know the company	r	1	.807**	.858**	.228**	.701**	.048	-.145	.509**	-.061	.303**
	sig		.000	.000	.007	.000	.571	.088	.000	.475	.000
Like the company	r	.807**	1	.786**	.542**	.722**	.301**	.000	.807**	.166	.174*
	sig	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	1.000	.000	.050	.039
Reliability	r	.858**	.786**	1	.572**	.816**	.000	.211*	.572**	.171*	.502**
	sig	.000	.000		.000	.000	1.000	.013	.000	.043	.000
Reputation	r	.228**	.542**	.572**	1.000	.701**	.412**	.506**	.474**	.208*	.236**
	sig	.007	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.014	.005
Uniqueness	r	.701**	.722**	.816**	.701**	1	.219**	.000	.350**	.000	.154
	sig	.000	.000	.000	.000		.009	1.000	.000	1.000	.070
Recall logo	r	.048	.301**	.000	.412**	.219**	1	-.208*	.202*	.174*	.136
	sig	.571	.000	1.000	.000	.009		.014	.017	.039	.108
Comes to mind	r	-.145	.000	.211*	.506**	.000	-.208*	1	.217*	.312**	.425**
	sig	.088	1.000	.013	.000	1.000	.014		.010	.000	.000
Delivers promise	r	.509**	.807**	.572**	.474**	.350**	.202*	.217*	1	.086	.196*
	sig	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.017	.010		.312	.021
Proud to buy	r	-.061	.166	.171*	.208*	.000	.174*	.312**	.086	1	.594**
	sig	.475	.050	.043	.014	1.000	.039	.000	.312		.000
Great value	r	.303**	.174*	.502**	.236**	.154	.136	.425**	.196*	.594**	1
	sig	.000	.039	.000	.005	.070	.108	.000	.021	.000	

The table reveals that there is significant relationship among the variables such as uniqueness with the knowledge of the company, liking, reliability and reputation of ITC. The proud feeling in buying ITC products doesn't have any significant impact on many variables such as knowledge, uniqueness, reliability, reputation and ability to recall the logo. The feeling of pride is significantly associated only with the opinion towards the value of the company. There is also significantly high positive relationship among the opinion towards delivering the promise and liking towards the company.

Table 3: ANOVA – Age and Gender vs Brand Identity Variables

Variables	Gender		Age	
	F	Sig.	F	Sig.
Like the company	.213	.887	8.750	.004
Reliability	.433	.729	4.142	.044
Reputation	1.298	.278	21.718	.000
Know the company	1.501	.217	16.362	.000
Uniqueness	.417	.741	13.013	.000
Recall logo	.466	.707	1.332	.250
Comes to mind	1.960	.123	8.957	.003
Delivers promise	1.201	.312	1.934	.167
Proud to buy	2.748	.045	.904	.343
Great value	2.154	.096	20.616	.000

The gender and the brand identity variables do not fit each other except for the opinion towards value and feeling proud to buy ITC products. The age has a significant impact on all the variables except the ability to recall logo and feeling proud to buy ITC products.

CONCLUSIONS

- The mean score reveals a positive brand image and a good brand identity for ITC as a corporate brand.
- The proud feeling in buying a particular company product depends on value offered by the company.
- Age impacts the brand identity and image of the company. The brand image develops over a period of time and when age increases, the image may also grow in the minds of consumers.

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