Measurement and Impact of Brand Doppelgänger Imagery on a Brand

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Abstract: Understanding customers' interpretation of brand image is a paramount concern for both researchers and practitioners of management, business and advertising, as firms strive to boost brand equity and gain/ maintain competitive advantages. Brand equity and brand value are widely discussed in extant studies. Doppelgänger Brand Image, an emerging concept in this body of literature holds tremendous potential for deeper forays. Doppelgänger Brand Image, comprising negative perceptions, creates a compelling set of motifs that influence the impact of a brand.

Fathoming brand equity involves identifying the network of strong, favorable, and unique brand associations in the minds of the stakeholders. This paper captures the brand associations related to the Indian Premier League (IPL) through the IPL's Advanced Brand Concept Maps (ABCM), for eliciting brand association networks (maps) from consumers and aggregating individual maps into a consensus map of the brand. Consensus brand maps include the core brand associations that define the brand's image and show which brand associations are linked directly to the brand, and which associations are linked indirectly to the brand, and which associations can be grouped together.

This paper analyses the problems in traditional ABCM, and modifies the measurement to reveal dynamics of impact Doppelgänger has on the brand measurement. The disparaging images of IPL are captured through negative brand associations and an analysis has been carried out to understand the impact of these monstrous negative associations on the overall brand imagery of IPL.

As explained in this paper, the dynamics on the brand are assessed at all levels: listing of impacting constituents, their relative importance, and the drift of their positive or negative influence, et al.

Keywords: Doppelgänger Brand Image; Brand Concept Maps; Brand Monster; anthropomorphism; Cultural Jamming; Cultural Branding; Brand Image; Brand Associations.

GENERAL OVERVIEW OF THE AREA

Understanding customers' interpretations of brand image is a paramount concern for both researchers and practitioners of management, business and advertising, as firms strive to boost brand equity and gain/ maintain competitive advantages. Brand equity and brand value are widely discussed in extant studies (for example, Aaker, 1996; Keller, 2003). Professor Jean-Noël Kapferer in 1986 was the first person to come out with the concept of "Brand Identity". He developed a brand identity six sided prism model, which coherently explained the six aspects of brand identity into two dimensions. The first dimension talked about brand as a person and can be explained as brand physique and brand personality and also depicts user reflection and self-image. Second dimension explained a brand's social aspects; its physique, relationship and reflection incorporated into the brand personality, culture and self-image. According to Kapferer, "Strong brands are capable of weaving all aspects into an effective whole in order to create a concise, clear and appealing brand identity." (Kapferer, 2004). Brand has been the cynosure of most academicians and marketing professionals – a concept revered and even defined multifariously. Nevertheless, its centrality cannot be overemphasized if one has to conceive or initiate marketing initiatives. Brand is by definition a network of associations in consumer's minds (Keller, 2003). High brand equity levels are known to lead to higher level of consumer preferences and intensions to purchase (Cobb-Walgren *et al.* 1995) and also high brand equity leads to higher stock returns (Aaker and Jacobson, 1994). While Keller (2003) gave the pathway to build brand equity; a conceptual framework to map customer based brand equity was given by Fayrene and Lee (2011).

Further, imagery based on anthropomorphisation (seeing the human in nonhuman forms and events, pervades human judgment (Guthrie 1993)) of products has been a powerful concept; Aggarwal and McGill (2007) have offered a framework to understand the phenomenon of anthropomorphisation of products. They concluded that the consumers positively evaluate products that are presented as humans and have human like features. Anthropomorphisation portrays a brand as an analogue of man, having a structure or morphology akin to a human being. Brown's (2010) pitch for anthropomorphisation seems very convincing as the best recourse to a larger market share. This is due to a more likely adoption of the brand by marketers and advertisers when the image chosen is an animal, which is "closer" to humanity. However, Holt (2010) has shown how anthropomorphism makes the branding indefensible and even irrelevant for the consumers. He has pioneered the Cultural Strategy thesis, while diagnosing failure of brands. He has in fact provided ammunition to the marketer who wants to counter a brand's impending demise by coming up with a disruptive ideology and thus tapping a blue ocean of consumers.

Brand image constitutes the most vital element of creation of a brand meaning in the customer's mind (Keller, 2003). Grasping totality of brand image holds some strong, unique, and favorable brand associations in the customer's memory in the form of associative networks (John, Loken, Kim, & Monga, 2006; Keller, 1993). The brand associations' network points out which associations are directly or indirectly linked to the brand and also indicate how these brand associations are mutually connected to one another. Naturally, association networks are a good correlate of a brand's value to consumers (Aaker, 2010; John *et al.,* 2006).

As the literature and advertising thought dipped into generic and universality of brand and brand image, alongside arose concepts of negative brand Imagery, esp. as a Doppelgänger brand image. The Doppelgänger as a motif arose within German Romanticism and became a canonical theme in the

"Gothic" literature. The term was coined by Jean Paul in his novel Siebenkiis, published in 1796 (cited in: Vardoulaki 2006). According to Thompson *et al* (2006), "Doppelgänger Brand Image is a family of disparaging images and stories about a brand that are circulated in popular culture by a loosely organized network of consumers, anti-brand activists, bloggers, and opinion leaders in the news and entertainment media."

Though negativity around brand has not been studied much; many online spaces encouraging anti-consumption and anti-branding have been mapped (Krishnamurthy 2009). There is a study that sheds some fundamental light on why people avoid a particular brand Lee (2009). Harold (2007) has talked of pranksters using media activism to provoke brand custodians. Giesler (2012) tried to get insights in Doppelgänger Brand Image via Botox market analysis over an eight-year period. Creation of Doppelgänger Brand Image for strong brands merits worthy fathoming, since the strong brands are likely to be most vulnerable to losing their brand equity. The creation of this Doppelgänger Brand Image might confuse customers and can lead to "brand avoidance" effects (i.e., consumers deliberately avoiding the target brand) as described in Thompson *et al.* (2006). Therefore, this creation of Doppelgänger Brand Image might lead to negative brand imagery, consumer judgment and consequently impact consumer brand's cultural resonance. According to Freund and Jacobi (2013): "The emergence of a powerful, popular Doppelgänger may signal that a brand has peaked and must either evolve or decline." Using Goldman Sachs as a case study, Freund and Jacobi (2013) explored that the creation and circulation of anthropomorphic and monstrous Doppelgänger brand imagery by anti-brand activists powerfully influences public perception of a corporate brand. This lineage of how organizational personae are created is very insightful.

Thompson *et al* (2006) integrated Holt's (2010) prime concepts with Doppelgänger Brand Image, showing how the traditionally adopted Emotional Banding lay defunct in face of Doppelgänger Brand Image. As a maverick, Vardoulakis (2006) has given a brave contra- rendition, in delinking Doppelganger with demonic, in fact showing it as having a potential of positivity. This positivity facet is intriguing and requires further study.

Studies on brand image are based on consumer perceptions rather than any rigorously tested measures (Lassar*et al.*, 1995). Aaker (1996) has delineated ways to measure brand, indicating how such a complex construct like brand can be practically measured. Ways to measure Doppelgänger Brand Image have been discussed by Brandt *et al* (2010) by studying negative user-generated content. Schnittka *et al* (2012) have validated Brand Concept Maps (John *et al* 2006) as most appropriate measuring mechanisms.

INDIAN PREMIERE LEAGUE (IPL) DOPPELGÄNGER

The specific brand chosen for this study is Indian Premier League (IPL), a globally recognized cricket extravaganza hosted by India. Studies have explored IPL as a global brand, Gupta (2011) has brought in a chronological build-up of brand IPL, showing how the IPL model was successful and instrumental in India's control over world cricket. Further, he cautions about problems therein (financial irregularities, match fixing scandals, nepotism, off-the-field conduct of players etc.). Interestingly, cricket was historically noted as a gentleman's game; however, IPL got mired in controversies of match fixing and misgovernance, bringing to fore uglier aspects of the commercial event. These have given rise to IPL s Doppelgänger

Brand Image. Hence, an in-depth biopsy into IPL s Doppelgänger Brand Image is worth studying. The study would yield deeper insights that can be used for better understanding and management of any brand.

Key Question

Can a strong IPL Doppelgänger lead to Brand avoidance?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

There exist a host of techniques that could be employed for measuring impact of a brand, viz. consumer mapping techniques and analytical techniques (John *et al*, 2006). Of these, Advanced Brand Concept Mapping (Schnittka *et al* 2012) belonging to the consumer mapping techniques family has been preferred for this research; and that too modified to reveal the dynamics of Doppelgänger. Initially, it looked as if, the study should take recourse to application of the Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique (ZMET) (Zaltman, Gerald 1997). This was thought knowing that Brand Perceptions emanate from both conscious and unconscious seats of consumers. The founding assumption arises from Mehrabian's (1971) reporting that 93 percent of message is non-verbal. In case of Doppelgänger Brand Imagery, this becomes significant, as the consumers may not freely share their reasons for thinking negative. They may not freely reveal the impact of a particular Doppelgänger Brand Imagery on consumer perception of a brand. Further, it needs to be seen how these associations or linkages may lead to negative purchase behaviour. This research is better possible in Brand Concept Mapping (John *et al* 2006). Since the respondents are taken through a guided personal interview, the core beliefs are unearthed much more reliably than with other tools.

Now, brand image is read as strength, uniqueness and favourability of brand association, organized in a network (Keller, 2003). Brand Concept Mapping has been seen to just reveal two facets, viz. strength and uniqueness of the associations. It uncovers structural linkages of underlying brand associations – it even indicates strength of these linkages (Schnittka *et al* 2012). The psychoanalytic dimension thus gets due merit and attention. On the other hand, Advanced Brand Concept Maps doo factor direction of favourability, but wrongly show lower impact for low ranked favourable constituents.

The IPL consensus brand concept map included both positive and negative brand associations, as IPL is a popular sports event and also is marked by controversies like fixing, betting, black money etc. The respondents were not only influenced by the IPL live matches updates, TV programming, star players but also had a negative influence from the negative publicity arising from the IPL controversies. Also most of the respondent were youth and therefore were active on the social media. They not only generate content but also get influenced by the user- generated content on IPL. IPL has a almost 58:42 as ratio of positive and negative sentiments (30db.com as on May 5th, 2016) floating on the internet particularly the social media like facebook, twitter, YouTube etc.

The study was carried out over the following steps:

(i) Experts were asked to list various brand associations, which have impact on the brand IPL. Our sample in this was 30 experts very familiar with cricket and IPL people (critics, commentators, article writers, players *et al*). They thus revealed 25 brand associations. They also rated these 25 as

positive shapers of the brand (called Positive Influencers – PI) or negative influencers (called Doppelgänger Influencers - DI), as pertinent.

(ii) The next step was to find out the Brand Association Network Value (BANV), in order to quantifies the overall favorability of brand association networks. The BANV is based on multi-attribute attitude model given by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975), according to this model brand attitudes are a multiplicative function of the salient (cognitive) beliefs that a consumer has about the product or service and the evaluative (affective) judgment of those beliefs (Ajzen Fishbein, 1980).

Therefore, the overall evaluation of the favorability of an individual brand association network for consumer j (i.e., BANVj) initially consists of the added evaluative judgments of all brand associations m that appear in the individual brand map, multiplied with the corresponding strength of the association linkage to the brand node or superordinate co-associations in consumer memory (i.e., $\Sigma_{a=1}^{m} E_{aj} * S_{aj}$ Reder & Anderson, 1980; John *et al.*, 2006).

Respondents were asked to assign the 25 brand associations four values, E, S, I, and L.

E_{aj} is the respondent j's evaluative judgment of each brand association on a one-item, seven-point Likert scale, where a 7 point means more favourable rating. Also, S_{aj} represents the weak, moderate, or strong strength of an association is to its superordinate associations within the network, with stronger linkages producing a greater association impact on the BANV, extended to a 7 point scale. Whereas I_{aj} represents the individual importance of the association E_{aj} to a purchase decision. Further, each brand association's level of placement within the network is represented by L_{aj} and transformed L_{aj} to a seven-point scale to match the measures of Eaj, Saj, and Iaj.

All of these were to range on 7 point scales, with 1 as least value and 7 as most powerful, whilst 4 was a neutral middle ground. Our respondents numbered 120.

(iii) A BANV was computed for every respondent as follows:

$$\sum_{a=1}^{m} E_{\alpha j} * S_{\alpha j} * I_{\alpha j} * L_{\alpha j}$$

We neutralized E by making it unit value in each case. This allowed us to compare weights as per directional categories.

(iv) Apart from overall consolidation, separate BANVs* were found for:

    a) Positive Influencers that received higher than 4 E value – dubbed SPI (same)

    b) Positive Influences that received a lower than 4 E value – dubbed FPI (flip)

    c) Doppelgänger Influencers that received a lower than 4 E value – dubbed UDI (unchanged)

    d) Doppelgänger Influencers that received a higher than 4 E value – dubbed RDI (reversed)

    e) Aggregate BANVs were also found for SPI & UDI combined; and for FPI & RDI combined.

* The tables in appendix show the results.
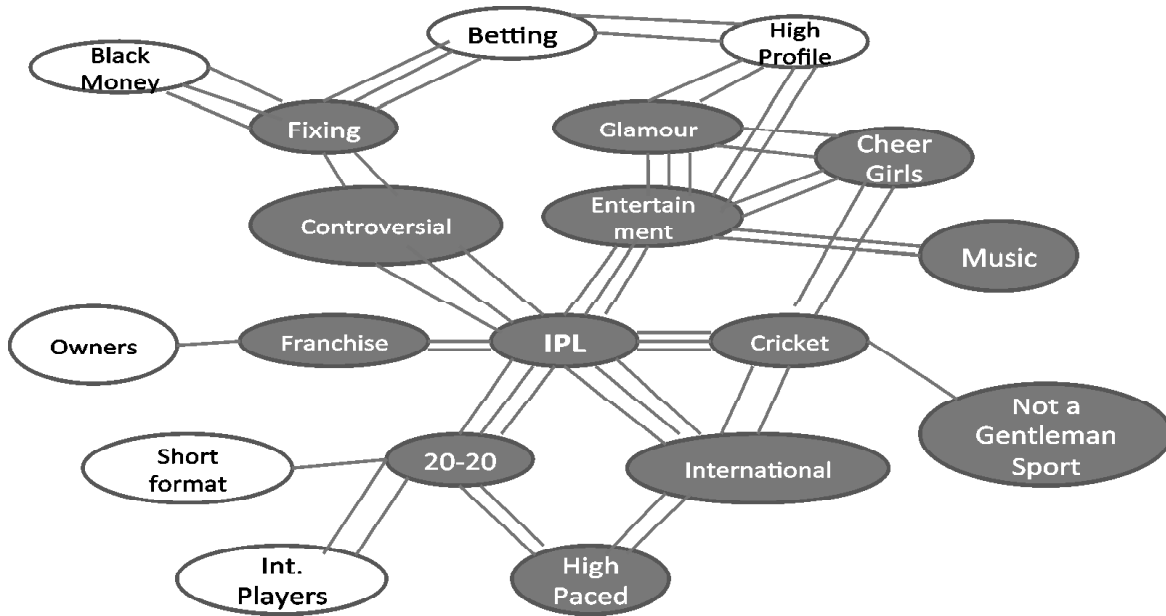
IPL's Consensus Brand Concept Map

Figure 1.1

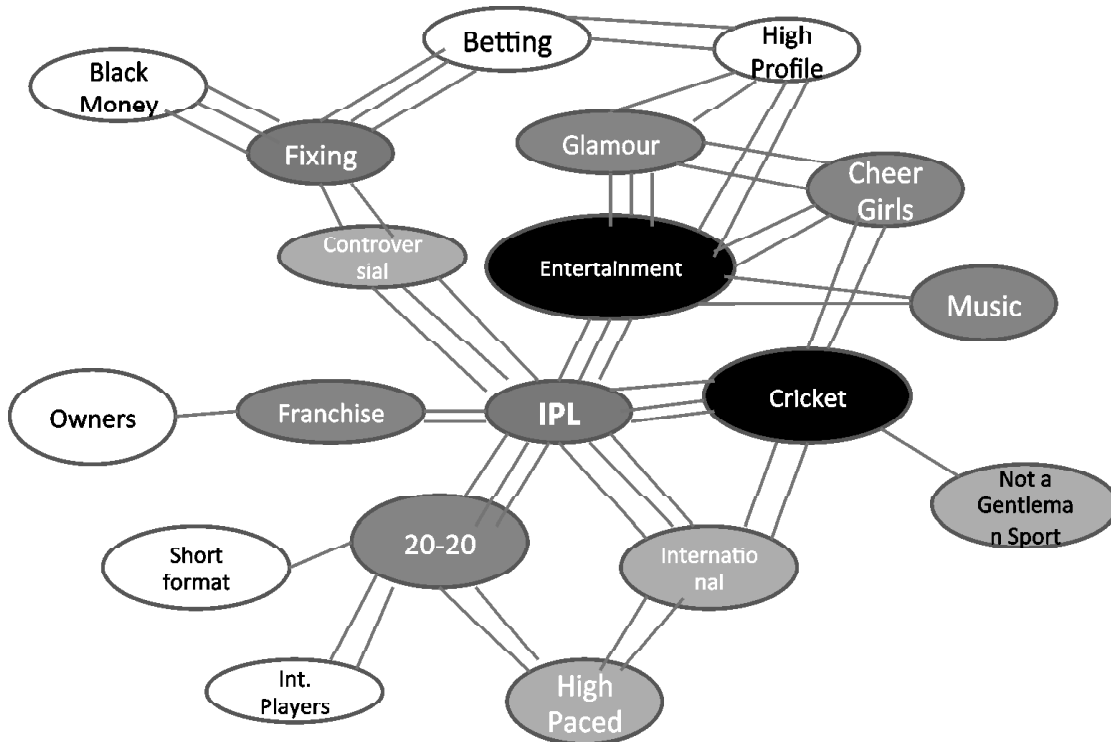The favorability is illustrated in the figure I with the uniqueness and the strength of the IPL.

Figure 1.2

If we look into the map, we find that "Entertainment" and "Cricket" are the most favorable brand associations overriding the negative brand associations linked to the "Controversial" brand association. That means the respondents do not give much weightage to the controversies generated by the IPL like match fixing, betting and black money. This could be the reason of IPL brand going strong despite the Doppelganger brand imagery..liability78, which both meet ociation link the coefficient alpha is of .78, which both meets the acceptable level of reliabil.liability78, which both meet ociation link the coefficient alpha is of .78, which both meets the acceptable level of reliabil

Analysis and Insights

The following insights emerged from detailed analysis:

A.   The way experts view a brand and the way general respondents can be very different. This is what accounts for change in status of Influencers. But it is the respondents who denote the consumer behaviour.

B.   This is interesting, as it implies all so called Doppelgängers do not pull down a brand, and in a similar vein, the so-called Positive Influencers may not add to value of a brand.

I.   Overall IPL brand emerged with a BANV of 83.94.

II.   The favourables gave a BANV of 134.99, which was 61% higher; the unfavourables returned a value of 36.82, which was 56% lower. This was in order with definitional standing of concepts.

III. The combined Positive Influencers (SPIs & FPIs) gave 102.62, showing the experts had gone wrong in assessment (as favourables got 134.9). Same ways the DIs combined (UDIs & RDIs) had 55.91, wrongly higher than unfavourables 36.82.

CONCLUSION

This paper exposes the imprecise brand measurements that have been hitherto made in many studies, as the analytic look into "real" Doppelgängers and "real" positive influencers dynamics used to stay hidden. Also brand image measurement through brand associations network using Brand Concept Maps can only be limited to analyzing strength and uniqueness of brand associations. Whereas, to analyze an association's favorability to a purchase decision, it is only possible by quantifying the favorability of the brand association, through brand association network (BANV). Therefore we add the aspect of favorability to the existing BCM approach of measuring the strength and uniqueness of brand associations. By applying BANV, we are able to separate the "positive" and the "negative (Doppelganger)" brand associations by quantifying the favorability of the brand association network.

Further the marketing implication of this approach is that not all negative imagery or brand Doppelganger imagery leads to brand avoidance. Sometimes it even acts as a good monster and might impact positively to the brand health. Also as in the case of IPL the core motivation or favorable association to purchase decision is entertainment and not cricket. Therefore all the negative association like betting, match-fixing etc has less impact on the performance of the league as the consumer does not associate it with traditional cricket the "gentleman's sport".

This paper thus points out further similar measurement studies need to be carried out for other brands to see variance in judgment of critics/ experts and actual market representing consumers. It also gives insights into how a few Doppelgangers may actually be used to push up a brand, rather than treat all Doppelgangers as negative pull downers. Similarly, the classic view on positive influencers also needs a relook – as relative priority to be given to brand constituents may have a few positive influencers actually pull downers.

APPENDIX

Table 1
The favorability of brand associations

1 = extremely low favorability; 7 = extremely high favorability		
S.No.	Brand associations	Favorability
1	Cricket	5.5
2	High Paced	4
3	20-20	5
4	Franchise	3.5
5	Music	4
6	Entertainment	6
7	International	2.8
8	Fixing	2.5
9	Glamour	3.9
10	Controversial	3
11	not a gentlemen sport	1.7
12	Cheer Girls	3.3
13	Format	3.7
14	High Profile	1.9
15	Betting	2.8
16	Star owners	3.2
17	International Players	3.5
18	Black Money	3
19	overdose of cricket	1.3
20	Parties	1.2
21	Contests	2
22	Conflict of interest	1.4
23	players conflict	1.3
24	Music	3.5
25	BCCI	2.6

Table 2
The 25 Brand Associations Ranked by Experts

Item Code	Brand Associations	Association Influence
1	Cricket	Positive PI
2	High Paced	Positive PI
3	20-20	Positive PI
4	Franchise	Positive PI
5	Entertainment	Positive PI
7	Auction	Positive PI
8	Glamour	Positive PI
12	International	Positive PI
15	Format	Positive PI
16	High Profile	Positive PI
19	BCCI	Positive PI
21	Star owners	Positive PI
22	International Players	Positive PI
23	Contests	Positive PI
25	Music	Positive PI
6	Cheer Girls	Doppelgängers DI
9	Controversial	Doppelgängers DI
10	Fixing	Doppelgängers DI
11	Parties	Doppelgängers DI
13	Players' Conflict	Doppelgängers DI
14	Not a gentlemen sport	Doppelgängers DI
17	Betting	Doppelgängers DI
18	Overdose of cricket	Doppelgängers DI
20	Black Money	Doppelgängers DI
24	Conflict of interest	Doppelgängers DI

Table 3
After Ratings by Respondents

Same PIs:

Cricket
20-20
Entertainment
High Paced
Auction
Franchise
Glamour
International

Table 4
Unchanged DIs

Betting
Not a gentlemen sport
Fixing
Overdose of cricket
Black Money
Conflict of interest

Table 5
Flip PIs

International Players
Format
High Profile
Star owners
Music
BCCI
Contests

Table 6
Reversed DIs

Controversial
Cheer Girls
Players' Conflict
Parties

PIs = Positive Influence
Dis = Doppelganger Influence

Table 7
The BANVs

Overall	83.94
UDIs	44.26
SPIs	165.78
RDIs	73.4
FLPIs	30.44
UDIs & SPIs	113.7
RDIs & FPIs	46.06
UDIs & RDIs	55.91
SPIs & FPIs	102.62
Favourables	134.99
Unfavourables	36.82

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