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Examining the Effect of the Factors Influencing Brand Development Services in Small Companies

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ABSTRACT

Today, competitive forces make organizations adopt strategies to create competitive advantage for themselves. Building a brand is one of the ways to achieve this goal. However, since organizations always do not have sufficient financial capability or they are reluctant to invest frequently for building new brands while producing new products and according to available statistics which show that only about 40% of all new products fail, while failure is 80-90% for new brands, in this case, instead of introducing a new brand for new products, a successful brand with a satisfactory history is used for this new category of products; in other words, brand extension strategy will be used. In this respect, strategies that are used by organization to extend its brand, to ensure its success, and to increase the loyalty of its customers are regarded as part of the strategy of that organization. In today's highly competitive business environment and rapid changes in technology, effective development of brand is considered as a competitive advantage for the business. Brand development is to develop a strategic, creative, and dynamic policy to improve the performance of a particular brand. The aim of this study is to examine the effect of factors influencing brand development services in small companies. Criteria including: perceived quality, perceived value, enhancement of customer experience, customer perception of price, value-based pricing, direct and indirect distribution, pull and push strategy, supporting distribution channel, advertising, sales promotion, marketing and support, public relations, and personal selling were examined while examining factors influencing brand development services. Research hypotheses were tested using SPSS software. The results showed that the product strategy, pricing strategy, distribution strategy, and communication strategy would influence the brand development services.

Keywords: Brand development services, product strategy, pricing strategy, distribution strategy, communication strategy.

1. INTRODUCTION

In today's market, good thinking about brand strategies plays an important role in the success of the organization. Brand development strategy and extending consumer right to select various products have turned to popular ways to grow business. According to Aaker and Keller (1990), brand development is the result of the development of product line which are commonly about new goods or services of new products in areas such as taste, smell, size, etc. (from jeans to bedspread, from coffee to ice cream, etc.). Brand development may influence the equity of original brand or even the name of company or corporation. Consumer familiarity with the original brand may help to new product entry and its rapid spread in new segments which are formed in the market (Ghorbani, 2010). When customers and consumers are willing to buy a commodity, they should pay attention to product brand because it indirectly represents the quality, functionality, and design. Brands have a special place in product marketing as they can create a competitive advantage to differentiate the products and bring success for the company (Wang and Tzeng, 2012).

Brand issue is among the topics that are the focus of companies and market participants. Consequently, brand development issue is considered as an essential or even as a critical issue in today's marketing world and especially in mature markets (Hosseini and Rezaei, 2011). Since brands are among the most valuable assets of a company and they increase the final value of product and influence the personal lives of people and even may influence the values, beliefs, politics, and even people, the importance of creating and maintaining customer loyalty has turned to the sharper focus on marketing. The high level of customer loyalty to the brand leads to creation of a series of competitive advantages for companies and the positive effect on increasing income and reducing costs of the company are being marketing (Chai Lee and Yew Leh, 2011).

Moreover, many other researchers have also pointed out that creating a powerful brand is one of the key factors to achieve competitive advantage and long-term survival on the market. A powerful brand creates value both for the customer and organization. According to Dieb A. and Ceymian A. (2014), brand acts powerfully because it leads to more loyalty of customer and stability in buying and selling (Batra S., 2010). Powerful brands help the customer to identify services of companies. Berry (2000) believes that a powerful service brand increases customer confidence to buy intangibly and enables him to imagine and perceive intangible services and in this way, reduces the feelings of social and financial risk in customers. Accordingly, branding is referred to as the basis for service marketing in the twenty-first century. Brand has had a great deal of development in service sector. Given that service sector is governing the west part of the world as a powerful sector, most people are earning from the jobs they do in service sector (Lindgrein, 2004). However, not much research is carried out on the role of brand in the field of service marketing, and in particular in the field of service brand identity and factors that reinforce and affect it (Krishnan, 2012). Keller (2001) claimed on the basis of studies he has done that perceived quality, perceived value, enhanced experience of the consumer from brand strategy, perceived price, value pricing, pricing strategy, design practices, advertising, promotion, communication strategies, and so on may be the most important factors influencing brand development in marketing practices and marketing planning.

In this study, factors influencing brand development services in small companies will be examined. Later, an overview of research literature and hypotheses will be provided. In the next section, the design of the study will be introduced and data will be collected, then the conclusion will be presented after interpreting findings.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Brand Development Services

Establishing a simple but powerful distinction in the minds of your customers and employees (and in fact, in the minds of all of your stakeholders) requires a clear and worthy vision expressed in actions you perform in all environments - from manufacturing to service to employing people and the way that you talk about yourself. Maintaining this simplicity across all systems, processes, and sophisticated policies which describe modern business is a big task requiring focus, passion, enthusiasm, and entire conviction. Therefore, it is not surprising that when competition increases, brands increasingly play a stronger role in business strategy (Chen et al., 2015:43).

Presently, it is accepted that branding is fundamental to business success. Perhaps that is why the Global Business Roundtable is ranked third in the published global business ranking. In interbrand, one global institution that is active in the field of brand and brand evaluation, always more emphasis is on the need for a balance between logic and innovation. Brands live in our minds and hearts (Mohammadzadeh, 2014:32).

In fact, brand building is a formal and structural distinctive character in a work or in a group of works of art and it is necessary that these features either have a kind of inner link or represent signs of a complete unit. Techniques may have expressive, temporal, spatial, topical, thematic, and methodic features. Farkvar (1990) cited some examples of the application of brand in ancient Egypt. Back then, Egyptian brick makers distinguished their products from that of their competitors' by carving their symbols on produced bricks (Hosseini and Rezvani, 2012).

Brand literature has experienced a dramatic change over the past decade. Brand and the role of brand names have been the center of attention traditionally and were constantly reviewed and redefined. Brand has been defined conventionally and traditionally as, "A name that is associated with one or more parts of the production line, and is used to determine the origin of a part" (Cutler, 2003). Keller and Kevin Lane (2003) have mentioned that "Whenever a marketer builds a name, logo, or a symbol for a new product, he has built a brand in practice". As it is obvious, brand had a simple function and was used as an identifier based on these definitions.

Prior to emphasize and focus on brands and brand building process, brands were just a step of the marketing process of products. "For a long time, brand has been considered as an improvised version of a part of product" (Urde, 2009). Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2000) remind that "In a common brand building model, the purpose is to make a vision of the brand. It is a tactical element with short-term results". In fact, brand is used in order to identify a product and differentiate it in a competition.

Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2000) focused on the traditional brand where the brand management team was responsible for creating and coordinating brand management programs. In this condition, brand manager was not the first one in the hierarchy of company. His focus was on short-term results of single brand names and single products in the markets of company. The main goal was to coordinate the production and sales of branches in order to solve any possible problem related to the sales and market share. According to this strategy, the responsibility of the brand was merely related to marketing department (Davis, 2002).

Each expert has a definition for the mentality and perceptions of brand services. Aaker (1991) states that each likable thing which belongs to brand helps with the formation of brand mentality and is considered as brand perception”. Another general definition is that whatever that is associated to a brand in mind, is indeed the perception of the brand (James, 2004; Low and Lamb, 2010). Perceptions may be based on product experience, product features, brand position, promotional communications, price information, packing, and certain assumptions of consumer or other sources (Dean, 2011).

It seems that definition presented by Keller (2003) has been the most comprehensive definition of brand image or brand mentality. He considered brand mentality or brand image as reflection of the perceptions that the person has in his memory about the brand.

Kapferer (1997) noted that “Prior to 1980, there was a different policy and a different approach to brand names. Companies wished to buy a chocolate or pasta manufacturer. While after 1980, they wanted to buy Buitoni or Kit Kat. This difference is very important, in the former case, firms wish to buy production capacity while in the latter case, they are looking to open a place in the consumer’s mind. In other words, changes in emphasis on brand began when it became clear that brands were more than identification indicators. According to Kapferer (1997) brands have eight functions that are displayed in Table 1: The first two functions are technical and related to brand recognition: “A function that is the symbol of recognition and awareness to facilitate the selection and time acquisition.” The next three functions reduce the perceived risk, and the last three functions are related to the enjoyment and pleasure of using a brand. He adds that “Brands also play the role of an economic function in the mind of consumer; brand position is the result of the ability of brand to create a unique, positive, and prominent meaning in the minds of a large group of consumers”. Therefore, brand and brand building must focus on developing value and brand position.

Table 1
Marketing strategy (Cutler, 2003)

<i>Market segmentation</i>	<i>Market targeting</i>	<i>Market positioning</i>
1. Defining a basis for segmenting the market and parts of a market	1. Evaluating attractiveness of segments	1. Selecting a desired position and building a position for each target segment in market
2. Building a series of given market segments	2. Selecting target segments	2. Performing positioning by building mix marketing for each target segment

2.2. Effective Factors of Brand Services

1. *Brand services orientation:* Urde (1991) introduces brand services orientation as another model to build brand services which emphasizes on brand names as a strategic resource. “Brand orientation is a way in which organizing processes revolve around the issues of building, developing, and maintaining brand identity and is possible through consistent interaction with target customers by assessing the latest competition results in the form of brand names” (Urde, 1999). Brand orientation focuses on the development of brand names in a more practical manner and begins with brand identity as the strategic foundation. The logical result of this orientation is that brands turn into an “Unconditional response to customer needs and desires. This must be carefully taken into consideration. What is demanded by the customer is not the same at any time and the brand

will be strengthened as a strategic resource. According to these reasons, demands and needs of consumers are not ignorant; however, they are not allowed to clearly direct and determine brand development” (Urde, 1999).

2. *Service brand loyalty*: In general, it can be said that each customer may have a reason for brand loyalty; as a result, commercial enterprises adopt different strategies. Some offer discounts, some try to make a good picture of their brand, and some offer loyalty programs. These programs encourage present customers to stay and maintain their loyalty. However, the important point is that the reason for the loyalty of customers should be properly evaluated before taking any action and no action should be taken based on speculation (Shouli, 2007). Keller (1998) mentions that in past, brand loyalty has often been measured simply and in terms of behavior through repetitive purchase behavior while customer loyalty can be considered more widely rather than being measured through simple purchase behavior. Brand loyalty is consisted of two components which are behavioral loyalty and attitudinal loyalty (Keller, 1998).
3. *Service brand trust*: Mayer et al. (1995) define trust as: trust represents the confidence in which people involved in a transaction do not exploit another one’s vulnerability. It is very difficult to define trust and there are significant differences in its definition; however, most definitions mainly contain three aspects:
 - The degree of the dependency of truster to trustee
 - Trust can be considered as a method that can overcome the risk or lack of confidence.
 - Trust or belief that members involved in the relationship would not experience vulnerability when the risk increases (Asadollahi, 2010).
4. *Feelings toward service brand*: Peterson et al. (2001) state that feelings toward the service brand is based on customer sentiment and commitment to a product. This means that customers are attached to a product that is based on more recognition. Feeling toward brand is a function of emotional driven attitudes of customers toward product. Positive feeling of customers toward product will increase their positive attitude toward the brand (Bhat and Reddy, 2001). Emotional category assesses overall feelings of a brand’s customer. In particular, emotional component usually indicates a positive or negative emotional relationship with a certain brand. Bagzy (1984) states: “The emotional component is the result of the pairing of attitude with emotional stimulus, through the mechanism of classical conditioning.” Especially, a brand can be considered as a “conditioned stimulus” which is paired with another stimulus that calls for an emotional response (unconditioned stimulus). According to Igly and Chaycan (1993) as a result of the repetition of this relationship, attitude reaches the point where emotional response could not be called; therefore, a behavioral response would be shaped (Najafi, 2009).
5. *Brand social power*: A brand is said to have power when it can have an influence on the behavior of those consumers who look up to it and can make preferences, attitudes, and purchasing behavior toward it routine in a normal manner. Today the brand is an important and integral part of the marketing strategy and brand marketing is at the heart of business and many of the best known companies of the world such as Procter & Gamble and Mars are structured around their brand (Heidarzadeh et al., 2010). Brand power is enforced through influencing purchasing decisions

and the willingness of consumers to pay extra price. Although brand does not have real power, consumers who use a brand attribute a series of features such as power, control, and influence to it (Valli, 2013).

2.3. Reviewing Research Studies

Oh and Hsu (2014) have concluded about the effect of different factors on brand loyalty in hotels that brand credibility and service quality have a significant effect on brand loyalty. Krystallis and Chrysochou (2013) have come to this conclusion about examining the impact of brand aspects on brand loyalty that verification and standards are related to brand can affect the satisfaction, attitude, and loyal behavior of customer. Yung-Lan Wang et al. (2012) investigated brand marketing to create brand value through fuzzy method which combines ANP and VIKOR methods to examine factors influencing brand development services and indicated that pricing is the most important factor and consumer perceptions of price and perceived quality are the next most important factors in brand development services which should be taken into consideration while planning for brand development services. Patricia A. Boyle et al. (2012) concluded while examining the relationship between risk aversion and decision making of elderlies who had social status that age, gender, as well as level of education and income influences decisions and may lead to more risk aversion decisions which are combined with weakness. The results also suggest that the relationship of risk aversion and decision-making will continue after adjusting and regulating global cognitive function as well as executive and non-executive cognitive capabilities. Risk aversion or weakness of decision making is observed among older people whose decision is enforced. Liung et al. (2015) carried out a research on the impact of customer loyalty on buyer behavior and concluded that there is a significant relationship among brand capital, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty. They also stated that customer satisfaction is a prelude to customer loyalty. Moreover, they indicated that although brand capital has little relevance with customer loyalty as compared with satisfaction, brand capital is considered as a positive point for brand. Donghan Liang et al. (2010) examined the effects of risk aversion on manufacturer: Advertising in a two-stage supply chain and have come to the conclusion that manufactures have increased their advertising efforts when the risk aversion of retailer is appropriate while they have decreased their advertising efforts when the risk aversion of the retailer is high. The findings also show that the advertising of manufacturer can be an effective in preventing risk averse retailer from downsizing the existing inventory which is in turn determined through the power and capability of joint promotional activities and target profit (α , β). Notash (2013) examined appropriate brand developing strategies in the market of the products of poultry industry using an integrated approach of balanced score cards and analytic hierarchy process (a case study: Simorgh brand). The results showed that brand quality development is the most important strategy and one can be very successful in brand development by enhancing quality. Moreover, the index of arising feeling and establishing a sense of trust and interest in customers towards the brand had the highest priority. This study has been carried out using modern perspective of Balanced Score Card and Analytic Hierarchy Process and recent studies suggest that the integration of these two techniques have never been used in poultry industry. The results of this study can be used by managers and marketers of this industry, researchers of marketing and especially researchers of brand, those who are active in this area, as well as all practitioners and those interested in the study of brand and help managers to make the right decision and select the appropriate strategies for the future. Fooladi (2014) examined the effect of the development of imported brands on consumer loyalty (a case study: Samsung brand) and indicated that variables such as perceived

quality, brand recognition and awareness, appropriateness of extension, and the attitude of consumer toward brand may have a direct impact of the loyalty and commitment of consumers. Bahreinzhadeh et al. (2013) investigated the effects of risk aversion of consumer and his engagement with goods on brand loyalty and word of mouth behavior: the mediating role of brand attachment and brand trust indicated that consumer engagement with goods has a significant and direct impact on brand loyalty and positive word of mouth behavior and also have an indirect impact on brand loyalty through brand attachment and brand trust. The results also showed that the influence of consumer risk aversion on brand loyalty and positive word of mouth advertising is due to the mediating role of brand trust and brand loyalty. Shahbazi (2012) assessed the relationship between risk aversion and brand loyalty and the mediating role of customer feeling and trust toward it and concluded that the positive and significant impact of risk aversion on brand trust, and the positive and significant impact of customer feelings toward brand, and also brand trust and customer feelings toward brand on (behavioral and attitudinal) loyalty and the indirect impact of risk aversion of (behavioral and attitudinal) loyalty through brand trust and customer feelings toward brand have been verified.

3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY:

Following research hypotheses are presented according to topics covered in the previous section:

First hypothesis: Product strategy has an impact on brand development services in small companies.

Second hypothesis: Pricing strategy has an impact on brand development services in small companies.

Third hypothesis: Distribution strategy has an impact on brand development services in small companies.

Fourth hypothesis: Communications strategy has an impact on brand development services in small companies.

Present study is quantitative and applied in terms of purpose. Since survey method is used in this research, it is considered as a descriptive study. Survey studies are a description of the attitudes and behavior of a sample which represent the whole population and is selected through random sampling. A researcher-made questionnaire is used to measure the research variables.

Cronbach's alpha was calculated for the dimensions of the questionnaire and is presented in Table 2. Alpha coefficient calculated through statistical analysis software is higher than 0.7. So it can be said that the questionnaire has enough validity.

Table 2
Cronbach's alpha of the questionnaire

<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Number of items</i>	<i>Cronbach's alpha</i>
Product Strategy	3	0.801
Pricing Strategy	2	0.745
Distribution Strategy	3	0.806
Communications Strategy	5	0.702
Brand development services	4	0.704

The population of this research consisted of managers, professionals, experts, and employees of small companies. Data was analyzed using SPSS in order to examine the relationships that exist among variables.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

Descriptive statistics of questionnaire is presented in Table 3 as follows.

Table 3
Descriptive statistics of research variables

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Range</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard error</i>	<i>Standard deviation</i>	<i>Variance</i>
Product Strategy	60	2.33	2.67	5.00	3.3111	0.05922	0.45872	0.210
Pricing Strategy	60	3.50	1.50	5.00	3.2750	0.08927	0.69150	0.478
Distribution Strategy	60	2.33	2.33	4.67	3.1667	0.05849	0.45307	0.205
Communications Strategy	60	3.20	1.40	4.60	3.3467	0.08866	0.68679	0.472
Brand development services	60	2.75	1.75	4.50	3.2125	0.06586	0.51012	0.260

Based on data presented in Table 3, it is clear that 60 correct data were collected related to variables. The means of variable scores were between 2.3 and 3.3 with communications strategy having the highest mean. Distribution is high in terms of variation range and is in the range of 4.1 to 5 so that variation range of most research variables is close to 3. Pricing strategy variable has the largest distribution regarding the index of standard deviation.

Testing the normality of data: The results of testing the normality of data are presented in Table 4.

Table 4
Testing the normality of data (Kolmogorov-Smirnov)

	<i>Product Strategy</i>	<i>Pricing Strategy</i>	<i>Distribution Strategy</i>	<i>Communications Strategy</i>	<i>Brand development services</i>
Frequency	262	262	262	262	262
Mean	3.565	3.906	3.853	3.848	3.794
Standard deviation	0.788	0.761	0.710	0.839	0.819
Kolmogorov-Smirnov	0.162	0.186	0.190	0.171	0.149
Significance	0.086	0.065	0.092	0.173	0.108

According to the results of Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, significant amount was larger than the error level (0.05) in all cases. So there is no reason to reject the null hypothesis and data distribution is normal.

4.1. Research Hypotheses Test

To perform a regression analysis, the analyst speculates that there is a kind of relationship between two variables; in fact, he speculates that there is a linear relationship between two variables and then starts to collect quantitative information related to two variables and plots these data as points in a two-dimensional graph. Results for the regression model used for hypotheses are presented in Table 5 as follows.

First hypothesis: Product strategy has an impact on brand development services in small companies.

According to the results presented in Table 5, linear regression coefficients and also the test which proves that coefficients equal zero are performed; impact coefficient of independent variable of product strategy on brand development services variable is calculated to be 0.282 and t-test statistics is also

Table 5
Testing the normality of data (Kolmogorov-Smirnov)

Dependent variable	Independent variable	Nonstandard coefficients		Standard coefficients Beta	T-statistic	Significance level
		B	Standard error			
Brand development services	Constant value	0.255	0.168		1.521	0.134
	Product Strategy	0.277	0.135	0.282	2.050	0.045
	Pricing Strategy	0.203	0.100	0.220	2.029	0.047
	Distribution Strategy	0.290	0.080	0.330	3.614	0.001
	Communications Strategy	0.158	0.065	0.190	2.438	0.018

calculated to be 2.050 which is larger than critical value of t at 5% error level equaling 1.96 indicating the observed coefficient is significant; moreover, obtained significance value equals 0.045 which is smaller than 5% error level verifying the above mentioned finding. Therefore, one can say with 95% confidence that product strategy variable has a positive and significant impact on brand development services and the first hypothesis is approved.

Second hypothesis: Pricing strategy has an impact on brand development services in small companies.

According to the results presented in Table 5, the value of the coefficient of the impact of independent variable of pricing strategy on brand development services variable is calculated to be 0.220 and t-test statistics is also calculated to be 2.029 which is larger than critical value of t at 5% error level equaling 1.96 indicating the observed coefficient is significant; moreover, obtained significance value equals 0.047 which is smaller than 5% error level verifying the above mentioned finding. Therefore, one can say with 95% confidence that pricing strategy variable has a positive and significant impact on brand development services and the second hypothesis is approved.

Third hypothesis: Distribution strategy has an impact on brand development services in small companies.

According to the results presented in Table 5, the value of the coefficient of the impact of the independent variable of distribution strategy on brand development services variable is calculated to be 0.330 and t-test statistics is also calculated to be 3.614 which is larger than critical value of t at 5% error level equaling 1.96 indicating the observed coefficient is significant; moreover, obtained significance value equals 0.001 which is smaller than 5% error level verifying the above mentioned finding. Therefore, one can say with 95% confidence that distribution strategy variable has a positive and significant impact on brand development services and the third hypothesis is approved.

Fourth hypothesis: Communications strategy has an impact on brand development services in small companies.

According to the results presented in Table 5, the value of the coefficient of the impact of the independent variable of communications strategy on brand development services variable is calculated to be 0.190 and t-test statistics is also calculated to be 2.438 which is larger than critical value of t at 5% error level equaling 1.96 indicating the observed coefficient is significant; moreover, obtained significance value equals 0.018 which is smaller than 5% error level verifying the above mentioned finding. Therefore, one can say with 95% confidence that communications strategy variable has a positive and significant impact on brand development services and the fourth hypothesis is approved.

5. CONCLUSION

The brand of products and services is one of the most valuable assets of any organization. Brand value is a collection of intertwined dimensions and characteristics which are added to or deducted from the value provided by the product or services of a company over time. Brand development services in small companies have a distinct and positive effect on consumer response to the product or services. Impact of service brand image in the small companies is the reason for more focus on brand in this field. Nowadays, the development of entrepreneurial activities and an increase in the establishment of small service industries as well as more sophisticated needs of consumers and customers and their higher demands has led to its more importance for organizations. In today's competitive world, focusing on the impacts of product brand on customers' purchase intention can be considered as a tool to achieve competitive advantage among organizations. Integrated elements of marketing are considered as effective aspects influencing product brand. In line with this research, Zarepour (2012) also indicated that consumer attitudes affect brand development. Besides, Mansouri Kermanshahi (2014) also indicated that brand awareness, brand image, brand loyalty and perceived appropriateness affect homogenous development. In this regard, Fooladi (2014) also manifested that perceived quality, brand awareness and recognition, extension appropriateness and consumer attitude toward brand development are also effective. Furthermore, Wang et al. (2012) also investigated factors influencing brand development services and showed that pricing is the most important factor and consumer perceptions of the price and perceived quality are the next important factors in brand development services and must be taken into consideration while planning for brand development services. According to the overall model of this research, "brand development services" is at the heart of the relationships of the model. Brand value and its development have a significant impact on customer purchase intention. In addition, it has an influence on customer attitude. On the other hand, direct brand development affects the willingness to purchase. That is, brand development is influential directly and through trust, satisfaction, and attitude and affects the customer willingness to purchase the products of small companies. This shows that if all small companies emphasize on improving their product brand, they eventually can expect to have more sales. In this regard, one can first emphasize on retailers who sell the product. The choice of a reputable retailer is remarkable in this regard. The products of this brand must be presented in such a way that the customer must have a sense of excitement while using the products of small companies. Product branding must induce a sense of sincerity and using the products of small companies must result in a sense of relief and tranquility. In total, the customer must feel that brands of small companies are a perfect example of a brand. In this cause, brand personality leads to this belief that products with the brand of small companies are worthy to be used.

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