

Identifying the components of brand equity creation in Iran's clothing industry

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Receive:

06 March 2024

Revise:

19 May 2024

Accept:

24 June 2024

Keywords:

Brand,
Brand equity,
Brand awareness,
Positive brand image,
Perceived value

Abstract

The aim of the current research is to identify the components of brand equity creation in Iran's garment industry. The research method is of a fundamental type with an exploratory purpose; and in terms of the implementation method, it is mixed (qualitative-quantitative). The statistical population in the qualitative section is made up of managers who are members of the Supreme Council of Iranian Clothing Brands, 16 of whom were selected based on the snowball method; and in the quantitative section, the statistical population is all customers who refer to Iranian clothing shopping centers, which due to the unlimited nature of the population, with Using Cochran's formula, 387 people were selected as the sample size by simple random sampling. Data collection was carried out by interviews in the qualitative part; and by a researcher-made questionnaire in the quantitative part, and the validity of the questionnaire was confirmed by the professors' confirmation method, and its reliability was confirmed by Cronbach's alpha. Coding, along with grand theory method was used in the qualitative data analysis; and SPSS and AMOS software in the quantitative part. According to the results obtained in this research, the four components of internal brand power, brand awareness, positive image of the brand, and perceived value are the most key components of creating brand value in Iran's clothing industry, and the obtained model has a good fit.

Please cite this article as (APA): Sabzvari, M., Ahmadi Sharif, M., Gharibnavaz Sharbiani, N. and Keshtkar Haranaki, M. (2025). Identifying the components of brand equity creation in Iran's clothing industry. *Journal of value creating in Business Management*, 5(2), 270-293.



<https://doi.org/10.22034/jvcbm.2024.447256.1335>



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Publisher: Research Center of Resource Management Studies and Knowledge-Based Business

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Extended Abstract

Introduction

In today's world, which is the world of consumerism, companies try to attract more audiences through different tricks, but in the end, it is the mind of the customer that determines the power of a brand and turns it from a simple brand to a brand (Rastgar et al., 2016). In other words, brand is a perceptual concept that is rooted in the realities of the product on the one hand, and expresses the perceptions and personal characteristics of the consumer on the other. In fact, the concept of brand is something beyond the product (Keller, 2012). Brands are defined by individuals, not companies. Because the inner feeling and perception of each person is different and in the end each person creates his own version of the brand; as a result, the brand is a completely relative concept that part of which is in the mind of the individual and other part in the mind of society (Moghaddam, 2023).

Customers are the most important and fundamental source of brand value determination. If a company can imitate the production processes and product features, it certainly cannot imitate the positive experiences and memories of customers that have been obtained from years of buying and consuming products. Thus, brand equity helps companies gain competitive advantages, and creating, maintaining, improving, and preserving brand equity is one of the most privileged abilities of a brand manager. Therefore, the higher the value of a brand, the more loyal customers and fans it will have (Mohabbat Talab & Rezvani, 2018). On the other hand, the fashion industry is one of the growing industries that is constantly changing and evolving. Considering that we live in the age of information and communication, people can easily access the latest information in various fields, including fashion (Solomon, 2019). Identifying the components of the brand equity in any industry can, in addition to increasing the credibility and reputation of the brand, help to make the market more competitive, change the mentality of mistrust of goods made in Iran - which clothes are not excluded - and provide a basis for revising the incorrect macro-policies in support of Iranian quality products, so as to a big step be taken to develop and strengthen the national brand in the clothing industry. In this research, we are looking for an answer to the question: how to identify the components of brand equity creation in Iran's clothing industry?

Theoretical Framework

Brand equity

The definition of the international marketing dictionary of brand equity defines the values, assets, funds and perceptions related to a product, service, or idea that are assigned to it and promoted by the creator of that product, service, or idea (Khalilnejad, 2021). After the correct implementation of branding and influence in the mind of the audience, the sum of the activities that lead to influence in the customer's heart and favor and customer's loyalty of the brand is called the brand equity (Hoseinzade & Baktash, 2018).

Amiri & Rezaei (2023) investigated the analysis of consumer buying behavior influenced by awareness of sustainability in the fashion industry (case study: clothing industry). The results showed that the cognitive component including knowledge and awareness, the emotional component including emotions and feelings, and the behavioral component including the purchase decision; as dimensions of attitude towards the concept of sustainability, affect the purchasing behavior of fashion industry consumers in the field of clothing.

Mohammadi et al, (2023) investigated the understanding of the phenomenon of brand courage in the fashion industry. The results showed that the model of brand courage phenomenon in the fashion industry includes five components: "brand-related features", "brand social actions", "advertising-related features", "competitor-related actions" and "customer-related actions."

Research methodology

The research method is of a fundamental type with an exploratory purpose; and in terms of the implementation method, it is mixed (qualitative-quantitative). The statistical population in the qualitative section is made up of managers who are members of the Supreme Council of Iranian Clothing Brands, 16 of whom were selected based on the snowball method; and in the quantitative section, the statistical population is all customers who refer to Iranian clothing shopping centers, which due to the unlimited nature of the population, with Using Cochran's formula, 387 people were selected as the sample size by simple random sampling. Data collection was carried out by interviews in the qualitative part; and by a researcher-made questionnaire in the quantitative part, and the validity of the questionnaire was confirmed by the professors' confirmation method, and its reliability was confirmed by Cronbach's alpha.

Research findings

Coding, along with grand theory method was used in the qualitative data analysis; and SPSS and AMOS software in the quantitative part. According to the results obtained in this research, the four components of internal brand power, brand awareness, positive image of the brand, and perceived value are the most key components of creating brand value in Iran's clothing industry, and the obtained model has a good fit.

Conclusion

The current research was conducted with the aim of identifying the components of brand equity creation in Iran's clothing industry. The results of this research are aligned with the results of Amiri & Rezaei (2023), Mohammadi et al, (2023), Taleghani et al, (2022), Yazdani Kachuei et al, (2022), Rezaeian & Asgari (2021), Azimi et al, (2021), Ghorbani dolatabadi et al, (2021), Khademi et al, (2022), Ishaq & Di Maria (2020), Beig & Nika (2019), and Molse et al, (2019). Ishaq & Di Maria (2020) showed that sustainability in brand equity is effective in reducing consumer cynicism and removing significant flaws in the current conceptualization of brand equity.

According to the results of this research, the following suggestions are presented:

It is suggested that the supporting roles of the government to implement the brand equity model in Iran's garment industry should be further investigated.

It is suggested that the training needs of employees of Iranian clothing brands should be taken into consideration to improve the internal strength of the brand.