

RESEARCH ARTICLE

A STUDY ON BUSINESS SCHOOL BRANDING

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ABSTRACT

The study stemmed from the idea of “Action belief gap” in the sense that often institutions talk of ideals and when comes to action, it ends up in indifference to it. Vision statement one such thing, often it remains as a mere rhetoric in many companies. While Customer Based Brand Equity (CBBE) is an external litmus test of brand power, this research is an internal driver of brand and Brand Vision, Brand Objectives, Brand Essence, Brand Culture and Brand Resource and Implementation as variables studied. The study was a pan India one with Business Schools across the nation with the use of questionnaire to find efforts under way to build the brand around the institution. The study being a first of its kind globally, now the questionnaire serves as template for an institution to introspect on their work on branding.

Keywords: Brand Vision, Objectives, Essence, Culture, Resource, Implementation.

1. BRAND VISION

Brand vision is about considering how a brand could benefit its stake holders over a long-time horizon. Externally the stake holders are customers, nation and internally the employees, suppliers etc., The inductively generated themes uncover internalizing issue of reference to owners and managers relatively to: vision and alignment; creative growth; creative evaluation and rewards (1). From the vision springs an aligning of the entire employee in the organizational towards the company's goal. The concept of using leadership to develop organizational messaging draws on research of human memory capabilities to identify structures for messaging that are both meaningful and memorable (2). Unless there is as strong ‘indoctrination’ of the vision, employees spontaneous use of it in work, fails. . It is a mental model for the organizational to work for. Having likeminded people together reinforces the common mental model amongst a management team and makes it difficult for a new model to be accepted (3) while vision comes from the man at helm, the people down the line are the ones who make it happen. Just to give a perspective, it is worth mentioning MRF tyre advertisement. The advertisement says, “the Tyres we race are the tyres you buy” and the brand is truly associated with race for many decades.

2. BRAND CULTURE

Organization's culture is relatively more important than market orientation in affecting organizational performance (4). After all organization are social systems runs with certain

norms and values evolved over a period. The culture in a society or a community also evolves based on certain belief systems. But in an organization, the founders' vision influences it. When the promoters think “growth as a way of life” as vision it only implies that grow inorganically. Such firm's growth is always more than the industry average growth and it means holding lion's share in which ever market they are in, strong brand image and goodwill. Customers the key stake holder of a brand in the market spontaneously and explicitly judge service encounters based on service employee's effort and abilities, perceived through certain behavioural cues (5). A well settled culture even in a society assumes – consistency. Firms are not exception to it. If there is a strong brand culture, consistency is sustainable. When there is no in consistency it is natural trust emerges deeply too. The culmination is esteemed brand performance. Schein (6). A typical brand-oriented culture inevitably would put customer solutions, relations, emotional bonding, it is only illustrative and not exhaustive.

3. BRAND OBJECTIVES

There is a saying that what cannot be measured, cannot be evaluated. Business planning is undertaken to assist companies grow, while management development concerns planning an individual's growth in a company. Obviously these two kinds of growth are interdependent. As management development becomes more scientific, it must do more than keep up with change; it must lead change. Company organization directly influences a company's environment for management development (7). Companies

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undergoing reengineering found that defining the driving objectives—such as reducing costs, elapsed time, or work hours, or improving quality—mapped the path for successful teamwork. it is objective that influences the organization structure too. Pharmaceuticals are driven by Research and Development (R&D) and so here R&D overwhelms in all actions. Research reveals that both stakeholder influence and environmental sector volatility are important in determining organizational objectives (8).

4. BRAND ESSENCE

What is the brand essence of USA? Economic super power. What is the brand power of Saudi Arabia? World's richest oil nation. What is it for Harvard Business School? Benchmarked in every sense of a B school functioning. When consumers think when the company and the competitors selling a parity product, then the company reputation can be a valuable asset (9). In case of products like Toyota, it is quality, for Volvo it is road safety, for South West., pioneer of low cost carrier.

5. BRAND RESOURCES AND IMPLEMENTATION

But for resources brand suffer in the market . brand needs communication, image and all call for committed resources. The results shows that controlled communication and brand have a significant effect on customer satisfaction, brand attitude and reuse intension (10). . When one think of making corporate choices and allocating resources ,the process calls to mind a vision of a CEO who has been provided with a broad menu of business opportunities from which he can simply choose the most month- watering and supply the money and people required to pursue than (11). As people do not buy products and only buy brand, some spends million on brand first recall, some on brand positioning, some on brand visibility and so on.

6. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To find the overall performance of MBA institutions on internal brand elements.
2. To find the zonal level differences within the country (India) on internal brand elements.
3. To find the performance level difference on internal brand elements between stand alone MBA institutions and the integrated institutions
4. To find the performance level difference on internal brand elements between management

institutions based on the quantum of students intake.

5. The find the performance level difference on internal brand elements between early and late entrants to management education.
6. To find the performance level difference on internal brand elements between business schools in state capitals and other towns.
7. To find out the performance level difference on internal brand elements based on business school ranking.
8. To identify clusters in Business schools based on brand elements.
9. To examine brand elements that can discriminate the groups of business schools.

7. THE RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

1. There is no significant difference between the business schools in metros and in other center in the branding process.
2. There is no significant difference between the business schools in State capital and in other towns in the branding process.
3. There is no significant difference between the business schools in established prior to 1997 and the business schools established after 1997 in the branding process as the year 1997 and later a huge surge in Business schools population surged
4. There is no significant difference between the business schools with lower intake and higher intake of students in the branding process
5. There is no significant difference between the stand alone business schools and the integrated business schools in the branding process
6. There is no significant difference between the business schools in northern, southern, eastern and western regions of India in the branding process
7. There is no significant difference between the business schools that are in the ranking list and the business schools that are not in the ranking list , in the branding process

8. DEPENDANT AND INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

The independent variables are as follows:

1. Brand vision
1. Brand culture

2. Brand objectives
3. Brand essence
4. Brand resource & Implementation

The dependent variables are:

1. *The place of existence- Metro*

This variable is chosen because in a metro, the faculty resources can be better managed and visiting faculty outsourcing is also easy. Outside the metro, it is expensive and difficult to manage. Generally quality students would like to migrate to metro institutions for the benefit of better quality faculties and company interface.

2. *The year of establishment- prior to 1997 and after 1997*

The time line for the institution matters in branding. All educational institutions since not-for-profit organization, they seldom do the way for profit organizations do. Year after year, the concern for brand image raises and so for the branding concern.

3. *The intake of students – 60 or above 60*

Here the assumption is customer stake in the institution. When the intake goes up, there is brand power at work and it is vice versa too. All leading MBA institutions globally send more than 300 students to job market in a year.

4. *The ranking-*

The business school ranking is done as a means to select the best institutions. This is often done by business magazines like Business India (BI), Business today and Business world. Amongst them, BI is the pioneer in India and in their 21.10.2007 edition, the eighth year survey report was published. There are 1200 institutions took part and dimensions for ranking are academic programs, faculty details, students profile, infrastructure, curriculum & pedagogy, placements, intellectual interface, management development programs with a cumulative score of 1000 and 164 institutions got the rating from A++, A+, A, B++, B+, B, C++.

5. *The institution status- Stand alone or integrated one*

The AICTE gives approval for MBA as a standalone institution as well as, as additional course to an engineering college. Stand alone college teaches only MBA subjects.

6. *The State Capital*

The business schools located in the state capitals have similar edge the metro institutions have. Thus there is a difference between the institutions that are located in the state capital and the rest outside of it.

The use of statistics tools :

For testing hypotheses techniques like *t*-test, ANOVA and cluster analysis have been used. ANOVA has been used to find if any differences exist in each of the internal brand components (brand vision, brand culture, brand objectives, brand essence and brand resourcing and implementation) among the four regions (north, south, east and west).

T-test has been used to find if any differences exist in each of the internal brand components between ranked and unranked institutions, B-Schools established prior to 1997 and after 1997, B-Schools in Metros and Non-Metros, B-Schools in State Capitals and those in non State Capitals, B-Schools with 60 students or less and more than 60 students, stand alone B-Schools and integrated B-Schools. Cluster analysis has been used to find out if homogenous groups of respondents existed in the data set. Attempt has also been made to devise a mathematical equation that best describes the two groups on using engagement of corporate branding using discriminant analysis.

The key findings of the study:

On brand vision variable, the component of “employee commitment”, has a good score followed by the component “Leadership support”. On brand culture variable, one third of the institutions do not have brand driven culture. On the brand objectives variables, three fourth of the institutions do not have a catalytic mechanism to realize the brand vision. On brand essence, 52% do not have quality as part of brand element. No brand without quality can do well in the market. The last variable of resource provision for brand health, the score is low on all counts.

An attempt has been made to find whether there exist regional differences in the five dimensions, viz, Vision, Culture, Objective, Essence, and Resourcing, of the current study. It is observed that no regional differences are found in all the parameters except the parameter, A-3 where the northern zone has significantly higher score than the other three regions.

The B schools ranked by Business India, performance when compared to the rest, there are

no significant difference except on the item “The management providing strong leadership for the brand sustenance”. In the area of Brand culture, again ranked ones have edge over items like “Organizational culture supporting the brand vision and brand vision strongly entrenched in overall corporate vision. Over the variable brand objectives, again ranked ones holds sway on the item of brand objective finding a place in the annual plan. Only on brand resourcing and implementation, there are so significant differences between the two.

There is no difference significantly except on leadership support for the sustenance of the brand vision and it goes in favor of above 60 students in take institutions. Higher students intake institutions’ culture supports the brand vision, there is a cogent sub culture and it is brand oriented. Short term documented plan is a sign of organized approach to branding process, higher strength institutions stand at 4.033. Here the difference is significant and in favor of higher in take institutions. Barring customer value chain capturing mechanism where the higher strength institutions holds a sway, rest there are no significant differences.

There is a significant difference on items “Employee awareness of brand vision and commitment” and it goes to B schools outside the state capital. Again similar position for the item “brand vision being apart of overall corporate vision” with in brand culture. As regards the other variables, brand objective, essence and resourcing & implementation there is no significant difference between the two.

There is a significant difference in favor of stand alone for attributes like leadership support for brand vision, ability to inspire employees and making employees being aware of brand vision. Stand alone stand out on attributes like culture supporting brand vision, supportive sub culture in all function and strongly entrenched in overall corporate goals. There is a significant difference on items such as “brand has clear short-term objectives and brand long-term goals are more qualitative in nature and stand alone B schools overall score also at .023. Stand alone B schools brand functional capability and brand image when compared with the integrated ones , difference is significant and overall score is also significant. The brand value chain delivery system as a score goes in favor of stand alone with significant difference and for other items, there is no significant difference between the two groups.

An attempt has been made to find whether there exist regional differences in the five dimensions, viz, Vision, Culture, Objective, Essence, and Resourcing, of the current study. The hypothesis that the mean values are the same in all the four regions for each one of the items listed under each dimension. It is observed that no regional differences are found in all the parameters except the parameter; brand vision awareness by employees where the northern zone has significantly higher score than the other three regions

Scores obtained by the B-school in all the 26 parameters of the five dimensions, viz., Brand Vision, Culture, Objectives, Essence, and Resources and Implementation are used to find out the groups of respondents existed in the data set. It is found that there are two groups of opinions by the B-Schools covered in the present study. The first cluster consisted of 114 B-schools, and the second cluster consisted of 44 B-schools. The first cluster of B-schools has significantly higher scores in all the five aspects compared to that of the second cluster. This has been established using Cluster Analysis.

To devise a mathematical equation that best describes the two groups discriminant function has been used using the five dimensions.

The discriminant function is given by:

$$Z = - 5.536 + 1.907 \times \text{Vision} + 0.572 \times \text{Brand Culture} - 0.374 \times \text{Brand Objective} - 0.340 \times \text{Brand Essence} - 0.306 \times \text{Brand Resource and Implementation}$$

It is found that the correct classification using this function is nearly 70%. If one wishes to find out whether a new B-school is having the perceptions closer to Metro Schools or Non metro schools, the scores on the five aspects are to be obtained. These scores should be substituted in the equation given above. If the Z value obtained for the new B- school is less than or equal to - 0.1355, then it should be assigned to Metro group of B-schools; and if the Z value of this school is greater than - 0.1355, then it should be assigned to Non-metro group.

9. CONCLUSION

It is observed that no regional differences in all the parameters except the parameter, “The employees awareness of brand vision” where the northern zone has significantly higher score than the other three regions. There is clear evidence that among the four geographical zones in India , east performance is good followed by south, north and

east in the end. But the future research can be undertaken with response from the students as they are the important stakeholders for educational institutions. A study can be done on the basis of customer based brand equity for B schools as a brand.

It is believed that metro B schools level of commitment as brand custodian is more intense than the rest but the reverse is true in this study. Similar result is obtained for state capital institutions and the rest. Together we can conclude tier one cities fare poorly, and the centers out side of it show relatively good scores. As AICTE provides a clear frame work for running B schools approved by it to ensure quality, the resource gap can be a research in itself and can be undertaken to find the level of dilution by B schools. Stand alone B schools fare well than the MBA run in engineering colleges and others implying the better focus by the former than the later. A further research on customer satisfaction (students) can be undertaken as a comparative study between the stand alone and the integrated ones.

The instrument (questionnaire) since stood well with the confirmatory factor analysis test very well, a study relating to internal brand building task for any organization can be used. This is considered to be a big contribution in the area of brand research as there is no similar research is done till date.

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