



Original Research

Impact of Brand Reputation on Initial Perceptions of Consumers

Khurshidul Alam^a, Nosrat Jahan^{b,c}, Redoyan Chowdhury^d, Md Tuhin Mia^d, Sadeques Saleheen^e, Md. Nadir Hossain^f, Sharif Ahmed Sazzad^{b*}

^a Cultive8 Technologies Limited, Bangladesh

^b Pathfinder Research and Consultancy Center, Bangladesh

^c Department of Agricultural Economics and Policy, Sylhet Agricultural University, Sylhet, Bangladesh

^d Department of Business Administration, International American University, Los Angeles, CA 90010, USA

^e Genix International, Bangladesh

^f Department of Agriculture, Narsingdi Independent College, Narsingdi, Bangladesh

Corresponding author: sazzad139@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the role that brand reputation plays in influencing consumers' initial perceptions. In today's cutthroat business environment, when consumers are inundated with choices and decisions about what to buy, a favorable first impression can greatly influence both short-term and long-term brand loyalty. This study investigates how a single shopping experience could affect a person's opinion of a mall. In a similar vein, patrons of the Bashundhara mall in Dhaka may perceive the encounter and develop particular impressions as a consequence. Initial impressions shape a customer's perspective on subsequent actions, such as choosing and justifying a purchase, looking for something else, pricing considerations, degree of interest in an item, and degree of brand confidence. The brand can increase brand awareness by utilizing these impression values. Customers knew the tenants better than the mall did, and that was the problem. This study uses a descriptive qualitative technique, aligning the relevance part of the consumer behavior process with the AIDA brand awareness marketing model. As a result, the consumer's drive, perception, attitude formation, and integration could all produce an impression that would subsequently build brand equity and subtly engender sentiments of satisfaction and loyalty in the consumer. The Bashundhara retail mall's attempts to improve brand recognition will be more effective if they make some adjustments to its lighting, situation/ambience, physical evidence, and other supporting facilities. Implementing these adjustments is crucial to keeping clients away from rival businesses.

1. Introduction

Customers generally depend on their first impressions, which are created in two seconds and are based on stored memories, feelings, and images. Most of us are inherently conscious of the importance of first impressions. Even if we detest to admit it, we usually judge a person or a book

by the clothes they are wearing. You just have it in your nature (Maitland, 1987). Shopping is often associated with a consumerist way of life because it usually takes place at malls or other high-end establishments that sell well-known brands and goods. The presence of large department stores that act as attractions, smaller boutiques and restaurants, and building typologies such as stores fronting the mall's main corridors or pedestrian walkways that act as the mall's hub and a place where patrons and merchants interact are some of the main draws for the general public to shop at (Aaker, 1996).

Similar to people, small businesses are often evaluated by the public based only on their outward appearance. Things that, without further research, are readily clear. This does not mean that we have to appear to be someone we are not, or dress to impress (Kapferer, 2002). For customers to "size us up" right away (which they will do regardless), and for our first impression to be positive, we need to make sure our image truly reflects who we are (Keller and Gerhard, 1998). A first impression that will, first and foremost, make them remember us when they need or want what we have to give, and, more importantly, will persuade them to return once they have experienced what we have to offer (Chi et al., 2009). This is where branding comes in! Our company's brand image needs to accurately and positively reflect our company's identity (Hoeffler and Keller, 2002). It is useless to present our business as one that cares if the products or services we offer, together with the way we deliver them, let our customers down (Davis et al., 2008). If we spend a lot of money on advertising in the hopes of attracting new customers, we will be wasting both time and money if they simply visit the first page of our website or physical store (Keller, 1993). Despite its great importance, branding has few consequences (Mithun et al., 2021). If you're a flash in the pan looking to make some fast cash before you leave town, you might be able to make it work for your firm in the short term (Herbig and Milewicz, 1993; Sunny et al., 2021a). But, you have to be true to your brand if you want to stay in the business for a long time, or it will come back to bite you! Excellent branding campaigns can't make up for poor quality products and services! Furthermore, we could offer the best product and service that humanity has ever seen or heard of (Janiszewski and Van Osselaer, 2000; Sunny et al., 2021b). However, if we are unable to communicate this message to potential customers, we will just be another small business with an excellent service or product that fails due to a lack of clients (Mithun et al., 2020). If others don't know about you or don't want to know because they don't completely understand the benefits of what you have to give, it is your obligation to change things (Turley and Moore, 1995). You might require help, albeit maybe not specifically regarding your profession. Excellent branding campaigns can't make up for poor quality products and services! Furthermore, we may offer the best service and product that humanity has ever seen or even God (Macdonald and Sharp, 2000).

However, if we are unable to communicate this message to potential customers, we will just be another little business with an excellent service or product that fails due to a lack of clients (Mithun et al., 2024). If others don't know about you or don't want to know because they don't completely understand the benefits of what you have to give, it is your obligation to change things. You might require help, albeit maybe not specifically regarding your profession. Your reputation will matter

because of the truth about who you are, what you do, and how you do it. You don't need to be a big business to succeed in your local market. But building your brand requires work, and it takes time (Percy and Rossiter, 1992).

Of course, bad performance, subpar customer service, and overpromising and underdelivering on commitments will also reflect badly on your business (Hoyer and Brown, 1990). A bad reputation in the market can likewise be strengthened by strong branding (Dodds et al., 1991). It's challenging to surpass a strong reputation. Repairing reputational harm is a challenging task. Two advantages of branding include business development and brand reinforcement in the marketplace (Grewal, 1998). Your website is an essential part of your online identity (Keller, 2003). That's the only virtual property you own! Making sure your online area is easy to read and manage, promotes branding, and has a visually pleasing layout is far more important than most people realise (Schuiling and Kapferer, 2004). It's usually the first place that potential customers go online to learn more about you (Lewis, 1988). as well as present customers! If your business isn't effective online, you could miss out on business opportunities, even if it succeeds in many other domains. Even your present customers may unwittingly be harming your company's reputation if you do not regard your website as an essential part of your online brand. This might happen if you do not maintain the highest standards for your website. Social media is a vital and affordable method that small businesses may use to build their online identity. But pay attention to this aspect of your website and don't overlook it! Make sure that every aspect of your branding is consistent, accurately describes who you are, and clearly identifies you as such for maximum impact (Duncan, 2005). One essential element of branding is consistency. Naturally, branding is more than just appearances. It's not just about how your brand looks; it's also about your identity, activities, and methods.

2. Research Methodology

This study uses a qualitative technique with a descriptive approach to the shopping experience and impression of visitors in order to increase knowledge and comprehension of the Bashundhara shopping mall's brand. The initial phase of the study was the collection of data and direct observations regarding the Bashundhara shopping center and its customers. This investigation's data sources were the results of in-depth interviews conducted with several visitors and representatives of brand observers, as well as the researchers' own observations. This inquiry used data analysis based on qualitative data, according to Bogdan and Biklen. First, data must be organized. Next, it must be sorted, searched for, synthesized, and patterns must be found. Subsequently, noteworthy characteristics that require further examination are highlighted, and the procedure culminates in elucidating what might be shared with others via study reports.

3. Results and Discussion

It is common knowledge that a name, symbol, and design or any combination of these are intrinsically tied to a brand. All the elements including goods, places, people, companies, countries, associations, and so on are surely utilized to denote something good. Each brand ought

to stand out from the rest and have a distinct identity (Alam et al., 2023a). Of course, brands exist because they are deliberately created with language, images, and goals in mind to appeal to target audiences. The process of establishing a brand presence is called labelling. Speaking about share of mind and heart is equally as crucial to branding as talking about share of market. This is also expected as a result of the purposeful efforts made by the Bashundhara shopping mall to increase brand recognition, which they have built through the opinions of visitors at each step of the purchasing process. This element is intrinsically connected to the bittersweet sensation of buying (Islam et al., 2023). Since its establishment, opinions on the Bashundhara shopping Centre have surely been both favorable and unfavorable. Based on observations and conducted interviews, a number of aspects of the shopping experience and the formation of perceptions can be investigated. Among these are the following:

3.1. Complete

The mall is able to accommodate a diverse range of customers because it has a variety of tenants from the products that the Bashundhara shopping mall offers, such as department stores that specialise in fashion, eateries that serve food and/or drink, retail supermarkets, and entertainment options like ice skating, cinema, and children's games.

3.2. Innovative and Up-to-Date

In order to keep its loyal customers happy and satisfied with product tenants who could meet their needs, the establishment had to come up with creative ideas due to the challenges posed by the emergence of multiple national-scale malls in the Arengka area, which is also home to the Bashundhara shopping mall. By modifying each visitor segment starting from low-mid-high, the Bashundhara shopping mall creates the impression of being a mall that can cover all of the needs of visitors with all variant products, making Bashundhara shopping mall a one-stop shopping Centre. This is a result of the mall management consistently adding new merchandise that has enough room. In addition, a wide range of locations, including Rajshahi, Sylhet, Chattogram, and other of the bordering districts of Dhaka, are home to regular visitors of the Bashundhara shopping mall.

3.3. Strategic

Geographically, the Bashundhara retail mall is located in the heart of Dhaka, on Farmgate Road. Nestled next other national franchise malls such as Transmart and Living World is the Bashundhara shopping centre. One of the choices is the Bashundhara retail mall because of its advantageous position and the fact that residents of Dhaka city can easily visit it.

3.4. Past Habits and Experiences

The city of Dhaka unwittingly gave rise to the lengthy history of the retail mall industry. The Bashundhara shopping centre has been a fixture in the Dhaka community for almost two decades. Dhaka society's choice to instill the Bashundhara mall in the hearts and thoughts of its members is based on their habitual buying behaviors and sporadically formed shopping routines.

3.5. Facility Availability

There are several aspects and greater value in Bashundhara Shopping Mall as compared to several similar malls that are its rivals in Dhaka. The large parking area at Bashundhara Shopping Mall, which can hold two-wheeled vehicles, is its primary selling factor. It also provides a range of auxiliary services, like a parking lot and a mall center. In addition, the Bashundhara shopping mall and the Bashundhara Convention & Exhibition Centre, both owned by the Bashundhara Group, are connected. The product differentiator is the private ice skating rink at the Bashundhara mall in Dhaka. Furthermore, product classification that is always changing, creative, and exhibits originality is becoming increasingly appreciated in order to compete in the market.

3.6. Promotion Strategy

A key component of the mall's offline and online marketing strategy is the well-known names of its selected partners and tenants at Bashundhara Shopping Mall. The brand of the Bashundhara shopping mall will keep expanding because of its marketing communication techniques, which include buy one get one free and get cash back points for using fintech with the assistance of Dhaka's influencers and information providers (Kuddus et al., 2021). Additionally, Dhaka people are developing a new shopping culture that includes the midnight sale strategy, which attracts customers to the Bashundhara mall.

3.7. Combination with the AIDA brand awareness models

The AIDA brand awareness models and consumer behavior factors framework can be combined with some of the analyzed points regarding shopping experiences and the construction of impressions of the Bashundhara shopping mall, based on observations and interviews, to take into consideration elements that impact the significance of the purchasing decision-making process, specifically:

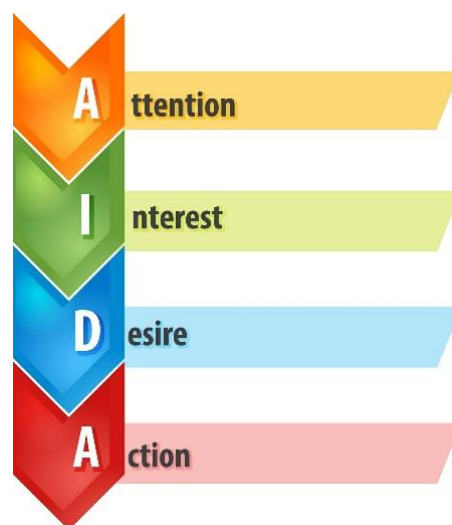


Figure 1: AIDA brand awareness models

3.7.1 Attention

Even non-customers are starting to express interest in the Bashundhara shopping center at this point. In addition to its prime position, Bashundhara retail center provides a wide selection of goods. Through this potential, consumers become more knowledgeable about and conscious of a particular category from both brands and products—in this example, advertising that is consistently produced by existing tenants (Alam et al., 2023a). This raises the incentive value for customers visiting Bashundhara malls, igniting their requirements and wants to achieve the purchase goal and gradually cementing the Bashundhara mall brand in each customer's consciousness.

3.7.2 Interest

Customers now begin to express interest in the brand's auxiliary features, which in this case include fresh products, experiences that are one-of-a-kind, new tenants who are returning, and other qualities that will always benefit the business and demonstrate to consumers how the brand can enhance their quality of life. This characteristic causes perception, which is the result of how the visitor interprets the given stimuli (Alam et al., 2023b). Every event that is received is the starting point for perception, which is based on both positive and bad experiences and understanding of these stimuli.

3.7.2. Desire

The potential customer has come to the conclusion that, for a variety of reasons related to the generated personal experience, they enjoy a product or tenant at the Bashundhara retail center. The visitor enters the preference stage at this point. By looking at these elements, it is possible to come to the conclusion that attitude formation is important in assessing each individual customer of the Bashundhara shopping center and determining the advantages and disadvantages of a particular brand of product that should be purchased or recommended to other potential customers (Hossain et al., 2023).

3.7.3 Action

When a prospective customer acts as a consumer and decides to make a purchase and then follows through by purchasing items, that is when this element of action becomes valuable. The activities made during the purchase and the decided attitude can always be incorporated (integrated) into the worth of one entity (Chakma et al., 2022; Kuddus et al., 2022). This value element is introduced into the value of a single visitor and no longer compares the advantages of the products offered by each shopping mall because it has an excess value and a deficiency value for each shopping center. When consumer demands and desires are evident, the top value of mind (the aspects of trust and awareness) in brand management is at its peak. Customers' shopping experiences give them a sense of loyalty and trust, which shapes their perspective. If someone feels content and at ease, they are

more inclined to make another purchase (Sunny et al., 2017; Kuddus et al., 2020). Conversely, unfavorable, uncomfortable, and unsatisfied feelings will make someone decide against buying the product and might even cause them to suggest or mislead potential buyers. Word-of-mouth marketing can surely undermine customer loyalty and satisfaction over time.

4. Conclusion

Recollections of former experiences can influence the perception of the Bashundhara shopping center, as it was the biggest and first mall in Dhaka at the time. The great degree of creativity and modernity of the products that Bashundhara Shopping Mall offers its customers makes it a popular choice for both in-store and window shopping. It is a good thing that Dhaka residents can still choose to shop at the Bashundhara Shopping Mall. The Bashundhara shopping center also often introduces new ideas and advances. Even though a number of competitors have moved into the area surrounding the Bashundhara shopping mall, the residents of Dhaka will never forget their shopping experience at the mall, making it their first option. However, if Bashundhara shopping center does not make changes to stay up with modern advancements in terms of physical (display or tangible proof), situation/ambience, lighting, and other supporting amenities, loyal clients will eventually shift to other competitors. They will go to malls where customers can feel at ease spending a significant amount of time, whether they are just window shopping, relaxing, or meeting with business partners. As the research and discussion above indicate, a customer's buying experience can shape their perception of a brand, either positively or negatively. Consumers who have followed the growth of Bashundhara Shopping Mall up to this point are the informants whose shopping experiences contribute to the brand equity elements. These factors have to do with how happy customers are because there are a variety of tenants, which encourages creativity and freshness in the shopping environment. This is the one that progressively molds and elevates the consciousness of shoppers at the Bashundhara shopping center, making them more committed to both the center and the original Dhaka local brand.

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Author Contribution

Each author took involved in the creation of the study design, data analysis, fieldwork, and execution stages. Every writer gave their consent after seeing the final work.

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A statement of conflicting interests

The authors declare that none of the work reported in this study could have been impacted by any known competing financial interests or personal relationships.

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