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Measuring the Mental Image of the Country of Origin of the Brand Through the Middle Factor of Brand Value Differentiation and Loyalty

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Abstract:

The brand is one of the most valuable assets of the brand value and is one of the most important and inimitable assets of any company. One of the effective factors in the brand value is the image of the brand's country of origin. The purpose of the research is to examine the measurement of brand differentiation and loyalty on brand equity in the automotive industry. The dimensions of brand value in this research are (brand differentiation, loyalty) In the current research, the statistical population of all people who are exposed to the choice and use of cars in Rasht city and the sample size of this research is also due to the unlimited population, Cochran's formula was used, and 282 samples were analyzed and statistically analyzed. The results of the analysis showed that: the mental image of the country of origin of the brand does not have a positive effect on the special value of the brand due to the middle factor of brand differentiation. Also, the mental image of the country of origin of the brand does not have a positive effect on the special value of the brand due to the intermediate factor of brand loyalty.

Keywords:

The Mental Image of the Country of Origin of the Brand, The Middle Factor of Differentiation, The Middle Factor of Loyalty

1. Introduction

Today, the competition between different companies in the market has increased significantly. For every company, the brand is of particular importance. The brand is

considered as the most valuable asset of any company. Brands are the children of industry and production. The artisans and producers first make the goods in the factory and then name this new child. They are embedded in people's minds. Brand in its original and old meaning is burning a mark on wood, leather, etc. It is said that at that time it was a way to prove ownership and authenticity. The expansion of markets in the world has changed its shape and become a concept that has credibility and power. This power is the ability to influence the buyer's behavior. In recent years, the business environment in the world has witnessed many changes and transformations, among these changes can be changed. The attitude of companies pointed from tangible assets to intangible assets, therefore the valuation process of intangible assets is very important for companies. Due to the importance and prioritization of domestic production for the sake of patriotism, supporting national production in order to pay attention to the young and creative workforce in the production of Iranian automobiles, preventing the indiscriminate entry of foreign automobiles into the country, as well as preventing foreign exchange from leaving the country, due to the fact that Iranian automobiles create a favorable image in the Middle East. able to create value for the country from the political and economic point of view, the measurement of the mental image of the country of origin of the brand was investigated through the middle factor of differentiation of brand value and loyalty.

2. The Important and Necessity of Research

The importance and necessity of conducting research is related to the importance of brand trademarks in the marketing strategies of companies and its role in attracting, maintaining and supporting customers. Trademarks play an important strategic role in gaining competitive advantage and strategic management decisions of companies. It is effective for the domestic company in order to gain a larger share of the market. Unfortunately, despite more than 30 years of continuous work on the enrichment of brand knowledge in Europe and America, this concept has not received much attention in Iran. Adolescents and young adults will not be isolated from domestic products. Also, brands are at the heart of marketing and business strategy, and brand value or strong brands are one of the key factors for the success of a business. One of the most famous and important marketing concepts that is widely discussed by marketing researchers and experts today is the special value of the brand in decisions and creating a competitive advantage for organizations and their customers.

3. Definitions of Research Terms and Variables

3.1. Brand

It is a name, word, symbol, or design or a combination of them, whose purpose is to introduce the products or services of a seller or a group of sellers to customers and also distinguish their products from other competitors.

3.2. The mental image of the country of origin of the brand

The mental image of the country of origin is an important external cue associated with branded products, especially when consumers have little familiarity with foreign products.

3.3. Brand equity

Brand equity is a set of assets and liabilities associated with a brand, name, and sign that add or detract from the value provided by a product or service to a company or its customers.

3.4. Brand loyalty

Loyalty to a brand is a relatively fanatical buying behavior reaction that a person finds towards the brand over time, and this behavior causes him to find a special tendency towards that brand in the process of decision-making and evaluation of the set of names he has in mind. This reaction is a function of the psychological and mental processes of the person. Products that are equal in all aspects, consumers often choose brands that they know, respect and endorse.

3.5. Brand differentiation

Brand differentiation means the unique identity of a brand in relation to other competitors and is a simple tool to increase brand recognition.

4. Research Background

Taghipour et al.[1] studied “Risk analysis in the management of urban construction projects from the perspective of the employer and the contractor.”

Mahboobi et al.[2] discussed “Assessing ergonomic risk factors using combined data envelopment analysis and conventional methods for an auto parts manufacturer”, occupational injuries are currently a major contributor to job loss around the world.

Taghipour et al.[3] studied “The impact of ICT on knowledge sharing obstacles in knowledge management process (including case-study).”

Karimi et al.[4] studied “The impact of environmental transformational leadership on organizational citizenship behavior (case study: Municipality of 22nd district of Tehran) ”.

Mirzaie et al.[5] studied “The relationship between social bearing capacities with conflict as a result, in the perception of the visiting historical sites.”

Alamdard khoolaki et al.[6] studied “Effect of integrated marketing communication on brand value with the role of agency's reputation (including case study).”

Taghipour et al.[7] studied “A survey of BPL technology and feasibility of its application in Iran (Gilan Province).”

Mohammad et al.[8] studied “Assessing the effect of the FRP system on compressive and shear bending strength of concrete elements.”

Jalili et al.[9] studied “Comparative study of Khaje Rashid al-Din views on Rab-e Rashidi Islamic Utopia and Kevin Lynch ideas.”

Taghipour et al.[10] studied “Insurance performance evaluation using BSC-AHP combined technique.”

Rezvani et al.[11] discussed “The design of high-rise building with ecological approach in Iran (Alborz Province).”

Taghipour et al.[12] studied “The identification and prioritization of effective indices on optimal implementation of customer relationship management using TOPSIS, AHP methods.”

Taghipour and Yazdi[13] studied “Seismic analysis (non-linear static analysis (pushover) and nonlinear dynamic) on Cable-Stayed Bridge.”

Taghipour et al.[14] studied “Investigating the relationship between competitive strategies and corporates performance (case study: Parsian Banks of Tehran).”

Taghipour and Moosavi[15] studied “A look at gas turbine vibration condition monitoring in region 3 of gas transmission operation.”

Rahmani et al.[16] studied “Providing health, safety and environmental management (HSE) program in metal mining industry (including case study).”

Taghipour and Vaezi[17] studied “Safe power outlet.”

Tarverdizadehet et al.[18] studied “Predicting students’ academic achievement based on emotional intelligence, personality and demographic characteristics, attitudes toward education and career prospects through the mediation of academic resilience.”

Azarian and Taghipour[19] studied “The impact of implementing inclusive quality management on organizational trust (case study: educatin).”

Ghadamzan Jalali et al.[20] studied “Explain the relationship between intellectual capital, organizational learning and employee performance of Parsian Bank Branches in Gilan province.”

Mohammadi et al.[21] studied “Investigating the role and impact of using ICT tools on evaluating the performance of service organizations.”

Abdi Hevelayi et al.[22] studied “Predicting entrepreneurial marketing through strategic planning (including case study).”

Arsalani et al.[23] studied “Investigating the effect of social media marketing activities on brand awareness.”

Khorasani and Taghipour[24] studied “The location of industrial complex using combined model of fuzzy multiple criteria decision making (including case study).”

Taghipour et al.[25] studied “Risk assessment and analysis of the state DAM construction projects using FMEA technique.”

Hoseinpour et al.[26] studied “The problem solving of bi-objective hybrid production with the possibility of production outsourcing through Imperialist Algorithm, NSGA-II, GAPSO Hybid Algorithms.”

Taghipour and Ahmadi Sarchoghaei[27] studied “Evalation of tourist attractions in Bourujerd County with emphasis on development of new markets by using Topsis Model.”

Hashemi et al.[28] studied “The effect of personal factors on increasing the productivity of low-level employees in the General Welfare Department of Tehran Municipality.”

Safdarpour et al.[29] studied “The effect of government support on innovation ability (including a case study).”

Ganjali et al.[30] studied “Strategic analysis of household hazardous waste reduction.”

Taghipour et al.[31] studied “The impact of managerial factors on increasing the productivity of low-level employees (including case study).”

Ganjali et al.[32] studied “Investigating the relationship between environmental awareness and the level of education and occupation of people.”

Baghipour saramiet et al.[33] studied “Modeling of nurses’ shift work schedules according to ergonomics: a case study in Imam Sajjad(As) Hospital of Ramsar.”

Moradi Lalekaei et al.[34] studied “Measurement of the country of origin of the brand of branding and brand loyalty.”

Taghipour et al.[35] studied “Investigating the effect of intelligent ordnance on the level of learning/teaching (including case study).”

Taghipour et al.[36] studied “The study of the effect of smart schools on the level of learning-teaching in high school.”

Taghipour et al.[37] studied “The impact of motives from obtaining ISO 9001 certification on organization performance (including case study).”

Yaghoubi et al.[38] studied “Students learn and learn using the effects of smart schools.”

Taghipour et al.[39] studied “The impact of working capital management on the performance of firms listed in Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE).”

Habibi Machiyani et al.[40] studied “Designing a smart model for managing Iranian chain stores based on business intelligence (case study of proma chain store).”

Ghaed Amini Harouni et al.[41] studied “Effectiveness of Self-control and Aggression Reduction Skill Training of Male Juvenile Delinquents Correction and Rehabilitation Center (Including Case-Study) ”.

Nezamivand et al.[42] studied “Compare Effectiveness of Teaching Rational Emotive Therapy on Flexability and Mental Health Women with Sexual High risk and Substance Abuse Behaviours(Including Case-Study) ”.

Taghipour et al.[43] studied “iuithe effect of personal factors on increasing the productivity of low-level employees in the general welfare department of tehran municipality”.

Abolghasemi et al.[56] studied “operational and credit risk model on planning management and efficiency of banks admitted to the stock exchange”.

Molavi and Taghipour.[57] studied ”A survey on electrical cars advantages”.

Mousavi and Taghipour.[58] studied “Turbine vibration condition monitoring in region 3”.

Medhat M, Taghipour.[59] studied “Investigating the role of social capital in recreating the historical-cultural context of shiraz”.

Taghipour.[60] studied “A review of the sustainability indicators’ application in vehicle routing problem”.

Sharifzadeh and Taghipour.[61] studied “Evaluating the efficiency of dam construction management and ways to improve it”.

Shakeri Tabariyan and Taghipour .[62] studied “Identifying and prioritizing supply chain risks using the ANP and Dematel Model Process (including case study) ”.

Azizzadeh Kalngestani and Taghipour. [63] studied “Identifying Investigating he effect of smart schools on students’ learning and teaching”.

Moradi Lalekaei and Azizzadeh Kalngestani [64] studied “Measuring brand differentiation and loyalty on brand equit”.

5. Hypothesis

The present research is aimed at Measuring the mental image of the country of origin of the brand through the middle factor of brand value differentiation and loyalty was done. This research was conducted to investigate the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: The mental image of the country of origin of the brand has a positive effect on the special value of the brand due to the middle factor of brand differentiation.

Hypothesis 2: The mental image of the country of origin of the brand has a positive effect on the special value of the brand through the intermediary factor of brand loyalty.

6. Society and Research Samplex

The statistical population includes the people of Rasht city, and due to the unlimited population, Cochran's formula with an error level of 6% was used, and finally 282 questionnaires were examined.

7. Research Method

This research is in terms of practical purpose and in terms of descriptive-inferential research method, in order to collect data, first from library studies and then distributed questionnaires, and due to the use of the present research questionnaire, it is a survey, and the analysis and analysis of data was done using SPS 16 and Lieserl statistical software, which at the descriptive level of statistics such as mean, standard deviation and kurtosis, but at an inferential level, Pearson's correlation coefficient tests have been used, and to determine the extent and strength of the influence of independent variables, structural equation modeling has been used based on Laserl software. And using Laserl software to analyze the data It was discussed through structural equations.

7.1. Data collection method

In the current research, a survey questionnaire was used to collect field data. This questionnaire has a Likert scale, which includes two parts of general and specific questions. The first part of the four general questions is related to the individual's profile, which includes gender, age, employment status, and education level. Then a question that includes choosing a car brand and finally specialized questions that are asked to measure the research variables. The contribution of each component and its questions are listed below in Table 1.

Table 1. The contribution of each component and its questions are as follows.

Row	Variable	Number of questionnaire questions	Number of questions
1	Image of the country of origin of the brand	1 to 5	5
2	Brand loyalty	6 to 8	4

3	Brand distinction	9 to 12	4
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Table 2 shows the reliability coefficients for each of the subscales of the research questionnaires.

Table 2. Reliability coefficients for each of the subscales of the research questionnaires.

Dimensions	Reliability coefficient
The mental image of the country of origin	74/0
Loyalty	79/0
distinction	71/0

Table 3 shows that 8.41 % of the sample group is men and 2.58 % of them are women.

Table 3. Frequency distribution and sexual percentage by gender.

Statistics gender	Frequency	Percent
Man	118	41/8
Female	164	58/2
Total	282	100

Table 4. Frequency distribution and the percentage of statistical sample by age.

Age statistics	Frequency	Percent
25–15	122	43/3
35–26	26	9/2
45–36	89	31/6
55–46	34	12/1
56 to the top	11	3/9
Total	282	100

Table 4 shows that 3.42% of the sample was between 15 and 25 years, 2.9% between 26 and 35 years, 6.33% between 36 and 45 years, 1.2% between 46 and 55 years old and 9.3% over 56 years old.

Table 5. Statistical sample distribution in terms of study.

Degree statistics	Frequency	Percent
Diploma	50	17/7
Associate degree	38	13/5
Bachelor	108	38/3
Masters	83	29/4
P.H.D	3	1/1
Total	282	100

Table 5 shows that 7.17% of the statistical sample had a diploma, 5.13% with associate degrees, 3.38% had a bachelor's degree, 4.29% had a master's degree and 1.1% had a doctorate.

Table 6. Statistical sample distribution in terms of employment status.

Employment status statistics	Frequency	Percent
Housewife	29	10/3
Employee	59	20/9
Retired	61	21/6
Free	70	24/8
Student	63	22/3
Total	282	100

Table 6 shows that 3.10% of the statistical sample were housewives, 20.9% were employees, 21.6% were retired, 24.8% were self-employed, and 22.3% were students.

Table 7. Distribution of statistical sample according to brand type.

Brand type statistics		Frequency	Percent	Percent
Iran Khodro	Iranian	38	13/5	
Saipa		46	16/3	49/3
Mazda		55	19/5	
Benz	Foreign	51	18/1	
Toyota		47	16/7	50/7
Peugeot France		45	16/0	
Total		282	100	100

Table 7 shows that 5.13 percent of the statistical sample of Iran Khodro brand were Saipa, 3.16 percent, Mazda 5.19 percent, Benz 1.18 percent, Toyota 7.16 percent, and Peugeot 16 percent.

Table 8 shows the descriptive indices of the research variables.

Table 8. Descriptive indices of research variables.

Variable	Average	The standard deviation	crookedness	Elongation
Image of the country of origin	4/29	0/44	0/38	0/28
Brand equity	3/57	0/70	0/30	0/57

Table 9. Correlation matrix of research variables.

Row	Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	Image of the country of origin	1					
2	Brand equity	**0/31	**0/53	**0/51	**0/56	1	

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$

According to table number 8, the relationship of all variables is positive and significant at the 0.01 level. Before examining the research hypothesis, the table of values and its significance is presented in Table 9.

Table 10 shows the values of T and the significance of each.

Table 10. *T values and significance of each.*

The significance level	Not meaningful	0/05	0/01	0/001
<i>T</i>	Smaller 1/96	From 1/96 to 2/58	From 2/58 to 3/29	From 3/29 onwards

8. Research Hypothes Analysis

Hypothesis 1: The mental image of the country of origin of the brand has a positive effect on the special value of the brand due to the middle factor of brand differentiation.

Table 11. *The effect of the mental image of the country of origin with the mediating role of brand differentiation on brand equity.*

Brand equity					
Mediator	Impact factor	<i>T</i>	The significance level	Test result	
The mental image of the country of origin	They are different	06/0	14/1	63/0	Reject

The results of Table 11 show that the indirect effect of the image of the country of origin on brand equity with the mediating role of brand differentiation (0.06) is not significant according to the T-statistic of 1.14.

Hypothesis 2: The mental image of the country of origin of the brand has a positive effect on the special value of the brand through the intermediary factor of brand loyalty.

Table 12. *The effect of the mental image of the country of origin with the mediating role of brand loyalty and special brand value.*

Brand equity					
Mediator	Impact factor	<i>T</i>	The significance level	Test result	
The mental image of the country of origin	Brand loyalty	02/0	45/0	89/0	Reject

The results of Table 12 show that the indirect effect of the image of the country of origin on brand value with the mediating role of brand loyalty (0.02) is not significant according to the T-statistic of 0.45.

Table 13 shows the results of research hypotheses.

Table 13. *The results of research hypotheses.*

hypothesis	Path coefficient	Test result	
The mental image of the country of origin of the brand has a positive effect on the special value of the brand due to the middle factor of brand differentiation	06/0	14/1	Not confirmed
The mental image of the country of origin of the brand has a positive	02/0	45/0	Not confirmed

effect on the special value of the brand through the intermediary factor of brand loyalty			
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9. Conclusions

The image that consumers have of a country is one of the factors that they consider in their purchasing decisions. The findings remind us of the following point: The effect of the image of the brand's country of origin on the brand's equity has not been accepted due to the intermediate factors of the dimensions of brand equity (distinction, loyalty) and Hypothesis 1 of the research: the indirect effect of the image of the country of origin on the special value of the brand with the mediating role of brand differentiation is less than 1.96 according to the T-statistic of 1.14. Therefore, the hypothesis is not significant and is rejected and Hypothesis 2 of the research: the indirect effect of the image of the country of origin on the special value of the brand with the mediating role of brand loyalty is less than 1.96 according to the T-statistic of 0.45, so the hypothesis is not significant.

10. Research Proposals

(1) The current research model should be tested for the scope of the research in societies with different cultures.

(2) Test the model of this research on other brands and other industries and compare the results obtained with the results of this research.

(3) If you want to research about the brand, use other models.

(4) Distribute the questionnaire of the current research model to another group that includes experts in the automobile industry.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

Author Contributions

Conceptualization, MM and MT; methodology, MM; software, MT; validation, MM, MT and MM; formal analysis, MT; investigation, MT; resources, MT; data curation, MT; writing – original draft preparation, MT; writing – review and editing, MM; visualization, MM; supervision, MT; project administration, MM; funding acquisition, MM. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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