

Strategies to Change Brand Association Towards Prada

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Abstract. Prada is a famous Italian luxury brand, which had made itself hit by black nylon bags, and “killer” bags in the past years. In recent years, Prada’s performance declined gradually. The covid-19 led the Chinese to buy luxury products in China instead of in foreign countries. Meanwhile, in the luxury fashion industry, the proportion of younger customers is increasing. The purpose of this study was to explore how to change customers’ brand association with Prada. This paper further develops past research on the brand association by adding brand position as an independent variable. Some data analyses were performed using SPSS 23. This research concluded that brand position, brand awareness, and brand experience affect brand association. In addition, brand experience affects brand association the most. Thus, it is useful for Prada to change customers’ brand association by changing its brand position through some marketing devices which can also improve brand awareness and enhance the brand experience. This research also refers to some specific advice for Prada in the end.

Keywords: Brand position; Brand awareness; Brand experience; Brand association.

1. Introduction

Prada is one of the leading luxury fashion brands in Italy. Moore in 2010 said the brand focused on the five themes: fashion brand in retail outlets, globalizing the brand, adhering to the technology, strong supply chain network, and remaining trendy [1]. Sabanoglu in 2021 found that Prada used geographical segmentation in Asia and decided to serve the Asia Pacific market with its twenty-five outlets. The Company has used various features like the value of homes, cities, regions, population density, and governmental obligations [2]. Recently, Zhu’s 2017 research conducted on Fashion Synthesis with structural coherence showed that Prada is working on niche segments and designing outfits that exhibit the wearer’s personality [3]. Meanwhile, Kelly in 2016 said Prada focuses on youngsters to cater to sales as the Company’s profit declined to twenty-five percent due to falling demands in China and Italy. It was the lowest revenue of their five years as revenue decreased to fifteen percent [4].

1.1 Research Background

Nowadays, the consumer class of Asian countries is increasing. Buchholz in 2021 said it will become part of the top thirty biggest markets by 2030. Nearly fifty-five percent of the global consumer class belongs to Asian countries, and the buying power of the young class is increasing over time [5]. According to United Nations Youth, 2010, there are seven hundred fifty million youngsters’ range fifteen to twenty-four living in that region. India is top of the list with two hundred thirty-four million young, China has two hundred twenty-five million youth, and Japan with twelve million young population. Similarly, Bangladesh and the Philippines contribute twenty percent of the total youth population [6].

Prada has the opportunity to change its brand’s association strategies to target more customers and Companies are looking forward to gaining their market share in the developing markets of Asia. They focus on their products and services, advertisements, customer experiences, brand assets, and

identities. These factors help customers associate with the brand, and a positive association leads the customers to prefer this brand over others. Perera et al. in 2013 found that brand association has a significant impact on consumer purchase decisions as it creates the brand image in the mind of customers and increases the recommendation of purchasing premium products during the buyer purchasing decision process. It is found while studying the impact of brand awareness and brand association on making purchasing decisions of makeup products among women [7]. The untapped market of youngsters must have properly engaged with the Prada Brand as it increases the growth of the Company, its revenue, and market share. All these factors will lead the Company to become one of the top luxury brands in the world. Gentina's 2016 study on teenagers towards luxury brands shows that they focused on fashion innovativeness and were more influenced by peer groups [8]. Prada must focus on these attributes to increase its customer footprint and brand loyalty. The brand needs to use the strategies to introduce products and properly segment the target market based on demographic and psychographics to enhance the influence and association of the brand among youngsters.

1.2 Research Question

The recently declined revenue of Prada resulting from decreasing demand from China and Italy created a challenge for the Company to resolve the serious issue. In addition, the encouraging response via online sales attracts the Company's leadership to change their brand image and brand association to cater to the large chunk of the market that was unexplored and do not properly target by the Company. Prada has a competitive advantage as it is one of the most experienced and luxurious fashion brands worldwide. The Company is now changing its brand association towards Prada, focusing on younger customers. However, it raised the question: How will Prada change its younger consumer's brand association to become their first accessible priority?

The paper discussed the contribution of researchers to brand association and Prada's evolution and positioning. Prada is well known luxurious brand. However, its revenue declined, which captured the intention of the Company's leader to change its target market and turn its focus over the youth customers. It creates the question that how to change customers association with Prada. The paper further discusses how it will conduct this research on raised questions and the steps that lead to the completion of the research. The research paper will use different works of scholars and look at their addressed problems, methods to solve these problems, and results to identify the most recent attention. Further, the paper will use qualitative analysis to increase understanding of the problem and helps to overcome the challenge. The data was collected through books, journals, articles, and interviews. A structured interview will help the researcher get specific, correct, and concern-related answers and thematic analysis will examine the data and process it to identify patterns. Structured and closed-end questions to get information about their tastes and preferences. Thematic Analysis will process that data to get meaningful findings that further turn into results. Results will provide an answer to this research and its implications. Additionally, it discusses whether the hypothesis is supported or not. Ritchie et al. in 2013 showed that the research will provide a discussion that includes a summary of the paper, a comparison of previous studies, the implications of this work, and the limitation of the study [9].

2. Literature Review

Several models have been to demonstrate the connection between brand association and some other concepts like brand awareness, brand loyalty, and so on. The researchers also find some strategies that researchers advise for marketing managers.

2.1 Brand and Brand Position

2.1.1 Definition

In 1993, Ger et al. published a paper that for customers, brand means familiarity and credibility, because they can experience brands in their daily life; Therefore, they use brands as an indicator to help them make some decisions on buying new products [10]. Al Ries & Jack Trout in 2001 published a book named positioning, they defined brand position as how to be different from other brands or products in people's minds [11].

2.1.2 Important Results

Aaker in 1996 shows the four components of brand positioning are target customers, value proposition, the advantage of products and brand, and active communication [12]. Ries & Trout in 1986 found that positioning is important based on 3 propositions [13]. First, when people live in a communicated society, they received loads of information every day. Second, the brain generates a defense system. At last, the simplified and focused message is the only method to escape from a large amount of information [13]. These correspond to us; brand positioning must exist and the researchers should make good use of it.

2.1.3 Summary

Brand position is known as very important for most companies. The company needs positioning to attract its customer segment. When companies meet performance problems, they can try to change their brand position. Brand position is reflected in many things, like price, design style, and so on. All the companies need deep consideration.

2.2 Brand Experience

2.2.1 Definition

Schmitt in 1999 defined that when people observe something or indicate some events, then they react to the stimulation in these private events, whether real, virtual, or in dreams. All of these are called experiences [14].

2.2.2 Important Results

Over time, Keller in 1993 and Emari et al. in 2012 supplied that brand associations can be related to what consumers thought, the positive and negative information. Also reflecting the brand node in the brain memory, what the brands represent [15,16]. Fiske & Taylor in 1995 found that every different experience reinforces brand associations stored in people's senses and impressions [17]. Later, Supphellen in 2000 found that in the people's brand-associated network, a large number of associations came from visual and sensory impressions [18]. The first systematic study of brand association and experience was reported by Brown & Dacin in 1997. They showed that sensory and emotional experiences contribute to creating and strengthening brand associations [19]. Franzen studied that thoughts and experience generate brand association in 1999 [20]. Berry in 2000 reported that people also create brand association through social experience (relate experience) [21]. Chang in 2006 demonstrated that both individual experiences appeal to the product-related brand association while shared experiences have a significant impact on the association of the lifestyle and social relationship [22].

2.2.3 Summary

Experience is an integral part of brand association. The brand needs to enhance customers' experience, this is not only useful for existing customers but also for potential customers who can get information from social media or from their friends.

2.3 Brand Association

2.3.1 Definition

Aaker in 1991 showed that brand equity could conceptualize into 5 dimensions: brand loyalty, brand awareness, perceived quality, brand associations, and other proprietary brand assets [23]. Aaker in 1991 labeled “anything linked in memory to a brand” to brand association, and also states that one of the most important missions of brand associations is to create brand meaning for people [24].

2.3.2 Important Result

In 1993, Keller artistically divided brand name organization right into three components: qualities, advantages, and also perspectives. Attributes represent consumers' ideas regarding product or services (attributes of products and services) and what includes the acquisition or consumption components. Advantages represent the fulfillment level regarding the product and services offered by the brand name, or the individual worth added by features. At last, perspective is the total feeling of customers towards a brand name. Some of them generate favorable feelings when connecting a brand name, after that transform their feeling into mindsets [15]. Till et al. in 2011 concluded that for brand organization there are 5 crucial features like: strength, favorability, originality, significance, and number. Till thought about toughness of association as the purpose of the connection between the brand node and the brand organization. There are different ranks of brand association toughness. A stronger organization can turn on by means of spreading out easier. Regardless of what brand name strategies, among its central goals must be to affect the stamina of consumers association. Organization favorability is specified as the level to which organization is regarded as a positive or adverse feature of a brand. Brand organization uniqueness is defined as the degree to which an organization is viewed as a various brand name attribute within an item variety. Some brand name associations are fairly various. This implies that some completing brand names share the very same brand organization. These brand name organizations are common for an item group however a few other associations are special for just a small scale of brands. Association importance suggests just how much individuals believe that association is a valuable, substantial, and acquiring decision-driving feature of a brand within an item group. Consumers might pay more focus to some brand name associations. As an example, red shade is related to Coca-cola. However, when consumers think of this brand, the initial thought is always that Coca-cola is an American brand. Campbell in 2002 stresses that the business advertising market ought to pay even more focus to an association that makes sense and also pertains to consumers. The last one is number. The quantities of brand name organizations clients can associate [25,26].

2.3.3 Summary

Changing the brand association is essentially changing the attributes of the product, benefits customers can get from the product, and customers' attitudes toward the product.

2.4 Brand awareness

2.4.1 Definition

Aaker in 1991 defined the ability of potential buyers to recognize a brand belongs to a product category or an industry [23].

2.4.2 Important Result

By attracting the ideas of brand name understanding as well as some other measurements of brand, Alexandra et al. in 2018 have been able to end that luxury brands are Today, a lot of high-end brand names are changing their advertising techniques to focus on mass-produced items, additionally known as "mass-market". Its products can be supplied to consumers with different socioeconomic attributes, as opposed to just elite clients. Population-centric advertising and marketing strategies have been verified to be effective and have a positive influence on both brand equity and customer habits [27]. Chen et al. in 2013 looked into that brand organizations are influenced by regarded brand

globalization due to brand name understanding. Advertising managers can find out more concerning what their clients considered international brand names and afterwards supplies various strategies to suitable client sectors that intend to produce positive brand name organization [28]. Sasmita & Suki in 2015 assessed that brand understanding has an extensive impact on the brand name organization, specifically amongst youngsters. Children can quickly make use of social media sites to get messages as well as awareness of details products or brands. Therefore, these young clients can recognize how the appearance and also features of the products or the brand name from social media sites via others' shares. Compared to contending items and brands, individuals know more about these as well as create even more brand organizations [29]. Moreover, Chansuk in 2020 assessed that brand organization with high-end can also be affected by brand recognition. The high-end brand can improve brand organization by constructing brand recognition with brand name background education and learning [30].

2.4.3 Summary

Brand awareness is important for a brand, especially for a luxury brand. Brand awareness makes a good difference in the brand association.

2.5 Conclusion

Over the past decades, most researchers pay particular attention to the connection between some brands' related concepts and brand association. The researchers have known that brand associations have a great impact on purchase intention. Brand associations are influenced by experience, some positive strategies will be useful for customers to build a brand association, But the researchers find that this research is too general, and does not consider the specific situation. The researchers also find that little research is about the relationship between brand position and brand association. This paper will focus on the concrete operation (younger brand position) depending on the review to change brand association based on Prada, which combined with the environment of Prada nowadays.

3. Method

3.1 Research Design

The main purpose of this study is to investigate how to change the brand association with Prada customers in Asia area, especially China. The researchers investigate that does brand experience, brand awareness, and brand position influence brand association.

In this paper, the researchers use the descriptive research method. Zikmund et al. in 2003 showed that when the researchers want to ensure whether some factors affect the other variables, they use descriptive research [31].

3.2 Data collection

The researchers in this paper use the survey research mainly through questionnaires to get the primary data. Brand awareness, brand experience, and brand position are the three independent variables in this research. Brand association is the dependent variable. In this research, the primary purpose is to study brand association with the Prada brand in the Asia area. Therefore, this study's target population includes both Asia male and female customers who are already Prada customers and who has bought Prada product before.

Chansuk & Chaipoo Pirutana in 2020 showed that convenience sampling is a useful method to find a large number of respondents who are willing and convenient to answer the questions [30]. In this paper, the researchers only use this method. The first part researches the demographic information, including three items (gender, age, education, income). The researchers set the income as a "doorsill" to ensure respondents can buy luxury products. Part 2 just includes one question to make sure indicators have bought Prada products. Part 3 and part 4,5 are scale questions. The researchers set a background that is helpful for respondents to learn about what the researchers are researching. The

content of the background is: After the COVID-19 pandemic, many people in China have stopped traveling abroad to buy luxury goods. As a famous luxury brand, Prada tries to use some brand strategies to change its brand position as a younger brand in the Chinese market, such as hiring flow stars, opening Prada-themed afternoon refreshments in high-end hotels in Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Shenzhen, and other places, cross-linking products, adding new main colors to create innovative products and matching products in pop-up shops. After Prada carries out these brand strategies and product updates, listen to suggestions to enhance after-sales. Five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly discontent) to 5 (strongly content) is used to measure all the items in this research. Here is the scale design, the variables involved in this study are all from existing literature.

- Brand position: Xu in 2010 concluded factors influence brand position through past essays that research brand position, including price, quality service, discount, communication, and emotion [32]. In this paper, researchers integrated discounts and prices and also delete emotion. Two questions for each dimension to measure.

- Brand awareness: The researchers refer to the paper of Yoo et al. in 2000 and Yang in 2013, setting 3 questions. Question 1 is When I think of luxury goods, Prada comes to mind first. Question 2 Prada will become more of a widely known name. Question 3 is I can recognize Prada in many brands [33, 34].

- Brand experience: Based on a scale designed by Schmitt in 1999, the researchers in this study select two dimensions (sense, think). Two questions for each dimension to measure [14].

- Brand association: The researchers develop five items for this study from the work of Aaker in 1996, Yoo & Donthu in 2001, Chunlin Yu et al. in 2005. These items include benefits and attitudes [12, 35, 36].

3.3 Data Analysis

A total of 193 questionnaires were distributed to consumers all over China. Invalid samples were eliminated, leading to a final survey size of 133 samples. The researchers use SPSS to analyze the data, including Factor Analysis, Descriptive, Correlations analysis, Regression analysis, ANOVA, and frequency analysis.

The researchers depicted the demographic profiles of the respondents' characteristic. The samples are as follows:

gender (male: 47.01%, female: 52.99%), age (below 20 years: 0.75%, 20–40 years: 91.79%, more than 40 years: 7.46%), highest education level (secondary school or lower: 2.99%, college: 88.06%, postgraduate or higher: 8.96%) and month average income (3000-9000 yuan per month: 38.81%, 9000-20000 yuan per month: 45.52, more than 20000 yuan per month: 15.67%).

4. Result

4.1 Factors analysis

The researchers first do factors analysis by KMO and Barlett's test, this study can see in Table 1 KMO is higher than 0.8 and the Sig is 0 which means that the data of this study are suitable for factor analysis.

Table 1. Factor analysis result

Factor Analysis	
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.	.815
Approx. Chi-Square of Bartlett's Test	680.380
Df of Bartlett's Test	153
Sig. of Bartlett's Test	.000

4.2 Descriptive analysis

Before the Regression analysis of the survey data, descriptive statistical analysis of the sample data is firstly carried out to preliminarily test the discrete distribution of the sample data. This paper could see the descriptive statistics in Table 2 follow.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics

	Mean Statistic	Std. Deviation Statistic	Skewness Statistic	Kurtosis Statistic
Brand position	3.393	.5858	-.100	-.232
Brand awareness	3.857	.6857	-.960	1.323
Brand experience	3.974	.5897	-.618	-.015

According to the data available in the above table (refer to Table 2), the brand experience represented the highest mean value of 3.974 and the second small standard deviation of 0.5897. The Absolute Value of Skewness for these three is smaller than 3 and the Absolute Value of Kurtosis is smaller than 10. The figure corresponds to the normal distribution. Based on the calculated figures it can be concluded that brand experience was the most influential element in the brand association of Prada.

4.3 Correlations analysis

Correlation analysis is a statistical analysis method to study the correlation between two or more random variables with the same status.

Table 3. Correlations with brand association

	brand position	brand awareness	brand experience
Pearson Correlation	.479**	.549**	.667**
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000
N	133	133	133

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Figure correlation above 0.5 means that there is a strong relationship between the independent and the dependent variable. According to the correlation analysis, it was shown that there is a significant relationship between each selected element of brand position (near 0.5), brand awareness and brand experience, and brand association. Especially the relationship between brand awareness, brand experience with the brand association was significant. The data accept the hypotheses which were developed based on brand position, brand awareness, brand experience, and brand association. Furthermore, "Brand experience" is the one that makes the biggest difference in the brand association.

4.4 Regression analysis and ANOVA

Table 4. Regression result

Regression Statistics	
Multiple R	.741 ^a
R Square	.549
Adjusted R Square	.538
Std. Error of the Estimate	.3737

a. Predictors: (Constant), brand experience, brand position, brand awareness

From Table 4, this paper can see Multiple R is bigger than 0, representing a positive correlation between the independent variable and dependent variable. $R=0.741$ shows that the correlation is high.

R square=0.549 means that the independent variables can explain 54.9% of the changes in the brand association.

Table 5. ANOVA Result

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	21.890	3	7.297	52.240	.000 ^b
Residual	18.019	129	.140		
Total	39.909	132			

a. Dependent Variable: brand association

b. Predictors: (Constant), brand experience, brand position, brand awareness

Table 6. Coefficients Result

	Unstandardized Coefficients B	Unstandardized Coefficients Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	.858	.256		3.350	.001
brand position	.164	.064	.174	2.558	.012
brand awareness	.206	.056	.257	3.672	.000
brand experience	.453	.063	.486	7.172	.000

a. Dependent Variable: brand association

Significance is the Fa critical value at the significance level, that is, the P-value of the F test, which represents the truth rejection probability. This value is generally less than 0.05, and the smaller the better. According to Table 5 and Table 6, all the sig. is smaller than 0.05 means that these analyses make sense.

5. Discussion

5.1 Summary

From the SPSS analysis, the researchers find that brand position, brand awareness, and brand experience influence brand association. Especially regarding brand experience, Prada needs to make more effect on improving customer's brand experience. Prada can change the brand position by decreasing the price, improving service quality, and making more communication with customers. For brand experience, Prada can make marketing strategies on customer sense and make the customer think more about Prada. Also, the researchers set a younger Prada as the background and find that this can improve people's brand awareness and brand experience.

5.2 Comparison

Compared to previous brand studies with a single question, this study examines brand association from two perspectives. The first core purpose of this study is to demonstrate contextual effects, and the researchers find that brand position also has an impact on brand awareness, brand experience, and brand association. Brand position is like a catalyst that will always make the brand produce some special changes, which is a more important brand factor structure than other brands' relative concepts. The results the researchers collected through surveys show that brand position is an indispensable part of a brand. This result is creative, past research didn't analyze the effect of brand position.

The second is to examine the fetters between consumers and brands. Through the survey and the limitation of the researchers, the researchers can more advantageously obtain how to change the brand

association from consumers towards the brands. The relationship between them is mainly composed of brand position, brand awareness, and brand experience. These effects benefit customers can get from the brand and their brand attitude which was an important component of brand association. So, these will have a positive impact on the brand association. Compared with the predecessors, this paper has more limited control over respondents, which leads to these results being more accurate in the direction the researchers need. Past research demonstrated brand awareness and brand experience impact brand association. This research finds that the influence of brand experience is bigger than brand awareness. This may be because associations need content, people always memorize what they have experienced deeper. Experience is the foundation of brand association. Brand awareness comes from what other people say to a large extent, also from advertisements or something like that. What people heard may be different from their real experiences. The researchers have more in-depth verification of the influence of brand experience on the brand association and proved this through accurate data.

6. Conclusions

Few empirical studies have examined the influence of brand position on brand association. This study takes an experiential view to exploring the effects of brand position based on Prada. Previous studies have been limited to certain fields, and this study attempts to contribute to the theory of how to change the brand association. The researchers want to make some substantive advice for Prada. To make a younger Prada, Prada can do some strategies to improve brand awareness and optimize customers' brand experience. All the time, people always remember Prada is a brand with a brief style, combined with its logo, people can only remember black and white. To attract younger people, Prada needs some innovation in the color of products. This new staple color should not be high profile but elegant. Green rarely appears in the products of the luxury brand; it seems that green is a contradiction to "luxury". This corresponds to Prada's idea. A new staple color can make Prada popular because it is big news in a luxury product. This can let people know Prada is changing which can improve brand awareness. Afternoon tea is a culture of Britain. In recent years, it was more and more popular in China, especially among young people including some internet celebrities, the rich second generation, and some others. This would be a trend in the future. Prada can make afternoon stores or some other stores with a Prada theme. Customers will share their experiences on social media which can not only attract other potential customers (someone who hasn't bought Prada products before) but also let old customers know and think more about Prada. There are some deficiencies in this study. First, this research merely gets the questionnaire from the Internet. Although the researchers make some questions to make sure people don't mess with the answer of the questionnaire. The researchers don't have a close connection with respondents. They still probably do not have deep thought through some issues. It's better to make some interviews, because, for people buying luxury products, it's a process with a high degree of consumer involvement. In the questionnaire, the researchers make a background for them, the researchers don't know if all the respondents know what the researchers are expressing. Last, there are so many luxury brands, they may need more time and a better environment to think about these questions. Also, when the researchers design the scale for a brand position, the researchers don't find any useful information. The research for brand position over the past year always uses SWOT analysis to give companies some useful advice. The researchers think that the scale for the brand position can be better in the future. This research only focuses on Asia especially China market of Prada, the result may not correspond to the other market. This research demonstrated that brand position influences brand association. Researchers can study the connection between brand position and the other element of brand equity.

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