

Abstract of Doctoral Dissertation

Effectiveness of Word of Mouth Communication on Brand Equity of Personal Care Products : A Study in Erode District

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I. Introduction

IN THE ERA of cut-throat competition and changing market dynamics, producers of goods or services fight relentlessly to sell their inventories and secure a comfortable position in the market place. In the pursuit of achieving this hard and ambitious endeavour, they settle with the fact that satisfying customer needs is of paramount importance (Liang and Wang, 2007). So, the producers take every effort, and leave no chance, to satisfy the consumers by providing them quality products and serving them after the products are sold or services are being rendered. Hence, satisfying customer needs and wants alone determines the success of any business. This satisfaction results in establishing the brand value for products or services. In other words, brand positioning in the market and creating positive image for the products or services depend on the performance of products or services in the market and how they contribute to satisfy the consumers. This ultimately paves way for enjoying substantial market share ahead of the competitors. This brand positioning, which is often tagged as brand equity, consists of attributes, such as brand awareness, brand association, perceived quality, brand loyalty and other attributes like product availability, consumers' preference, product familiarity, image and personality of producers and competitive products available in the market. These attributes can be created through various means and one among them is the Word of Mouth (WOM) communication.

WOM communication refers to oral recommendations uttered by a satisfied customer of a product or service to his or her friends, relatives and other people known to him or her to buy a product or to avail a service,

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