

The role of brand content in improving brand image

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Abstract :

In a digital age, overloaded with information, companies are competing to be leaders in their sectors of activity, and are seeking to reinforce their brand image. In order to do so, they must communicate by offering added value that goes beyond mere advertising or marketing intentions. Such value requires customer-centric communication. In this context, this study aims to examine the role of branded content in enhancing brand image, based on a qualitative and quantitative analysis using linear regression method, applied on the case of LG Electronics Algeria. The results obtained showed that branded content has a positive impact on brand image and plays a role in improving it.

Keywords: Brand, Brand content, Brand image, Entertaining content, Informative content.

Résumé:

À l'ère numérique, saturée d'informations, les entreprises rivalisent pour être leaders dans leurs secteurs d'activité et cherchent à renforcer leur image de marque. Pour ce faire, elles doivent communiquer en offrant une valeur ajoutée qui dépasse les simples intentions publicitaires ou marketing. Une telle valeur requiert une communication centrée sur le client. Dans ce contexte, cette étude vise à examiner le rôle du contenu de marque dans l'amélioration de l'image de marque, en se basant sur une analyse qualitative et quantitative utilisant la méthode de

régression linéaire, appliquée au cas de LG Electronics en Algérie. Les résultats obtenus montrent que le contenu de marque a un impact positif sur l'image de marque et joue un rôle dans son amélioration.

Mots clés : Marque, Contenu de marque, Contenu informatif, Contenu divertissant, Image de marque.

1. Introduction

In today's highly competitive market, brands strive to not only survive but also gain market share by presenting themselves in diverse forms and communicating the specifications of their products. This is aimed at showcasing their added value in a manner that resonates with consumers and opens up a world of possibilities. As Walter Landor once said, "Products are made in factories, but brands are born in minds." Therefore, one of the biggest challenges for brands is to formulate a compelling idea in the consumer's mindset through various communication channels.

Today, brands rely heavily on digital communication to establish a strong and consistent image. It is crucial for them to determine what content should be delivered and how it should be disseminated across all digital channels. Brand content plays a pivotal role in shaping a company's brand image. It encompasses all the content created and shared by a company to communicate its brand, values, products, or services. Brand image, on the other hand, is a blend of perceptions, emotions, and mental associations that consumers hold towards a

brand. Through a cohesive and effective branded content strategy, a company can nurture the brand image of its products or services. Customization and personalization are key aspects of branded content, tailored to the needs and interests of the target audience while reflecting the brand's values and personality. The ultimate goal is to forge an emotional connection between the brand and its consumers, fostering trust and brand loyalty.

Lucky Goldstar (LG) International Group, a leading company specializing in consumer electronics products, including TVs, refrigerators, washing machines, air conditioners, smartphones, and more, utilizes brand content as part of its marketing strategy. This involves creating content for its website, social networks, blogs, promotional videos, and other advertising materials. However, despite its global success, LG faces challenges in adapting its commercial content strategy to the preferences of the Algerian community and the brand's positioning in the market. This mismatch could potentially lead to consumer frustration.

For the following statement, we address the secondary questions, which will be used to guide our research work:

- ✓ Q1 : What is the effect of perceived information and perceived entertainment of brand content on attitude toward brand content?
- ✓ Q2 : What is the effect of brand content on over all brand image?
- ✓ Q3 : What is the effect of functional and emotional brand image on over all brand image?
- ✓ Q4 : Does the perceived information of brand content influence the functional brand image?
- ✓ Does the perceived entertainment of the brand content influence the emotional brand image?

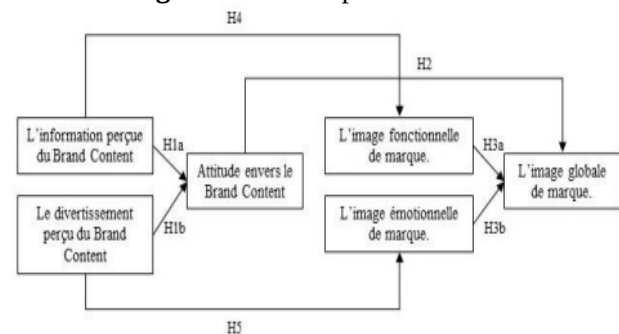
2. Literature review:

Various studies have delved into branded content from diverse angles. Choi (2015) conducted a study to explore the emergence of branded content as a marketing communication medium through a relational perspective. Initially, the author examined the concept and extent of branded content, its impact, and its potential expansion as a marketing communication medium. Subsequently, attention was directed towards the relational aspect and its significance in the marketing communication landscape. The study concluded by examining the correlation between branded content and the relational perspective, highlighting how branded content can establish and fortify relationships with consumers. Although the study didn't entail empirical research involving systematic data collection and analysis, it presented the author's subjective analysis of existing literature. Finally, the author outlined a vision for the future of branded content, emphasizing the necessity for maintaining an emotional and personalized connection with individual consumers. Further research delved into the value of branded content marketing in brand development, as evidenced by the study conducted by Lou, Xie, Feng, & Kim (2019). Their objective was to investigate the contribution of branded content on YouTube to brand building, elucidating the process through which branded content influences consumer purchase intentions and loyalty. Drawing on previous research and literature, the authors elucidated the fundamentals of branded content, its added value, and its role in prompting consumers to engage in learning to derive value. Employing a quantitative, web-based approach, the authors enlisted YouTube users via Amazon Mechanical Turk. The core finding revealed that repeated exposure to branded content facilitates social learning among consumers, subsequently leading to more favorable brand attitudes, increased brand loyalty, and heightened purchase intentions. These findings underscore the significance of investing in the creation of informative and entertaining branded

content to foster brand loyalty. The concept has also been explored by other researchers from the perspective of customer experience. Waqas, Salleh, & Hamzah (2021) endeavored to enhance the understanding of customer experience in branded content after identifying gaps in the conceptualization and operationalization of "branded content experience" (BCE). Through two qualitative studies, the authors identified seven dimensions of branded content experience, encompassing personal identity, social connection, usefulness, aesthetics, humor, inspiration, and intuition. Before conducting a third quantitative study, a questionnaire was pre-tested with 12 respondents to ensure clarity and ease of answering. Subsequently, a pilot test involving 106 individuals was conducted to validate the questionnaire's effectiveness. The pilot test affirmed that respondents accurately followed instructions and effectively responded to the questionnaire. Acknowledging the subjective nature of the concept and its necessity to be gauged at the non-verbal and subconscious levels, researchers discovered several qualitative and projective techniques adapted from the field of psychology. These techniques unveil consumers' thoughts that may remain unspoken due to a lack of verbal expression, insufficient vocabulary, or unfamiliarity. Consequently, qualitative research to assess brand image has emerged as a recent trend in brand image research. The study conducted by Lee, James, & Kim (2014) aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding and exploration of branding based on an extensive literature review. This allowed the authors to gather various definitions and categorize them into five groups: cover definition, symbolism emphasis, meaning or message emphasis, personification emphasis, and cognitive or psychological emphasis. Upon reviewing these definitions, it became apparent that the concept was inadequately addressed and interpreted by researchers. Their definitions indicated a broad and often vague classification. The primary issue identified was the failure to consider brand image as the culmination

of cognitive, affective, and evaluative processes toward a brand, posing challenges for brand management and positioning. Ultimately, the authors formulated a definition that synthesized previous definitions, terminologies, and analogous concepts, defining brand image as "a sum of a customer's perceptions of a brand, generated by the interaction of cognitive, affective, and evaluative processes in the customer's mind."

Figure 01: Conceptual framework



Source: (Source : By the authors (Source : (Ducoffe, 1995 ; Jahn & Kunz, 2012 ; Stewart, Kammer-Kerwick, Koh, & Cunningham, 2018 ; MacKenzie & Lutz, 1989 ; Bruhn, Schoenmueller, & Schäfer, 2012 ; Ryffel, Wirz, Kühne, & Wirth, 2014)).

In his study, Wijaya (2013) investigated the dimensions of brand image as a crucial stage in the hierarchy of branding or brand communication, aiming to provide guidance for future research in this domain. The examined dimensions of branding included brand identity, personality and association, brand behavior and attitude, and brand competence and benefits.

The author posited that clarity regarding these dimensions would aid researchers and managers in assessing and understanding the strength of a product or company's brand image through analysis and evaluation. According to Wijaya (2013), the robustness and positivity of these dimensions in consumers' minds are pivotal to the strength and positivity of a product or company's brand image.

For more details about the structural classification of brand image (see appendix 01).

2.1 Conceptual framework:

The conceptual framework outlined in Figure No. 03 posits the existence of a relationship between brand content and brand image, subdivided into four components. Firstly, the model explores the relationship, whether existing or non-existing, between the perceived information variable and the perceived entertainment of brand content, as well as the attitude toward brand content. Secondly, it examines the linkage between the attitude toward brand content and the overall brand image. Thirdly, it explores the relationships between functional and emotional brand image and the overall brand image. Finally, it investigates the relationship between both dimensions of perceived information and perceived entertainment of brand content and functional and emotional brand image, respectively.

2.2 Research Hypothesis:

The formulation of our research hypotheses is grounded in the literature review utilized to define the research question and our conceptual framework. This enables us to investigate the relationship between the variables under study. Below is the construction of each hypothesis:

4.1 *Perceived information and perceived entertainment of brand content have a positive effect on the attitude towards brand Content*

The company's vision is reliant on two traditional advertising or brand communication strategies. One is an informative or utilitarian communication strategy, which emphasizes products, their features, and functional usefulness. The other is an emotional or transformative communication strategy aimed at thematizing the experience of using the product (Puto & Wells, 1984). The "advertising value" study initiated by (Ducoffe, 1995) provided insights into the impact of brand content. It demonstrated

that perceived information and entertainment positively influence advertising value and attitudes toward advertising. (Jahn & Kunz, 2012) analyzed various factors influencing Internet users' engagement on brand fan pages. A survey of members from different brand fan pages on Facebook revealed that functional and attractive content is most effective in attracting users. It is widely acknowledged that information and entertainment play crucial roles in media consumption and brand interaction. Given that information and entertainment in branded content consistently cater to the user, we can infer that these positive effects are also evident in branded content. This leads us to formulate the following hypotheses:

- ✓ H1a: Perceived information of brand content has a positive effect on attitude towards brand content.
- ✓ H1b: Perceived entertainment of brand content has a positive effect on attitude towards brand content

4.2. *A positive attitude towards brand content has a positive effect on the overall brand image :*

Testing on attitude towards advertising has repeatedly set that positive attitude towards advertising has a positive effect on attitude towards the brand (MacKenzie & Lutz, 1989). This relationship can also be applied to digital advertising (Stewart, Kammer-Kerwick, Koh, & Cunningham, 2018). Rather than "brand attitude," we will use the term "overall brand image" in this study. This leads us to the following hypothesis:

- ✓ H2: A positive attitude towards brand content has a positive effect on the overall brand image.

4.3 *Functional brand image and emotional brand image have a positive effect on the overall brand image :*

In addition to the overall brand evaluation (overall brand image), brand image is broken down into several associations with the brand (Keller, 1993). Associations related to the functional and emotional aspects of the brand are extremely important from the consumer's perspective (Batra & Ahtola, 1991). Therefore, partial brand images can be considered to positively influence the overall brand image. This link has been confirmed by (Bruhn, Schoenmueller, & Schäfer, 2012). Hence, our hypotheses can be articulated as follow :

- ✓ H3a: Functional branding has a positive effect on overall brand image.
- ✓ H3b: Emotional branding has a positive effect on overall brand image.

4.4. perceived information and perceived entertainment of brand content exerts an influence on the functional and emotional dimensions of brand image.

Successful brands are able to simultaneously enjoy a high level of functional and emotional brand image. It is common for brands to emphasize one dimension in terms of communication, while the second dimension is relegated to the background. A highly functional brand image is the result of an informative communication strategy, while a highly emotional brand image is the result of an emotional communication strategy. An informative message primarily elicits cognitive processing, while an emotional message primarily elicits affective responses. As a result, informative brand content primarily influences functional branding, while entertaining brand content primarily contributes to emotional branding (Ryffel, Wirz, Kühne, & Wirth, 2014). Based on these prior studies, we formulate the following hypotheses:

- ✓ H4: Perceived information from brand content has a positive effect on functional brand image.

- ✓ H5: The perceived entertainment of Brand content has a positive effect on the emotional brand image.

3. Methodology

Straight to test our research hypotheses, we employ quantitative method, which is in line with a positivist epistemological perspective. We followed a hypothetical-deductive approach to test our hypotheses. To do so, we conducted a survey using a self-administered questionnaire to quantify and measure the relationship between the variables under study. To measure the variables discussed on the conceptual framework, we used measurement scales validated in the literature from (Haws, Dholakia, & Bearden, 2010) and (Pham & Tamar, 2004 Puto & Wells, 1984, Schweidel, Bradlow, & Williams, 2006 Schlinger, 1979, Gordon C. , 2012) Albisser, 2022) which were adapted for use in our study.

The studied sample concern 200 responded received from a representative a target of population that use home appliance users and familiar with the LG brand, including all age and socio-professional groups. For our study, we chose to use the convenience sampling method to select participants. To collect the data, we administered an online questionnaire on the Google Forms platform.

4. Results

4.1. Descriptive analysis of the respondent's profile:

From the table provided, it is evident that our sample predominantly consists of women (67%), aged between 18 and 24 years (66%), unmarried individuals (92.5%), predominantly students (63.5%), with a monthly income of less than 14,999 Da (49.5%), and residing in the central region (64.5%).

Table 1: Descriptive statistics

Variables	Characteristic s	Frequenc y	Percentag e
Gender	Female	134	67%
	Male	66	33%
Age	18-24	132	66%
	25-34	61	30.50%
	34-44	06	03%
	45-54	01	0.5%
	55 & Older	0	0%
Marital status			92.50%
	Single	185	92.50%
	Married	2	01%
	without children		
Profession	Married with children	13	6.5%
	Student	127	63.50%
	Employee	47	23.50%
	Independent	13	6.5%
	Top manager	04	02%
	Retired	0	0%
	Unemployed	09	4.50%
Income	Less than 14 999 DA	99	49.50 %
	15 000 to 24 999 DA	24	12%
	25 000 to 39 999 DA	17	8.50%
	40 000 to 59 999 DA	29	14.50%
	More than 60 000 DA	31	15.50%
Residentia l	Center	129	64.50%
	West	41	20.50%
	East	19	9.50%
	South	11	5.50%

4.2. Reliability measurement scales:

We tested the reliability of our measurement scales using the internal consistency test. According to Hair, Money, Babin and Samouel (2003), a Cronbach's alpha threshold of 0.6 is considered acceptable. Our results show that all the constructs studied have satisfactory reliability, with Cronbach's alpha values ranging from [0.684 to 0.938].

We also tested the feasibility of our principal component analysis using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) index and the Bartlett test. We found that the KMO index is greater than 0.6 and the Bartlett test is equal to 0, suggesting that our principal component analysis is feasible.

We name:

- The attitude towards brand content: **ATB**
- Perceived information: **PI**
- Perceived entertainment: **PE**
- The overall brand image: **OBI**
- The functional image of the brand: **FIB**
- The emotional image of the brand: **FEB**

Figure 02: Results

Variable	KMO	Sig	Variance	Value	Cronbach's alpha
ATB	0,726	0,000	75,222 %	2,257	0,833
PI	0,701	0,000	72,039 %	2,161	0,806
PE	0,867	0,000	61,899 %	3,714	0,874
OBI	0,651	0,000	63,287 %	1,899	0,695
FIB	0,639	0,000	54,788 %	2,192	0,684
FEB	0,875	0,000	80,224	4,011	0,938

Source: by the authors

Source : By the authors

We observe that all variables demonstrate statistical significance and contribute significantly to explaining the model. As such, the model hypotheses are accepted.

- ✓ H1a: The perceived information of Brand Content has a positive effect on the attitude towards Brand Content.
- ✓ H1b: The perceived entertainment of Brand Content has a positive effect on the attitude towards Brand Content.
- ✓ H2: A positive attitude towards brand content has a positive effect on the overall image of the brand.
- ✓ H3a: Functional branding has a positive impact on the overall image of the brand.
- ✓ H3b: Emotional branding has a positive impact on the overall brand image.
- ✓ H4: The perceived information of brand content has a positive influence on the functional image of the brand.
- ✓ H5: The perceived entertainment of brand content has a positive effect on the emotional brand image.

5. Discussion & Recommendations

Upon analyzing the outcomes of our research, several observations regarding the impact of Brand content on the brand's overall image, as well as its functional and emotional dimensions, emerge. Our findings indicate a positive correlation between Brand content and the global, functional, and emotional image of the brand, suggesting that informative and engaging Brand content fosters favorable consumer attitudes.

Our study also uncovered a positive impact of Brand content on overall brand image, functional image, and emotional brand image, corroborating the findings of (MacKenzie & Lutz, 1989) and (Bruhn, Schoenmueller, & Schäfer, 2012). In contrast to the perspective of (Ryffel, Wirz, Kühne, & Wirth, 2014), which posited that informative brand content predominantly affects functional

brand image while entertaining brand content primarily contributes to emotional brand image, our research indicates that perceived entertainment of brand content positively influences emotional brand image, whereas perceived information does not significantly impact functional brand image.

Ultimately, our results underscore the significant role of Brand content in enhancing the brand image of the company. The primary aim of our study was to investigate the role of brand content in brand image enhancement, focusing on two types of brand content—informative and entertaining—in measuring their effects on the functional and emotional dimensions of brand image, with LG Electronics Algeria serving as a case study.

Our research validated the hypothesis of the model, collectively affirming the influence of brand content on the brand image.

6. Conclusion

In order to anchor its brand image in the minds of consumers and convey its values, we recommend LG to base its digital communication on entertaining branded content in order to create positive emotions among consumers, by choosing the right methods and channels. Also, we recommend the brand to follow a customer-centric approach and not a product-centric business approach. Our research had some weaknesses and limitations, including the sample size (200 respondents) which is quite small for a household appliance sector, so we noticed during our analysis that there were some scattered responses as our questionnaire was a bit long. Due to the lack of resources, we could not do a random sampling. Finally, previous studies dealing with our topic in general and more specifically with the concept of brand content are scarce. In order to complete the research on brand content and its role in improving brand image, further research can be done on the other types of brand content and the remaining dimensions of brand image, and also integrate

business data to see the influence of brand content towards sales. It might also be useful to examine storytelling as a factor that impacts attitudes towards brand content. Finally, further research could focus on the communication channels of brand content.

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Appendix 01: Structural classification of brand image

Author(s)	Dimensions			Critical judgment
(Biel, 1992)	Brand image	User image	Product image	These dimensions concern the entities linked to a particular brand.
(Keller, Conceptualizing, measuring, and managing consumer-based brand equity, 1993)	Attributes « are those descriptive elements that specify the product or service's characteristics ».	Advantages « are the personal value that consumers attach to the attributes of the product or service ».	Attitude: « is the overall evaluation of a brand by consumers (Wilkie 1986) ».	Here, the judgment relies on the benefits that signify customer values, as "the meaning of 'customer value' is a level of return in product benefits for a certain amount of customer money (i.e. price) in a purchase exchange" (Lai, 1995).
Garter 1993	Cognitive	Affective	Conative	Unlike the previous model, this one does not deal with a situation of attributes, benefits and attitude. It describes perceptions of image as cognitive and affective and may be based on a variety of customers values. The three dimensions are interrelated.
(Baloglu & McCleary, 1999)	Cognitive	Affective	Global	In this case, the dimensions refer to the destination image.
(Hariri & Vazifehdust, 2011)	Functionnal image	Affective image	Reputation	Double dimensional model that treats functional and affective image, where reputation is a matter of affective image.

Source : Malik, M., Naeem, B., & Munawar, M. (2012). Brand image: Past, present and future. Journal of Basic and Applied Scientific Research, 2, 13069-1307