

Customers Recognition Level of Logos in Kingdom of Bahrain

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This study is conducted to measure customer recognition level of business logos in Kingdom of Bahrain in order to identify the best predictor for logo recognition in a local context. A quantitative approach and combination of descriptive and correlational research design is reflected in this study. Customers in Bahraini market whose age range is between 15 and 50 years were deemed to be research population; to form a representative sample, non-probability sampling technique was applied, specifically combination of convenient and judgmental sampling method. While in deciding the size of the sample, ratio sampling was used; total of 384 customers using confidence level of 95% were the research sample. As for data collection, the researcher used structured interview questionnaire as an instrument to extract the raw data and 16 business logos were presented equally to customers, those logos belong to four distinctive industries in Bahrain: food, medical, beauty services, and fashion. As for the demographic profile, most of customers in the sample were female (54.9%) that belonged to the age range between 18-24 years old (33%) with income range between 301 and 600 BD (41.1%) from Capital Governorate (41.9%); in term of education level most of respondents have bachelor's degree holder (58.1%). The research concluded with significant findings, one of which was that the relationship profile revealed that all of the demographic variables inserted in the research had significant correlation with the customer's overall logo recognition and in addition to the other aspects associated with recognition, such as logo scope recognition, logo industry recognition, and company name recognition. Moreover, it has been concluded that the scope of all medical logos in the research was mostly moderately by the customer beside many other findings.

Keywords: logos, logo recognition, Bahrain, customer, SME, business identify, Middle East, marketing

Introduction

Logos are one of the most important aspects to be tackled as a part of business representation and identity in the market. Henderson, Cote, Leong, and Schmidt (2003) described logo as a primary visual representation and the key element of brand identity that provides instant and consistent recognition.

This research aims to conduct clear outlook about a "logo" as a concept, its significant role for the business, and customer's perception of it in kingdom of Bahrain.

Almost no business can be distinctive in the marketplace without a well-designed or catchy logo defining it, especially in highly hostile market, each competitor strives to attract the largest possible number or segment

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of customers in order to be strategically positioned, dominated, and competitive in marketplace.

Many researchers visualize logo as a part of brand identity components (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993; Machado, Lencastre, Carvalho, & Costa, 2012). The term “logo” was defined by multiple authors and researchers, however, the most dominant definition referred to logo as a brand identity sign that serve as a type face element or a graphic, ranging from word driven to image driven, such as word marks or pictorial marks respectively (Henderson & Cote, 1998).

Logos have functional and emotional benefits that are not limited to business only, but it extends to include customer as well. MacInnis, Shapiro, and Mani (1999) stated that previously the purpose behind creating a logo for a business was limited to identification and differentiation only. However, one of the recent researches conducted by Van der Lans et al. (2009) illustrated additional purposes for logo; logo is a mean in which first derives customer output such as customer’s positive and effective reactions, second delivers the meaning of a brand, and third emphasizes on logo associations with customer positive emotions. Similarly, C. Park, Eisingerich, Pol, and J. Park (2013) stated logos role are not only a simple mean for distinction and identification, further it enhances customer commitment by evoking positive emotions that may influence and reflect on firm’s performance.

Based on that, logos role in business are expanding to include assigning a unique identity to the business by communicating and delivering to customers the main characteristic of the business, in return customer responses and emotions will be influenced positively.

Another outlook presented by Gunter (2014) illustrated that a representative logo can be an essential part of any business’s overall strategy, to put it in another way logos significantly might become the higher strategic marketing asset for any business. Therefore, a well-known logo might be subject to intellectual property mark.

Mochado (2015) stated that the usage of the term “logo” was not limited to business, and even authors, researchers, and writers from other disciplines referred and used this term. For instance, in economic field, relevant studies illustrated the importance of evaluating trademarks beyond quality as symbol has a deep sentimental meaning. Also in social science, it has been stated that goods are not consumed because of tangible need associated with it, rather it is because the emotional content it delivers.

This research was designed to match Bahraini market profile due to the significant role of logo and its deep impact on both customer and business as shown in the earlier paragraphs. Another reason for conducting this research was due to lack of studies in this area, hence it was important to customize and apply a research on the domestic Bahraini market by linking multiple business logos reciprocal among different segments in this market to customer recognition. Basically, this research aimed to fill the gap in Bahraini market in line with lack of business researches that it is most likely to be very few or non-exist by tackling and highlighting customer recognition level of both local and international business logos in domestic market with a greater focus and deeper meaning by illustrating the common and hidden patterns using application of reasoning. Moreover, the concerned business logos in this research will be aware of the impact and influence of their logos in Bahrain.

How Should Logos Look Like?

According to Henderson et al. (2003), logos should be simple, familiar, and recognizable, elicit a correspondence held meaning in the target market, and evoke a positive effect. Logos should also speed the

recognition of a company or brand, especially that rationally pictures are perceived faster than words.

Christie (2014) emphasized the importance of understanding the psychology of colors in order to design an effective logo. His view was compatible with the former view in sense of human mind high responsive to visual stimuli.

Jabbar (2014) stated that selecting a logo is a robust task for the companies including difficulties distinguishing which logo would be most liked, remembering the best, or creating the strongest sense of familiarity on initial exposure. Moreover, it is probable that desired responses are not achieved because the selected logo is difficult to access or store in the memory, fails to evoke any sense of meaning, or is not likeable.

Accustomed stimuli are processed and perceived faster, which is particularly important for logo; such thing could result from a logo that evokes familiar meaning or a design being similar to familiar-looking logos. A familiar meaning may be maximized by choosing a unique and easily interpreted design of familiar object (Henderson et al., 2003; Machado et al., 2012).

Naturally, visual shapes have their own distinctive meaning. But, this meaning gets weaker or stronger as soon as the visual shape is used intensively by the organization. The original perception of the visual shape or the logo will be “colored” in the long run by associations with organization. In the other words, assuming that the degree to which organization has a strong set of negative or positive associations and high familiarity will whether dominate or at least have an impact on the nature of perception people attached to symbol (Henderson et al., 2003).

As a consequence, it may be assumed that a collection of so-called intrinsic and extrinsic properties will affect an individual's interpretation and understanding of a logo (Henderson et al., 2003):

(1) Intrinsic properties of a logo: It is properties that result from confrontation with logo itself directly, divided into: (a) perception of graphical parts (what is logo's factual interpretation?); and (b) perception of referential parts (what does the logo represent?);

(2) Extrinsic properties: They originate from the associations with company behind the logo. In turn these associations are partly defined by the behaviour of the organization in the past and the intensity of communication in which they express their values to internal and external audience.

Research Design

This research may be deemed as “descriptive research” especially that it aims to identify the factors that basically influence consumer recognition level of business logos in Kingdom of Bahrain; the research broke down those factors into two parts: first the demographic factors that pertain to customer and shall be collected through identifying each and every respondent's profile including his/her age, income, gender, etc., and second, factors that pertain to the concerned logos in the survey, such as customer perception of the logo in terms of usage experience, emotion associated to the logo, customer familiarity with the logo, and logo visibility (logo repetition) that is the frequency by which customers in Bahraini market are exposed to the selected business logos in their daily life. Besides, other factors are related mainly to the assessment of logo design and aesthetic, such as color combination, design quality, simplicity, and logo representativeness. The research tends to measure those variables against logo recognition in order to describe and identify the most influential factors on logo recognition in predetermined common business sectors within Bahraini market.

Research Method

This research is classified under “quantitative approach” that can be carried out through a survey method. Dully, in order to collect the data, understand the research phenomena from a closer perspective, and describe it in a deep comprehensive manner, a structured interview questionnaire was designed and inclusive to the variables concluded in the literature review phase and each section in the interview questionnaire was designed to reflect the predetermined hypothesis that was mentioned in the first chapter. This justifies the relevancy of the selected instruments to the general aim, objective, questions, and hypothesis of the research.

The structured interview questionnaire basically consisted of two parts: part one for interviewee use and part two for interviewer use. The first part aims to identify customer profile by extracting demographic factors that pertain to the subject. While part two seeks to measure certain factors concluded in literature review section against logo recognition. Part one includes only close-ended multiple choice questions where the subject must select an answer from multiple answers. While, part two of the structured interview questionnaire includes close-ended questions which varied among Likert questions, dichotomous questions, and rating scale questions.

Results

Relationship between Demographic Factors and Logo Recognition

The table below reflects the relationship between the demographic factors and logo recognition. As shown in the table (see Table 1), age has significant relationship with overall logo recognition. This correlation status is indicated by the p -values that are lower than 0.05 level of significance. Thus, it is logical to state the alternative hypothesis is accepted, which states that there is a significant relationship between age and overall logo recognition.

The other demographics, such as gender, nationality, level of education, occupation, have also significant relationship with overall logo recognition. This correlation status is indicated by the p -values that are lower than 0.05 level of significance in the aforesaid categories of dependent variables. Thus, it is logical to state all alternative hypotheses are accepted, which states that there is a significant relationship between demographic factors and overall logo recognition

Table 1

Relationship Between Demographic Factors and Logo Recognition

Variables	Chi-square	P -value	Interpretation
Age	2.73	0.000	Significant
Gender	3.53	0.000	Significant
Nationality	3.52	0.000	Significant
Education	5.97	0.000	Significant
Occupation	2.65	0.000	Significant
Monthly income	3.18	0.000	Significant
Residence location	4.66	0.000	Significant

Factors Affecting Overall Logo Recognition

The following table (see Table 2) reflects the factors affecting the overall logo recognition. As shown in different recognition forms, the factors are associated to customer perception, such as logo familiarity, logo usage experience, and logo visibility. Besides, the factors associated to customer assessment of logo design, such as the color combination, logo simplicity, and overall logo assessment, have significant correlation with

the overall logo recognition of the respondents. This is indicated by the p -values that are lower than 0.05 level of significance in the said variables. Thus, the alternative hypothesis is accepted, which states that there is a significant relationship between overall logo recognition and the respondents' logo scope recognition, logo industry recognition, logo company association recognition, logo familiarity, logo usage experience, logo visibility, logo color combination, logo simplicity, and overall logo design assessment.

However, emotion associated to the logo that is categorized under customer perception, logo design quality, and logo representativeness that is categorized under customer assessment of logo design have no significant correlation with the overall logo recognition of the respondents. This is indicated by the p -values that are higher than 0.05 level of significance in the said variables.

Table 2

Factors Affecting Overall Logo Recognition

Variables	R -value	P -value	Interpretation
Customer perception of a logo			
Logo familiarity	0.709	0.000	Significant
Logo usage experience	0.939	0.000	Significant
Logo visibility	0.721	0.000	Significant
Emotion associated with the logo	-0.032	0.535	Not significant
Customer assessment of logo design			
Logo design quality	0.108	0.535	Not significant
Logo representativeness	0.021	0.681	Not significant
Logo color combination	0.126	0.013	Significant
Logo simplicity	0.119	0.020	Significant
Overall logo evaluation	0.117	0.022	Significant

Conclusion

This study brought about significant contributions to empirical research because it confirmed several findings related to customer recognition level of logo in kingdom of Bahrain. The study basically examines, measures, and documents the demographic profile of respondents, customer perception of logo, and customer assessment of logo design.

Foremost, due to varying profile of concerned sample within the study, it was possible to correlate several demographic factors to the logo recognition, such as age, gender, income, residence, and education level. The study confirmed Solomon, Russell-Bennett, and Previte's (2013) discussion that physiological factors like age may cause differences in retrieval ability, besides that it proved Loftus, Banaji, Schooler, and Foster's (1987) view who raised customer's gender as another demographic factor that may influence recognition. In this study the variable relationship profile indicated that there is a significant relation between respondent's recognition of logo and all demographic factors inserted in the study.

In the discussion of Henderson and Cote (1998), it was pointed that a logo is a brand identity sign and it is referred to as a graphical typeface element or graphic. On a broader level, Blue Wheel Media (2018) explained that a logo is a symbol or graphic mark that is utilized by an organization or a business entity or even individual in order to foster broader recognition. In relation to the study, it was discovered that most of the respondents recognize the scope of inserted logos. Recognizing the scope of the logo, whether it is operating locally or international, is an important factor for the success of the business recognition.

Blue Wheel Media (2018) claimed that logos are used for broader recognition and another form of recognition is the recognition of the industry sector where the business is operating and positioned. For example, some logos are naturally associated to the field of medicine or to the field of arts and sciences. In this study, most of the respondents recognize the industry sector of Zara, House of Uniforms, Louis Vuitton, Alshifaa Hospital, McDonald, Jasmis, Tony and Guy Salon, Pace e Luce, Al-Ghusoon, and Apricot Beauty Salon. The ability of the potential consumers to recognize the industry sector of the logo is also considered an important aspect in business promotion and recognition development. This basically means that if the potential consumers cannot associate the nature of business logo, then the cognitive ability will be confused which may lead to a difficulty in recognizing the logo.

According to Henderson and Cote (1998), logo recognition basically happens at two main levels. The first one is “correct recognition” where the customer must remember seeing the logo, while the second one is “recall” where the logo must remind the brand or company name. In this study, most of the respondents recognize the company name associated to inserted logos. Surprisingly, the said results confirm the fact that most of these logos in Bahrain are generally recognized. It must also be noted that the level of recognition for particular logo might also be influenced by other factors, such as the marketing strategies employed by the company or even the quality of the logo itself.

Generally, Machado et al. (2012) opined that logos speed up the process of brand recognition. This view was clearly reflected in determining customer overall recognition of examined logos that were measured through three focal components encompassing: logo scope, industry sector, and company name. The concerned logo ranged among extremely recognized, highly recognized, and moderately recognized. To be more specific, according to mean score extracted from statistic tests, it has been observed that logos which belong to food and beauty sector were either highly or extremely recognized unlike medical sector that mostly were moderately recognized. While fashion logos overall recognition varied among extremely, highly, and moderately recognized.

Customer familiarity with the logo is also an important aspect to be tackled in order to determine the most influential factor on logo recognition. This factor may facilitate logo recognition that is one of the basic goals of marketers who constantly try to form and maintain awareness of the business. Hence, in relation to the study, most of the respondents were familiar with Zara, Louis Vuitton, Bahrain Specialist Hospital, Jasmis, and McDonald and such logos were also either highly or extremely recognized, which proves that there is a significant relation between logo recognition and customer familiarity with the logo.

Referring to Solomon et al. (2013) the more experience customer has with the brand, the better ability to recall. This is reflected in the study where the respondents' logo usage experience profile indicates that most of them have experienced using Louis Vuitton, Zara, Alshifaa Hospital, McDonald, Jasmis, and Pace e Luce; most of these logos were also extremely recognized which prove the point that there is a significant relation between customer recognition of business logo and their usage experience.

Solomon et al (2013) and Schiffman and Wisenblit (2015) advanced the idea that the people's perception of logos includes exposure, attention, and interpretation. Customer exposure is associated to logo visibility (the frequency of how the respondents see the logos in their interaction). In this study, the visibility profile of the respondents indicated that the logos that are often visible to respondents were Louis Vuitton, Zara Fashion, Bahrain Specialist Hospital, McDonald, and Jasmis logos and such logos were also highly/extremely

recognized. From this point, the study agrees with Tussing and Greene's (1999) observation that repetition of set of items increases individual's ability to recognize those items. On the other hand, most of moderately recognized logos are rarely visible, such as Al Soroor Fashion, American Mission Hospital, and Alshifaa Hospital.

It was Van der Lans, Cote, Cole, Leong, Smidts, Henderson, Bluemelhuber, Bottomley, Doyle, Fedorikhin, Moorthy, Ramaseshan, and Schmitt (2009) who argued that people of different backgrounds attribute different association to each logo. This basically means that a particular logo may be recognized and perceived in a different manner by different people depending on its overall presentation. One way of exemplifying this premise is the people's emotion toward logo. Nonetheless, for this study, emotions were used to probe respondent's interpretation of logos. Specifically, the respondents associate happiness to logos of Louis Vuitton and McDonald only, while most of the logs evoke no feelings to respondents specifically the following: Al Soroor Fashion, House of Uniforms, Bu Ali Restaurant, and Maki Restaurant besides all beauty and medical logos; such logos fluctuated among highly, moderately and extremely recognized. This justifies the negative correlation among logo recognition and emotion associated to logo. Consequently, the study disagrees with the argument of Park et al. (2013), which states that logos may induce customer to develop emotional relation with what they perceive close to themselves.

Referring to Pittard, Ewing, and Jevons (2007), logos act as a facilitator that speed up recognition of the company or a brand; the rationale behind this statement is that pictures are faster than words which is very important because many company's communications are seen briefly. Therefore, it is critical for the companies to make the proper selection of the logos because they are one of the main vehicles for cutting through clutter to gain attention, communicating image, and speeding recognition of the company/product. However, in relation to this study, the assessment of logo design was examined and correlated to logo recognition in terms of multiple variables, such as design quality, color combination, representativeness, and simplicity.

As for design quality, most of logos with fair design quality were still highly or extremely recognized, such as Apricot Beauty Salon, Ghusoon Beauty Salon, Pace e Luce, Tony and Guy Salon, Bu Ali Restaurant, Maki Restaurant, and Zara Fashion, which means that there is no significant relationship between logo recognition and design quality. This result is unlike many theorists' view who coincide that well designed logos are recognizable, such as Henderson and Cote (1998) and Janiszewski and Meyvis (2001).

According to research sample, the logos with good representativeness are House of Uniforms, Jasmis, and Apricot Beauty Salon and such logos were highly/extremely recognized. The same applies to logos with fair representativeness, such as Louis Vuitton, Zara Fashion, Ghusoon Beauty Salon, Pace e Luce, Tony and Guy Salon, McDonald, and Maki Restaurant. This explains the insignificant relation between logo recognition and representativeness which scored *p*-value of 0.681. Accordingly, the result of this study contrasts Schiffman and Wisenblit's (2015) view that stated that unexpected elements improve customers' logo retention only when those elements are related or representative to brand's message or products, as descriptive brand names and logos have higher tendency to be recognized than those that do not provide adequate cues as to what the product is.

Moreover, the logos that have good color combination are Louis Vuitton, House of Uniforms, McDonald, and Jasmis and those logos were also highly and extremely recognized, which is compatible with Christie (2014) that emphasized on the importance of understanding the psychology of colors in order to design an effective logo.

Finally, many logos with good simplicity based on respondent's assessment were also highly and extremely recognized, such as Louis Vuitton, House of Uniforms, McDonald, and Jasmis. Hence, Henderson et al. (2003) was compatible with the results, which states that simple logos should also speed the recognition of a company or brand.

Here is manifested the importance of correlating customer assessment of logo design to overall logo recognition; Park et al. (2013) assured in his study that brand with high aesthetic attractiveness has more capability to build a connection with customers than brands with lower aesthetic.

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