SURVEY THE EFFECTS OF SOCIETAL MARKETING ON BUILDING CORPORATE IMAGE OF CUSTOMERS (CASE STUDY; IRAN KHODRO COMPANY PRODUCTS IN KHOUZESTAN)

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Abstract
Taking into account the increasing importance of independence and prosperity of the automobile industry and the necessity of the freedom of this industry from dependence on foreign sources, it is essential that societal marketing programs and their influence on the outlook of the consumers toward the products of Iran Khodro be taken into account as beyond a merely money making tool. The functional purpose of the present study is to analyze the influence of societal marketing programs on the outlook of the consumers toward the products of Iran Khodro in Khouzestan.

The nature of the present study is descriptive and its purpose is functional. The sample consists of the customers of Iran Khodro in Khouzestan and the data is collected through field method, using questionnaire as the tool. Data analysis is carried out at two descriptive and deductive levels, using SPSS and Lisrel 8.8. The findings of this functional study show that, concerning the first and the second hypotheses, the societal marketing programs and the organizational relations have a positive and significant influence on the consumers’ opinion. Also, about the third and the fourth hypotheses of the present study which concern the influence of age and gender on the consumers’ opinion, the findings of the present study show that gender has a positive influence, but age does not have any significant influence on the consumers’ opinion of the image of the organization.
1. Introduction

The philosophy of societal marketing is different from other philosophies common in marketing, since it underscores the benefits and welfare of posterity and the society and attempts to involve cultural issues directly in marketing. According to the concept of societal marketing, the marketing managers of organizations and companies have to take into account important factors such as the demand of the consumers and the benefits of society in short and long terms in determining the guidelines and methods of their marketing. Although this field is new compared with commercial and traditional marketing, the role it has played in societal development has brought it to the center of public attention. In societal marketing, making money and personal or organizational benefits is not the main priority. Today, many of the well known brands of the world have reached the conclusion that mere dependence on traditional and commercial marketing cannot guarantee their position in the competitive world of the market. Preserving competitive advantages requires the continuous improvement of the brand, which in itself needs more cooperation between the organizations and the individuals in a society so as to achieve micro and macro societal goals (Khorshidi Gholam Hossesin, 1382).

2. Materials and methods

2.1 The concept of Societal Marketing

Societal marketing is the latest concept among the five marketing philosophies. Some marketing experts and thinkers believe that the focus of marketing should be only on meeting the customers’ demands and needs and that societal health has no place in such a philosophy. They believe that heads of organizations have to move toward their goals through attempting to determine the needs, demands and interests of markets they are aiming at, so that their organization can meet these needs and demands in a more efficient way than other rival organizations. Such measures will, in themselves, lead to more welfare and health in society and among customers.

For example, consider Coca Cola. Most people see this organization as a highly dedicated one that can satisfy customers through producing soft drinks that can pleases them. However, consumer rights groups and the environmentalists claim that the products of this organization lack nutritional value; they damage consumers’ teeth; they are unhealthy because of the high caffeine in them; and disposable bottles and cans they produce pollute the environment.

In a study carried out by (Virvilaite 2011) titled “the societal responsibility of companies in forming an image for the company”, findings show that the most important condition for business is societal responsibility. If we want to meet legal and economic expectations, we need to have a basis for ethical
criteria and humanitarian responsibilities in business. Identity, individuality and marketing communications have a direct relationship with programmed activities. If the customer sees that the products of a certain organization are presented in accordance with his personal needs, societal and economic conditions, he will form a positive image of that organization in his mind.

2.2 Organizational relations and the image of the organization in a consumer’s mind

Organizations are considerably busy creating an image for themselves. There is a strong and positive relationship between individuals’ understanding of an organization and their supportive behaviors toward that organization. Most of the designers work with or within a single organization and design the products of that organization or its visual communications. Designers cooperate with the managers, salespeople, engineers and the workers in the process of production. Although an organization consists of numerous parts, it is generally given a human image. One of the characteristics of an organization is its image. It is said that the positive image is a competitive advantage for an organization. The purpose of the present study is to discuss the image of an organization and the role of designers in the process of its creation (Chatananon, 2007), (Balmer M.T. John .2001)

2.3 Research Questions: The attempt of the present research is to answer the following questions:

- Does societal marketing program have positive influence on the consumers’ opinion of the image of an organization (Case study: products of Iran Khodro in Khouzestan)?
- Do organizational relations influence the consumers’ opinion of the image of organization (Case study: products of Iran Khodro in Khouzestan)?
- Does the consumer’s gender influence the consumers’ opinion of the image of organization (Case study: products of Iran Khodro in Khouzestan)?
- Does the consumer’s age influence the consumers’ opinion of the image of organization (Case study: products of Iran Khodro in Khouzestan)?

3. Deductive statistics

In this stage of the study, the normality and abnormality of the data distribution has to be taken into account so that we can decide about the kind of deductive statistics and analyze research hypotheses.

3.1 Kolmogrov-Smirnov test:

In this stage of the research, we have to take into account the normality and the abnormality of data distribution so as to analyze research hypotheses. In the present study Kolmogrov-Smirnov test has been used to analyze the normality and the abnormality of data distribution. The findings of this test have been used in table 1-1. Since the calculated $sig$ for all variables is greater than 05/0, we can conclude that data distribution for all variables is normal.

Table 1-1 the significance level of Kolmogrov-Smirnov test for variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>components</th>
<th>Significance level $sig$</th>
<th>Test size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>


3.2 Examination of Hypotheses

Since the data are normal, in order to examine research hypotheses we use Pearson correlation test for the first and the second hypotheses, the t test for the two independent groups of the third hypothesis and the single operation analysis of variance for the two independent groups of the fourth hypothesis. The data have to be normal so that we can carry out the above tests. As discussed above, Kolmogrov-Smirnov test has confirmed the normality of the data.

3.2.1 The first hypothesis test

Societal marketing programs have a positive and significant influence on the consumer’s opinion of the image of an organization (case study: the products of Iran Khodro in Khouzestan).

H0: Societal marketing programs do not have a positive and significant influence on the consumer’s opinion of the image of an organization (case study: the products of Iran Khodro in Khouzestan).

H1: Societal marketing programs have a positive and significant influence on the consumer’s opinion of the image of an organization (case study: the products of Iran Khodro in Khouzestan).

Pearson correlation coefficient was used in order to examine the above hypothesis. Results are shown in the following table.

Table 2-1 results of the examination of the first hypothesis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Correlation coefficient</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Societal marketing program on consumer’s opinion</td>
<td>*0/604</td>
<td>0/000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*correlation at 0.01 level

Considering the results of Pearson correlation test for the consumers we can say that since the significance level is 000/0 which is less than 01/0, there is a significant and positive correlation between these two variables.

Therefore, H0 is rejected. The influence of societal marketing program on consumer’s opinion is 0.604 (60/4%).

3.2.2 The second hypothesis test
Organizational relations have a positive and significant influence on consumer’s opinion of the image of organization (case study: The products of Iran Khodro in Khouzestan).

H0: Organizational relations do not have a positive and significant influence on consumer’s opinion of the image of organization (case study: The products of Iran Khodro in Khouzestan).

H1: Organizational relations have a positive and significant influence on consumer’s opinion of the image of organization (case study: The products of Iran Khodro in Khouzestan).

Pearson correlation coefficient was used in order to examine the above hypothesis. Results are shown in the following table.

Table 3-1 results of the examination of the second hypothesis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Correlation coefficient</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Societal marketing program on consumer’s opinion</td>
<td>*0/482</td>
<td>0/000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*correlation at 0.01 level

Considering the results of Pearson correlation test for the sellers we can say that since the significance level is 0/000 which is less than 0/01, there is a significant and positive correlation between these two variables.

Therefore, H0 is rejected. The influence of societal marketing program on consumer’s opinion is 0.482 (48/2%).

3.2.3 The third hypothesis test

In Khouzestan women have a more positive opinion of the image of organization (Iran Khodro products) compared to men.

H0: there is no significant difference in terms of gender concerning the more positive opinion of the image of an organization (case study: Iran Khodro products in Khouzestan).

H1: Women have a more positive opinion of the image of organization (case study: Iran Khodro products in Khouzestan) compared to men.

The independent t test was used to analyze the significance of the difference in average score of individuals’ opinions about the variable of the study, in terms of gender. The independent t test is used when we have two independent groups.

Table 4-1 shows the descriptive statistics such as average, standard deviation and number.

Table 4-1: the descriptive statistics of the third hypothesis
Table 5-1 shows the findings of the test

Table 5-1: the t test with two independent samples of the third hypothesis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Equality of analysis of variance</th>
<th>Average t for tests</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consumer’s opinion of the image of organization</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F statistic</td>
<td>Significance level (p)</td>
<td>Degree of freedom (df)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.719</td>
<td>0.030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>182/6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>equality of variance hypothesis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>inequality of variance hypothesis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table contains two tests. The first test (the equality of variances is 4.719 for F statistic and the criterion for decision making is 0.030) shows that the hypothesis of the equality of variances cannot be rejected. That is to say, taking into account the data for this sample, the variance of the consumer’s opinion of the image of an organization is equal for men and women. The second test is the comparison of averages. Assuming that variances are equal, the criterion for decision making sig (2-tailed) is 0.000 which is less than 0.05; it shows that consumer’s opinion of the image of an organization is not significantly different for the two groups of men and women. Even if we assume that the variance of the two groups is not equal, the same results would follow. In both conditions, the results of the test show that the average of consumer’s opinion of the image of an organization in women (3.59) is more than men (3.03). Therefore, the above hypothesis is confirmed; that is, women have a more positive opinion of the image of the organization (case study: Iran Khodro products in Khouzestan) compared with men.

3.2.4 the fourth hypothesis test

Young consumers have a more positive opinion about the image of the organization (case study: Iran Khodro products in Khouzestan) compared to the older ones.
H0: There is no significant difference in the opinion about the image of an organization (case study: Iran Khodro products in Khouzestan) in terms of age.

H1: Younger consumers have a more positive opinion of the image of the organization (case study: Iran Khodro products in Khouzestan) compared to the older ones.

In order to see whether there is a significant difference in terms of age between the participants about the variable under study, the single agent analysis of variance which functions for more than two independent groups, was used.

Table 6-1: analysis of variance for the fourth hypothesis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consumer’s opinion</td>
<td>0/957</td>
<td>0/100</td>
<td>younger than 25</td>
<td>3/2436</td>
<td>1/0862</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>26-35</td>
<td>3/1227</td>
<td>0/9741</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>36-45</td>
<td>3/1081</td>
<td>1/0886</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>46-55</td>
<td>3/4659</td>
<td>0/9358</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>older than 55</td>
<td>2/8556</td>
<td>0/9660</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Taking into account the above results, since sig. is more than 0/05, (0/1), there is no significant difference in individuals’ opinions in terms of age. Therefore, H0 is confirmed; that is, there is no significant difference in the opinions about the image of the organization (case study: Iran Khodro products in Khouzestan).

4. Results

The sample for the present study consists of 385 customers of Iran Khodro products in Khouzestan, 42.4% of whom are women and 75.6% men. In terms of age, 13.5% of them are younger than 25, 47/3% are between 26 and 35, 19/2% are between 36 and 55, 14/8% are between 46 and 55 and 5/2% are older than 56 years old.

The results of the hypotheses can be seen in the following table. The assumptions will, then, be described.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>result</th>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Confirmed</td>
<td>The 1st hypothesis: societal marketing programs have a positive and significant influence on consumer’s opinion of the image of the organization (case study: Iran Khodro products in Khouzestan)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confirmed</td>
<td>The 2nd hypothesis: organizational relations have a positive and significant influence on consumer’s opinion of the image of the organization (case study: Iran Khodro products in Khouzestan)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confirmed</td>
<td>The 3rd hypothesis: women have a more positive opinion of the image of the</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
According to the first hypothesis, societal marketing programs have a positive and significant influence in consumer’s opinion of the image of the organization (case study: Iran Khodro Products in Khouzestan). Results of Pearson correlation test for this hypothesis with a significance level less than 0.01, (0/000) and the correlation coefficient of 0.604, confirmed the hypothesis.

Results of this hypothesis are in line with the findings of Chatananon et al. In their study, the coefficient of the influence of societal marketing programs on consumer opinion of the image of the organization is 0.37.

According to the second hypothesis, organizational relations have a positive and significant influence on consumer’s opinion of the image of the organization (case study: Iran Khodro Products in Khouzestan). Results of Pearson correlation test for this hypothesis with a significance level less than 0/01, (0/000) and a correlation coefficient of 0/482, confirmed this hypothesis.

Results of the above hypothesis are in line with the study carried out by Chatananon et al. In their study, the coefficient of the influence of societal marketing programs on consumer opinion of the image of the organization is 0/30.

According to the third hypothesis, women have a more positive opinion about the image of the organization (case study: Iran Khodro Products in Khouzestan), compared with men. In order to examine this hypothesis, the t test was carried out for two independent groups. Since the significance level is less than 0/05,(0/03), we conclude that there is a difference between the opinions of women and men. Because the average of women’s opinions (3/59) is more than men (3/03), the hypothesis is confirmed.

Results of the above hypothesis in different from the findings of the study carried out by Chatananon et al. In their study, no relationship between gender and a more positive opinion about the image of organization was discovered. In other words, the above hypothesis is not confirmed in their study.

According to the fourth hypothesis, young consumers have a more positive opinion about the image of the organization (case study: Iran Khodro Products in Khouzestan), compared with older ones. ANOVA (analysis of variance) is used to examine this hypothesis; this test is used to compare the average opinion of more than two groups. Since the significance level is more than 0/05, (0/1), we conclude that there is no significant difference between the opinions of young and old customers about the image of the organization (case study: Iran Khodro Products in Khouzestan). Therefore, this hypothesis is rejected.
Results of the above hypothesis are in line with the findings of the study carried out by Chatananon et al. In their study, no relationship between age and a more positive opinion of the image of an organization has been discovered. In other words, the above hypothesis is not confirmed in their study.

Discussion:

The automotive industry in our country became increasingly vulnerable in 2012 when sanctions reached their highest point and dollar exchange rate increased; notable loss was reported through the financial statements of Iran Khodro. In 2013, the company succeeded in increasing the price of its products and consequently its gross profit margins from 4% in 2012 to 14% of the previous years (Iran Khodro database). But, since there has been a drop in production and sales, the company is making small profit and a fall in sales can result in loss for the company. Also, some analysts believe that if sanctions are eased and international relations are improved, the possibility of cooperation between domestic and foreign automakers will increase, the conditions will be favorable for providing parts and materials and more production will be possible. However, achieving this end requires numerous preparations in international relations which take time and are not certain. If such preparations are made, all the assumptions concerning the automotive industry will be revolutionized and a great change will be possible in this industry.

Conclusion

The most important issue in relation with the sales of Iran Khodro Products is whether this company be able to maintain the level of demand it had before 2012, taking into account the presence of several imported automobiles with higher quality (in 2012 car imports increased by 13%)? The findings of this functional study show that, since maintaining the demands for the products of Iran Khodro is a crucial factor for it to be able to make profit, it should attempt to use the capacities of the markets of Khouzestan. Khouzestan is a free trade area, the fifth most populous province in the country and a great source of oil and gas. For Iran Khodro to be successful in Khouzestan, it should make use of societal marketing programs as a suitable functional tool for having access to the special competitive advantages. Societal marketing is an important and necessary strategy that can create a positive image of the organization in the minds of the customers.

Conflict of interest:

We declare that I did not submit this article to any journal and newspaper and publisher and there is none of conflict of interest and it is original paper.

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11. Lisrel 8.8: is a statistical software package used in structural equation modeling. ... (Scientific Software International).
13. Spss: SPSS Statistics is a software package used for statistical analysis. Long produced by SPSS Inc., it was acquired by IBM in 2009. The current versions (2014) are officially named IBM SPSS Statistics.