

The Role of Brand Identity and Values in Building a Unique Brand Personality

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Abstract: In today's fiercely competitive business landscape, establishing a strong brand identity and values is paramount for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) seeking to thrive in the engineering sector. The current research investigates the role of brand identity and values in shaping a unique brand personality within the engineering SME sector in Pune, India. Employing a systematic sampling approach, the study ensures representation across various sectors and demographics within the engineering industry. Secondary data sources, including government publications, scholarly journals, and industry reports, serve as the foundation for data collection, offering comprehensive insights into the research topic. Methodologies such as Cronbach's alpha assess the measurement instrument's reliability, ensuring the collected data's accuracy and consistency.

Regression analysis elucidates the complex relationships between dependent and independent variables, shedding light on how variations in one variable impact others. Additionally, ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) is employed to discern disparities in means across multiple groups, remarkably illuminating the influence of categorical variables on continuous outcome variables. Sophisticated statistical software such as SPSS or R is employed for data analysis, facilitating the generation of descriptive statistics to summarize sample characteristics and inferential statistics to rigorously test hypotheses or draw meaningful conclusions through regression analysis and ANOVA.

By employing rigorous statistical methods, this study delves into the intricate interplay between brand identity, values, and personality. The findings hold significant implications for SMEs in the engineering sector seeking to carve out a distinctive market position and foster long-term growth amidst heightened competition.

Keywords: Brand identity, Brand values, Brand personality, Engineering SMEs.

INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary marketplace, characterized by intense competition and rapid technological advancements, the role of brand identity and values in shaping a unique brand personality has emerged as a critical area of study. This research explores this dynamic interplay within the context of Engineering Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) in Pune, India. As these SMEs navigate the complexities of the globalized economy, understanding and harnessing the power of brand identity and values becomes imperative for their sustained growth and competitiveness.

Brand personality refers to the human-like traits and characteristics attributed to a brand, influencing consumer perceptions, preferences, and behaviours. It encapsulates the distinctiveness, authenticity, and emotional resonance that a brand evokes in the minds of its target audience. In today's fiercely competitive marketplace, where products and services often exhibit parity in features and functionalities, cultivating a unique brand personality is a potent differentiator for SMEs, enabling them to carve out a distinct identity and foster deeper connections with consumers.

Establishing a robust brand identity framework is central to developing a compelling brand personality, encompassing the Brand's core values, mission, vision, and positioning. Brand identity serves as the foundation upon which a brand's personality is constructed, providing a coherent and consistent narrative that communicates the essence and ethos of the Brand to its stakeholders. For engineering SMEs in Pune, articulating a clear and compelling brand identity is paramount, as it not only helps define their unique value proposition but also facilitates alignment with the evolving needs and aspirations of their target market.

By examining whether SMEs prioritize the cultivation of brand identity and values and identifying the core values they deliver to customers, this study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the current landscape. Additionally, by investigating the gaps in developing a unique brand positioning with the Brand's unique personality, this research seeks to offer insights into areas for improvement. Ultimately, this study's findings aim to enhance brand strategies within Engineering SMEs, facilitating their ability to carve out a distinctive and compelling brand presence in their respective markets.

The significance of a brand name is increasingly recognized alongside the product or service it represents, highlighting the pivotal role of brand values in shaping consumer preferences (Beig & Nika, 2019). Understanding the processes involved in brand identity and their resultant brand image is crucial for collective brand success. The complexity of identity and image management adds unpredictability and innovation to management discussions (David N Bibby, 2015). Establishing standards or frameworks is preferred when developing an active brand identity to ensure accuracy from the outset, guided by Lord Kelvin's adage that quantification leads to enhancement (Mindrut et al., 2015a). Trust forms the cornerstone of a strong brand, distinguishing between rebranding and brand building (Bagga, 2015). Organizations must exceed client expectations, fulfil commitments, and deliver outstanding experiences to cultivate a positive reputation.

Brand managers diligently ensure their Brand's presence in consumers' minds, as brands promise an experience (Wheeler, 2023). Brand builders wield significant influence in crafting a brand's identity, possessing the freedom to establish a new brand or redefine existing brands, even those with historical ties or founder identities. The Branding prism, depicted in Figure 1, emphasizes relationships, self-image, culture, and physique as essential components of brand identity (Reference). By elucidating a brand's inner and outer characteristics, the prism aids SMEs in crafting narratives and imbuing brands with the necessary identity for resonating with their target audience.

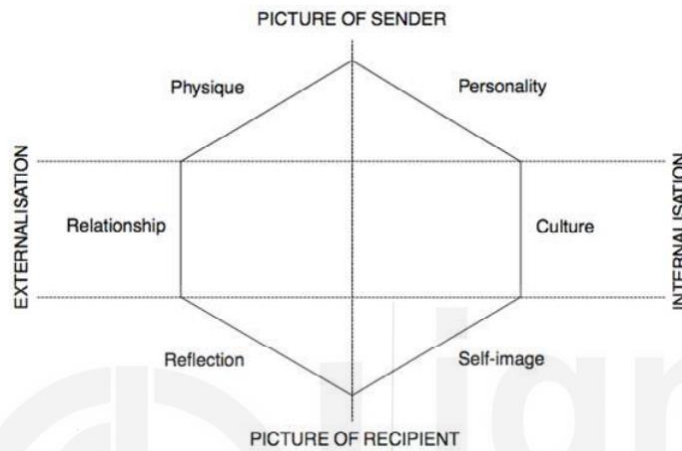


Fig 1. Kapferer's Brand Identity Prism (Srivastava, 2017)

A brand's personality serves as its distinct identity, shaping how it presents itself to the public and distinguishing it from competitors. A prism model facilitates a comprehensive examination of an existing brand, determining its current state, potential trajectory, and necessary external adjustments to align with desired brand perceptions (Beig & Nika, 2019). Long-term brand building requires substantial investment to enhance brand awareness, disseminate company messaging, and foster consumer loyalty over time. This strategic approach prioritizes brand investment over immediate financial gains, recognizing the enduring value of brand equity (Jones, 2021).



Fig 2. Brand Building Factors (Gyan Kosh, 2019)

Effective brand management requires internal and external alignment to ensure consistent brand messaging and values across all organizational levels (Wheeler, 2023). Internally, all stakeholders must understand and embody the Brand's positioning and values, fostering a cohesive brand culture. Externally, brand reputation is bolstered through positive media exposure, celebrity endorsements, strategic event affiliations, and influencer partnerships, all of which contribute to heightened brand credibility and consumer trust (Kheder, 2018).

Customer-centric branding strategies, characterized by attentive customer service, robust interpersonal connections, and transparent organizational structures, are pivotal in driving commercial growth and enhancing consumer value in today's globalized market landscape. Furthermore, a brand's long-term viability is reinforced through continual innovation in product development, efficient distribution channels, and effective communication strategies, which deepen customer engagement and loyalty (Brito, 2023). Ultimately, the study underscores the significance of brand identity and personality in shaping a company's competitive advantage and sustainable growth trajectory, emphasizing the need for strategic alignment with evolving market dynamics and consumer preferences.

The following research objectives are formulated to gain essential insights into the current practices of SMEs concerning Brand Identity and Values, aiming to provide valuable recommendations:

- To assess the extent to which Engineering SMEs prioritize the development of Brand Identity and Values within their organizational strategies.
- To investigate SMEs' recognition and articulation of core Brand Values and alignment with customer expectations and preferences.
- To identify and analyze engineering SMEs' challenges and shortcomings in establishing a distinctive brand positioning that reflects their Brand's unique personality.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the pursuit of understanding the intricate dynamics of brand identity, brand personality, and brand image, this research delved into a comprehensive analysis. A survey comprising 1032 individuals, all Volvo product purchasers aware of Jeremy's endorsement, provided invaluable insights (Wu & Chen, 2019). It illuminated the profound impact of brand behaviour on consumer perceptions and underscored its managerial implications. Marketers can glean significant insights from brands fostering sentimental attachment and affinity towards their offerings, thereby informing brand positioning strategies (Becheur et al., 2017).

In today's fiercely competitive landscape, long-term survival necessitates the cultivation of a distinct brand personality and loyal customer base. Brand behaviour, encompassing tone of voice and conduct, forms the cornerstone of brand differentiation (JAIN, 2017). The study by Mao et al. (2020) underscores the pivotal role of brand behaviour, personality, and identity in shaping purchase intent through flow experience mediation. Moreover, the interplay between personality, trust, and brand loyalty is examined to elucidate consumer-brand relationship dynamics (Villagra et al., 2021).

Brand identities evoke rational and emotive responses, with consumers employing analytic or natural cognitive styles (Alvarado-Karste & Guzmán, 2020). This research explores the impact of business identity-cognitive style harmony on perceived brand value and the role of social influence on

brand perception (Alvarado-Karste & Guzmán, 2020). Additionally, brand loyalty creation and maintenance strategies are explored, delving into the causal connections between various elements through structural equation modelling (Jamshidi & Rousta, 2021).

Further insights emerge regarding the influence of unique value propositions on customer loyalty and brand image, emphasizing the significance of brand experience in enhancing brand equity (Bakri et al., 2021; Pina & Dias, 2021). The correlation between brand image and social media marketing underscores the importance of strategic branding initiatives in the digital realm (Savitri et al., 2021). Moreover, aesthetic appeal and brand personality interaction emphasize the importance of visual branding elements in shaping consumer perceptions (Luffarelli et al., 2019).

Scholarly contributions extend to service marketing within educational institutions, emphasizing the importance of heritage, reliability, and service excellence in cultivating a robust brand image (Panda et al., 2019). A case study approach further elucidates the brand identity co-creation process, particularly within small to medium-sized B2B corporations (Iglesias et al., 2020).

In conclusion, organizations' relentless pursuit of gratifying customer experiences underscores the paramount importance of brand experience in enhancing brand value (Mindrut et al., 2015b). This collective body of research enriches our understanding of brand dynamics and provides invaluable insights for practitioners navigating the complex terrain of brand management.

Research Gap

While extensive literature discusses the importance of brand identity and values in shaping brand personality, a notable gap exists in understanding their intricate interaction to create a wholly unique brand persona. Previous research has often focused on isolated aspects, such as establishing brand identity or assessing the impact of brand values on consumer perceptions. However, these studies lack a holistic examination of how these components synergize to shape brand personality comprehensively. Therefore, there is a pressing need for research that delves deeper into the nuanced interplay between brand identity elements and values, exploring how they converge to cultivate a distinctive and resonant brand personality. Such investigations hold the potential to elucidate specific strategies and mechanisms through which brands can effectively differentiate themselves in the competitive marketplace, thereby providing valuable insights for both practitioners and scholars seeking to foster brand uniqueness and enhance consumer engagement.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a quantitative research approach, employing a Likert scale with seven rating points to collect data from 380 medium-sized engineering businesses (SMEs). Additionally, secondary data from various relevant sources complements the primary data collection process. The key components of the research methodology are outlined as follows:

Quantitative Research Design: A quantitative approach addresses the research questions effectively. This design enables the collection of numerical data, facilitating subsequent statistical analysis to identify patterns, correlations, and trends.

7-Point Likert Scale: The study utilizes a 7-point Likert scale to gauge respondents' opinions, attitudes, and perceptions about the investigated variables. This scale provides a spectrum of response options, allowing for nuanced data collection and analysis.

Research Hypothesis

H0: There is no significant relationship between a unique brand personality and its brand identity and defined values among engineering SMEs.

H1: A well-crafted brand identity and defined values contribute to developing a unique brand personality for engineering SMEs.

H0: Engineering SMEs based in Pune do not actively engage in developing a unique brand personality aligned with their identity and values.

H2: Engineering SMEs based in Pune actively develop a unique brand personality aligned with their identity and values.

Independent Variables

☐ Unique Brand Identity

- ☐ Well-defined brand Values
- ☐ Brand Promise

Dependent Variables

- ☐ A Unique Brand Personality

Sample Selection: The study collects data from 380 Engineering SMEs. Systematic sampling methods ensure diverse representation across different sectors and demographics within the engineering industry.

Data Collection: Secondary data sources, including industry reports, academic journals, and government publications, are utilized for data collection. Leveraging existing data provides comprehensive insights into the research topic.

Statistical Techniques:

Reliability Test: The reliability of the measurement instrument (Likert scale) is assessed using methods such as Cronbach's alpha to ensure consistent measurement of intended constructs. **Regression Analysis:** Regression analysis examines the relationships between dependent and independent variables, identifying predictors and understanding their interrelations.

ANOVA (Analysis of Variance): ANOVA is used to analyze mean differences across multiple groups, which is particularly useful when comparing the effects of categorical variables on continuous outcome variables.

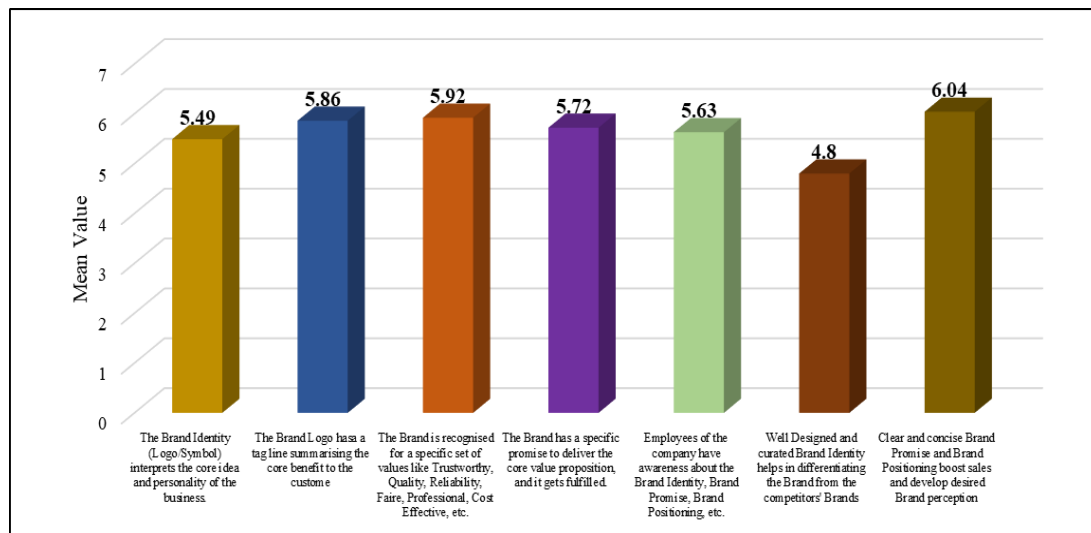
Data Analysis: Statistical software such as SPSS or R is utilized for data analysis. Descriptive statistics summarize sample attributes, while inferential statistics, such as ANOVA and regression analysis, test hypotheses and conclude.

Ethical Considerations: Ethical principles are strictly followed throughout the research process, ensuring anonymity, confidentiality, and appropriate consent for participant data usage.

The outlined research methodology provides a structured approach to conducting a quantitative study on Engineering SMEs, utilizing secondary data and employing various statistical techniques for analysis and interpretation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive statistics



The table presents descriptive statistics regarding various aspects of brand identity and perception within a business context. Each element is evaluated based on mean scores and standard deviations. Respondents perceived the Brand positively, with mean scores ranging from 4.8 to 6.04 out of 7. Higher mean scores indicate stronger agreement with brand identity, recognition, and promise

fulfilment statements. However, there are variations in perceptions, as indicated by the standard deviations, suggesting differing levels of agreement among respondents.

Specifically, clear brand promise and positioning receive higher mean scores, indicating their perceived importance in boosting sales and shaping desired brand perception. Conversely, aspects like differentiation through brand identity design show slightly lower mean scores, possibly suggesting room for improvement. These statistics provide insights into the strengths and potential areas for enhancing Brand identity and perception strategy.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.915	7

The table provides reliability statistics, revealing that seven items achieved an impressive Cronbach's Alpha of 0.915. This observation indicates a high degree of internal constancy among the items, which suggests that they consistently assess the same fundamental construct. As a result, the data derived from these items can be considered more reliable.

Hypothesis 1:

H0: There is no significant relationship between a unique brand personality and its brand identity and defined values among engineering SMEs.

H1: A well-crafted brand identity and defined values contribute to developing a unique brand personality for engineering SMEs.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.967 ^a	.935	.934	.578

ANOVA^a

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	1797.455	5	359.491	1077.814	.000 ^b
Residual	124.743	374	.334		
Total	1922.197	379			

a. Dependent Variable: Designed and curated Brand Identity helps in differentiating the Brand from the competitors' Brands

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	-1.894	0.125		-15.192	0.000
The Brand Identity (Logo/Symbol) interprets the core idea and personality of the business.	0.796	0.048	0.57	16.419	0.000
The Brand Logo has a tagline summarising the core benefit to the customer	-0.191	0.056	-0.15	-3.438	0.001
The Brand is recognized for specific values, such as trustworthiness, quality, reliability, fairness, professionalism, cost-effectiveness, etc.	-0.117	0.023	-0.087	-5.052	0.000
The Brand has a specific promise to deliver the core value proposition, which is fulfilled.	0.779	0.065	0.636	12.005	0.000
The company's employees know Brand identity, Brand promise, Brand positioning, etc.	-0.056	0.02	-0.045	-2.74	0.006

a. Dependent Variable: Designed and curated Brand Identity helps in differentiating the Brand from the competitors' Brands

For engineering SMEs, the table displays the outcomes of a regression analysis that investigated the connection between the Brand's identity, defined standards, and brand personality. The model shows a high level of explanatory power ($R = .967$, $R\text{ Square} = .935$), indicating that brand identity and defined values explain 93.5% of the variability in brand personality. The statistically significant ANOVA results ($F = 1077.814$, $p < .001$) indicate that the regression hypothesis adequately describes the data.

Examining the coefficients, it appears that brand identity elements such as logo interpretation and promise fulfilment positively influence brand personality, while the presence of specific values has a negative impact. This suggests that while a well-curated brand identity and promise fulfilment contribute to a unique brand personality, particular values may not have the same effect. Therefore, Hypothesis H01, which proposes that a well-curated brand identity and defined values develop a unique brand personality for engineering SMEs, is accepted. Hypothesis H0, which suggests that a distinctive brand personality is unrelated to brand identity and defined values, is rejected.

Hypothesis 2:

H0: Engineering SMEs based in Pune do not actively engage in developing a unique brand personality aligned with their identity and values.

H2: Engineering SMEs based in Pune actively develop a unique brand personality aligned with their identity and values.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.422 ^a	.178	.167	1.348

ANOVA^a

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	147.196	5	29.439	16.210	.000 ^b
Residual	679.212	374	1.816		
Total	826.408	379			

a. Dependent Variable: Clear and concise Brand Promise and Brand Positioning boost sales and develop desired Brand perception

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	3.826	0.291		13.148	0.000
The Brand Identity (Logo/Symbol) interprets the core idea and personality of the business.	0.392	0.113	0.429	3.469	0.001
The Brand Logo has a tagline summarising the core benefit to the customer	0.122	0.13	0.146	0.939	0.348
The Brand is recognized for specific values, such as trustworthiness, quality, reliability, fairness, professionalism, cost-effectiveness, etc.	0.004	0.054	0.005	0.078	0.938
The Brand has a specific promise to deliver the core value proposition, which is fulfilled.	-0.126	0.152	-0.157	-0.835	0.404
The company's employees are aware of brand identity, brand promise, brand positioning, etc.	0.008	0.047	0.01	0.162	0.872

a. Dependent Variable: Clear and concise Brand Promise and Brand Positioning boost sales and develop desired Brand perception

The table presents the results of a study examining Hypothesis 2, which posits that engineering Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) from Pune either do or do not develop a unique brand personality

with its identity and values. Based on a regression model's R-squared value of 0.178, it can be inferred that the variables under consideration account for around 17.8% of the diversity in brand development.

The ANOVA results indicate significant variation explained by the regression model ($F(5, 374) = 16.210, p < .001$). Looking at the coefficients, the Brand Identity (Logo/Symbol) and its interpretation significantly contribute to brand personality development ($\beta = 0.429, p = 0.001$). However, other factors such as tagline presence, specific values association, and fulfilment of brand promise do not significantly contribute. Thus, Hypothesis 2 is partially accepted: while engineering SMEs from Pune develop a unique brand personality with their identity and values, certain aspects like taglines and specific value associations may not be as prominent in their brand development strategies.

OBJECTIVES – FINDINGS – RECOMMENDATIONS

Throughout this study, we have aimed to investigate the brand management practices of engineering SMEs, focusing on key objectives related to brand identity, core values, and brand positioning. The findings shed light on the current status of brand management strategies within the engineering SME sector and provide valuable insights for future improvements.

Our research revealed that engineering SMEs significantly emphasize developing their brand identity and values. This focus on cultivating a unique brand identity was evident through high internal consistency and regression analysis, highlighting the influential role of brand personality. As a result, we recommend that engineering SMEs continue prioritizing brand identity and values development as fundamental components of their branding strategy to uphold competitiveness in the market.

Secondly, our investigation highlighted that SMEs in the engineering sector do indeed identify core values for their brands, contributing substantially to brand personality. However, SMEs need to conduct thorough market research to precisely pinpoint these core values, aligning their branding strategies accordingly. SMEs can strengthen their brand positioning and enhance customer engagement by ensuring alignment between brand values and customer expectations.

Lastly, our study identified variations in developing unique brand positioning among engineering SMEs, particularly concerning regional and industry-specific factors. While SMEs prioritize brand differentiation, they must tailor their branding approaches to these factors to ensure a cohesive brand positioning that resonates with target customers. This requires a nuanced understanding of regional market dynamics and industry trends to effectively communicate the Brand's unique personality.

In conclusion, our findings underscore the importance of brand management practices in engineering SMEs and highlight areas for improvement. Engineering SMEs can enhance their competitiveness and foster stronger connections with their target audience by focusing on brand identity, core values identification, and tailored brand positioning strategies. It is imperative for SMEs to continuously evaluate and refine their brand management strategies to adapt to evolving market dynamics and maintain relevance in the competitive landscape.

Summary

Objective	Findings and Conclusion	Recommendations
To know whether Engineering SMEs focus on developing the Brand Identity & Values.	The study reveals that engineering SMEs prioritize developing a unique brand identity and values, as indicated by high internal consistency and regression analysis, which strongly influence brand personality.	Engineering SMEs should continue emphasizing brand identity and values development as a core aspect of their branding strategy to maintain competitiveness.
To explore whether SMEs identify the core Values the Brand delivers to its customers.	The research underscores that SMEs in the engineering sector do identify core values for their brands, contributing significantly to brand personality.	SMEs should conduct thorough market research to pinpoint the core values they aim to deliver to their customers, aligning their branding strategies accordingly.
To understand the gaps in developing a unique brand positioning with the Brand's unique personality by engineering SMEs.	While SMEs prioritize brand differentiation, variations exist in emphasizing specific branding elements across different regions.	Engineering SMEs should tailor their branding approaches to regional and industry-specific factors, ensuring a cohesive brand positioning that resonates with target customers.

CONCLUSION

Investigating small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the engineering sector yields valuable insights into the fundamental correlation between brand identity, clearly articulated principles, and brand personality. Results indicate a significant influence of a well-curated brand identity on brand personality, underscoring SMEs' dedication to crafting a unique brand identity and values. This finding underscores SMEs' commitment to differentiation in a fiercely competitive market environment. The robust internal consistency among items measuring brand identity and values, reflected in a high Cronbach's Alpha value of .915, enhances the reliability of the collected data. Moreover, regression analysis reinforces these findings, with the model explaining 93.5% of the variance in brand personality. Elements such as logo interpretation and promise fulfilment emerge as positive contributors to brand personality, emphasizing the importance of a well-defined brand identity.

Regarding the geographical focus, the study examines engineering SMEs in Pune, India. Findings suggest that while these SMEs invest in cultivating a unique brand personality aligned with their identity and values, certain components like taglines and specific value associations may not receive as much emphasis in their branding strategies. This nuanced understanding underscores the complexity of brand development across different contexts and highlights the necessity for tailored branding approaches based on regional and industry-specific considerations.

In conclusion, the study emphasizes the pivotal role of brand identity and values in shaping the brand personality of engineering SMEs. While brand differentiation and personality development remain paramount for these enterprises, the relative significance of specific branding elements varies across regions and contexts. The findings offer valuable insights for SMEs seeking to enhance brand visibility and effectively communicate their unique value proposition to clients in a fiercely competitive market landscape.

LIMITATIONS

- Geographical specificity: The study's focus solely on engineering SMEs from Pune may limit the generalizability of findings to SMEs in other regions or industries.
- Industry focus: Narrowing the scope to engineering SMEs may overlook unique branding dynamics in other sectors, potentially limiting the applicability of findings to broader SME contexts.
- Size bias: Concentrating on SMEs may overlook insights relevant to larger enterprises with different branding resources and strategies, potentially limiting the study's insights on brand personality development.
- Limited stakeholder perspective: The research may not have explored the perspectives of key stakeholders such as customers, employees, or competitors, potentially overlooking valuable insights into brand perception and personality.
- Lack of longitudinal analysis: A lack of longitudinal data collection may hinder assessing how brand identity and values evolve, limiting understanding of long-term brand personality development trends within engineering SMEs from Pune.

FUTURE SCOPE

Here are potential future scopes for this research topic:

- Comparative Analysis: Expand the study to include engineering SMEs from other regions in India or even globally. Researchers can uncover region-specific trends and factors influencing brand development by comparing SMEs' branding strategies and practices across different geographical locations.
- Longitudinal Study: Conduct a longitudinal study to track changes in brand identity, values, and personality over time within engineering SMEs. This approach would provide insights into the evolution of branding strategies in response to market dynamics, technological advancements, and changing consumer preferences.
- Qualitative Research: Interviews and focus groups are examples of qualitative research methods that can be used to supplement quantitative results. Qualitative data can provide engineering SMEs with information on the motivations, perceptions, and obstacles encountered in establishing and sustaining a distinct brand personality.

- Customer Perception Analysis: Investigate how customers perceive and interact with engineering SMEs' brand identities and values. Understanding customer perceptions can help SMEs align their branding efforts more effectively with customer expectations, ultimately enhancing brand loyalty and competitiveness.
- Industry-Specific Analysis: Explore the unique challenges and opportunities faced by engineering SMEs in building brand identity and personality within the context of the engineering industry. This specialized focus can uncover industry-specific best practices and strategies for effective brand management.

By exploring these prospective domains, scholars can enhance their comprehension of how brand identity and values contribute to forming a distinctive brand persona for engineering small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) originating from Pune and other locations. This will contribute to scholarly discourse and practical ramifications for SMEs and marketers.

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