

Impact of Indian Quirky Brand Names on Consumer Preference & Likeability: A Quantitative Study

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Abstract

The paper investigates the impact of quirky, funny brand names on consumer preferences and likeability. Extant research has stated time and again that brand names influence consumer preferences and likeability to a large extent. Marketers have laid several guidelines to be followed while giving a brand its name. However, with changing times, increased competition, few notable brands such as “Chumbak”, “Bewakoof”, Pink- Wasabi, FarziCafe and many more have been found to challenge the naming norms.

The paper explores consumer preferences and likeability with respect to Indian quirky brand names in young adults and thereby adds to the already existing body of knowledge regarding rules of branding. Finally the research shall present results, findings and future recommendations.

Keywords: quirky brand names, brand, consumer preferences and likeability, brand naming norms

Introduction

“Brand” is defined as a unique name, design, sign, symbol, words or a combination of these employed in creating an image that identifies a product and differentiates it from competitors. In due course of time, this image becomes linked with a certain level of satisfaction, quality & credibility, in the consumer’s mind. This is said to influence consumer buying preferences in a positive manner. Brand name, as one of the fundamental dimensions of brand equity, is often considered to be a prerequisite of consumers’ buying decision, as it represents the main factor for including a brand in the consideration set (Moisescu, 2011).

Brands and brand names play an important role in marketing (Kapferer, 2012; Kotler, Keller, Brady, Goodman and Hansen, 2009). Finding the “right” brand name is one of the most delicate issues companies face when creating new brands (Klink, 2000). According to Aaker (1991) and Kazmi (2007) the choice of the “right” brand name can enhance awareness and create a favourable image for a product. Thus the brand name becomes the base of every marketing effort across all touch points.

Marketing thinkers and practitioners have tried to lay down a range of rules and guiding principles for developing brand names and managing brands. From being unique and distinct,

the brand name is supposed to be easy to pronounce, suggestive, indicate concrete qualities etc. It thus is one of the most important differentiating factor when it comes to choice of one over the other. Time and again, it has been made evident that brands need to follow these rules to achieve success. Nevertheless, in these times of 360-degree engagement, one comes across a few highly successful brands that seems to defy theory.

Funky, quirky and cool names, many a times bordering on being derogatory in common parlance stick like a glue in the minds of the buyers. Educational fora that came into existence during the last half a decade such as Palgalguy.com has attained an iconic status, with a rapidly growing user community. The brand has witnessed a phenomenal growth from **158,000** users in 2007 to 40,00,000 registered users and 10,374 Twitter users as well, as on September, 2022¹.

Similarly lifestyle and fashion brands name Bewakoof and Chumbak, the funny and quirky, very Indian lifestyle and fashion brand too has high visibility, both online and offline - at its exclusive stores and multi-brand outlets. Bewakoof, has attained an iconic status, with a rapidly growing user community. The phenomenal brand started in the year 2012. Its fan page has more than 75,000 users². On social media this brand especially Instagram and Facebook have witness 4.5 millions consumers who are loyal to this brand till March 2021³. According to the financial year 2019-20, its annual turnover touched **Rs210 crore**. The brand has estimated to reach Rs250 crore during the year ended March 2022⁴. Twitter active users are 24,857 as on September 2022. Instagram has the highest count with 1.7 million users till 26 September, 2022.⁵

Chumbak, a Home Lifestyle brand receives about 106 daily unique visitors. The domain has 602,364 Facebook Subscribers, 6,505 Tweets, Instagram Users 3,970 and Facebook Likes 603,123 thousand as on September 2022^{6,7}.

At the same time, Chumbak (meaning magnet in Hindi), the funny and quirky, very Indian lifestyle brand too has high visibility, both online and offline - at its exclusive stores and multi-brand outlets. Over the last five years, the brand has witnessed tremendous growth. From being a souvenir store to a lifestyle brand in five years has witnessed 300 percent year on year growth.⁸ With more and more customers visiting the site, Chumbak is considered as one of the most loveable brands online and its story is often compared to that of the Facebook success story. The number of fans acquired over a short period of time is all set to testify the magnetic pull of this label.

Now coming in light is restaurants with quirky names. Restaurants like pink wasabi and Farzi café. Pink wasabi the restaurant which is in a buzz now - a days on social media. This site being the most Instagrammable all-day dining restaurant in Mumbai – Pink Wasabi⁹. Pink Wasabi, the Asian dining space is all set to present a new menu that lets you reveal in an extraordinary gastronomical journey, with an amalgamation of culinary modernisations and new aesthetics, making it the beautiful experience ever! After the great success of the launch in Mumbai one year later they have now launched another branch in Chandigarh. The restaurant has total number of 14,500 Instagram users 1,900 Facebook users and 1,800 Facebook likes.^{10,11}

Farzi Café endeavours to showcase an exclusive, modernist approach to Indian food, where guests not only enjoy culinary inventions as part of its tapas style menu but also offers a high energy space, perfect for a relaxing dining experience. The cuisine served at Farzi Café speaks for itself, as it surprises the palate as never before. Focusing on the gourmet diner as well as the youth of India, Farzi Café aims to bring Indian cuisine back in-Vogue. At Farzi Café, it has just one meaning - creating an illusion with its cuisine. It is a quirky, chic, modern Indian café, where guests enjoy a sensory experience through the finest modern Indian cuisine, with a high energy ambiance. The restaurant has an average 3,000 followers for its different Facebook pages as per the branches all over India and 41,100 Instagram followers¹².

The chain will expand to Canada through a Farzi Café in the middle of October and will have 25 operational cloud kitchens by the end of this year, up from seven currently¹³. It will open its cloud kitchen brand Louis Burger, currently present in Mumbai, on October 15 in Delhi, Noida and Gurugram and has eight franchised Farzi Café outlets in the pipeline. The list however is becoming longer with brands named as Petoo, Bewakoof.com, and many more joining others with quirky names. Restaurants like 'Pink wasabi' in Mumbai and Chandigarh and Farzi café chains all over India are a few others on the same bandwagon.

The purpose of this paper is to examine and explore the influence of a brand name in customers' purchase decision and thereby add to the already existing body of knowledge regarding rules of branding. The second section of the paper focuses on the objectives and literature review. Section three discusses the methodology and hypothesis development. Section four represents results, findings and discussions and section five comprises conclusion and future recommendations.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To investigate consumer preference with respect to Indian quirky Brands
2. To assess the recall factor of such funky, quirky brand names.

II. Literature Review

Brand & the Brand Name

Brands are an integral part of present day businesses. It has been recognized that the company's real value lies in the minds of potential buyers or consumers. "A brand is both, tangible and intangible, practical and symbolic, visible and invisible under conditions that are economically viable for the company" (Kapferer, 1986).

The American Marketing Association defines the term 'Brand' as "A name, term, symbol or design, or a combination of them, which is intended to signify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors."

Several definitions put together, a brand is the basis of relationship and a promise to the consumer. It is the experience with the consumers.

A brand name on the other hand is not just a label; it may be an important product characteristic and an integral part of consumers' decision making set. It represents many ideas and features associated with the product it signifies.

Brand names are important means to communicate brand identity to consumers (Aaker 1996; Henderson and Cote 1998; Shimp 2003). Since a decade there has been ongoing research on brand names (Collins 1977; Gardner and Levy 1955; Miller et al. 1971) which has given rise to a wide body of knowledge. Characteristics of brand names and their impact on one's memory has been of utmost importance for researchers for a long time (Boyd 1985; Chen and Paliwoda 2003; Durgee and Stuart 1987; Keller et al. 1998; Kohli and LaBahn 1997; Kohli et al. 2005; Lowrey et al. 2003; Robertson 1989; Sen 1999; Van den Bergh 1990; Van den Bergh et al. 1987; Wänke et al. 2007).

However, it has been researched that, in a cluttered market, the yearning to be different and create an instant brand recall has led to many firms experimenting with unusual names. While some want the brand name to connect instantly with potential customers, others want it to be just quirky,

In present day parlance, a brand name that could tickle your funny bone, grab eyeballs and help snare those first few thousand users is what sells with most of the young Indian consumers.

The study was carried out in two phases- qualitative and quantitative. The qualitative study include transcription of interviews with the founders of few of the quirky brands mentioned below.

¹⁴The thirty four year old, Ritesh Dwivedy, named his start-up "Petoo"— meaning "glutton". In the kitchen of Petoo, food gets cooked and is then delivered to customers.

In an interview Dwivedy said. "We don't think Petoo is negative. It is rather funny. We wanted to association food with fun," Petoo gets 1,000 orders a day and has over 15,000 registered users. Such is the case with Bewakoof.com meaning senseless in English

¹⁵Harish Bijoor, Chief Executive officer of brand and business strategy firm Harish Bijoor Consults Inc stated that "Quirky helps you stand out. There is enormous clutter in the start-ups sector. One way to stand out is by having a exclusive and unique brand name,".

He added, "the young want to be irreverent. By having such names it becomes easier for brands to associate with their target audience—the youth. It helps them in having the first stickiness on the stage,"

Chumbak today is one of India's most recognizable quirky brand, as mentioned in an interview¹⁶ and Shubra Chadha, the co-founder of Chumbak is being addressed as the quirk queen. In an interview with e-Inc, Bloomberg TV, Vivek Prabhakar, Founder of Chumbak said that "The most widely used and affordable souvenirs were that of fridge magnets. So they thought of Indian fridge magnets that talk about the country and the places that there are in India. Thus the original idea of Chumbak was of fun cool collectibles on India."¹⁷ From being a souvenir brand Chumbak is a lifestyle brand found in millions of homes.

Allywin Agnel, the founder of India's largest online MBA discussion forum, PagalGuy, found the name just perfect for a site that attracted the attention of motivated aspirants. Users of PaGaLGuY are called puyas and believe that "pagalpan" (Hindi word for insanity) is what drives the community - the insanity to believe in.¹⁸

III. Research Methodology:

In this study the researchers have undertaken an exploratory research design to conclude the hypothesized testing. Questionnaire survey was administered. It is divided into two parts. Part 1 is about demographics of the respondents such as age, occupation, and to gauge awareness with respect to Indian quirky brand names. The second part assessed the impact of funny quirky brand names on consumers' preference and likeability. Five point Likert scale has been taken. Research was carried out in area of Mumbai, there were 100 respondents which included males and females from educational institutes in the age group of 15 – 24 years. The method that was carried out for the research was simple non-probability convenient sampling.

Research Questions

1. Do quirky brand names have an impact on consumer preference and likeability
2. Are quirky brand names easy to recall?

Hypothesis:

H1: Quirky brand name has significant relationship with consumer preferences and likeability.

H2: Quirky brand names have a higher recall.

IV Research Results

Data analysis and findings

Part 1

The first section of the survey explored the awareness of the respondents with regards to quirky/unique/different brand names.

Question 1 asked respondents about the Indian quirky brands names they recollected with respect to educational brands. Names such as Byjus, ,Bright, Lifehacker, Cramster, Qwiki, Career360 ,Physics wallah ,Gradeup, Coursera, ,Great Learning, Khan Academy, Pathshala, Clever ,Ace, Brainly.

Question 2 asked respondents about the Indian quirky brands names they recollected with respect to restaurants category. Names such as Foo , Baithak, MomuStory, Mitron , Friends, Aura, Vividh, . Namaste ,MBA Chaiwala ,Chai Sutta Bar, foodie adda, Chayoos, Monk wonk, Chai Theka, 90s Cafe, Firangi Burger, Oye Teri- The kulcha culture, and many more

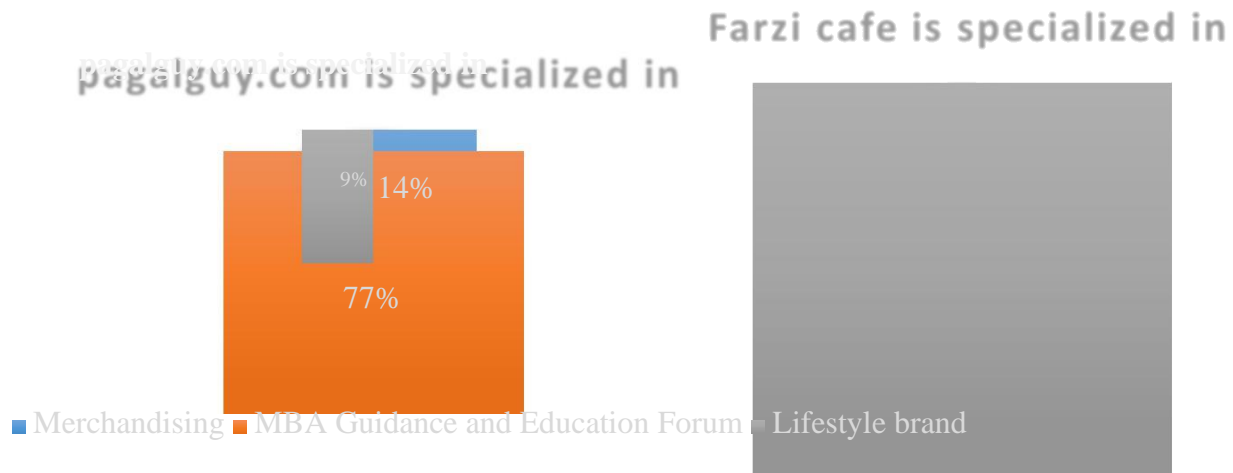
Question 3 asked respondents about the Indian quirky brands names they recollected with respect to lifestyle and fashion category we came across names such as Chumbak, Souled store, myntra , nyka, Meesho, Bewakoof, anabella, max, Biba, Allen Solly, Shorsharaba, Westside, FabIndia, H&M, Pantaloons , zamkudi, Pitaraa, Stop N Stare, ajio,

The analysis of the above confirmed that respondents were aware of quirky/unique/different brand names.

Part 2

The second section of the research firstly explored the recall of the brand names with regards to the category and the subsequent part examined the preference and likeability of respondents with respect to quirky brand names.

Analysis of question 4 to 8 (reference to attached questionnaire)



Inference: 77% respondents recalled the category of the brand



Inference: Massive 91% respondents recalled the category of the brand

chumbak is specialized in

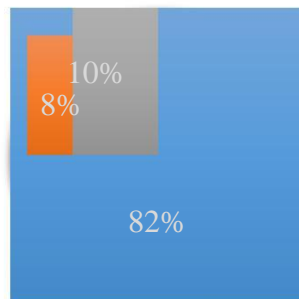
10%5%

85%

■ restaurant ■ life style ■ mithai shop

Inference: 85% respondents recalled the category of the brand

pink - wasabi is specialized in



■ restaurant ■ mithai ■ merchandise store

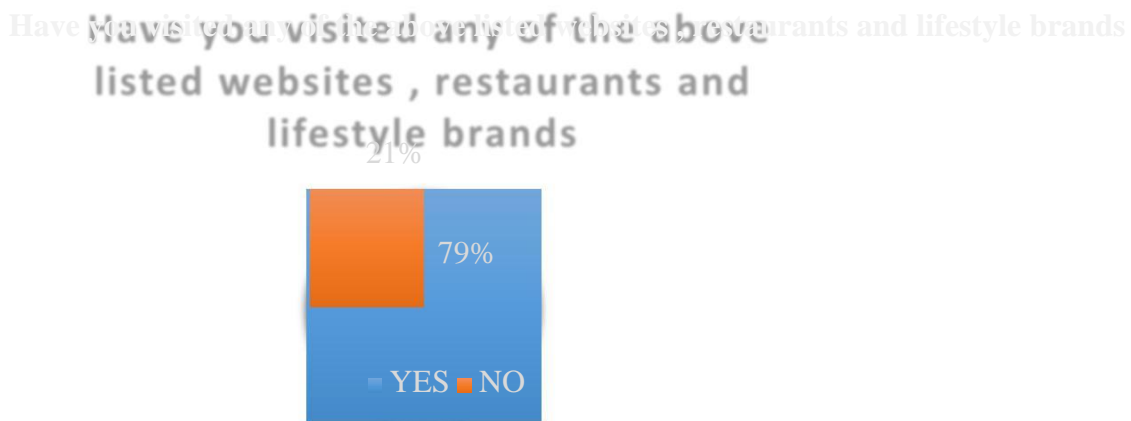
Inference: 82% respondents recalled the category of the brand



Inference: Considerable 92% respondents recalled the category of the brand

Analysis of question 9 to 13 (reference to attached questionnaire)

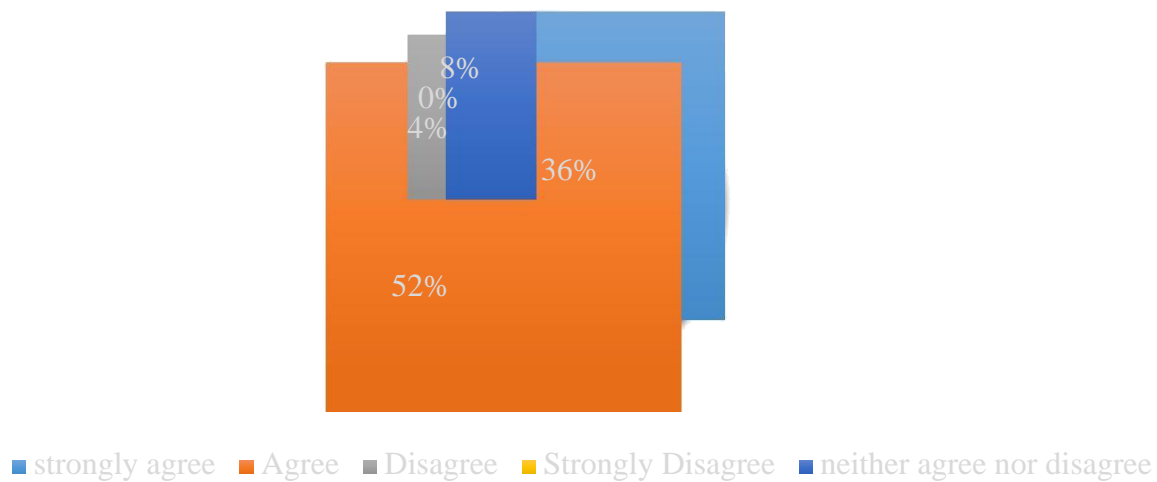
Question 9 explored whether the respondents have ever visited the mentioned brands



Inference: 79% visited the above listed website, restaurants, and lifestyle brands

Question 10 analysed the excitement and likeability of respondents towards funny brand names.

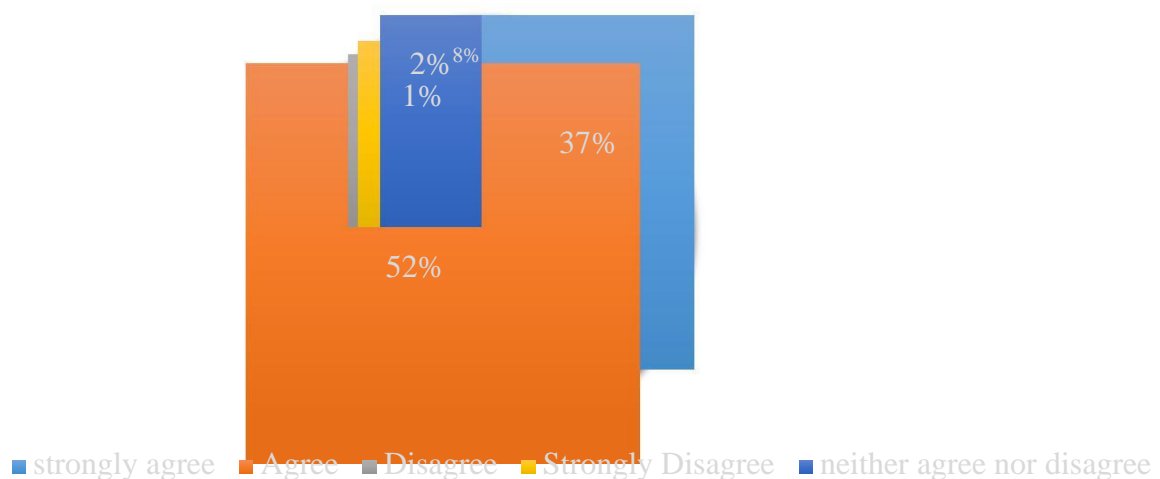
Funny Brand names excite me to try them out



Inference: 52% of total respondents agreed that funny brand names excited them to try it out and 36% strongly agreed to the same

Question 11 was to know whether the respondent can easily remember funny or quirky brands

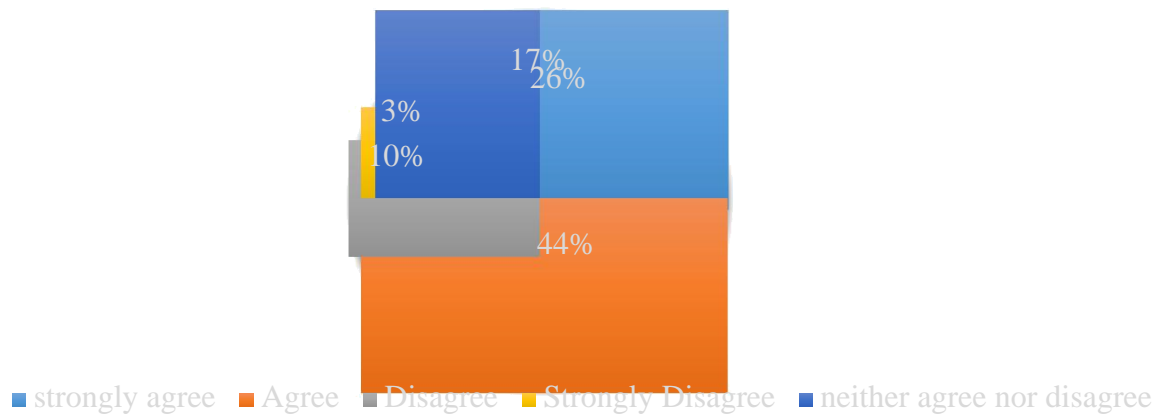
Funny quirky brand names are easy to remember



Inference: 53% of total respondents agreed that funny brand names are easy to remember and 37% strongly agreed to the same

Question 12 was to know the preference of the respondents of using a product with a funny brand name that could give them cool image

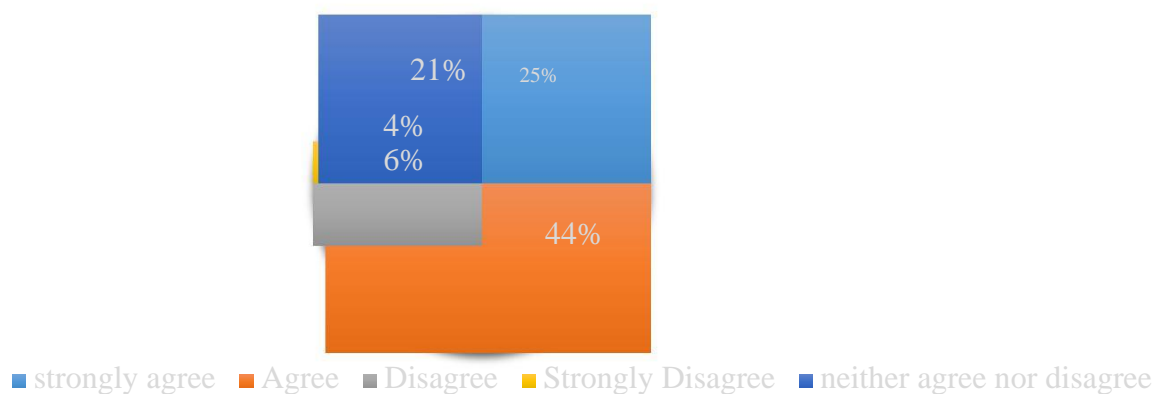
I prefer using a product with a funny brand name since it gives me a 'cool' image



Inference: 44% of total respondents agreed that funny brand names add to the cool image and 26% strongly agreed to the same

Question 13 was to know whether the respondents felt that the offering would be good.

Funny brand names make me feel that the offering might be very good



Inference: 44% of total respondents agreed that offering by such brands would be good and 25% strongly agreed to the same

Overall data analysis tested the hypothesis as positive and it can be concluded that the funny/quirky/unique brand names have a positive impact on preference and likeability and recall with respect to young adults

Conclusion

The study was based on two research goals. The first question did quirky brand names have an impact on consumer preference and likeability and if quirky brand names easy to recall. Findings reflected that there is a significant impact on the preference, likeability and recall of quirky brand names on the youth. The findings thereby add to the already existing body of knowledge regarding rules of branding.

Recommendations

The present study has highlighted insightful evidence to support future research and can be enhanced in several ways. Firstly a wider sample size of more number of colleges and states than just Mumbai can be taken into account. Secondly, respondents from different age groups can be taken and the study can be conducted. Thirdly, impact of quirky brand names on customer decision making can be explored in future research.

References:

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⁵@bewakoofofficial

⁶<https://www.facebook.com/Chumbak/>

⁷@chumbak

⁸<http://yourstory.com/2015/07/chumbak-growth-story/>

⁹<http://www.fnbnews.com/Top-News/sink-in-the-new-pink-at-the-aesthetic-asian-restaurant-pink-wasabi-70257>

¹⁰@pinkwasabi.in

¹¹<https://www.facebook.com/pinkwasabi.in/>

¹²@farzicafe

¹³<https://farzicafe.com/about-us/>

¹⁴<http://www.livemint.com/Consumer/LidBGIt4Bpl1LOlyLQRrK/Petoo-to-Bewakoofcom-why-do-startups-adopt-quirky-names.html>

¹⁵<http://www.livemint.com/Consumer/LidBGIt4Bpl1LOlyLQRrK/Petoo-to-Bewakoofcom-why-do-startups-adopt-quirky-names.html>

¹⁶<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ujVmMH9oX9k>, accessed on February, 17, 2016

¹⁷<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BGHwADs6DhU>, accessed on February, 17, 2016

¹⁸<http://www.iimb.ernet.in/~gprabhu/pgcase.pdf>, accessed on February, 19, 2016

Annexure A

Google Form Survey

Part 1

1. Mention any three Indian brand names (which you felt were unique/funny/quirky) that you recollect for educational brands
2. Mention any three Indian brand names (which you felt were unique/funny/quirky) that you recollect for restaurants
3. Mention any three Indian brand names (which you felt were unique/funny/quirky) that you recollect for lifestyle and fashion category

Part 2

4. PagalGuy.com is specialized in

- a. Merchandising (goods)
- b. MBA Guidance and Education Forum
- c. Lifestyle & Fashion Brand
- d. Food & Restaurant

5. Farzi Café is specialized in

- a. Merchandising (goods)
- b. MBA Guidance and Education Forum
- c. Lifestyle & Fashion Brand
- d. Food & Restaurant

6. Chumbak is specialized in

- a. Merchandising (goods)
- b. MBA Guidance and Education Forum
- c. Lifestyle & Fashion Brand
- d. Food & Restaurant

7. Pink-wasabi is specialized in

- a. Merchandising (goods)
- b. MBA Guidance and Education Forum
- c. Lifestyle & Fashion Brand
- d. Food & Restaurant

8. Bewakoof is specialized in

- a. Merchandising (goods)

- b. MBA Guidance and Education Forum c. Lifestyle & Fashion Brand
d. Food & Restaurant

9. Have you visited or experienced any of the above

- a. Yes b. No

10. Funny Brand names excite me to try them out	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Neither Agree nor disagree
11. Funny					