

# An Empirical Study to Identify Consumer Brand Relationships During a Crisis

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## Abstract

Countless businesses exist only to serve the varying demands of the world's customers, and those consumers find themselves constantly bombarded by an overwhelming selection of goods and brands. The brand distinguishes the company from its rivals and aids consumers in making educated purchasing decisions. However, when faced with a catastrophic event like the COVID-19 outbreak, consumers' assessment criteria shifted in response to shifting priorities and circumstances. As a result, shoppers are rethinking their brand loyalties and choosing new ones. This article used the brand archetype framework to determine what factors customers value during times of crisis. It also used the brand archetype framework to identify the elements consumers consider important during a crisis. Data were collected from 207 respondents and using the Relative to an Identified Distribution (RIDIT) approach, the top-rated brand elements were identified based on level of importance or agreement. This study will help practitioners incorporate the identified elements into their brand image. Their subsequent actions will help them remain relevant and essential for their consumers, even in challenging situations.

**Keywords :** brand archetypes, brand engagement, branding crisis, brand experience, brand engagement

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Marketing can be considered a multi-layered array of interconnected and specialized sub-systems (Layton, 2009). One of the sub-systems is brand, and an essential role of it is to be identified easily from the competition. But while emphasizing brand attributes, such as color, design, or logo, if consumers do not see the value or unique benefits in it, brand success will get hampered. So, a brand could be defined as having a set of values that promises a unique and enriching experience for its consumers through functionally related attributes and amplified with emotionally oriented values (De Chernatony, 2009; Sumbly & Siraj, 2019). It can be said that a brand represents the organization and helps connect with its customers through the ideals that the brand stands for its customers, thus generating business value over and above the physical assets.

At the micro-level for an organization, competition and consumer actions influence brand meaning, whereas environmental factors, such as economic, social, and ecological, moderate brand meaning at the macro-level (Oswald, 2012). So, crises like an economic downturn or a pandemic like Covid-19 will impact consumer behavior and brand meaning for consumers (Jain, 2022), leading to changes in marketing strategies for

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organizations to provide better customer experiences (Chakraborty & Dash, 2022). For example, during an economic slump, there is a drop in consumption expenses for consumers as they switch to cheaper variants (Diallo & Kaswengi, 2016), thus reflecting consumer price consciousness (Lichtenstein et al., 1993). Kulshrestha et al. (2022) investigated the buying behavior for Need-Based Goods during the Covid-19 pandemic. Kirk and Rifkin (2020) have examined the changes in consumer behaviors during the COVID-19 pandemic (another crisis) by segregating the behavioral changes into three phases, namely “reacting-hoarding and rejecting,” “coping-do-it-yourself behaviors, change in views towards brands,” and “adapting.” Talking about changing views of brands by consumers, the Edelman Trust Barometer worldwide survey covering 12,000 consumers (Rogers, 2020) found that 65% of the respondents agreed that their future purchase decision would depend on how the brands responded to the pandemic. The result depicts the organizations' responsibility to re-look at their brand during a crisis to prevent them from going into oblivion.

Despite the undeniable significance of brand management during crises, the authors could only locate a handful of publications on managing brands during crises. A study by Johnson Tew et al. (2008) presented an approach to tackle the SARS crisis through efficient communication and brand positioning but lacked details on its implementation. A study on a publicity crisis and brand contagion by Dahlén and Lange (2006) revealed that brand crisis negatively affected the category and brand perception. Eagle et al. (2005) found how a crisis could affect brand and category loyalty. Manning (2007) and Kahuni et al. (2009) found that the associated brands, too, got impacted during a crisis. Stephens Balakrishnan (2011) developed a conceptual model to manage brand burn and provided strategic tips for managing brand crisis (in the context of terrorism). In their article, Kirk and Rifkin (2020) explained and predicted consumer behaviors during a crisis like the Covid-19 pandemic, which could help marketing practitioners plan better. Finally, a study by Sen (2022) identified the perceived risk of supporting impulse buying during the Covid-19 pandemic, showing psychological changes among customers because the pandemic influenced changes in consumer-brand interactions. As a result, there is a lack of literature and studies exploring the many factors consumers consider when making a purchase choice that pertains to studying brand management in times of crisis. However, the literature on crisis-specific brand management approaches through the lens of brand archetypes is sparse. This study sets out to rectify this knowledge gap by identifying the aspects of brands that are most important to consumers during times of crisis.

## **Literature Review**

### ***How Do People Look at a Brand?***

The consumers' buying decision process is complicated, involving distinct steps. Karimi et al. (2015) showed that purchase processes for consumers depended on their decision-making styles and the product itself. In this consumer purchase process, the brand image helps to kindle the customers' minds and motivates them to purchase the brand (Zhang, 2015). The brand creates an association with the product, influencing customers' minds to see certain values that positively influence their purchase process. The brand image forms a psychological linkage with the customers, thus differentiating it from its competitors (Chovanová et al., 2015). Many research papers have identified that consumers' relationship with a brand reflects their relationships with others (Liu & Chang, 2017). Researchers like Das (2015) also showed that brands get evaluated for their functional characteristics and symbolic aspects.

According to Aaker et al. (2004), brand personality can enhance affiliation, position, and brand appeal toward a branded product or service. Just as humans have definite personalities that other people get attracted to, brands can also attract customers by stimulating them and delivering value beyond their expectations (Beldona & Wysong, 2007). In their paper, Xara-Brasil et al. (2018) discussed the critical work that brand managers need to do

to frame the dimensions of the brand identity framework, in which brand personality is a critical component. They identified how certain marketers used archetypes to identify their brands as archetypes and built the bridge between products and customers' motivations, resulting in an ethereal and significant experience.

### **Brand Archetypes**

Eminent psychologist Carl Jung (1968) talked of the collective unconscious, a collation of knowledge and imagery that everyone possesses since birth and is shared by all, owing to ancestral experiences. He believed that the collective unconscious manifests through universal concepts called “archetypes” repeated across cultures and generations, shaping human experiences. Tsai (2006), in the research paper on archetype and brand marketing, referred to Jung's theories and stated that archetypal is found in all cultures and is universal. Therefore, marketers could use Jungian archetypes to identify the different factors that influence people's actions, which play an important part in their purchase behavior and expectations of the product and service (Harris, 2007).

Using archetypes helps build a spiritual and magical brand personality that supports building a more robust and lasting relationship with the customers by harping on their unconscious requirements. As per Mark and Pearson (2001), marketers use archetypes to relate to customers' deep-seated motivations so that they can associate with the product and brands in their conscious and unconscious wishes. They developed a model based on Carl Jung's archetype concept. In this model, Mark and Pearson (2001) identified the 12 archetypes that could be most related to brands. Table 1 summarizes the archetypes' characteristics and their play with brands to make them impactful on the minds of consumers.

**Table 1. Mark and Pearson's (2001) Archetypes**

Archetype	Definition	Examples
<b>Creator</b>	Brands with this archetype look at creating innovative, imaginative, enduring value, and original products. The characteristics involved are pioneering, creative, high quality, self-driven, and often non-social.	Lego, Apple
<b>Caregiver</b>	This archetype represents compassion, caring, and generosity. The products under this type of brand take care of the needs of their customers through greater commitment and ease of usage. The characteristics involved are benign, helping, trustworthy, friendly, shielding, nurturing, and compassionate.	Nivea, UNICEF
<b>Ruler</b>	This archetype invokes responsibility, capability, and control. They work to construct a flourishing community and are strict but responsible. The characteristics involved are power, control, influence, leadership, and domination.	Audi, Rolex
<b>Innocent</b>	This archetype symbolizes purity, faithfulness, simplicity, and humbleness. Brands with this archetype give happiness, optimism, trust, and sincerity. The characteristics involved are chaste, straightforward, modest, serene, safe, and optimism.	Coca-Cola, Disney
<b>Explorer</b>	This archetype aspires to be free, explore the world, and understand the self. So brands with this archetype allow their customers to discover themselves and enjoy life. The characteristics involved are sovereign, free-willed, adventurer, often resolute, and lonely.	Land Rover, Starbucks
<b>Sage</b>	They are continuously motivated to learn the truth. So, consumers with this archetype use rationality and intelligence to find and analyze the truth and understand the world. Before purchasing, they will seek information regarding the product and price and make a rational decision. The characteristics involved are valuing knowledge and enlightenment, understanding, truth-seeking, expert, counselor, intelligent, philosophical, and mentor.	McKinsey, Philips

<b>Hero</b>	<p>This archetype tries to prove its worth and is daring. Consumers with this archetype use their command to improve the world and make it a better place to live. The brand with this archetype gives its customers courage and self-esteem and is authoritative and striving.</p> <p>Characteristics involved are courage, boldness, inspiration, crusader, and possessing skills such as strength, perseverance, determination, and discipline.</p>	Nike, BMW
<b>Outlaw</b>	<p>This archetype denotes a strong desire for rebellion or destroying things that are not suitable for him/herself or society. Brands related to this archetype do not follow normal social conventions. Therefore, the products associated with this brand do not follow a predictable path.</p> <p>Characteristics involved are rebellious, rule-breaker, survivor, wild, disparaging, and radical.</p>	Harley Davidson, Linux
<b>Magician</b>	<p>They are in search of the fundamental laws and working of the world and realize their dreams. They are "catalysts for change" and are motivated to change themselves and others. The brand with this archetype looks at achieving dreams and transforming adverse situations into enthralling goals.</p> <p>The characteristics involved are visionary, alchemist, dreamer, aspirational, and spiritual.</p>	Red Bull, Absolut
<b>Lover</b>	<p>This archetype aims to maintain an intimate, unadulterated, and private relationship that can lead to the experience of sensual pleasure. Brands, to achieve this archetype, need to offer admirable and preferably customized products. Consumers look for contentment, experience, and enchantment. This archetype is common in cosmetics, fashion, jewelry, and certain food categories like fine wines.</p> <p>The characteristics involved are personal, intimate, romantic, sensual, passionate, and capricious.</p>	Victoria's Secret, Bacardi
<b>Jester</b>	<p>They are spontaneous and playful, live in the present, enjoy life, and entertain the world. The products of brands belonging to this archetype ensure that people enjoy their life and remain amused.</p> <p>Characteristics involved are humorous, playful, impish, fun-loving, and gleeful.</p>	Pepsi, M&Ms
<b>Everyman/ Everywoman</b>	<p>They are desirous of remaining connected with others, denounce make-believe, and are usually honest. Brands belonging to this archetype represent normal people, accessible to all, practical, and products are not distinctive.</p> <p>Characteristics involved are preserving, structured, wholesome, careful, realistic, and down-to-earth.</p>	Levi's, IKEA

Source : Adapted from Mark and Pearson (2001), Faber and Mayer (2009), Kamlot and Calmon (2017), and Xara-Brasil et al. (2018).

### ***A Brand During Crisis Situations***

The impact of a crisis on a brand can be evaluated based on functional and symbolic components (Stephens Balakrishnan, 2011), where examples of functional could be loss of business or property, and symbolic could be a psychological impact or loss of reputation affecting the brand. So, during a crisis, brand management should have an integrated approach by giving importance to public opinions and attitudes and not just the important stakeholders (Johnson Tew et al., 2008). The communication flow and swift and valuable decision-making and discussion with stakeholders can play a significant role during a crisis (Ritchie, 2004). Siddiqui and Siddiqui (2021) observed that trust and purchasing intention were strongly correlated for online food delivery platforms during the COVID-19 pandemic. Chawla et al. (2022), while studying streaming apps during the pandemic, found that the quality of service and benefits received determined customer acceptance of a product/service during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Consumers form “psychological contacts” with the brands they believe based on the promises made by brands (Montgomery et al., 2018). So, consumers can ignore or “punish” a brand if they perceive it has betrayed its promised positioning during the crisis (Kirk & Rifkin, 2020). Another element that emerged from the Edelman Trust Barometer survey (Rogers, 2020) was that consumers expected brands to understand the impact of the pandemic and explain to their audience how the brands could help consumers cope with the situation. So, effective marketing communication by brands during crises is another vital requirement.

## Objective

The present research has focused on capturing consumer views on their brand experiences and expectation related to uncertainties and future crisis circumstances. We have followed the brand archetype framework to assess the brand-consumer connection. This study intends to help organizations and marketing professionals build long-term and sustainable brand engagement and loyalty, irrespective of environmental uncertainties and crises.

## Methodology

This study is descriptive in nature, and the empirical data collection was performed using convenience sampling (To et al., 2007) along with snowball sampling (Szolnoki & Hoffmann, 2013), which ought to be considered the most common approach to the accumulation of empirical data. Everyone who participated in the study completed the questionnaire to the best of their abilities and willingness. The questionnaire was designed based on the brand archetypes concept (Mark & Pearson, 2001) and the existing scale developed by different prominent researchers (Mark & Pearson, 2001; Faber & Mayer, 2009; Kamlot & Calmon, 2017; Xara-Brasil et al., 2018). To better understand how customers feel about their brand experiences and what they expect would happen in the event of a crisis in the future, this study gathered a total of 238 empirical responses from various parts of India between March 2021 to May 2021. Finally, 207 were selected for the analysis, of which 54% were male. The demographic profile of respondents is shown in Table 2. A five-point Likert scale was used to collect the responses, with 1 being *very unimportant* and 5 being *very important*.

This research used the relative to an identified distribution (RIDIT) approach to quantitatively analyze the empirical data. This technique aimed to identify the top-rated brand features according to importance or agreement among respondents. According to the literature review findings, the brand's features that were considered for the survey were formed from the numerous factors related to the brand archetypes. Following the RIDIT algorithm, quantitative data analysis was carried out using Microsoft Excel 365.

### Algorithm for RIDIT Analysis

RIDIT analysis for  $m$  items and  $n$  ordered categories, where the entries are from the most to least preferred on the scale, is given as :

(i) RIDIT computation for the considered dataset.

(a) A reference dataset is selected, which can include all the survey responses for a Likert scale survey if population identification is difficult.

(b) Frequency  $f_j$  to be computed for each category of responses, where  $j = 1, \dots, n$ .

(c) Mid-point accumulated frequency  $F_j$  for each category of responses is calculated.

$$F_1 = 1/2 f_1$$

$$F_j = 1/2 f_j + \sum_{k=1}^{j-1} f_k, \text{ where } j = 2 \dots n.$$

(d) Calculation of RIDIT value  $R_j$  for each category of responses.  $R_j = \frac{F_j}{N}$ , where  $j = 1 \dots n$ .

$N$ : All responses from the Likert scale survey. The reference dataset is likely to have 0.5 as  $R$ 's value (Bross, 1958).

(ii) Calculate RIDITs and mean RIDITs for comparison datasets. With  $m$  Likert scale items, there will be  $m$  comparison datasets.

(a) RIDIT value  $r_{ij}$  is calculated for every category of scale items.

$$r_{ij} = R_j \times \frac{\pi_{ij}}{\pi_i}, \text{ where, } i = 1 \dots m.$$

$\pi_{ij}$  is the frequency of category  $j$  for the  $i^{\text{th}}$  scale item and  $\pi_i$  is a short form for the summation of frequencies for scale item  $i$  across all categories.

$$\pi_i = \sum_{k=1}^n \pi_{ik}$$

(b)  $\rho_i$  is the mean RIDIT for every Likert scale item.

$$\rho_i = \sum_{k=1}^n r_{ik}$$

(c) The confidence interval for  $\rho_i$  is calculated. 95% confidence interval of any  $\rho_i$  is:  $\rho \pm 1/\sqrt{(3\pi)}$ .

(d) Kruskal - Wallis statistics  $W$  is calculated to test the hypothesis, as given below :

$$\begin{cases} H_0 : \forall_i, \rho_i = 0.5 \\ H_1 : \exists_i, \rho_i \neq 0.5 \end{cases}$$

$$W = 12 \sum_{i=1}^m \pi_i (\rho_i - 0.5)^2$$

$\chi^2$  (chi-square) distribution is followed by  $W$  with  $(m - 1)$  degree of freedom. Values of  $\rho$  are interpreted as given below:

**Step-i.** If the  $\rho_i$  value of a scale item statistically diverges from 0.5, it indicates a considerable difference among reference and comparison datasets' response patterns related to the considered scale item.

**Step-ii.** A low  $\rho$  value is considered better than a high  $\rho_i$  value.

The responses of different scale items having overlapping confidence intervals of  $\rho$  are considered statistically unrelated.

### **RIDIT Analysis**

Since RIDIT analysis is “distribution-free,” it is unnecessary to make any assumptions about the population distribution that is being taken into account. Furthermore, RIDIT analysis is a disciplined approach to the study of Likert scale data (Bross, 1958; Wu, 2007). Therefore, arranging things on a scale in a certain order is acceptable depending on the established priorities (Bhattacharya & Kumar, 2017). The RIDIT study helped determine which aspects of the brand the respondents felt were the most significant while the company faced a crisis. The data set was examined using skewness and kurtosis tests to see whether or not it was normal, and the results showed it fell between the range of 1.5 to –1.5.



**Table 2. Demographic Profile of the Respondents**

Parameters	Description	Count	Percentage
Gender	Male	112	54%
	Female	95	46%
Occupation	Students	43	21%
	Working professionals	54	26%
	Self-employed	29	14%
	Homemakers	45	22%
	Retired	36	17%
Age	18 – 30	71	34%
	31 – 45	64	31%
	46 – 60	37	18%
	> 60	35	17%

## Data Analysis and Results

Microsoft Office Excel 2007 was used to test the RIDIT model along with skewness and kurtosis tests to check the normality of the data under consideration. The RIDITs for the data set are given in Table 3, related to the choices provided by the respondents toward different brand elements corresponding to the 12 brand archetypes.

**Table 3. RIDITs for the Reference Data Set**

Items	5	4	3	2	1	Total
Thoughtful	72	119	11	1	4	207
Simple	46	123	30	5	3	207
Experimental	52	60	50	37	8	207
Imaginative	35	87	54	26	5	207
Genuine	99	90	12	2	4	207
Faithful	98	89	14	3	3	207
Goodness	58	114	29	3	3	207
Safety	107	89	6	2	3	207
Supportive	75	96	25	6	5	207
Reliable	115	73	12	4	3	207
Honest	126	69	8	3	1	207
Real Thinker	58	96	37	12	4	207
Generous	119	66	15	4	3	207
Nurturing	67	75	46	13	6	207
Empathetic	76	74	39	12	6	207
Courageous	93	64	19	24	7	207
Control	47	66	39	36	19	207
Innovative	46	57	43	40	21	207

Dominating	43	59	52	32	21	207
Credible	89	92	18	5	3	207
Tough	68	105	22	10	2	207
Confident	71	97	31	5	3	207
Happiness	88	86	25	4	4	207
Compassionate	84	86	28	6	3	207
Inspirational	78	90	24	9	6	207
Influential	19	26	8	61	93	207
Power	15	22	53	26	91	207
Free-willed	35	42	15	22	93	207
Adventurer	23	30	9	42	103	207
Sovereign	19	26	7	30	125	207
Rebellious	15	22	5	26	139	207
Disparaging	15	22	5	22	143	207
Wild	17	24	6	22	138	207
Radical	23	30	9	24	121	207
Spiritual	15	22	5	30	135	207
Aspirational	9	16	2	22	158	207
Dreamer	19	26	7	16	139	207
Visionary	15	22	5	26	139	207
Intimate	27	34	11	22	113	207
Romantic	29	36	12	34	96	207
Sensual	27	34	11	36	99	207
Capricious	29	23	38	34	83	207
Humorous	21	31	19	72	64	207
Playful	31	25	43	34	74	207
Fun-loving	17	24	6	96	64	207
Impish	13	20	4	24	146	207

**Notes.** 1 – very unimportant, 2 – unimportant, 3 – Neutral, 4 – important, 5 – very important.

**Table 4. *Kruskal - Wallis W Test***

Kruskal-Wallis <i>W</i>	369.970
Chi-Square (46 – 1 = 45 <i>df</i> )	61.65623
<i>p</i> -value	0.00

In accordance with the findings shown in Table 4, the Kruskal-Wallis *W* statistic was calculated for the whole RIDIT model. In the present inquiry, the fact that the Kruskal-Wallis *W* (369.97) is significantly greater than the Chi-Square (46 – 1 = 45 *df*) value 61.656 contributes to the rejection of the original null hypothesis that was evaluated. The high value of Kruskal-Wallis *W* signifies that the respondents' views about the scale items are significantly different. The viewpoints and attitudes of the respondents on the components of the scale are statistically diverse from one another. Consequently, it is possible to conclude that the perspectives, opinions, and



attitudes of Indian customers regarding their experiences with brands and what they expect would occur in the event of a crisis are distinguishable. The various brand components or factors involved in making a purchase decision, pertaining to a study on brand management in times of crisis, significantly impact brand selection decisions.

Table 5 shows that the closeness of the calculated  $W$  of the individual factors leads to the probability-led familiarity of the variables. So, the top-ranked brand elements indicate that these are considered to have a higher probability of being important to consumers during a crisis. Besides RIDITs ranking, lower and upper bound indicators also showed the respondents' components that are rated lowly. If the upper bound value of an element is greater than 0.5, then the consumers' probability of it being ignored is high. A low value of rho is considered better than a high value. A low value of rho of a component suggests that the component is an important brand element for consumers' purchase decisions.

**Table 5. RIDIT Ranks for the Comparison Data Sets**

Items	5	4	3	2	1	rho <sub>i</sub>	Rank	LB	UB	W-Calculated
<b>Thoughtful</b>	0.043	0.222	0.031	0.003	0.017	0.316	<b>9</b>	0.276	0.356	7.013
<b>Simple</b>	0.027	0.230	0.084	0.016	0.013	0.370	<b>18</b>	0.330	0.410	3.496
Experimental	0.031	0.112	0.140	0.122	0.034	0.438	21	0.398	0.478	0.787
Imaginative	0.021	0.163	0.151	0.086	0.021	0.441	22	0.401	0.481	0.721
<b>Genuine</b>	0.059	0.168	0.034	0.007	0.017	0.284	<b>5</b>	0.244	0.324	9.668
<b>Faithful</b>	0.058	0.166	0.039	0.010	0.013	0.286	<b>6</b>	0.246	0.326	9.469
<b>Goodness</b>	0.034	0.213	0.081	0.010	0.013	0.351	<b>16</b>	0.311	0.391	4.598
<b>Safety</b>	0.064	0.166	0.017	0.007	0.013	0.266	<b>4</b>	0.226	0.306	11.352
<b>Supportive</b>	0.045	0.179	0.070	0.020	0.021	0.335	<b>11</b>	0.294	0.375	5.667
<b>Reliable</b>	0.068	0.136	0.034	0.013	0.013	0.264	<b>3</b>	0.224	0.304	11.525
<b>Honest</b>	0.075	0.129	0.022	0.010	0.004	0.240	<b>1</b>	0.200	0.280	13.967
<b>Real Thinker</b>	0.034	0.179	0.103	0.040	0.017	0.374	<b>19</b>	0.333	0.414	3.309
<b>Generous</b>	0.071	0.123	0.042	0.013	0.013	0.262	<b>2</b>	0.222	0.302	11.753
<b>Nurturing</b>	0.040	0.140	0.129	0.043	0.025	0.377	<b>20</b>	0.336	0.417	3.156
<b>Empathetic</b>	0.045	0.138	0.109	0.040	0.025	0.357	<b>17</b>	0.317	0.397	4.224
<b>Courageous</b>	0.055	0.120	0.053	0.079	0.029	0.336	<b>13</b>	0.296	0.377	5.535
Control	0.028	0.123	0.109	0.119	0.080	0.459	23	0.419	0.499	0.353
Innovative	0.027	0.106	0.120	0.132	0.088	0.474	24	0.434	0.514	0.139
Dominating	0.026	0.110	0.145	0.106	0.088	0.475	25	0.435	0.515	0.132
<b>Credible</b>	0.053	0.172	0.050	0.016	0.013	0.304	<b>7</b>	0.264	0.344	7.940
<b>Tough</b>	0.040	0.196	0.061	0.033	0.008	0.339	<b>15</b>	0.299	0.380	5.337
<b>Confident</b>	0.042	0.181	0.087	0.016	0.013	0.339	<b>14</b>	0.299	0.379	5.358
<b>Happiness</b>	0.052	0.161	0.070	0.013	0.017	0.313	<b>8</b>	0.273	0.353	7.254
<b>Compassionate</b>	0.050	0.161	0.078	0.020	0.013	0.321	<b>10</b>	0.281	0.361	6.617
<b>Inspirational</b>	0.046	0.168	0.067	0.030	0.025	0.336	<b>12</b>	0.296	0.377	5.539
Influential	0.011	0.049	0.022	0.201	0.390	0.674	36	0.634	0.714	6.241
Power	0.009	0.041	0.148	0.086	0.382	0.666	35	0.626	0.706	5.679
Free-willed	0.021	0.078	0.042	0.073	0.390	0.604	26	0.564	0.644	2.235

Adventurer	0.014	0.056	0.025	0.139	0.432	0.666	34	0.625	0.706	5.673
Sovereign	0.011	0.049	0.020	0.099	0.524	0.703	38	0.663	0.743	8.514
Rebellious	0.009	0.041	0.014	0.086	0.583	0.733	42	0.693	0.773	11.229
Disparaging	0.009	0.041	0.014	0.073	0.600	0.736	44	0.696	0.777	11.577
Wild	0.010	0.045	0.017	0.073	0.579	0.723	40	0.683	0.763	10.316
Radical	0.014	0.056	0.025	0.079	0.508	0.682	37	0.642	0.722	6.832
Spiriual	0.009	0.041	0.014	0.099	0.566	0.729	41	0.689	0.769	10.886
Aspirational	0.005	0.030	0.006	0.073	0.663	0.776	46	0.736	0.816	15.798
Dreamer	0.011	0.049	0.020	0.053	0.583	0.715	39	0.675	0.755	9.600
Visionary	0.009	0.041	0.014	0.086	0.583	0.733	42	0.693	0.773	11.229
Intimate	0.016	0.064	0.031	0.073	0.474	0.657	32	0.617	0.697	5.099
Romantic	0.017	0.067	0.034	0.112	0.403	0.633	30	0.593	0.673	3.658
Sensual	0.016	0.064	0.031	0.119	0.415	0.644	31	0.604	0.685	4.317
Capricious	0.017	0.043	0.106	0.112	0.348	0.627	28	0.587	0.667	3.326
Humorous	0.012	0.058	0.053	0.238	0.268	0.630	29	0.589	0.670	3.473
Playful	0.018	0.047	0.120	0.112	0.310	0.608	27	0.568	0.648	2.410
Fun-loving	0.010	0.045	0.017	0.317	0.268	0.657	33	0.617	0.697	5.099
Impish	0.008	0.037	0.011	0.079	0.613	0.748	45	0.708	0.788	12.727

**Notes.** LB – lower bound of the 95% confidence interval of mean RIDIT rho<sub>i</sub>. UB – upper bound of the 95% confidence interval of mean RIDIT rho<sub>i</sub>.

## Discussion

The 12 brand archetypes may represent the personality of the businesses and match certain customer profiles to develop a stronger interaction between the consumer and the brand. In response to this, the research's purpose was to determine the characteristics customers seek in a brand during a crisis. The RIDIT study has helped determine aspects of a brand that customers see as vital at critical junctures in their lives. The survey carried out at the time of the COVID-19 pandemic is important in several respects. The top 20 most highly valued brand aspects were considered and mapped against their respective brand archetypes (as shown in Table 1) to compile the list of archetypes that the respondents believed to be significant during a crisis such as the pandemic. Table 6 presents the detected components and the corresponding brand archetypes for each. The RIDIT research helped us uncover five brand archetypes: the innocent, the everyman, the caregiver, the hero, and the sage, which held the most significant value in the thoughts of consumers during times of crisis. The top 20 variables were determined via the RIDIT study.

**Table 6. The Identified Brand Archetypes During a Crisis**

Variables				Archetypes
Honest	Safety	Happiness	Goodness	The Innocent
Supportive	Faithful	Reliable	Simple	The Everyman
Compassionate	Generous	Nurturing	Empathetic	The Caregiver
Courageous	Genuine	Inspirational	Tough	The Hero
Credible	Thoughtful	Confident	Real Thinker	The Sage

A consistent pattern was noticed during the conversation on the efforts that many well-known brands carried out during the COVID-19 epidemic. Many firms aspired to connect with their consumers and contribute to society via many activities. The following are some instances of such: When the pandemic was affecting numerous people all over the globe, the healthcare system encountered a shortage of ventilators. Considering this circumstance, automobile manufacturers like Ford and General Motors have repurposed their defunct production facilities to manufacture ventilators (O'Kane, 2020). Domino's Pizza has partnered with ITC Limited, India's second-largest FMCG company, to deliver their 'Aashirwaad' range of food products. As a result, they have adjusted their distribution network to ensure that their customers have access to the essential commodities and food items they require. This was beneficial not just to themselves but also to their clients, allowing them to deliver critical supplies directly to consumers' homes (Aggarwal, 2020).

In addition to the annual donation of \$250 million that the bank makes, Bank of America made a charitable pledge of \$100 million, which helped the bank assist local communities and small companies all around the United States. Additionally, the bank has pledged up to \$250 million to community development financial institutions to help small companies participate in the Paycheck Protection Program administered by the federal government (Bank of America, 2020). Over 1.7 million units of 10-ounce hand sanitizer were manufactured by Bacardi and delivered to the communities, police, and firefighters in the areas affected by the hurricane (Felton, 2020). Pernod Ricard, a company that produces wine and spirits, remodeled its production facility to begin producing hand sanitizers that would be given away to people in many countries where the company had production units. The activities made by many businesses throughout the pandemic had one thing in common: They all wanted to reassure their customers that companies understood the struggles that they were going through and that they (businesses) were thinking about them. In addition, they were working toward providing value to consumers as per the situation's requirements at the time. Building an emotional connection with consumers is the first step in developing long-term brand loyalty that will survive the post-crisis era. This may be accomplished by strengthening customers' associations with and confidence in a particular brand.

## **Theoretical Contribution**

The amount of academic literature pertaining to managing brands during times of crisis is quite limited. A few pieces of research have been done on brands during a crisis. These include a discussion on brand positioning and communication during the SARs crisis (Johnson Tew et al., 2008); evaluation of brand association on brand during a crisis (Dawar & Lei, 2009); impact of the crisis on brand perception (Dahlén & Lange, 2006); brand loyalty (Eagle et al., 2005); and associated brands (Kahuni et al., 2009; Manning, 2007; Stephens Balakrishnan, 2011) proposed a conceptual approach to control brand burn during terrorism, while Kirk and Rifkin (2020) anticipated the buying behavior of consumers during the COVID-19 pandemic problem. Both of these studies were conducted after Stephens Balakrishnan's work was published. It is difficult to find publications that illustrate different brand management methods during a crisis, especially ones that use brand archetypes. The current research, which has also revealed the major brand components that consumers examine most often during times of crisis, has remedied this vacuum. The present study has addressed this gap and identified the significant brand elements consumers consider the most during crises. Rarely have we come across any study using brand archetypes to identify the brand elements relevant during a crisis, which this research article has presented. This study has also ranked those variables considered important by consumers while making purchase decisions during crises. This can be seen as a major theoretical contribution of this article.

## **Managerial Implications**

In the present situation, brands are competing to occupy the mind space of their prospective consumers to develop a sustainable consumer-brand relationship. For this, the brands must do certain activities to engage with their consumers, particularly during crises. During crisis moments like the COVID-19 pandemic, consumers look for specific characteristics of brands and evaluate brands' responses during crises (Rogers, 2020) to analyze their future relationship with the brands (Dawar & Lei, 2009; Kirk & Rifkin, 2020; Montgomery et al., 2018). The present study has identified the important brand elements that organizations and marketing practitioners should include in their brand management activities and practice so that consumers will be happy to continue their associations with the brands during and post the crisis circumstances.

## **Limitations of the Study and Future Research Directions**

The current study was conducted on Indian customers. It can be replicated in other countries to generalize the identified elements better. Future studies can also include gender heterogeneity, cultural influence, and the country's level of development (developed, developing, and underdeveloped) to understand their impact on the different brand elements during crises using the brand archetypes.

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## **Authors' Contribution**

Both Dr. Subhajit Bhattacharya and Mr. Arunava Dalal contributed to the conception of the idea as well as the research design. In this study, Dr. Bhattacharya, Mr. Dalal, and Dr. Nirmalya Bandyopadhyay retrieved reputable research articles, selected those papers based on keywords, and developed ideas and codes pertinent to the investigation. The work was co-written by Dr. Subhajit Bhattacharya, Mr. Arunava Dalal, and Dr. Nirmalya Bandyopadhyay, and they all verified to ensure that the language used was proper.

## **Conflict of Interest**

The authors confirm they have no financial or other conflicts of interest related to the content of this paper and that they are not affiliated with any organizations that do. The authors and other contributors have no vested interest in the content or materials being presented.

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