

ISASE 2020

Qualitative Evaluation Method for Inner Branding of B2B Small and Medium-Size Enterprises Using Face Chart

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Abstract: It has become possible to quantitatively express where to improve the evaluation viewpoint of company members inner bundling. However, qualitative expressions as well as quantitative evaluations are required for the evaluation of inner branding. A more effective evaluation that balances these two is especially required for inner branding. In this paper, we propose a qualitative evaluation method of B2B (business to business) SMEs (small and medium-size enterprises) inner branding using a face chart.

Keywords: *Qualitative Evaluation, Inner Branding, Face Chart*

1. INTRODUCTION

SMEs (small and midium-size enterprises) account for 99.7% of all companies in Japan and, as such, are crucial to the Japanese economy. In recent years, price competition has intensified, increasing the importance of brands for SMEs to effectively promote sales activities and raise corporate value. However, brand strategy is a management strategy that is not only part of advertising and marketing but involves the entire company. It has significant influence on the formation of corporate value. Since brands are not just impressions or images, but also viewed as assets, branding is a very important concept.

Nevertheless, branding is considered very difficult for B2BSMEs and tends to be neglected. A possible reason for this is that the judgment material of the management for business development such as investment, human resources and so on is unclear. This is because it is unclear what department, product, human resource, etc. should be invested in and how much time should be spent on limited resources.

To solve this problem, the authors have proposed a quantitative evaluation method of inner branding using CS analysis [1].

As a result, it has become possible to quantitatively express where to improve the inner bundling points. However, qualitative expressions as well as quantitative evaluations are required for the evaluation of inner branding. A more effective evaluation that balances these two is especially required.

In this paper, we propose a qualitative evaluation method of B2B SME inner branding using a face chart.

Table 1: Evaluation aspects for inner branding

Employee	Corporate Manager
E1: Do employees feel that they understand the company’s philosophy well? And do you feel that the top management daily activities and decisions are in line with that philosophy?	T1: Does the top management have a “corporate philosophy” and does it have an “era” or a “universality”?
E2: Are employees aware that issues are being shared between organizations, employees, and top management and regular employee; that communication barriers within the company are being reduced; and that the organization is becoming more flexible and open-minded?	T2: Does the top management perform “Documentation” of “Corporate Philosophy”? And are they keyworded?
E3: Do employees feel the legitimacy of their business philosophy and the expansion of energy in response to the development of external branding? Additionally, do you feel more united with the outside world and feel that you belong to a company that has social significance?	T3: Does the top perform “documentation” of “corporate philosophy”? And do you permeate it internally as a “keyword”?
E4: Are employees becoming more active in their organizational position and their image of internal and external involvement compared to before? Do you also feel that your work has been fun and that your happiness has increased?	T4: Does the top management explain corporate identity’s (CI) medium- to long-term deployment plan to employees? Here, “deployment plan” means a manual, a sales promotion, an event, a related business, and the like.
E5: Do “corporate managers” and “employees” have “longing” and “vision” for their company?	

2. EVALUATION ITEMS FOR INNER BRANDING

Here, as a checkpoint when evaluating inner branding, the items shown in Table 1 are surveyed from the viewpoints of “employees” and “managers” [1]. Using these evaluation items, a questionnaire on inner branding was conducted for two B2B SMEs. Table 2 shows the survey table. Each item (S1-S9) was answered on a 5-point scale.

Next, we asked for an overall image evaluation of the company's inner branding. Therefore, we asked the “employees” and “managers” to give a comprehensive evaluation score for the items shown in Fig. 1 (S10).

Tables 3 and 4 present the results of the questionnaire survey conducted on SMEs A and B by incorporating this comprehensive evaluation into Table 1.

Further, as shown in Fig. 2, the dissimilarity based on the Euclidean distance was calculated for each checkpoint item based on the sample data of the questionnaire, and clustering was performed using Ward’s method.

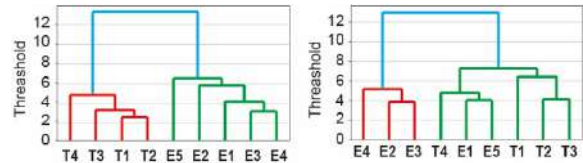
Then, they were roughly classified into “items related to managers” and “items related to employees”. In the dendrogram of Company B, shown in Fig. 2 (b), items E1 and E5 are “How employees evaluate management”. It is evident that there was a large division in terms of members.

Table 2: Questionnaire items and evaluation criteria

Please tell us your thoughts about your company.		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
S1	Management's corporate philosophy.	1	2	3	4	5
S2	Do you document your philosophy?	1	2	3	4	5
S3	Can you explain your vision with others?	1	2	3	4	5
S4	Is a public explanation given to employees?	1	2	3	4	5
S5	Do employees understand and empathize?	1	2	3	4	5
S6	Is there a consciousness of activation?	1	2	3	4	5
S7	Do you have sense of belonging to the company?	1	2	3	4	5
S8	Are you happy?	1	2	3	4	5
S9	Do you have a longing/vision?	1	2	3	4	5

- 1 Very bad.
- 2 Somewhat bad.
- 3 Normal.
- 4 Somewhat good.
- 5 Very good.

Fig. 1 S10: Objective variable
— Total evaluation score (from 1 to 5) —



(a) Company-A (b) Company-B

Fig. 2 Dendrograms for companies A and B

Table 3: Company A questionnaire results

	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	S9	S10
①	4	5	5	5	3	3	4	3	2	3
②	5	5	4	3	4	3	3	3	4	4
③	4	5	5	3	4	2	3	2	2	2
④	4	5	5	5	4	3	4	4	4	4
⑤	5	5	5	4	3	2	3	3	4	4
⑥	5	5	5	5	4	3	4	4	4	4
⑦	4	4	5	5	4	3	4	4	4	4
⑧	4	4	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	3
⑨	4	5	5	4	4	1	3	3	4	5
⑩	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	4	4	5
⑪	5	5	5	5	4	3	4	4	3	4
⑫	5	5	5	4	4	3	4	3	3	4
⑬	5	5	4	5	3	4	3	3	5	4
⑭	5	5	5	5	4	4	4	4	4	4
⑮	5	5	5	5	4	3	4	3	5	4
⑯	4	5	5	5	4	3	4	4	2	3
⑰	5	5	5	5	4	4	4	5	5	4
⑱	5	5	5	5	4	2	3	3	4	4
⑲	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
⑳	4	5	5	3	4	5	4	4	4	4
㉑	4	4	5	4	4	3	3	2	3	3
㉒	5	5	5	5	4	2	2	2	4	4
㉓	5	5	5	4	4	4	3	4	5	4
㉔	3	2	4	4	3	3	3	3	4	3
㉕	5	5	5	5	4	3	4	4	4	4
㉖	5	5	5	4	4	3	3	3	2	4
㉗	4	4	4	4	3	4	4	3	2	3

Table 4: Company B questionnaire results

	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	S9	S10
①	5	5	3	3	3	2	2	1	4	4
②	4	4	4	2	4	2	2	2	4	3
③	5	4	5	2	3	4	3	2	3	3
④	4	5	3	3	3	2	2	2	3	3
⑤	4	4	4	3	2	2	3	2	3	3
⑥	4	5	4	3	3	3	4	3	3	4
⑦	5	5	4	5	5	3	3	3	5	3
⑧	5	5	5	4	4	4	4	3	4	4
⑨	4	5	4	3	4	2	3	3	4	3
⑩	5	5	4	4	3	2	1	1	4	4
⑪	5	5	4	4	4	3	4	4	5	4
⑫	5	5	4	5	4	3	3	2	4	4
⑬	5	5	5	4	4	3	4	3	5	5
⑭	4	3	2	4	2	1	2	3	2	4
⑮	5	5	5	4	4	4	2	1	5	4
⑯	5	2	2	3	3	3	2	2	2	4
⑰	5	5	5	3	4	3	2	4	4	3
⑱	4	4	4	2	4	2	2	4	3	2
⑲	5	5	4	4	3	4	3	3	5	4
⑳	5	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	2

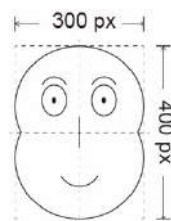


Fig. 3: The layout of each part of the face chart

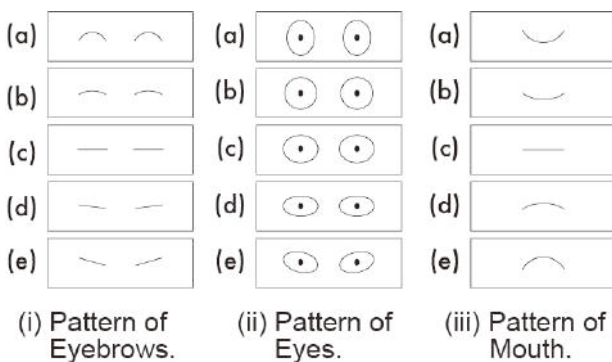


Fig. 4: Patterns of each part

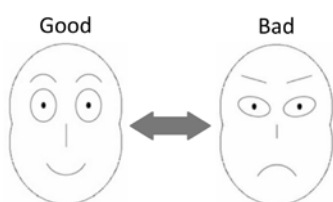
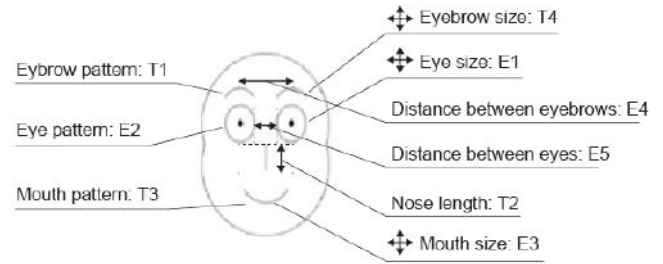
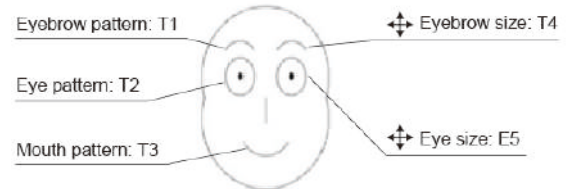


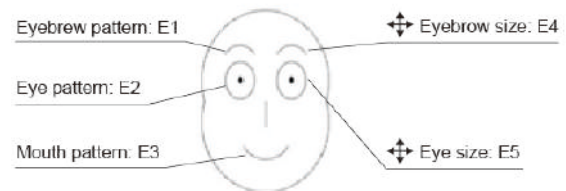
Fig. 5: Good expression (left), bad expression (right)



(a) Correspondence of parameters representing “the whole company”.



(b) Correspondence of parameters representing “company manager”.



(c) Correspondence of parameters representing “employee”.

Fig. 6: Correspondence with each parameter

3. FACE CHART

The face chart assigns ambiguous comprehensive information to each part of the face and presents the situation at that time in one expression medium called “face”. Here, we use the well-known Chernoff face chart [2]. Chernoff uses face graphs to classify and analyze “fossils.”

Here, we show that the state of inner branding in a company can be judged intuitively by expressing it with “facial expressions”. Therefore, as shown in Fig. 3, each part, such as the eyes and mouth, are arranged to look “similar to a face”, assuming a face’s layout. By changing the size and pattern of each part according to the amount of variation, the state of inner branding can be represented as a facial expression.

Here, a face chart is created using the nine variables (E1, E2, E3, E4, E5, T1, T2, T3, T4) shown in Table 1 as parameters.

(I) Each face part

First, of the facial parts, (1) eyebrows, (2) eyes, (3) nose, and (4) mouth are expressed as patterns. Each pattern is shown in Fig. 4. Each part is divided into five stages: a) to e). That is, if the “improvement degree” is good, a pattern close to (a) is displayed. If the “improvement degree” is poor, a pattern close to (e) is

displayed. The parameters use the nine “degrees of improvement” required for quantitative evaluation. In the Chernoff face chart, 18 parameters can be applied to one face. However, actually observed values may take different ranges depending on their characteristics, and if used as they are, an extreme face or a human face may not be formed. To prevent such a situation, it is necessary to standardize each parameter in advance using a method to fall within a certain range. Although the “improvement degree” has the same range, each value is adjusted to bring out the expression of the face chart when corresponding to the face chart.

This creates a face chart for the company's inner branding. The left (right) of Fig. 5 shows a case where the “improvement degree” is generally low (high) and the inner branding is good (bad).

(II) Parameters corresponding to the face chart

The degree of improvement corresponding to the items in Table 1 is used as a parameter for association, as shown in Fig. 6 [3],[4].

(E1 – E5, T1 – T4): Face chart parameters for the entire company.

(T1 to T4, E5): Manager’s face chart parameters.

(E1 to E5): Employee face chart parameters.

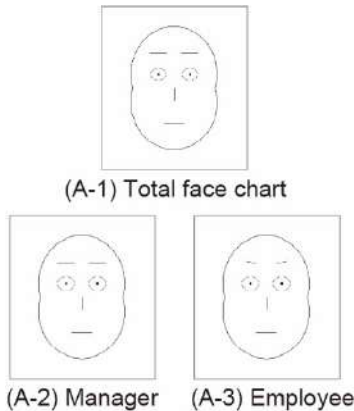


Fig. 7: Company-A inner branding expression

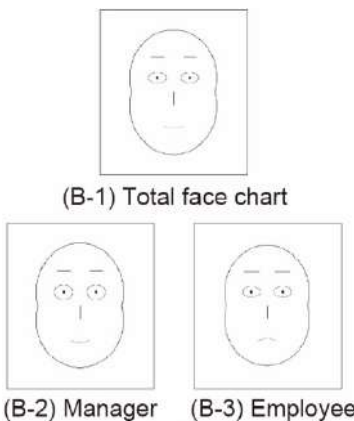


Fig. 8: Company B inner branding expression

4. EACH COMPANY’S FACE CHARTS

Figures 7 and 8 show the inner branding face charts of “1. Entire company”, “2. Managers”, and “3. Employees” based on the “degree of improvement” of Company A and Company B, respectively. The reason why “2.Managers” and “3. Employees” were created in addition to “1.Entire company” is that the cluster analysis described above largely divided items related to managers and employees.

Fig. 7 (Fig. 8) shows the following contents.

A-1 (B-1) Inner branding face chart of the entire company of A(B).

A-2 (B-2): Inner branding face chart of the manager of A (B) company.

A-3 (B-3): Inner branding face chart of the employees of A (B).

5. QUALITATIVE EVALUATION OF INNER BRANDING

The qualitative evaluation of inner branding is conducted through interviews from the viewpoint of qualitative evaluation while presenting the created face chart to the company. The interview items are shown in Table 5.

Table 6 presents the results of the interviews with the middle managers of Company A after presenting the face chart. The following became clear from this hearing:

- (1) First, it was found from the hearing results that presentation as a face chart was more sensory and easier to understand than the numerical value obtained by the quantitative evaluation.
- (2) Regarding the current state of inner branding, as in the result of interview item No. 4, we were able to draw out qualitative and hypothetical topics and discussions rather than numerical values.
- (3) It was also found that the overall problem view obtained from the interview was similar to item E1 (improvement degree= 6.78) regarding the penetration of the philosophy for employees and the understanding of employees, which are the items that Company A should improve most in the quantitative evaluation.
- (4) In addition, as in the results of interview items No. 5 and No. 6, we were able to develop more specific discussions on the issues to be improved at present.
- (5) On the other hand, it was found that, as in hearing items No. 1 and No. 2, “it is difficult to judge when there is no expression”. It was also found that it was necessary to devise measures such as parameter weighting and correspondence to each part so that the face chart would not be expressionless.

Table 5: Viewpoint of qualitative evaluation

	A qualitative evaluation perspective (hearing items)
1	What do you think about the evaluation of inner branding using a face chart?
2	What do you think about your company's overall face chart?
3	What do you think about the manager's face chart?
4	What do you think about employee face charts?
5	Please tell us about your current challenges in inner branding.
6	Please tell us what you think you need to do as a specific action.
7	Please tell us about the communication at your company.

Table 6: Interview results (simplified content)

	The contents of the hearing are summarized and simplified.
1	I did not know this method, but it is very easy to understand. It is more sensory and easier to understand than numbers.
2	The face chart looks expressionless. Does everyone think so? I wonder if all of them have a little attachment.
3	I look roughly the same as the whole face chart. It is difficult to determine whether it is good or bad. Everyone looks like they're not thinking.
4	This chart has a rather bad look. Are you not very satisfied? From the perspective of management, I wondered if the employees were not very visible. Isn't the management's feeling very popular?
5	To be able to understand the work that the company is doing and the social significance of the company.
6	I think it is necessary to have a working style and consistent explanations for bosses and management. I think it is necessary to be patient in our daily lives. The goal is to be proud. It is also important to set goals that do not deviate from reality. It is necessary to process the thoughts of upper-level executives and pass them down more clearly.
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I think that the top management has been able to send information to the employees several times a year since the top management has the opportunity to send them to the employees. However, I don't know if it's well communicated from the top management to the managers and even to the lower-level employees. • I think that opinions from employees are being taken up. I think that dissatisfaction and opinions have been taken up both in terms of corporate culture and organization. The system to draw in opinions from employees is working well. However, I do my best, but I don't think the management's thoughts have permeated. • I don't think it's well done in the company to treat it as my own. • I think there are more informal connections than connections on the organization chart. After all, I think this is because the boss is not well taught. • Overall, we are making efforts such as changing the personnel evaluation system from one year ago. I think the boss needs to motivate each person.

6. DISCUSSION

By qualitatively evaluating inner branding using the face chart shown in this paper, it became possible to display human feelings more intuitively rather than numerically presenting information. In addition, we were able to summarize more refined information about the current inner branding compared to the quantitative evaluation. This means that an approach to qualitative evaluation of inner branding has become possible.

On the other hand, it seems that the relationship between the content of “Current issues of inner branding” and “Feeling that we have to do” is low. Therefore, it is necessary to come up

with more ideas in the company about what must be implemented as inner branding based on the issues. On that basis, of course, it is necessary to consider efficiency improvement based on the positive points.

In addition, we cannot overlook the “thought as a member of the company”. The way managers and employees judge the “thought as a member of the company” is important not only for inner branding but also for various other matters, such as the relationship between the organization and the individual and the degree of happiness of each individual. In recent years, research such on Emotional Intelligence (EI) required for leaders is also progressing, and it is possible to develop an inner branding checkpoint that considers the relationship with EI in inner branding.

7. CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this paper, we showed that it is an effective method to qualitatively evaluate inner branding using a face chart. Although there are many future tasks, further qualitative evaluation is needed. Furthermore, it is necessary to formulate an inner branding checkpoint based on various studies on EI. Eventually, it will need to be put together as an inner branding program to strengthen the corporate brand.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to thank the company employees who cooperated with the face chart questionnaire and interviews in this study.

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