

THE CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT PROCESS AS IT RELATES TO A BRAND'S REVIVAL STRATEGY

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Abstract

This article explores the underlying cognitive, emotional and conative factors associated with the consumer engagement process as it relates to a brand's revival. There is an abundance of academic literature that studies, separately, brand revival strategy and the consumer engagement process with brands. However, to the authors' knowledge, there has been no specific research or prior framework connecting these two topics together. Our findings indicate that consumers targeted by a particular brand's revival strategy will engage with that brand through a differentiated process that is based on the presence or absence of their previous knowledge about the particular brand in question. Those who previously knew about a brand will be more focused on the emotional aspects of engagement, while those who had no previous knowledge about a brand will concentrate more on its cognitive aspects. The results of this study suggest that, in order to increase its chances of success, the management of a brand's revival should be based (1) on a better understanding of the above specific factors affecting the consumers' engagement process as it relates to a brand's revival, and (2) on an actionable retro-brand marketing re-launch campaign using conative factors to positively influence consumer behavior.

Keywords: Brand Revival, Nostalgia, Consumer Engagement Process with Brand Revival

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Introduction

Gaining strong brand equity is an important brand managers' aim (Bowden, 2009; Keller and Lehman, 2006; Vivek, Beatty and Morgan, 2012). When considering brand options, "there are too many choices available today for customers to make the effort to work out what makes a particular brand specific" (Kapferer, 2008, p. 178). Customer brand equity is "the differential effect that brand knowledge has on consumer response to the marketing of that brand (Keller 1993, 2; Keller 1998, 45). Bivainiene (2010) claims that likewise a product life cycle, there is

a brand life cycle through which brands are created, rise, decline and finally disappear. The causes for the decline and the ultimate disappearance can be many: falling sales, corporate consolidation, portfolio rationalization (McDermott, 2008) as well as managerial inactions, environmental factors, competitive actions, mergers and acquisitions (Shivakanth Shetty, A., Raghavendra, A.N. & Jyothis, M., 2014).

1 Brand Life-Cycle Extension Strategies

When it comes to the process of extending a brand's life cycle, a clear distinction must be made between the concepts of brand rejuvenation, brand revitalization and brand revival. The brand rejuvenation strategy is used when the brand is in the declining stage of the brand lifecycle, and that the brand is fading (Lehu, 2005). Revitalizing a brand looks for recapturing the lost equity or to build new sources of equity in order to gain again its place in the market (Keller, 1999). The revival brand strategy consists in reviving a dormant brand that has disappeared from the market, based on its past equity (Henning, 2004). Brand revivals tend to be based on the consumers' tendency for feelings of nostalgia for the past, and the search for the past brand's authenticity (McDermott, 2008; Levy, 2009; Shivakanth, Raghavendra & Jyothis, 2014). Brown, Kozinets and Sherry (2003) defined retro branding as "the revival or relaunch of a product or service brand from a prior historical period, which is usually but not always updated to contemporary standards of performance, functioning, or taste," seeing retro goods as "brand-new, old-fashioned offerings" (2003, 20). A successful brand revival strategy must contain "4 As", i.e. four elements that are relevant for brand revival management: allegory (brand story), arcadia (idealized brand community), aura (brand essence), and antinomy (brand paradox) (Brown, Kozinets and Sherry, 2003). In order for brands to be revived successfully, they must be remembered and respected by consumers, be relevant in the present/future and be differentiated in product features/packaging/offerings (Levy, 2009).

Due to demographic developments in the world, there is a generational effect with brands. The nostalgia appears because consumers compare their nowadays way of living, considered as stressful, with the one they used to have, more quiet. Furthermore, consumers' feeling of living in an unauthentic world is enhanced by mass marketing, and uniformed global offers of products & services. The above reinforces the consumers' desire to buy, use and possess brands that they can connect with. Therefore, consumers get attracted to revived brands and retro branding (Kessous and Roux, 2010).

2 Consumer Engagement Process with Revival Brands

Nostalgia about dormant brands is a powerful factor that can influence consumers who have a positive memory or feeling of some popular brand from their past, and to bind again with it if it were to appear again on the market. Trust is a result of a past positive consumer experience with the brand. Consumers with developed knowledge about revived brands are presumed to have already felt trust for them. As a consequence, both nostalgia and trust are considered as antecedents of a potential engagement process with revived brand. Commitment is defined as a concept that value a relationship with a strong desire and efforts made to maintain it (Moorman et al., 1992; Morgan and Hunt, 1994; Hollebeek, 2011) or as a sum of economical and psychological bonds held by consumers toward an object, a product, a brand or, even a store (Iglesias et al., 2010). The concept has become central in building a positive and valuable consumer brand relationship.

Commitment is generally considered as a parallel to trust, and as an antecedent of loyalty in the case of repurchase intention. There exists a distinction between affective and calculative commitments (Allen and Meyer, 1990). The affective commitment is based on psychological and desire process, which implies that experienced consumers are continuously being motivated to maintain the relationship with the brand (Bowden, 2009; Vivek, Beatty and Morgan, 2012). Calculative commitment is said to be the individual analysis about risks of loss and cost if a person were to lose the relationship (Swales, 2002). In consumer and marketing research, this construct is integrated into a rational evaluation process for potential and/or new consumers that do not feel engaged with the brand yet (Bowden, 2009). The latter need to be comforted in their choice when selecting a brand. The distinction between affective and calculative commitment is meaningful in the case of consumer engagement with revival brands. It is hypothesized that for past regular consumers of the revived brand, the commitment is already felt before the "re" engagement process. Furthermore, it is assumed that an emotional bond may have already occurred. Hence, consumers that have a developed knowledge about revived brands may feel an affective commitment. On the contrary, the authors presume that a commitment from new consumers will emerge once they get convinced that the brand is worth getting to be engaged with it. The emotional bond may appear much later, once they are convinced of the right choice.

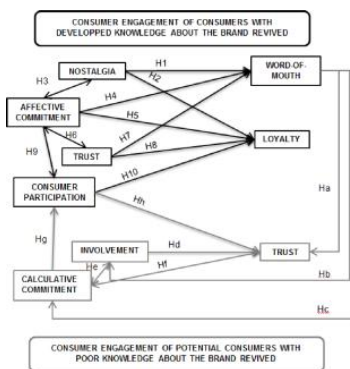
Based on the above, this paper therefore seeks to advance the notion of brand revival

strategy as a form of brand extension strategy in which abandoned brands have been reanimated and successfully revived thanks to a specific and differentiated consumer engagement process (Payne et al., 2009; Prahalad, 2004; Kelly & Lawlor, 2010). It is based on the notion of a Proactive Consumer Involvement (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2000) that requires co-opting consumer participation in the Value-Creation Process (Vargo & Lusch, 2004). The authors suggest that consumers targeted by a particular brand's revival strategy engage with that brand through a differentiated process that is based on the presence or absence of their previous knowledge about the particular brand in question.

3 Theoretical Framework & Research Design

Based on the existing undifferentiated conceptual models of consumer engagement, the authors propose a modified conceptual framework of a differentiated consumer engagement process with revival brands based on the level of knowledge and on the presence or absence of a prior experience with revival brands. In this model, a distinction has been made between consumers who have already known about a dormant brand (i.e. consumers with developed knowledge about the brand, further referred to as “CDKB”) and potential consumers who may be targeted by a revival brand might target (i.e. consumers with poor or no knowledge about the brand, further referred to as “CPKB”).

Fig.1: Conceptual model of consumer's engagement process with revival brand



Consumers with developed knowledge about the brand revived (CDKB) are hereby differentiated from potential consumers with poor knowledge about the brand revived (CPKB). CDKB and CPKB are hypothesized to have a differentiated engagement process with revival brands.

For CDKB, the propositions and hypotheses are summed up in the Table 1.

Tab. 1: Hypotheses for CDKB engagement process with revived brands

	Hypothesis
$P_1 \rightarrow H_1$	Nostalgia has a positive effect on intention to engage in word-of-mouth
$P_2 \rightarrow H_2$	Nostalgia has a positive effect on loyalty
$P_3 \rightarrow H_3$	Nostalgia and affective commitment are positively correlated
$P_4 \rightarrow H_4$	Affective commitment has a positive effect on intention to engage in word-of-mouth
$P_5 \rightarrow H_5$	Affective commitment has a positive effect on loyalty
$P_6 \rightarrow H_6$	Affective commitment and trust are positively correlated
$P_7 \rightarrow H_7$	Trust has a positive effect on intention to engage in word-of-mouth
$P_8 \rightarrow H_8$	Trust has a positive effect on loyalty
$P_9 \rightarrow H_9$	Affective commitment has a positive effect on consumer participation
$P_{10} \rightarrow H_{10}$	Consumer participation has a positive effect on loyalty

For CPKB, the propositions and hypotheses are presented in the Table 2.

Table 2: Hypotheses for CPKB engagement process with revived brands

	Hypothesis
$P_a \rightarrow H_a$	Word-of-mouth positively influences trust
$P_b \rightarrow H_b$	Word-of-mouth positively influences involvement
$P_c \rightarrow H_c$	Involvement has a positive effect on trust
$P_d \rightarrow H_d$	Involvement has a positive effect on trust
$P_e \rightarrow H_e$	Consumer participation has a positive effect on trust.

This research aims at highlighting the main differences between factors influencing experienced and potential consumers in the engagement process with revival brands through a descriptive quantitative research. First, 25 dormant brands were identified through a secondary data search and interviews with a non-representative sample (n=15).

Table 3 provides the list of these brands classified into product categories.

Table 3: List of most cited brands that have disappeared in France

Pastry	Dairy	Candy & Chocolate	Food (other)
Yes	Bio	Spring gum Treetts	Olida
Raider	Chambourcy La roche aux fées	Pastador Bonitos	Bannier
L'Alsacienne		Merveilles du monde	Kix
Papou			
Bamboula			
Household	Clothes	Drinks	Miscellaneous
Bonux	Waikiki	Pshitt	Pan'Am
		Banga	Felix Potin
		Tang	Mammouth
		Sironimo	Prisunic

Through an iterative process, three brands were chosen in the above list: Yes, Bonux and Pshitt. This choice was supported by the fact that these brands can be potentially known by the CDKB aged 39+. Also, the CPKB could potentially identify with these brands as market conditions seem to be favorable for their revival.

An online quantitative study was conducted (n=134). 130 questionnaires were complete and further analyzed. Table 4 provides the demographic and socio-economic profile of the respondents.

Tab. 4: Structure of the final sample according to socio-economic category, age and gender

	Number of respondents	Percentage
Socio-professional category		
Operating farmer	0	0%
Craftsman, trader or business owner	1	0.8%
Executive and intellectual profession	41	31.5%
Intermediate profession	7	5.4%
Employee	19	14.6%
Worker	0	0%
Retired	7	5.4%
Without professional activity	3	2.3%
Student	52	40.0%
total	130	100%
Age		
Under 19 years old [1995 -]	3	2.3%
Between 20 to 29 years old [1985 - 1994]	76	58.5%
Between 30 to 39 years old [1975 - 1984]	11	8.5%

Between 40 to 49 years old [1695 - 1974]	12	9.2%
Between 50 to 59 years old [1955 - 1694]	19	14.6%
Between 60 to 69 years old [1945 - 1954]	9	6.9%
Over 70 years old [- 1944]	0	0%
total	130	100%
Gender		
Man	43	33.1%
Woman	87	66.9%
Total	130	100%

Two different questionnaires were administered. The first one was designed to test attitudes to the selected revival brands of those respondents who have already had a previous knowledge and experience with these brands. The objective was to test the impact of previous trust, affective commitment and nostalgia on the respondents' engagement with the brands. The second questionnaire was designed for respondents who have not yet had any previous knowledge or experience with the selected revival brands. The aim of the second questionnaire was to understand salient factors that could lead to their potential consumer engagement with the brands.

In both CDKB and CPKB questionnaires, the constructs were measured by using a multi-item scale, based on a 7-point Likert scale. Both were composed of three main parts: (1) the first one was designed to filter the consumers' type; (2) the second part tested respondents' attitude toward the brands and provided grounds for testing the validity, reliability and the links between the tested variables in the proposed model; (3) the third part provided control and deeper understanding of respondents' consumer category belonging.

In a KMO - Bartlett's test for CDKB, the tested items scored as follows in Table 5.

Tab. 5 : Matrix of items by constructs for CDKB

Item	KMO		
	Yes	Bonux	Pschitt
NOSTALGIA Past childhood self-connection (<i>eliminated during reliability test</i>) Regret feeling Repurchase intention	0.761	0.774	0.706
TRUST1 Doubtless repurchase intention Brand credibility <i>Brand integrity</i> (eliminated during reliability test)	0.648	0.697	0.644

AFFECTIVE COMMITMENT Use to like Emotional brand attachment Brand meaning importance	0.746	0.697	0.732
CUSTOMER PARTICIPATION1 Participation to brand study Information seeking <i>Participation in social networks(eliminated during reliability test)</i>	0.500	0.500	0.500
INTENTION TO WOM Telling anecdotes about brand Advocating interest of purchasing brand Influence of previous	0.690	0.748	0.776
LOYALTY Brand favorableness Brand preference Re purchase intention	0.760	0.791	0.841

The same analysis was then conducted for CPKB. The results of the KMO-Bartlett's test are presented in Table 6.

Tab. 6 : Matrix of items by constructs for CPKB

Item	KMO		
	Yes	Bonux	Pschitt
INVOLVEMENT Interest for the brand Information seeking Trial influence Complementary Information seeking Consumers' matching value	0.645	0.805	0.746
CONSUMER PARTICIPATION Participation to study Co-creation goodwill Participation in social networks	0.682	0.785	0.704
INFLUENCE OF WOM Influence of positive WOM Influence of opinion of a trusted person knowing the brand	0.707	0.733	
TRUST Trust perception Integrity Satisfaction perception	0.839	0.838	0.581

CALCULATIVE COMMITMENT			
Complementary Information seeking			
Consumers' matching value			

4 Results & Discussion

The above analyses included tests for reliability, normality, sampling adequacy and correlations between variables. For the engagement process of consumers with developed knowledge about the revival brands, the tested hypotheses show the crucial role of emotions and affective commitment in the consumer engagement process (see Table 7).

Tab. 7: Hypothesis results for CDKB

Hypothesis	Result
Nostalgia has a positive effect on intention to make	Accepted
Nostalgia has a positive effect on loyalty	Rejected
Nostalgia and affective commitment are positively	Accepted
Affective commitment has a positive effect on	Accepted
Affective commitment has a positive effect on loyalty	Rejected
Affective commitment and trust are positively	Rejected
Trust has a positive effect on intention to make word-	Rejected
Trust has a positive effect on loyalty	Rejected
Affective commitment has a positive effect on	Rejected
Consumer participation has a positive effect on loyalty	Rejected

For the engagement process of consumers with poor knowledge about the revival brands, the results show the effects of word-of-mouth on involvement and the overall influence of involvement and participation on trust.

Tab.8: Hypothesis results for CPKB

Hypothesis	Result
Word-of-mouth positively influence trust	Rejected
Word-of-mouth positively influence involvement	Accepted
Involvement has a positive effect on trust	Accepted
Involvement has a positive effect on trust	Accepted
Consumer participation has a positive effect on trust	Accepted

This research confirms that the consumer engagement processes of CDKB and CPKB are differentiated. This study sheds light on their existing positive correlation between the emotional factors, represented by nostalgia and affective commitment, and propensity for a spreading word-of-mouth. On the contrary, consumers with poor or no previous knowledge about the revived brand will concentrate more on the cognitive factors of the engagement

process.

5 Limitations & Recommendations for Further Research

Some limitations to this research exist: (1) the sample is small (n=130) and non-representative (58% of students, aged between 20 to 29 years. The selected quantitative research method didn't allow for collecting verbal and/or non-verbal cues. Therefore, future research on the topic of consumer engagement with revival brands should include qualitative analysis by using experiments and interviews. A larger and stratified representative sample of consumers should be involved in the study.

6 Conclusion

In particular, the results of the present research encourages managers to use the emotional equity carried by dormant brands to be revived and targeted at the CDKB as a strategic pillar, by using the nostalgia and affection effects. Moreover, word-of-mouth sticks out as a key factor that is linked to the engagement process of consumers with developed knowledge about the brand revived and consumers who have poor or no knowledge about it. Word-of-mouth therefore seems to be the turnaround unifying backbone element of the consumer engagement process with both CDKB and CPKB consumers' types. Indeed, on the one hand, former and older former consumers of current dormant brands are ready to advocate for them, sharing positive experiences and anecdotes. On the other hand, potential consumers are more and more sensitive to word-of-mouth about brands, which would comfort them in their choice of brand. Last but not the least, retro branding strategies can only be successful if managers update the product's brand and/or the brand. The notion of updating is important because it supports the re-launch of the brand and comforts the acceptance of the brand in today's market.

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