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## THE NOSTALGIC BRAND IN SERVICE OF BUSINESS COMPETITIVENESS

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### **Abstract**

*With the opening of borders, and the technological development, the need to be distinguished in a global market becomes the ambition of any company seeking its durability. On the other hand, the consumer market is becoming increasingly demanding with savvy and volatile consumers who seek the semiotic satisfaction. To answer this problem, alternating between the rivalry of markets and the need for the consumption of meaning, we have associated two variables, namely brand and emotions. The objective of this work is to explore the Moroccan environment and to understand how the consumer reacts to the nostalgic brand. It is in this context that we carried out a descriptive exploratory study in order to understand the Moroccan market's reasoning in terms of offers, preferences and purchasing intentions with regard to the nostalgic brand.*

Keywords: Brand – Nostalgia – brand attachment – preference

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The company in its global context faces a multitude of constraints on a daily basis. A wide range of products, a market opening, substitute products, the emergence of new entrants, the sophisticated standards and regulations, the rapid technological development, all those elements place the company in an endless dilemma. In addition, globalization has had a great impact on changing the business climate. The markets are not in a unilateral or bilateral approach but in a dynamic approach (Ghilane & Aomari 2015).

Also, the culture of consumption of meaning is beginning to become more and more extensive. Looking for the meaning, consumers reflect an increasing demand according to their physiological, psychological and sociological needs (Ghilane & Aomari 2016).

This complex situation puts companies between two spheres, on one hand, the strong standardized production characterized by mass production, and on the other hand, the consumer market characterized by mass consumption (Ghilane & Aomari 2016).

To cope with this, and to ensure its sustainability and competitiveness in a market, the company must stand out and position itself positively to meet the environmental and the consumer market constraints. However, how can the company guarantee its competitiveness in a market? In other words, which competitive advantage a company should develop?

To answer this question, we have interacted two aspects of the marketing discipline, namely the brand component and the emotional marketing component under its variable nostalgia to study the concept of "the nostalgic brand".

The nostalgic brand is a fairly large and complex field of study, which makes a set of variables interact, it is also very relative to the culture of the market in which it is analysed.

It is in this context that we draw up questions specific to the Moroccan market through an exploratory study, to understand how the consumer reacts to the nostalgic brand.

The aim of this work is to present a descriptive interpretation of a market image based on the analysis of the perception of the nostalgic brand for the different age groups and thus to constitute a referential mapping for the managers to ensure the competitiveness of the company from a managerial point of view.

## **2. THE COMPANY CONTEXT:**

The environment in which the company operates is subject to numerous changes and involves numerous political, economic, social, environmental, legal and technological variables.

On the other hand, the study of the market of the company, developed by M. Porter 1979 through his model of "Forces de Proter", demonstrates the power relations between the actors of the sector and the strong or weak position that has the company in its market (E. Karsaklien 2009).

Thus, between the rivalry of the market and the pressure of the environment, a company must ensure its sustainability, to succeed in its environment. For that the company must acquire a competitive advantage and then defend it (M. Saïas, E. Métis 2001).

However, how can competitive advantage ensure a unique positioning in a complex and competitive market?

### **Competitive advantage:**

A company has a competitive advantage when it implements a value-creating strategy that is not simultaneously implemented by any current or potential competitor (Grisé, Yvan, Boulianne, and Lévesque 1997).

Competitive advantage is therefore a key success factor for companies, enabling them to stand out in a positive market. However, in the competitive context, this advantage can be imitated by competing organizations.

So, we can talk about a sustainable competitive advantage when implementing a value-creating strategy that is not simultaneously implemented by any current or potential competitor and when other companies are unable to replicate the benefits of this strategy (Grisé, Yvan, Boulianne, and Lévesque 1997).

To have the potential to provide a sustainable competitive advantage, a resource must meet four characteristics (Barney 1991): it must add value to the company, it can be used to seize opportunities and / or to neutralize threats to the environment; it must be rare, the resource must be unique or distinctive among the current or potential competitors of the company; it must be imperfectly imitable, that is to say, it cannot be imitated easily and completely by undertakings which do not hold it; it cannot be substituted by another resource equivalent to the plan of the strategy.

In this perspective, we are going to move towards a lasting and inimitable competitive advantage that is none other than the brand.

### **Inimitable competitive advantage: the brand**

The brand concept carries in it several senses, and has been presented under different approaches; in the present work we position ourselves on the corporate and client level while focusing on the brand under the semiotic approach and brand equity.

Brand equity may be defined as a set of assets that combines brand name sensitivity, customer loyalty, perceived quality, and brand (name and symbol) associations that add value to the product or service offered and Which brings value to both the consumer and the company (D.Aaker 1991). In other words, brand equity represents the added value that a given brand brings to the product (Farquhar1989).

From another point of view, the brand perceived by A. Sempirini(1992) is constituted by all the discourses held about him and by the totality of the subjects (individual and collective) involved in his generation.

In the semiotic approach or the brand equity approach, the aim of the brand is similar, insofar as the aim is to ensure a positive differentiation that creates an inimitable competitive advantage in the company through customer satisfaction.

Thus, in this work, we have combined the two approaches to add the variable nostalgia to the semiotic concept of the brand and thus strengthen brand equity and therefore the competitiveness of the company in a long term. So, for some companies and targets, it will be more practical to communicate around a nostalgic advertisement with a feedback effect than to rethink the strategy and create a new communication.

### **3. RETRO-MARKETING**

Since the early 1980s, consumer behaviour research has become increasingly interested in the concept of emotions (Graillet 1998), this interest has been shown when researchers, and more particularly Holbrook and Hirshman (1982), have suggested that the introduction of emotions, as an important special sub-set of emotional states, in research can help better understand the decision-making process and the behaviour of the consumer.

The human being is a set of reason but also of emotions, and in order to make a decision he makes appeal to his emotions, reason why today and more than ever the emotion is often at the heart of the act of purchase, it takes an increasingly important value in the field of marketing, hence the intense use of brands in emotional marketing.

These brands through this aspect have the purpose of developing emotions to promote action by creating a connection between the brand and the consumer, knowing that the person is under strong emotion, it goes to action in an impulsive manner (Vergnette 2015).

There are many definitions about the concept of retro-marketing. The academic literature defines retro-marketing as "the rebirth or return of a product or service from a previous period" (Brown, 2001). It is a marketing trend that uses consumer nostalgia to sell products.

Consumers need to be reassured and see the experiences of rebuilding the past as an opportunity to respond to a quest for security (Loveland, Smeesters and Mandel, 2010). Nostalgia thus

becomes a marketing tool at the service of brands and gives them a capital of authenticity, longevity and quality.

#### **4. THE NOSTALGIC BRAND:**

Nostalgic brands are defined as brands that were popular in the past and are still popular today (loveland, smeesters and Mandel 2010). We distinguish two types of nostalgic brand, the transgenerational brands and the generational brands (Kessous and Roux, 2010). The first surpass intergenerational differences and target a variety of consumer. The second, are specific to certain generations (eg Nintendo: generation Y, Lego: generation X, Levis: baby boomers, Ford: post-war generation) (Brée 1999, Heilbrunn 1999, Kessous and Roux 2010 ).

Fournier (1994) and Delgado and Escalas (2004) show that brands provide a dual identity function, enabling individuals to connect to their own past and promote their social integration. As a continuation of their research, Kessous and Roux (2010) verify that there are links; Nostalgia / attachment and nostalgia / connections to the self, and also integrate the attitudinal conative level with consumer preferences, purchase intention, propensity to offer and word-of-mouth.

#### **Attachment to the nostalgic brand**

The existence of a relationship between nostalgia and attachment is explained by several studies (Heilbrunn, 2001), Belk 1990 and Holbrook 1991), demonstrating that the consumer uses his memories before attaching himself to the brand. Thus, the greater the nostalgic connections, the greater the intensity of attachment to the brand is high (Richins, 1994, Kleines et al 1995, Lacoueilhe, 2000a). The brand can thus generate a nostalgic stimulus and allows the branded object to have a sentimental value that will be a source of attachment.

For Lacoueilhe (2000), attachment to the brand can be fuelled in different ways and mainly by nostalgic ties where the brand plays the memory role of the individual. Indeed, the attachment requires a minimum of prior knowledge of the brand to develop over time a set of memories associating the studied variable (Brand) with the consumer, thus creating the nostalgic effect.

#### **Nostalgic brand preference**

According to Holbrook and Schindler (1991), nostalgia is defined as a preference (loving, positive, positive effects) towards more familiar (popular, fashionable or widely diffused) objects (people, places or things when we were younger early adulthood, adolescence, childhood or even birth).

The long-term preferences of cultural consumption are created in late adolescence and early adulthood (Holbrook and Schindler 1989, 1994, 1996 and Holbrook, 1993). According to Bowlby's theory of attachment (1982), the brands that the child visualizes at an early age, and the memories associated with them, are coded in long-term memory and influence future consumption preferences. Finally, Moore, Wilkie and Lutz (2002) show that intergenerational influence plays at different stages in the decision-making process: awareness, choice and preference for the brand. In this sense, Ladwein, Carton and Sevin (2009, p. 12) point out that part of the consumption practices transmitted from one generation to another within the family "present nostalgic connections" Especially an inclination for brands associated with childhood memories, and thus the desire to find an idealized past through them.

## Purchase Intention

In their research on nostalgic consumption, Sierra and Shaun (2007) show that the cognitive and affective dimensions of nostalgia have a positive and significant impact on the intention to purchase nostalgic products. This leads us to postulate the existence of a significant link between the nostalgia aroused by a brand and its intention to purchase.

### 5. METHODOLOGY:

#### The object of study:

On a practical level, we conducted an exploratory study to identify the reaction of Moroccan consumers to the nostalgic brand through the three variables mentioned above, namely preference, attachment and purchase intention.

For preference, the objective is to study what interest the consumer gives to a nostalgic brand. For attachment, we studied the pattern and degree of bonding to a nostalgic brand.

For the purchase intention, we analyse the frequency of consumption of that nostalgic brand.

#### Sampling:

Holbrook and Schindler (1989) point out that sustainable preference in cultural consumption occur in late adolescence and early adulthood. Based on these findings, we limited our target to adults and senior.

For the sample size, it is estimated to be 150. To do this we used the following formula:

$$n = (z)^2 / 4d^2$$

Z = confidence level according to the normal centred reduced law (for a confidence level of 95%, z = 1.96). D = tolerated margin of error estimated at 8%.

Based on the statistics of the HCP<sup>1</sup> report published in 2016 about demographic distribution of population in the urban area, we used the quota method to justify our sample.

The following table shows the distribution of the sample of 150 individuals:

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<sup>1</sup> HCP : Le *Haut-Commissariat au Plan*

Table 1: Sampling through quota method

Ages	Womens	%	Sample	Mens	%	Sample
25 to 35	1785831	16,637	24,956	1681662	16,041	24,062
35 to 45	1548856	14,429	21,644	1422979	13,573	20,360
45 to 55	1262832	11,764	17,647	1191484	11,365	17,048
More than 55	830574	7,737	11,606	884666	8,438	12,658
Total sample	5428093	50,57	75,855	5180791	49,42	74,13
Total population	10496078	50,579	75,868	10255722	49,420	74,131

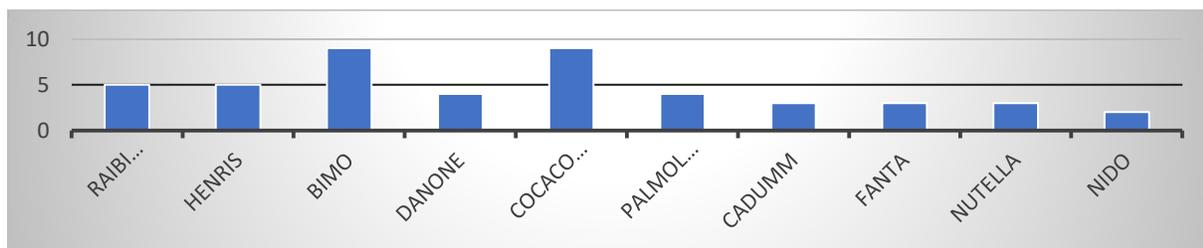
Source: Realised by the authors

## 6. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Before questioning consumers about their perceptions of the nostalgic brand, we have initiated our study by identifying brands that recall particular moments or memories for the consumer in a past period.

The graphic below traces the ten brands most cited by the Moroccan consumers as nostalgic brands.

Graphic 1: Brand cited as nostalgic brands



Source: Realised by the authors

Analysing the information gathered about the nostalgic brand according to the different ages and gender, conclusions were drawn about three components designed as objectives for the study: (a) Attachment to the nostalgic brand; (b) preference of the nostalgic brand; and (c) the intention of purchase of the nostalgic brand.

### **Attachment to the nostalgic brand:**

According to our study of literature, we note that the memories positively affect the attachment to the nostalgic brand.

Referring to our study of the Moroccan case, the highest attachment level is related to level 2 on a scale of 5. This level is represented by three categories: The women and men of the bracket (35 to 45 years), and the men of + 55 years.

The first argument presented as a reason for attachment for women (35-45 years) is the memories; this finding validates the theoretical reflection. The men of +55 years position quality before the variable of memories and men of (35-45 years) explain their attachment by quality, the habit of consumption and confidence. We notice that the variables for attachment vary according to the age and gender.

### **Preference of the nostalgic brand**

According to the Bowlby theory 1982, memories increase the preference for the nostalgic brand. In our exploratory study, we have highlighted new variables that we present in the table below.

Table 2: Explanatory reasons for the preference of the nostalgic brand according to the Moroccan case

	Preference (%)		Arguments
	Nostalgic brand	No nostalgic brand	
Women			Argument for the nostalgic brand
25-35	88%	8%	Habit of consumption - nostalgia - Attachment
35-45	68%	23%	Nostalgia - product knowledge - consumer habits
45-55	61%	17%	Nostalgia - confidence - quality
+55	55%	9%	Consumption habits - satisfaction - memories
Men			
25-35	88%	8%	Quality - Nostalgia - attachment
35-45	57%	19%	Consumption habits - quality - fidelity - memories
45-55	72%	28%	Consumption habits - nostalgia - satisfaction
+55	43%	21%	Souvenirs - attachment - confidence

Source: Realised by authors

The results indicate that apart the memory variable; we note new argument that impacts the preference to the nostalgic brand which is the habit of consumption.

### **Intention of purchase of the nostalgic brand**

In a synthetic way, the general analysis of the review of the literature shows that the cognitive and affective dimensions positively increase the purchase of nostalgic products.

The exploratory study allowed us to go deeper into this point by studying the frequency of purchase and the intention to purchase, while asking for reasons concerning the obstacles that

could negatively impact the purchase of the nostalgic brand. We present the answers in the table below:

Table 3: Intention to purchase and frequency of purchase of nostalgic brand

Women	Purchase intention	Frequency of purchase	Reasons for non-purchase
25-35	75%	Often	Quality - brand name - price
35-45	59%	Often	Quality - brand name - visual identity
45-55	50%	Occasionally	Quality - brand name - visual identity
+55	55%	Never	Quality - brand name - the product no longer exists
Mens			
25-35	74%	Often	Quality - price - brand name
35-45	67%	Occasionally	Brand name - quality - visual identity
45-55	78%	Often and Occasionally	Quality - brand - visual identity
+55	50%	Often	Quality - brand - visual identity

Source: Realised by authors

We generally find that the purchase intention and the actual purchase frequency are homogeneous. On the other hand, the causes that can negatively impact the purchase of the nostalgic brand relate mainly to the change of quality and the change of the brand name.

According to our review of the literature, we find that specialists have become aware of the place of nostalgic brand and the advantages it gives as a competitive element on which managers can base their positioning. It is this aspect that gives the company a distinctive character in order to guarantee its customers' attachment, preference and purchase intention.

## 7. LIMITS AND SUGGESTIONS

This work has some limitations. The study focuses on the perception of Moroccan consumers of the nostalgic brand in the sector consumption. It will be interesting to explore different sectors to better understand the consumer reaction, and to add other study variables. It will also be interesting to study the return effect that the nostalgic brand has on the company to have a complete picture in terms of profitability.

For the research tracks, a study on the impact of the nostalgic brand on the competence of the company from the financial point of view will be interesting, to better evaluate the importance of the use of the nostalgic variable.

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