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Hedonic and symbolic consumption perceived values:

opportunities for innovators and designers in the fields of
brand and product design

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Abstract:

This paper's objective is to stress the interest for both innovators and designers of a marketing concept that has been widely explored since the early 80's in the fields of customer behaviour and brand management. Indeed, the concept of hedonic perceived value, as defined by Holbrook and Hirschmann (1982), has provided marketers with a more complete understanding of consumption experiences. We argue that innovators and designers, could better assess the potentiality and viability of their ideas or projects, as early as during the conception phase of new brands and products, by taking into account the findings of a marketing study on hedonic and symbolic brand value perception which we present here. Firstly, we draw upon the hedonic and symbolic perceived value in the marketing literature. We then discuss the results of our survey, conducted in a French mass-consumption context, investigating the brand choice process of 251 customers among 3 product categories and 9 brands. We use tools initially developed by marketers to analyse the various dimensions of perceived brand value to explore their influence on customer-brand relationship and customer behaviour. Our findings show that both industrial brands and retailer brands can be valued in terms of hedonic and symbolic benefits. In an attempt to identify bridges between current brand management research and today's innovation and design issues, we indicate theoretical and managerial implications emphasizing the interest of interactions between designers, marketers and prospects or users during the conception phase of brands or products life cycle.

Key words:

Perceived value, brand relationship, consumer behaviour, design, innovation.

Recent marketing research has aimed at a better understanding of consumer-brand relationships and of the influence these relationships can have on consumer loyalty (Fournier, 1998). One of the most interesting fields of investigation consists undoubtedly of a finer assessment of the antecedents of this relationship. Many researchers argue that perceived value is actually the fundamental issue underlying consumer-brand relationship theory and thus consumer loyalty. Marketers have explored the concept of perceived value, differentiating between utilitarian and hedonic value, either from a general point of view (foundation articles by Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982; Hirschman and Holbrook, 1982) or focusing on a variety of levels, such as brands (Keller, 1993; Keller and Lehmann, 2003), products (e.g. Dhar and Wertenbroch, 2000; Okada, 2005), services (e.g. Arnould and Price, 1993), stores (e.g. Bellizzi, Crowley and Hasty, 1983), or shopping experience (Babin, Darden and Griffin, 1994). Some marketers prefer a tridimensional conceptualization of perceived value. They argue that symbolic perceived value appears to be a fundamental dimension of consumption experience and suggest that symbolic perceptions and associations help forging and enhancing relationships between consumers and brands. In this context, it seems important to analyse the specific influence of three facets of perceived brand value on the consumer-brand relationship. From both a managerial and an academic point of view, explaining the growing success of retailer brands worldwide has become a main issue of brand management today. Thus, we suggest that it might be useful to identify perceived brand value profiles, differentiating between manufacturer brands and retailer brands.

So this communication firstly develops the concept of perceived brand value and its links with design thinking. Then the methodology and the main results of our survey are discussed.

DESIGN THINKING AND HEDONIC PERCEIVED VALUE:

The link between design and hedonic consumption has been emphasized by marketers as early as 1982, when Holbrook and Hirschman (1982 and Hirschman and Holbrook, 1982) suggested that the hedonic perspective was needed to supplement and extend marketing research on consumer behaviour. Typically, they define the experiential approach as providing insights into the symbolic, hedonic and esthetic nature of consumption (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982). In other terms, they argue that hedonic consumption should be taken into account to provide a better knowledge on those “facets of consumer behavior that relate to the multisensory, fantasy and emotive aspects of product usage experience”.

In the same line of thought, more recent research, conducted by Chitturi, Raghunathan and Mahajan (2007, 2008), explores the role of both utilitarian and hedonic benefits in design. Clearly, design, as far as it is involved in a variety of marketing issues such as brand conception and management, product and packaging design, store concepts and atmosphere, or even shopping experience, is a further field where the hedonic perspective has proved useful. Typically, Chitturi and colleagues (2008) stress the multidisciplinary recognition of hedonic elements in consumption. Other researchers, Voss, Spangenberg and Grohmann (2003), emphasize that “investigation of the hedonic and utilitarian components of attitude has been suggested in such diverse disciplines as sociology, psychology and economics”. In other terms, a mere utilitarian perspective doesn't provide enough insights into consumption experiences and researchers agree that the hedonic approach is needed to investigate today's users behaviours.

Therefore, we suggest that useful bridges could be explored between current brand management research and “design thinking”. Brown (2008), underlining the link between design, innovation and value, defines design thinking as a “methodology that imbues the full spectrum of innovation activities with a human-centered design ethos”. He suggests that design thinking is a “discipline that uses the designer’s sensibility and methods to match people’s needs with [...] what a viable business strategy can convert into customer value”.

Brand value perception:

Creating customer value is clearly the major objective of innovation. For Brown (2008), successful brands innovate and build value thanks to “breakthrough ideas that are inspired by a deep understanding of consumers’ lives”. In the field of marketing, most researchers divide customer value into two different categories: utilitarian and hedonic (e.g. Babin et al., 1994; Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001; Hirschman and Holbrook, 1982; Mano and Oliver, 1993).

Utilitarian value, which has been widely studied, is described as instrumental (functional, task-related) and related to cognitive evaluation. Utilitarian value is linked with the notion of product performance and usefulness (Mano and Oliver, 1993). For example, savings, convenience and product quality can be classified among utilitarian values or benefits (Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001; Ailawadi et al., 2001). Conversely, hedonic value, in which designers and innovators are specifically involved, is more subjective and emotional, and results more from fun and entertainment than from task completion (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982; Babin et al., 1994). Pleasing properties such as consumer aesthetics, variety seeking or exploration, enjoyment are hedonic values or benefits: they are noninstrumental, experiential and affective.

While perceived value is often conceptualized as bi-dimensional , some researchers include a third dimension, suggesting that symbolic benefits such as self-expression or social recognition are additional gratifications, different from hedonic perceptions. There is no real consensus about the classification of symbolic value in previous literature: it has been referred to either as part of the hedonic value or as a specific type of value in itself. For some researchers (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982; Chandon et al., 2000; Ailawadi et al., 2001), symbolic meanings and self-expression are classified and explored among hedonic values, while Keller (1993) or Park and colleagues. (1986) make a clear differentiation and describe symbolic value as less product-related than hedonic benefits, including self-expression, social approval and self-esteem.

Other studies dealing with the self-concept in consumer behaviour have shown that products can be communication vehicles as far as they refer to images and associations (e.g. Sirgy, 1982). And Belk (1988) has highlighted the ways consumption helps define people's identity in relationship to others. Similarly, the symbolic interactionism perspective has described products as social stimuli (Solomon, 1983). Typically, if a consumer, after buying a brand, feels that using this brand provides self gratification, he or she will be more tempted to rebuy it. Findings have shown that self gratification is an antecedent of purchase behaviour and thus brand loyalty (Reed, 2002).

The hedonic and symbolic perceived value of retailer brands: investigating present brand choice processes to identify opportunities for designers and innovators

One of today's consumption behaviours that still remains unexplained, is undoubtedly the worldwide growing success of retailer brands. Both managers and academics express the need

for a more complete explanation of the “retailer brand phenomena”, but marketing research so far has failed to provide a fine understanding of customers’ new brand choice processes. This major evolution consists in the growing volatility of customers, associated with a declining loyalty to “traditional brands” and an increasing retailer brand consumption. Typically, in Europe, retailer brand sales accounted for a 23 % share in 2005 with a growth rate of 4% (sales in value, AC Nielsen, 2005). North-American retailer brands have a 16% share of the market and achieve a significant growth rate as well (7%, AC Nielsen, 2005). Comparing manufacturer brands’ and retailer brands’ growth shows that private labels and store brands more than double the growth rate of manufacturer brands (5% vs 2%), (AC Nielsen 2005, 38 countries).

We argue that investigating the hedonic and symbolic perceived value of retailer brands could provide managers with a better assessment of present brand choice processes and a clear knowledge of the retailer brands’ strengths and weaknesses, implying a more complete explanation of their success. This, in turn, could imply new opportunities for designers and innovators to create ideas that better correspond to today’s consumers’ needs, desires and behaviours.

Typically, prior conceptualizations of differences between retailer brands and manufacturer brands have stressed the utilitarian dimension of retailer brands evaluation. Researchers have studied store brands as opposed to manufacturer brands’ promotions (Ailawadi et al., 2001; Garretson et al., 2002) and analyzed whether store brands and national brands promotions attract the same value-conscious consumer . These studies suggest that antecedents of deal prone and private label prone consumers’ attitude toward retailer brands have similarities.

More specifically, Ailawadi and colleagues' research (2001) also questions the hedonic dimension of store brands. In an attempt to identify well defined consumer-segments, the authors compare national brands promotions use and store brands use, taking both utilitarian and hedonic benefits into account . Doing so, they continue work started by Chandon, Wansink and Laurent (2000), which showed that sales promotions can provide consumers with both utilitarian and hedonic benefits, beyond monetary savings.

In this study, we suggest that store brands and private labels can also be studied from both a *hedonic* and a *symbolic* value perspective and compared with manufacturer brands (either national or international) in a more extensive point of view, that is beyond the mostly *utilitarian* value focus. Thus, in an attempt to provide a fine assessment of value perception related to retailer brands compared to manufacturer brands, we use here a three dimensional typology of perceived value: utilitarian, hedonic and symbolic.

Manufacturer brands versus both store brands and private labels:

Today's retailer brands can no longer be defined as "low cost and low price brands". Retailers now differentiate between several types of brands, offering more added value and using a finer segmentation of consumer's needs and desires: *store brands* bearing the store brand's name but also *private own labels* which have specific brand names and often specific positionings and thus images. While store brands are often characterized by lower prices, private own labels deliver a more extensive value based on hedonic benefits such as exploration and self-expression. From the customer's point of view, retailer brands perception has improved not only in terms of value for money and taste quality but also in terms of perceived pleasure (France, Institut Fournier-PHB Consultants, 2004).

Despite these evolutions of retailer brands' offering and perception, previous retailer brand literature has focused on trade-offs between price and perceived quality (e. g. Corstjens and Lal, 2000). In this research stream, customers' retailer brands evaluation is clearly driven by mostly economic and utilitarian motivations. Similarly, store brand use is associated with a specific price conscious consumer segment whose attitude and behaviour are related to psychological and demographic characteristics (Ailawadi et al., 2001). The consumer is described as "value-conscious", "price oriented", "store brand-focused" (Ailawadi et al., 2001; Garretson et al., 2002).

Unlike this literature stream, we suggest that the trade-offs made by consumers regarding retailer brands might rely on a variety of considerations beyond only economic or utilitarian drivers and that evaluations of retailer brands made by consumers might be related to motivations similar to those of evaluations concerning manufacturer brands, including hedonic and symbolic perceptions.

Although retailer brand literature has studied retailer brands as a concept that is different from manufacturer brands, it has rarely explored the differences among several types of retailer brands. In fact, many researchers have dealt with retailer brands using the terms "store brand" or "private label" indifferently (e.g. Erdem et al., 2004; Sayman et al. , 2002; Corstjens and Lal, 2000). However, we suggest that evaluating store brands and private labels separately can improve our understanding of attitudes and trade-offs between the main types of brands. Consequently, we will use "store brand" for retailer brands bearing the brand name or logo of the store and "private labels" or "own brands" for retailer brands having a name different from the store's name and a specific positioning.

As we have mentioned, one major motivation of both manufacturers and retailers is to provide value to consumers (Ailawadi and al., 2001). Given this common motivation, the natural question is whether these products deliver the same value to consumer. Relying on both a theoretical and managerial perspective, this article's objective is to acquire better insights into consumer-retailer brand evaluation's antecedents compared to manufacturer brand evaluation and to analyze this evaluation's consequences on consumer-retailer brand relationship.

We suggest that a better knowledge and understanding of consumers' trade-offs between the different brand categories they are offered could result in important managerial implications for marketers. More specifically, a clear assessment of the role of hedonic and symbolic perceived value on the brand relationship could help define new challenges and opportunities for designers and innovators. Consequently, we now present the theoretical background of the consumer-brand relationship, and the definition and measurement of perceived brand value used in this study. We then apply a perceived value scale in three dimensions to 3 product categories and to 9 brands: 3 well-known manufacturer brands, 3 private labels and 3 store brands. Finally, we test the impact of each brand category's perceived value on consumer attachment and commitment toward the brand. The article ends with a discussion of results and managerial perspectives .

The impact of perceived value on two brand relationship dimensions: attachment and commitment

Brand relationship literature identifies three main relationship constructs: trust, attachment and commitment. Research has so far reached a consensus about trust as one major brand relationship construct. Conversely, the other two constructs have received little consensus. This study therefore investigates more specifically brand attachment and commitment, considering that brands compared here enjoy a similar trust level.

Most researchers agree that attachment and commitment as brand relationship constructs are antecedents of both purchase loyalty (or behavioural loyalty) and attitudinal loyalty. (Day, 1969; Jacoby and Kyner, 1973; Dick and Basu, 1994; Sirieix and Dubois, 1999; Gurviev, 1999). However, definitions of attachment and commitment, and their antecedents and interactions may differ from one author to another.

We define attachment as an affective long-term relationship with a brand, different from a simple short-term (like/dislike) affective attitude. Attachment for Gurviev (1999) implies “the feeling that the brand occupies a unique position in the consumer’s mind, and that, therefore, its withdrawal would result in a feeling of loss”. (This irreplaceable and unique character has also been stressed by Fournier (1998), although she includes it in the “love and passion” facet of her Brand Relationship Quality construct). Attachment is related to a feeling of dependance toward a brand and suggesting a difficult replacement in case of withdrawal. In the current article we use Cristau’s (2003) definition of attachment as an affective long-term relationship consisting of the conjunction of two specific dimensions: dependance and feelings of friendship toward a brand .

Although commitment is clearly identified as a key issue in consumer behaviour literature, there is little consensus about its definition. Commitment literature draws upon Morgan and Hunt's (1994) commitment-trust theory of interorganizational relationship marketing. Modeling commitment and trust as key variables of a successful relationship, Morgan and Hunt define commitment as "key to achieving valuable outcomes" for both partners in a relationship, resulting in the fact that "they endeavour to develop and maintain this precious attribute in their relationships". Jacoby and Kyner (1973) also emphasize the central role of commitment on long lasting attitudinal brand loyalty. According to them, "the notion of commitment provides the essential basis for distinguishing between brand loyalty and other repeat purchasing behavior".

In the present study, we will draw on commitment literature suggesting a bond between high commitment and greater resistance to both brand substitution and brand attitude change (e.g. Gurviez, 1999; Ahluwalia et al. 2000; Raju and Unnava, 2006). We also include a measurement of a construct related to commitment which is called either "brand activity" (Keller and Lehmann, 2003) or "proselytism" (Cristau, 2003), referring to the extent to which customers talk to others about the brand.

METHODOLOGY

Considering this study's objective which is mainly to test and evaluate the impact of hedonic and symbolic perceived values as opposed to utilitarian perceived value on the brand relationship, the methodology used is to select tools to measure, on the one hand, the facets of perceived brand value, and, on the other hand, brand attachment and commitment. The

capacity of these scales to clearly differentiate brand categories and to explain brand relationship is then tested. We now specify key measurement selection, product category choices and the sample studied.

Key measurements

Main concepts measured in this study are brand value perception, brand attachment and commitment toward the brand. All items used were rated on a 6-point Likert agreement scale (anchored by 1 = strongly disagree and 6 = strongly agree).

As explained before, in an attempt to provide a better assessment of value perception related to store brands and private labels compared to manufacturer brands, we use a three dimensional typology of perceived value: utilitarian, hedonic and symbolic. The utilitarian dimension measure is derived from two facets: one which is related to the savings benefit (3 items proposed by Chandon et al. (2000)) and the other which is associated with perceived quality (2 items proposed by Gurviez (1999)). The hedonic dimension measure is also based on two facets proposed by Chandon et al. (2000) : the first deals with brand entertainment (3 items) and the second with brand exploration and variety-seeking (2 items). At last symbolic dimension is measured by 2 items linked with self expression and self esteem (Chandon et al., 2000).¹

Brand attachment was measured through 6 items which assess both dependence and feelings of friendship toward a brand (Cristau, 2003). Resistance to change was measured through 5 items which deal with both brand substitution and brand attitude change (Cristau, 2003). Purchase intention was estimated by 2 items (Gurviez, 1999). The proselytism dimension was appraised by 3 items (Cristau, 2003).

¹ All items are listed in Appendix 1.

These different scale structures were tested. Firstly, principal component factor analyses with promax rotation and secondly a confirmatory factor analysis were performed in order to validate the one-dimensional formation of each facet or dimension and their internal validity. All analyses confirm these facts. Furthermore the α internal reliability coefficient of Cronbach was evaluated for each construct; it ranges from 0.750 to 0.882 depending on scales (Table 1 presents the α of Cronbach value for each construct).

Product category choices

The perceived value profile of brands and their impact on brand attachment and commitment were tested on nine brands from three different grocery product categories (pasta sauce, rice and apple stew). Grocery represents a high proportion of total sales and it is a category where retailer brands have an important market share (LSA Special issue on food related products, 12 October 2006).

For each product category, three different brands were selected in order to represent a manufacturer brand, an own private label and a retailer brand bearing the store brand. Brands were selected for their awareness and penetration levels so that virtually all respondents would have a reliable judgment of perceived brand value.

Sampling procedure

Data were collected online on a convenience sample of 251 French consumers representing all socio-professional and age categories. Each respondent evaluated the three brands selected for a product category. For each brand, they were asked to appraise brand value, brand attachment and commitment. People were selected on the condition that they usually do their

shopping in the stores studied (3 main hypermarket chains in France: Carrefour, Auchan, Leclerc).

SURVEY'S FINDINGS

The measurement of brand perceived value is managerially interesting as far as it allows managers to better understand major brand associations and identify target groups sensitive to some specific perceived value dimensions. Thus, we first present the brand category profiles concerning perceived value and then its impact on the consumer-brand relationship.

Brand category differentiation based on perceived value

Perceived brand value clearly allows a differentiation between the various brand categories and helps define their specific strengths and weaknesses. The difference in perceived brand value for manufacturer brands, private own labels and retailer brands bearing the store brand's name, was tested with a variance analysis.

Concerning the retailer brands, the findings show that own private labels are perceived as having an important hedonic value, as opposed to store brands which are mostly perceived in terms of utilitarian perceptions (consisting mainly in strong savings benefits). As for manufacturer brands, they are characterized by a high utilitarian perceived value (high score in quality benefits). Concerning the symbolic value dimension, the three different categories of brands show no differentiation; this result can probably be explained by the product categories choice (rice, apple stew or pasta sauce are not salient for self expression or self esteem).

The role of perceived brand value on the brand relationship

The impact of brand value perception on both brand attachment and brand commitment is clearly assessed. To test this impact, successive regressions analyses were performed. Perceived brand value does significantly influence brand attachment (see Table 3: adjusted R² of .65). Concerning the impact on brand commitment, perceived value weighs on purchase intention (adjusted R² of .684), on resistance to brand change (adjusted R² of .405) and on brand proselytism (adjusted R² of .325). Detailed results show that the symbolic value's influence is higher than the two other dimensions of perceived value as far as attachment, purchase intention and resistance to change are concerned. The utilitarian value has a high impact on purchase intention which is consistent with rather cognitive motivations, and a moderate influence on resistance to change. As expected, utilitarian motivations do not impact significantly on attachment. Hedonic perception influences both attachment and resistance to change. Finally, proselytism is mostly impacted by hedonic and symbolic perceptions.

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR DESIGNERS AND INNOVATORS

For the product categories that we studied, a comparison of the various brand types' profiles shows clear specificities leading to managerial implications for both manufacturers and retailers. We expected manufacturer brands and private labels to share common features while store brands could be seen as quite different. Some of the findings are consistent with this expectation. Thus, we first present the various brand profiles, stressing similarities and differences between manufacturer brands and private labels and providing more insights into their respective strengths and weaknesses. Specificities of store brands are then described as

opposed to private labels. Finally we identify some consequences of our findings concerning the impact of hedonic and symbolic perceived value on the consumer-brand relationship.

Comparing manufacturer brands and private labels, our findings suggest similarities relating to entertainment and, to a certain extent, to quality. As far as perceived value is concerned, manufacturer brands can be described as expensive, much more than private labels whose perception in terms of savings is comparatively moderate .

A finding which is favorable to private labels relies in the entertainment dimension which is slightly higher for private labels than the entertainment perception for manufacturer brands. Thus, hedonic value seems to be a key asset of private labels, which implies that product managers in charge of private labels should take advantage of this strength. This finding is consistent with the fact that retailers often offer a more innovative presentation of their products (new, more convenient packagings), using design as a clear differentiation asset.

According to our findings, the major asset of manufacturer brands is definitely their high quality perception which is consistent with previous studies. Typically, even though the product categories that we investigated require a limited technological know-how and investment, store brands fail to achieve good quality perception scores. This finding, which according to previous literature, would have been less surprising in the US market, differs from studies suggesting that without a combination of low price and high quality, store brands are not successful (Corstjens and Lal, 2000). In sum, manufacturer brands have a high price-high quality profile, private labels a relatively good value for money perception and achieve the highest score in terms of entertainment. Finally, store brands are seen as utilitarian products that provide an “alternative” in terms of variety-seeking expectations.

Clearly, the hedonic perceived value can be used by retailers as a differentiating tool to answer a variety of desires: private labels representing opportunities for entertainment expectations while store brands have an asset concerning exploration and variety-seeking. The study's findings also stress the lack of hedonic associations concerning manufacturer brands, which implies a high potential for them in terms of products answering entertainment and variety-seeking expectations.

Considering each type of brand (manufacturer brands, private labels and store brands) and their corresponding consumer-brand relationship, our study shows that a "real" attachment (i.e. implying emotional feelings, in other words in our definition "friendship") appears only in the case of manufacturer brands, which is something that manufacturers could capitalize on.

Furthermore, our findings highlight the fact that store brands induce a clear dependence. This dependence might suggest that consumers value store brands and depend on them for both affective and cognitive reasons, which would be consistent with studies differentiating between an affective and a cognitive commitment (e.g. Samuelsen and Sandvik, 1997; Amine, 1998; Dholakia, 1997). As far as commitment is concerned, our findings show that manufacturer brands, thanks to high resistance to change scores, are the more likely to keep customers loyal, whereas private labels imply a rather low resistance to change. This result seems to be confirmed by the purchase intention scores.

Generally, this study shows a clear evolution of brand choice processes in mass-consumption product categories, a specific evaluation in the consumer's mind of each brand type implying a real differentiation between manufacturer brands, store brands' and private labels in terms of perceived value. Our findings show that, whatever the brand type and even for retailer brands, the utilitarian, hedonic and symbolic facets of perceived value have an impact on the brand relationship (table 4 to 7). As a result, designers and innovators can capitalize on both hedonic and symbolic perceived value both in terms of new concepts, packaging and promotion strategies, even as far as retailer brands are concerned.

Potential tools could be, for instance, more sensorial differentiation among products providing customers with positive feelings during both the shopping and consumption experiences. Packaging design represents a clear asset whatever the brand category: the association of convenience of the packaging and positive sensations during the consumption experience can result in both functional and hedonic gratifications.

Symbolic associations and self-expression seem to be more related to the social status conveyed by brands, thus manufacturer brands can capitalize in their communication strategies on their high attachment score and on the emotions that the customer may feel. The fact that symbolic value impacts on both attachment and purchase intention suggests that self-expression is central in consumption issues even for mass consumption product categories. This result is consistent with Belk's conceptualization of consumption as a key way of expressing and defining ourselves (1988). The findings showing that proselytism is mainly impacted by hedonic and symbolic perceptions also emphasize the opportunity of using these facets in communication strategies to forge a relationship with a brand's clientele.

Whatever the facets of perceived value that are considered in product and packaging conception, positioning, and communication strategies, marketers should make sure that the associations of sensations and benefits offered are coherent (Giboreau and Body, 2007). Thus, we suggest that involving the customer as early as during the conception of new brands and products can help define the most consistent mix among the various facets of perceived value a brand may capitalize on, in the long run.

To conclude, this research provides more insights into the consumer's trade-offs and into the determinants of attitudinal loyalty. It shows that hedonic and symbolic associations clearly influence the brand relationship, even for mass-consumption retailer brands and product categories.

LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

This study provide researchers and marketers with a better knowledge of today's consumers' brand choice processes. Nevertheless it is not without limitations. One of them is obviously related to the fact that the study was conducted in a French context. It would be useful to replicate the study in other European countries. Moreover, our sample procedure and the fact that our study was conducted online are two further limitations. The product categories chosen should also allow a differentiated symbolic value analysis for the each type of brands. Thus, further research should try and explore this central issue for consumption and consumer behaviour. Typically, consumers establish a relationship with brands since it is a way for them to express themselves and, as a result, to both value and somehow justify their behaviour. In this perspective, value is less economic or utilitarian and involves a rather hedonic and self-expression dimension, which is consistent with Keller (1993).

In addition, in order to provide a more solid analysis and both confirm and refine our findings, we should test our model, above all the impact of value perception on both brand attachment and brand commitment, through structural equation modeling. Finally, previous literature has shown evidence that situational variables may influence consumers' brand choice (Belk, 1975). Thus we intend to include such dimensions as the anticipated consumption objective in our future studies. In conclusion, further research that specifically addresses the value perceptions and consumer-brand relationships including symbolic product categories and situational variables could benefit marketers, designers and innovators.

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Table 1: Reliability of measurement tools

Constructs	Cronbach's alpha
Utilitarian Value	0,750
Hedonic Value	0,787
Symbolic Value	0,807
Attachment	0,882
Purchase intention	0,763
Resistance to brand change	0,788
Proselytism	0,837

**Table 2: Analysis of Variance
(Manufacturer brands vs. Private labels vs. Store brands)**

	F	Signification
Savings (utilitarian value)	154,273	0,000
Perceived quality (utilitarian value)	23,549	0,000
Entertainment (hedonic value)	23,449	0,000
Exploration (hedonic value)	1,183	0,307
Self expression (symbolic value)	0,002	0,998

	F	Signification
Utilitarian value	15,789	0,000
Hedonic value	4,665	0,010
Symbolic value	0,002	0,998

Table 3: Regressions of Brand Attachment and Brand Commitment vs. Perceived Brand Value

Attachment

R ²	adjusted R ²
0,652	0,650

	Coef. St.	t	Sign.
(constant)		-0,240	0,810
Utilitarian value	0,019	0,536	0,592
Hedonic value	0,244	6,791	0,000
Symbolic val	0,592	14,911	0,000

Purchase intention

R ²	adjusted R ²
0,686	0,684

	Coef. St.	t	Sign.
(constant)		-0,350	0,726
Utilitarian value	0,352	10,797	0,000
Hedonic value	0,134	3,963	0,000
Symbolic val	0,422	11,372	0,000

Resistance to change

R ²	adjusted R ²
0,408	0,405

	Coef. St.	t	Sign.
(constant)		-0,894	0,372
Utilitarian value	0,121	2,709	0,007
Hedonic value	0,247	5,325	0,000
Symbolic val	0,331	6,490	0,000

Proselytism

R ²	adjusted R ²
0,328	0,325

	Coef. St.	t	Sign.
(constant)		-0,426	0,670
Utilitarian value	-0,009	-0,186	0,853
Hedonic value	0,325	6,568	0,000
Symbolic val	0,293	5,396	0,000

Table 4 Attachment for each brand category

Manufacturer brands

R ²	Adjusted R ²
0,646	0,641

	Coef. St.	t	Sign.
(constant)		0,697	0,487
Utilitarian value	0,036	0,514	0,608
Hedonic value	0,269	3,969	0,000
Symbolic value	0,547	7,463	0,000

Private own labels

R ²	Adjusted R ²
0,684	0,680

	Coef. St.	t	Sign.
(constant)		-1,286	0,200
Utilitarian value	0,119	2,033	0,043
Hedonic value	0,068	1,192	0,235
Symbolic value	0,684	10,644	0,000

Store brands

R ²	Adjusted R ²
0,661	0,657

	Coef. St.	t	Sign.
(constant)		1,818	0,070
Utilitarian value	-0,105	-1,709	0,089
Hedonic value	0,417	6,259	0,000
Symbolic value	0,526	7,737	0,000

Table 5 : Resistance to price change

Manufacturer brands

R ²	Adjusted R ²
0,715	0,711

	Coef. St.	t	Sign.
(constant)		3,858	0,000
Utilitarian value	0,315	5,122	0,000
Hedonic value	0,184	3,096	0,002
Symbolic value	0,414	6,449	0,000

Private own labels

R ²	Adjusted R ²
0,688	0,684

	Coef. St.	t	Sign.
(constant)		-3,728	0,000
Utilitarian value	0,346	6,048	0,000
Hedonic value	0,077	1,385	0,167
Symbolic value	0,479	7,741	0,000

Store brands

R ²	Adjusted R ²
0,701	0,697

	Coef. St.	t	Sign.
(constant)		-1,371	0,172
Utilitarian value	0,460	8,122	0,000
Hedonic value	0,100	1,600	0,111
Symbolic value	0,348	5,429	0,000

Table 6 : Resistance to brand substitution

Manufacturer brands

R ²	Adjusted R ²
0,481	0,474

	Coef. St.	t	Sign.
(constant)		2,848	0,005
Utilitarian value	0,230	2,773	0,006
Hedonic value	0,104	1,297	0,196
Symbolic value	0,411	4,773	0,000

Private own labels

R ²	Adjusted R ²
0,424	0,416

	Coef. St.	t	Sign.
(constant)		-2,399	0,017
Utilitarian value	0,239	3,045	0,003
Hedonic value	0,118	1,543	0,124
Symbolic value	0,358	4,204	0,000

Store brands

R ²	Adjusted R ²
0,389	0,381

	Coef. St.	t	Sign.
(constant)		-0,266	0,790
Utilitarian value	0,046	0,570	0,569
Hedonic value	0,489	5,456	0,000
Symbolic value	0,120	1,309	0,192

Table 7 Proselytism**Manufacturer brands**

R ²	Adjusted R ²
0,357	0,348

	Coef. St.	t	Sign.
(constant)		-1,822	0,070
Utilitarian value	-0,109	-1,177	0,240
Hedonic value	0,428	4,802	0,000
Symbolic value	0,296	3,072	0,002

Private own labels

R ²	Adjusted R ²
0,297	0,287

	Coef. St.	t	Sign.
(constant)		-1,730	0,085
Utilitarian value	0,039	0,450	0,653
Hedonic value	0,197	2,338	0,020
Symbolic value	0,355	3,807	0,000

Store brands

R ²	Adjusted R ²
0,374	0,366

	Coef. St.	t	Sign.
(constant)		3,369	0,001
Utilitarian value	-0,155	-1,879	0,062
Hedonic value	0,516	5,687	0,000
Symbolic value	0,241	2,589	0,010

Appendix 1: Perceived brand value measurements

Utilitarian value

Savings dimension

- With this brand, I really save money
- With this brand, I feel that I am getting a good deal
- With this brand, I really spend less

Perceived quality dimension

- This brand is a good quality one
- I have a positive impression of this brand when using its products

Hedonic value

Brand entertainment

- This brand is fun
- This brand is entertaining
- This brand is enjoyable

Brand exploration

- With this brand, I feel like trying new brands
- With this brand, I can avoid always buying the same brands

Symbolic value

- With this brand, I can be proud of my purchase
- With this brand, I'm a smart shopper

Attachment

Friendship

- I have some affection for this brand
- I have a friendly feeling toward this brand
- This brand is like a friend

Dependence

- I would be upset if I couldn't find this brand when I wanted it
- I would be desperate if this brand was taken off the market
- I would be sad if I had to give this brand up

Resistance

Resistance to price change

- I would stay with this brand even if the price increased by 10 to 15%
- I would continue to buy this brand even if the price increased slightly
- I'm ready to pay a little more for this brand

Resistance to brand change

- If this brand wasn't available, ideally I'd prefer not to need it urgently and wait a while
- I'm not particularly interested in trying other brands than this one

Purchase intention

- The next time that you buy a product in this product category, do you intend buying this brand?
- I think I will continue buying this brand for some time to come

Proselytism

- I like talking to other people about this brand
- I've told stories about this brand to other people
- I explain to other people why they should buy this brand