RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Impact of Modern Business Disruption on Heritage Brands: A Resiliency Model for the Packaged Food Product Industry

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Abstract

Heritage Brands of packaged food products have been used as a superficial and ambiguous marketing promotions moniker. The study first tested consumer insights in successfully identifying heritage brands from non-heritage brands to formally establish the parameters and specific advantages of heritage brands. Second is the measure of heritage brands' strength in comparison to non-heritage brands under the light Main Brand Themes of Kevin Lane Keller, namely a) Brand Pleasure and Pain, b) Loyalty and Attachment, c) Relevance and Distinctiveness all against the backdrop of Modern Business Disruptions as the mediating variables. The study employed mixed methods using Grounded theory as a validating instrument necessary to create a list of actual and verified heritage brands under established parameters. Then it used Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) to test and evaluate the main brand themes relative to the heritage brands and modern business disruption. The respondents of the study were 256 individuals aged 21 years and above and currently residing in 16 cities and a lone municipality of Metro Manila. Results show that eleven (11) heritage brands are firmly identified from other categories of Packaged Food Product brands in the market. Likewise, through SEM, heritage brands faired significantly better than non-heritage brands for Brand Pleasure and Pain with a t-statistic of 3.0762, for Loyalty and Attachment with a t-statistic of 4.277, and finally, for Relevance and Distinctiveness with a t-statistic of 10.473. Based on the insights gathered, there is an observed consumer insight consensus towards the ability of heritage brands to retain their preferential status and immunity from modern business disruption in terms of main brand themes, which would otherwise decrease consumer adhesion.

Keywords: Heritage Brand, Modern Business Disruption, Packaged Food Product, Brand Resilience, Main Brand Themes

1. Introduction

Marketing management is rapidly evolving as an industry and a field of study for academic literature. Since 1994, the number of published works of literature in marketing management has grown exponentially year after year (Benedetto, 2019). However, no matter how fast marketing

management develops, such evolution became more dynamic during the eventful years of 2020 to 2022, which covered the first three years and the different phases of the COVID-19 pandemic. The world as it was known, experienced the most significant challenge since the Second World War, with every country in the grip of recession (Hoekstra, 2020). Everything from the initial hard lockdowns to intermittent restrictions, granular quarantines, and the post-pandemic re-opening led to a distressful business environment (Sheth, 2020). Economic factors are the most impactful factors that triggered evolution within this time frame.

Major business disruptions are among the triggers that altered the marketing management landscape. While several business disruptions have been the subject of literature in the past, there are newly emerged, which we can refer to as Modern Business Disruptions (MBD). Numerous journal articles dealt with the adverse impact of the pandemic, but none have consolidated the challenges rooted and connected to this once-in-a-generation phenomenon. The modern business disruptions firmly identified in this research cultivated more specialized inquiries into the subject matter. The modern business disruptions declared are the following: (1) permanent reduction of mobility, (2) product obsolescence, and (3) regulatory and safety controversies.

The study explored these modern business disruptions and determined their impact on the long-term evolution trajectory of marketing management, specifically on one of its most significant sectors, the Packaged Food Product Industry (Euromonitor, 2020). Products include noodles, rice, dried pasta, and shelf-stable and canned meats, contributing to a total of 1.46 Billion sales for 2020. Although affected by uncertainties brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic and the mentioned business disruptions, consumers will gradually return to their daily routines and increase spending and consumption.

While this study focused on the Packaged Food Product Industry, the study also placed a huge emphasis on what we call Heritage Brands (HB). In the packaged food product industry, Heritage Brands has long been used as a marketing tool for companies but has not been used as a point of inquiry. Heritage Brands are the products that remain constant through time yet still are relevant in the current consumption period (Cooper, 2020). The reason behind the choice of this perspective is due to the generally longer operational history of the companies which carried these said heritage brands. Since marketing management is growing dynamically, some brands may have yet to exist long enough to have an ample comparison background for the defined period of the COVID-19 era.

The purpose of this study focuses on identifying the nature and identifying characteristics of Packaged Food Product Heritage Brands and how they fared against modern business disruptions using the latest brand analysis instruments of Keller (2021): pleasure and pain of brands, attachment and loyalty, and relevance and distinctiveness which will be known as main brand themes (MBT).

2. Literature Review

2.1. Heritage Brands

Heritage Brands are intangible, heterogeneous, inseparable, and perishable, and there is a correlation between brand heritage and recognition of benefits (Iglesias, 2019). Childhood memories, consumer experiences, expectations, and shared social conventions make corporate heritage brands an authentic construct for consumers (Rindell & Pinto-Santos, 2021). This assertion of Anne Rindell is

the most appropriate way to discuss a heritage brand. The shared history of a "past" makes a heritage brand (Pecot et al., 2019). The time or number of years offered in the market is insufficient to qualify a brand as heritage. Cooper (2020) describes heritage brand as brands that are present through multiple generations of consumer demographic and have maintained their relevance in terms of shelf presence at the current time. According to (Han et al., 2021), Heritage brands are the ones that command brand loyalty and willingness to accept higher prices as compared to competitors. Aside from being available for lengthy periods, Heritage brands utilized longevity, core values, symbols, and the importance of history (Zeren & Kara, 2020).

2.1.1. Packaged Food Product

Packaged Food Products are shelf-stable processed food under the fast-moving consumer goods category (Euromonitor, 2020). These are food items that can be safely stored in room temperature or, literally, on the shelf, which includes non-perishable products like rice, pasta, flour, spices, oils, and foods processed on retort packages, and this does not require refrigeration until after opening (USFDA, 2015). According to Euromonitor, the total Packaged Food Product Industry is at 1 million retail value USD. The industry felt the wrath of the COVID-19 pandemic and registered year-on-year negative performance starting from the spike last 2020. As eating occasions shifted into the houses of consumers with restrictions on movement and closure in food retail outlets, consumers were forced to buy more and cook and eat more at home. These pressures also followed food price inflation due to increased energy, production, and shipment costs, which prompted slight value recovery following increased retail prices.

2.2. Modern Business Disruptions

Reduced Consumer Mobility is one of the observed modern business disruptions. The initial phase of the pandemic required many consumers to stay home and later was subjected to limited movement and controlled opportunities to visit retail establishments (Scholdra et al., 2022). Depending on the specific time into the said three-year period, the holding capacity of retail establishments like supermarkets and convenience stores will range from having a maximum capacity of 10% to 80% of its pre-pandemic numbers (Fairlie & Fossen, 2021). At the height of the initial heavy lockdowns, cyclical cohorting of customers using geographic segmentation variables was even employed to control the volume of shoppers. Approaching the end of the three years of the pandemic, even after government regulations relaxed restrictions and allowed 100% holding capacity for retailing establishments, some chose to adhere to the practices and routines brought about by the mobility restrictions permanently (Verhoef, 2022). The reinforced value propositions of electronic-based retailers like online grocery shopping (Yohn, 2020) are also an important consideration toward the prospective permanence of reduced consumer mobility. The past three years of the COVID-19 Pandemic led to microeconomic changes where households adjusted their overall purchase volume (Scholdra, 2022). Further, these changes triggered alteration in shopping basket allocation and households' behavior, shifting to buying private label brands. Amidst all these observations, Eichinger (2021) argued that consumption will remain location- and establishment-based, wherein products connect to consumers considering the following: (1) physical or place, (2) social or people and lastly, (3) historical environment or past --- which provides a feeling of groundedness or be emotionally rooted.

Another disruption introduced is product obsolescence. Obsolescence for brands is regarded as the loss of popularity of some products due to an earlier version being improved or upgraded or, in most instances, when an alternative product is offered in the market. The recent changes in food trends will change strategies for how brands can retain relevance (Hassoun, 2022). A trigger like a global pandemic that alters the way of living of most people will likely result in changes for products as well. While dependence on habit and experience shapes branding preferences, consumption decisions are subject to change brought about by various factors (Guillemot, 2021). Changing preferences is expected during a crisis with economic instability, and consumers are also experiencing a transformation in behavior. However, how much of the transformation experienced during the crisis will sustain is a sustained question. (Mehta, 2020). The preferred brand may no longer be preferred after a certain period, mainly if a major societal-altering event, like a global pandemic, has transpired. This is because once we get through this pandemic, we will emerge in a different world than before the outbreak (Donthu, 2020). All the changes in all facets of society were forced to evolve faster than ever. According to Cooper (2021), accelerated new product development will now be more crucial than ever, and companies need to speed up in developing breakthrough products. Whether they be competitor-induced alternatives and substitutes or an organic change of preference due to revised lifestyles and routines, these changes in preference can quickly destroy entire sectors, if not entire industries.

While regulatory and safety controversies have already pestered some businesses in the past, the sensitivity of consumers and the different manner of exposure to news updating them of these controversies, the market revised manner of consuming media, and a generally more careful mindset toward health and wellness create different aftermath for the affected brands. Large-scale industry setbacks like controversies over quality and questions of safety endanger the functioning systems of businesses severely and fundamentally (Hoegl, 2021). On top of this, health and safety became the top-of-mind priority of consumers during a health crisis, further elevating the adverse impact of brand-associated controversies (Gizaw, 2019).

2.2.1. Main Brand Themes

Through Oxford Academic's Journal of Consumer Research, Kevin Lane Keller published the most contemporary method of analyzing brand equity.

Pleasure and pain of Brands are categorized as a metric dealing with how adhering to the brand delights or improves consumers' lives and, inversely, how brands may cause pain, harm, and anxiety. Attachment and Loyalty to Brands refer to a brand analysis tool that measures consumers' level of attachment and loyalty to brands amidst adverse scenarios. On the other hand, the relevance and Distinctiveness of Brands measure fluctuating levels of esteem and authority a brand commands across defined periods.

3. Hypotheses

H1.   Heritage Brands are firmly identified from other categories of Packaged Food Product brands.

H2.   Heritage brands resist Modern Business Disruptions better than non-heritage brands in terms of brand pleasure and pain.

H3.   Heritage brands resist Modern Business Disruptions better than non-heritage brands in terms of brand attachment and loyalty.

H4.   Heritage brands resist Modern Business Disruptions better than non-heritage brands in terms of brand relevance and distinctiveness.

4. Methods

The study employed a mixed-method approach, combining qualitative and quantitative results analysis. For the qualitative approach, the study used grounded theory design as the experiential-based validating instrument necessary to create a list of actual and verified Heritage Brand entities and brands in the Philippines. The respondents of the study were provided with the established parameters for Heritage Brands using the open coding platform of Grounded Theory. Through an unaided instrument, the researcher asked for five (5) packaged food brands or products the respondent thought would comply with the said parameters and asked for five packaged food brands that are opposite the parameters mentioned. Since the study focused on collecting recall-based validation, Data Saturation Event Guidelines are upheld. Saunders et al. (2018) argued that saturation centers on the question of how much data (usually several responses) is needed until nothing new is apparent, or what (Sandelowski, 2008) calls 'informational redundancy' Francis et al. (2010) and Grady (1998) provided a similar description of data saturation as the point at which no new insight is uncovered. The study, therefore, sets the saturation event after the fifth uninterrupted recurrence, given that the instrument provided a 5-point opportunity inquiry.

It is important to note that the study requires the completion of the Grounded Theory design, and the researcher can populate the list of Heritage Brands and non-Heritage Brands after proceeding with the quantitative part of the data analysis.

Since the study utilized a set of verified subjects and ran it through input variables and an analytical task involving an established model, Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was employed as the study's quantitative approach and statistical tool to test the hypotheses. Specifically, SEM was utilized to examine whether heritage brands resist modern business disruptions better than non-heritage brands in terms of the main brand themes. Moreover, it is found that SEM is particularly useful for modeling a network of complex structural relationships between one or more variables and latent constructs (Hair et al., 2021).

The study utilized the results of Power Analysis, assuming a weak level of association (R square 10%) at a 5% significance level based on the sample size requirement, according to Cohen (1992), which is a minimum of 166 respondents, but the researcher was able to gather a total of 256. The 256 respondents belong to the age group between 21 years old and up and residing in the National Capital Region of the Philippines, who was also aware of the concepts and parameters of Heritage brands of the study and completed the identification of the brands.

The study utilized a questionnaire that consisted of three parts. The first part of the questionnaire is the identification and determination of Heritage Brands and Non-Heritage Brands, followed by demographic questions. The third part of the study included a four-point Likert scale to measure the constructs used to determine Heritage Brands' ability to withstand modern business disruptions compared to non-heritage brands within the framework of main brand themes.

The study was subjected to validity and content evaluation from experts and appointed statistician. It was also checked with confirmatory tests (e.g., Cronbach Alpha, Composite and Construct Reliability tests) to verify the factor structure of variables (Abraham, 2019) and measure the consistency of future results.

4. Results and Discussions

4.1. Table 1

Grounded Theory Saturation Event for Heritage Brands

Continuous Frequency	Overall Frequency	Top Recurring Response	Detected Heritage Brands?
53	195	Lucky Me	Yes
27	122	Century Tuna	Yes
15	56	Del Monte	Yes
11	69	CDO	Yes
9	32	Purefoods Tender Juicy	Yes
9	53	Ligo	Yes
6	15	Datu Puti	Yes
5	9	MYSan / SkyFlakes	Yes
5	11	Pampanga's Best	Yes
5	10	Reno	Yes
5	6	Star / Star Margarine	Yes

The objective of the grounded theory is to create a list of actual and verified Heritage Brand entities and brands in the Philippines following the data saturation guidelines of Saunders et al. (2018). Figure 1 shows that eleven (11) brands were identified, and a theoretical saturation event was reached. The top brand Lucky Me! hit a massive fifty-three continuous frequency and overall frequency of 195, followed by Century Tuna with 27 continuous frequency and 122 overall frequency, and Del Monte with 15 continuous frequency and 56 overall frequency.

4.2. Table 2

Grounded Theory Saturation Event for Non-Heritage Brands

Continuous Frequency	Overall Frequency	Top Recurring Response	Detected Heritage Brands?
2	4	Payless / Nissin	No
2	4	Piattos	No
2	3	Maling	No
2	3	Angel (Evap)	No
2	3	UFC Ketchup	No
2	3	Zesto	No

Using the same methodology of grounded theory, the inquiry's perspective was reversed to identify brands that do not comply with the established parameters or what we call the non-Heritage Brands. A saturation event with a minimum standard of five successive recurrences was not achieved across the entire sampling endeavor for the inquiry regarding the determination of non-heritage brands, with 6 brands only hitting two (2) out of the required minimum of five (5) successive recurrences as upheld in theoretic saturation guidelines.

The findings of the study confirm the results and study of Weidmann (2018) that there is a clear distinction between how Heritage Brands and non-Heritage Brands presents themselves in the market.

4.3. Table 3

Construct reliability measures for the SEM model

	Pleasure	Attachment	Relevance
Alpha	0.758	0.872	0.883
Omega	0.773	0.871	0.883
Avaar	0.367	0.493	0.561
Composite	0.758	0.865	0.881
Fornell and Larcker			
Pleasure	1		
Attachment	0.358	1	
Relevance	0.266	0.515	1

Construct and Composite reliability examine in detail the construct reliability of the extracted latent factors in the model. Alpha represents Cronbach's Alpha measure of each factor, ideally at a value of 0.80 or higher. This is achieved by both Attachment & Loyalty and Relevance & Distinctiveness latent factors, with corresponding Alpha measures of 0.872 and 0.883. The Cronbach's alpha measure for the pleasure and pain factor falls short of this threshold, though it is noted that it continues to have a relatively high value that is close to 0.80.

Similar patterns can be found in the Omega and Composite Reliability measures for the Attachment & Loyalty, and Relevance & Distinctiveness factors exceed the 0.80 threshold, while brand pleasure and pain come short, though still close to this benchmark. Finally, the Avevar measure indicates the average variance explained in each factor as a percentage of the total variability in the associated items. For Relevance & Distinctiveness, this is found to be 0.561, while for Attachment & Loyalty, this is 0.493. Pleasure & Pain still have an observably low value for this measure, with only 0.367.

4.4. Table 4

<p style="text-align:center">Structural Equations Model coefficients</p>

Latent	Indicator	Est	S. Err.	P Value
Pleasure/pain	pleasure1	1		
	pleasure2	6.116	3.798	0.107
	pleasure3	3.553	2.246	0.114
	pleasure4	7.359	4.546	0.106
	pleasure5	3.685	2.322	0.113
	pleasure6	7.276	4.494	0.105
	pleasure7	5.306	3.307	0.109
Attachment/loyalty	attachment1	1		
	attachment2	1.25	0.112	0
	attachment3	1.308	0.121	0
	attachment4	1.232	0.106	0
	attachment5	1.307	0.11	0
	attachment6	1.284	0.119	0
	attachment7	1.092	0.142	0
Relevance/Distinct	relevance1	1		
	relevance2	1.055	0.106	0
	relevance3	1.228	0.119	0
	relevance4	1.282	0.116	0
	relevance5	1.314	0.118	0
	relevance6	1.234	0.115	0

These reliability measures may be explained by the following coefficients estimated in the measurement model of the structural equations model. All seven items in the pleasure & pain factor appear insignificant within a 5% level, indicating that the items may not be quite as strongly associated with the constructed factor. Regarding estimates, the items with the highest loadings are item 4 (Despite some issues/controversies, I am still willing to buy my heritage brands) and item 6 (Despite some production-related controversies, I am still willing to buy my heritage brands). The loadings indicate that these items are more strongly associated with brand pleasure and pain.

Meanwhile, for Attachment & Loyalty, all the items have a significant loading. This indicates these items' strong association with the overall brand attachment factor. In terms of loadings, the highest loadings are found for item 3 (I seek my identified heritage brands in other stores if they are not available in the store where I am currently shopping) and item 5 (The heritage brands I identified remained my brand of choice even if there are cheaper alternatives). These factors are the strongest associated with one's attachment to heritage brands.

Brand relevance and distinctiveness also have all significant p-values on their associated factor loadings. The item with the highest association to brand relevance is item 5 (The heritage brands I

identified stand out positively among their competitors in terms of quality), followed by item 4 (My family/ Household's affection towards the brand remained steadfast through the years).

4.5. Figure 1

Histograms of resulting overall latent factors, with dashed lines indicating the level for neutral assessment of heritage brands
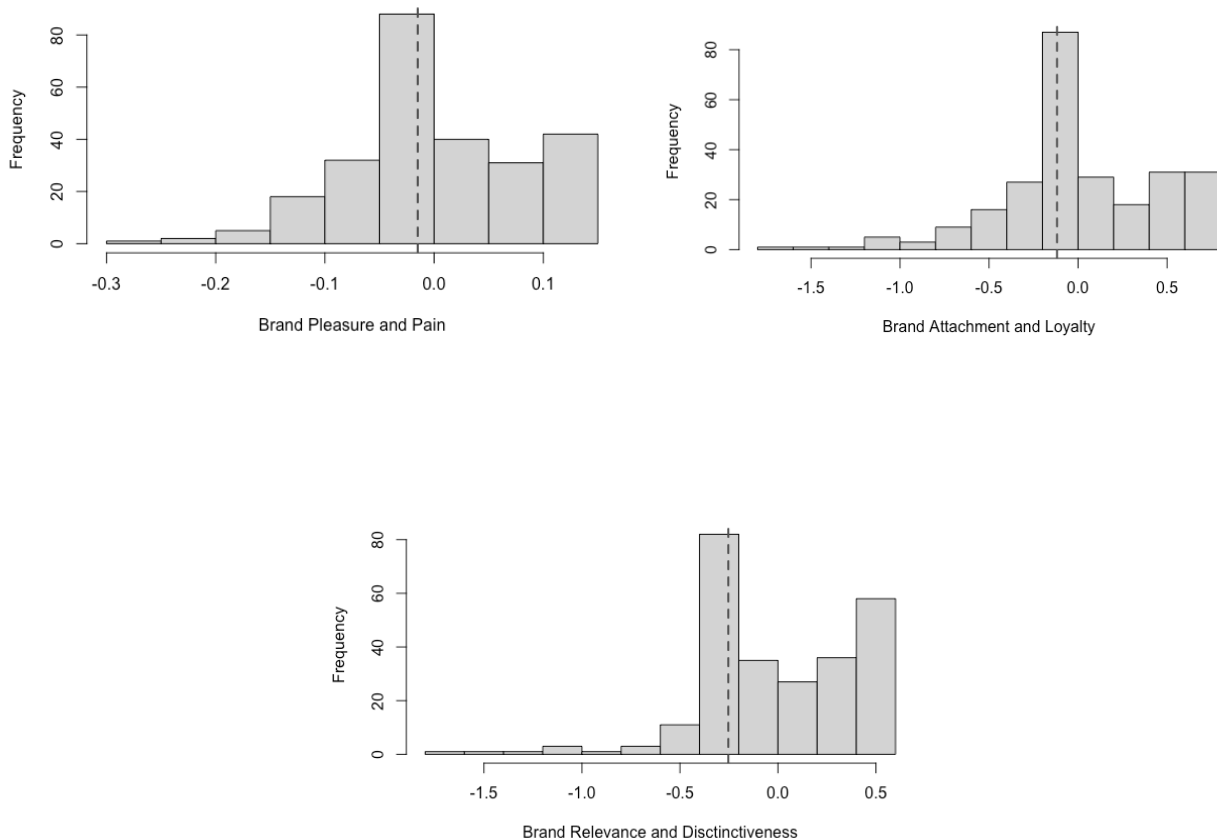
To test the hypothesis of better resistance in terms of brand pleasure and pain, brand attachment and loyalty, and brand relevance between heritage brands and other non-heritage brands, the researcher performed a comparison of means against the expected value of factors under the assumption of the null (i.e., heritage brands resist in the same level as non-heritage brands).

Testing that heritage brands have better resistance in brand pleasure and pain, the resulting t-statistic is 3.0762, against 258 degrees of freedom, p = 0.001. This means that on average ratings for the resistance of heritage brands are higher than for non-heritage brands in a 5% level of significance.

Meanwhile, for brand attachment and loyalty, the resulting t statistic is 4.2777 against 258 degrees of freedom, p = 0.001. Again, this is indicative that resistance ratings for heritage brands in brand attachment and loyalty is significantly higher than for non-heritage brands.

Finally, for brand relevance and distinctiveness the t statistic is 10.473 against 258 degrees of freedom, p = 0.001. Once again, this indicates that resistance ratings for brand attachment are significantly higher for heritage brands than non-heritage brands.

The three figures visualize these comparisons through the histogram of the resulting factor values. The dashed line indicates the critical value for the hypotheses, representing the expected ratings had the respondents all responded with a neutral rating for the heritage brands. It is observable that the concentration of the observations tends toward to right-hand side of the neutral lines, indicating respondents tend to provide stronger than neutral ratings towards heritage brands across all three dimensions.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The aim of this research is to investigate the characteristics and essence of Heritage brands and their ability to withstand modern business disruption compared to non-heritage brands within the framework of main brand themes.

Based on the qualitative and quantitative results, the study shows the superiority of heritage brands over non-heritage brands. This was affirmed by the eleven (11) saturation events occurring beyond the minimum standard for heritage brands and the inability of non-heritage brands to land even a single saturation event, pointing to the lack of adhesion of non-heritage brands over heritage brands.

The study also proved the superiority of heritage brands over non-heritage brands in withstanding modern business disruption in the framework of main brand themes: (1) heritage brands occupy a special place in consumer preference which observably immunes these products from perceived risk factors, controversies, and detrimental effects. (2) heritage brands show loyalty, eliciting situations which led to being the brand of choice for consumers amidst the strict lockdowns and quarantines, unavailability of stores, and availability of new, cheaper, and advanced alternatives. (3) heritage brands stood out and did not lose relevance to consumers regardless of the uncertainties the industry faced over the years.

Heritage brands, which maintain consistency over time and remain relevant to consumers, play a crucial role in repositioning existing or new products, particularly during significant business disruptions referred to as modern business disruptions. These disruptions often occur when consumers seek additional justifications for their purchase decisions, such as during periods of reduced mobility, product obsolescence, or regulatory and safety controversies, notably impacting the packaged food product industry. In times of uncertainty, consumers gravitate towards trustworthy brands and companies that can transcend economic limitations and connect with their target audience. By effectively communicating the heritage brand concept, emphasizing their long-standing operational history, and establishing a sense of groundedness and economic stability, heritage brands can overcome economic constraints and reap the benefits of their heritage status.

The preliminary discussions of this study pointed toward the gap in terms of a formal parameter of what qualifies as a Heritage Brand outside superficial branding and advertising usage. The study was able to prove not only the applicability of the parameters in the established research setting but all the advantages of the said brand category have likewise been validated as a compelling market advantage.

In line with the outcomes and conclusions shown in the study, the following recommendations are forwarded: (1) elevate Heritage Brand as a formal product category with the established main brand theme advantages both in the context of academic research and industry practice. (2) A cyclical litmus

test should be established to periodically monitor the emergence of new Heritage Brands or the Attrition of Heritage Brands. Syndicated research groups and insight organizations can integrate this within their services to create a more competitive environment and potentially police the companies who misuse the term Heritage Brand. (3) uniformity in the use of the parameters of the study should be upheld. A formal definition that includes the requirement of what can qualify as heritage brands, the validation of insights using the main brand themes are all required inclusions in further research. (4) conduction of the study to other countries to test the parameters and the main brand themes differ depending on the country where the study is deployed. Cultural significance can be included as the study's intervening or mediating variable to test further if a wider and universal parameter can be established.

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