

# مجلة البحوث الإعلامية

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- يتم إعادة تقييم المجلات المحلية المصرية دوريا في شهر يونيو من كل عام و يكون التقييم الجديد ساريا للسنة التالية للنشر في هذه المجلات.



● **Retro-marketing as a Determinant of  
Brand Equity Among Baby Boomers,  
Generation X, and Millennials:**

**A Comparative Analytical Study**

● **التسويق الرجعي كمحدد لأبعاد الوزن النسبي للعلامة بين أجيال**

**Millennials و Generation X و Boomers**

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## Abstract

Along with the postmodern transformation of the marketing industry in recent years, new concepts and techniques began to appear, including «retro-marketing,» which refers to the revival of a product or service from a previous historical period. With the introduction of the new marketing strategy, questions have been raised about the effectiveness of the retro-marketing strategy in determining brand equity. Within the framework of Keller's Model of Brand Equity, this study intends to discover through intensive interviews the role of retro-marketing strategy in brand equity among three different generations: Baby Boomers, Gen X, and Millennials. Results have revealed a noteworthy impact of retro-marketing strategy on brand equity among Baby Boomers and Gen X, while showing an ebbed effect on Millennials.

Keywords:

Retro-Marketing, Retro-brands, Brand Equity, Keller's Model of Brand Equity

## ملخص الدراسة

بدأ في السنوات الأخيرة ظهور لبعض المفاهيم والتقنيات الجديدة في مجال صناعة التسويق، من بينها مفهوم Retro-marketing أو التسويق الرجعي، والذي يشير إلى إحياء منتج أو خدمة من فترة تاريخية سابقة، مع ظهور هذه الاستراتيجيات التسويقية الجديدة، أُثيرت أسئلة حول فعالية استراتيجيات التسويق الرجعي في مدى تأثيرها على الوزن النسبي للعلامة. في إطار نموذج Keller للوزن النسبي للعلامة، تعتزم هذه الدراسة من خلال المقابلات المتعمقة اكتشاف دور استراتيجيات التسويق الرجعي في تحقيق أبعاد الوزن النسبي للعلامة بين ثلاثة أجيال مختلفة: baby boomers، و Gen X، و Millennials. كشفت النتائج عن وجود تأثير جدير بالملاحظة لاستراتيجيات التسويق الرجعي على الوزن النسبي للعلامة بين baby boomers و Gen X، في حين أظهرت تأثيراً طفيفاً على جيل الألفية.

الكلمات الدالة:

التسويق الرجعي، العلامة الرجعية، الوزن النسبي للعلامة، نموذج Keller للوزن النسبي للعلامة.



## **Introduction:**

With the beginning of postmodern marketing to take its place in the marketing literature, new marketing concepts have emerged. The strategic options are more than many for the marketing managers of companies that have products in a decline stage of the life cycle, from the complete withdrawal of this product from the market, with a view to reducing the costs of maintaining it, to reviving their sales and rebuilding the identity that was lost using a retrospective marketing strategy called retro-marketing<sup>1</sup>. "Retro-Marketing", which has emerged as a new marketing concept today, was first put forward by Stephen Brown. Brown (2001a)<sup>1</sup> defines retro-marketing as "the revival or resumption of a product or service from a previous historical period"<sup>2</sup>. Retro marketing reveals a different marketing approach with connotations from the past (music, fragrance, movies, books, etc.) presents a different marketing approach.

## **Research Problem:**

Building brand equity is a topic that preoccupies marketers' thought. With the new marketing techniques that emerge every day, marketers are seeking to measure their effectiveness on brand equity. Retro-marketing is among these new techniques that is pondered by marketers as a contributor in brand equity building. But with whom this technique would work best: baby boomers, Gen X, or millennials?

## **Aim of Study:**

It is the aim of this study to detect the impact that retro-marketing might have on brand equity among three different generations: baby boomers, Gen X, and millennials.

## **Literature Review:**

### **Understanding Retro-marketing**

Alongside to the postmodern transition of the marketing industry in the past few years, new concepts and techniques started to emerge, among which is the "Retro Marketing". Retro-marketing is considered a nostalgia referenced marketing that was firstly introduced by the British marketing researcher Stephen Brown who defined it as the revival or the restart of an old product from the past that is used particularly in targeting postmodern consumers by reshaping and resuscitation it again<sup>3</sup>. Bunch (2022)<sup>4</sup> added another

definition to retro-marketing, to be defined as a technique or process that aims to trigger audience demand by revitalization in the services or products that are about to be forgotten or have been excluded from the marketplace or in customer's mind through a nostalgic structure.

In the same context, Scola & Gordon (2019)<sup>5</sup> stated that it is beneficial for the companies to go back to the past aspiration of the target audience while making their branding strategy in terms of creating brand image and identity that provide more pleasure to the customers. This is because using a retro product is effective in reminding the target audience of a specific memory or event. Furthermore, applying retro-marketing to the retro products involves creating a completely new perspective to an old look or product, thus gives pleasure to the customers.

### **Evolution of Retro-marketing**

Although there are examples of retro-marketing dating back to before World War II, the arrival of retro products on the mass market is a recent phenomenon, born in the 1960s. In 1964, Time magazine testified to the importance of revival of Art Nouveau in consumer products, i.e., furniture and decoration. Two years later, a retrospective of an artist associated with this movement, London in 1966, generated an unprecedented enthusiasm for this past period, which can be considered as the first "retro event" in the field of art<sup>6</sup>.

The attraction of the past, which was latent until now, was only waiting for a large and solvent segment, historical events precipitating nostalgia, a postmodern socio-cultural context that values the recent past and technologies making it accessible, to be transformed by organizations into a viable strategy, called retro-marketing. Thus, the demographic situation, the historical and socio-cultural context, and technological evolution have modified the relationship of societies with their recent past, particularly the 1960s and 1970s. This recent past, desired by baby boomers, valued by society, made easily accessible by new technologies and ultimately promoted by companies, has become an object of collective desire. This allowed the development of retro-marketing, from the 1960s, but especially from the end of the 1980s, in terms of temporal distance, market segments and product categories, to end up with the all-out retro-marketing that we know today. However, while looking to the past, retro-marketing is in no way a lack of creativity on the part of marketing managers, but rather a response to the needs of 21st century consumers, that is, good marketing, where nostalgia is viewed positively<sup>7</sup>.

## Examples of Retro-marketing

There are several successful references to brands that started implementing the retro-marketing process to their branding strategies in order to make an innovative appealing product like: the modern fiat 500 cars that are styled in a way that they came from the 60s or the relaunch of the Cadbury's Wispa bar in UK or the never-ending story campaign by Spotify that has more than 64.5M streams on the app.<sup>8</sup>

## Developing Retro-marketing

Paradoxically digital marketing and artificial intelligence have helped the spread and the rapid rise of retro marketing in addition to their role in supporting niche marketing, providing great platform and bringing back the products from the past and deliver it to the right target audience.<sup>9</sup> In today's world the retro-marketing can be delivered through various ways; such as, through the offline marketing by tailoring up a "Retro campaign structure" that relates to the target audience on the traditional marketing media like TV, radio or out of home advertisements; through relying on the digital marketing tools and online platforms to deliver the retro-marketing product, and spread the brand awareness among the target audience in a shorter time with less efforts. Moreover, it can also be integrated with the traditional marketing activities as well; and through implementing the basic AI techniques to the retro marketing process like the augmented reality, virtual reality, targeted advertisements, or holographic advertisements by blending digital information with the real world in an appealing visual structure.<sup>10, 4, 3</sup>

## Forms of Retro Marketing

There are mainly two different forms to present retro marketing, the first one is called "The genuine retro marketing" or "The vintage retro" that refers to semi replicating an original old product or service, by presenting it to the target audience with the same exact standards and style that are still built in a traditional way, however with modern usability and recent functionality but still carries the same old feelings and appearance. While the second one is called "The modern retro" and it is mainly about completely innovating an old product in the terms of the look, the functionality, usability, and the feelings, however at the same time still reminds the target audience with the past they remember and the memories that are associated with the brand and the product in their minds.

<sup>11, 3</sup>

### Role of Retro Marketing in Brand Equity

Undoubtedly, due to the intense competition in the marketplace, the concept of nostalgia has been shown for a while in advertising, allowing both recent and old brands to attach to their audience on a strong passionate level.<sup>12</sup> In Fact, the twenty-first century has shifted into the period of “*retro-shock*,” where everything, including recreations, replicas, revivals, reproductions, remakes, and accordingly looking back to see forward.<sup>13</sup>

For the time being, many brands understand that it is critical to connect with consumers by forming memorable experiences to maintain and attract consumers. The retro notion is the approach of using aspects from the past throughout the stimulation of feelings. In this respect, communication strategies may concentrate on cultural dimensions' stimulus (e.g. films, music, etc.) to generate nostalgic inspirational experiences.<sup>14</sup>

### Retro and Nostalgia

Retro as a concept is utilized to describe the introduction products and services previously used to the present in relation to marketing. Retro-marketing; conveys the urge of customers for the products, services, and places they yearned for. It also shares these sensations with young generations who have not encountered it during its period. The first use of the word retro was to describe cultural products and materials in France during the 1970s. The current French “*Avant-gard*” cinema has started to describe the growing attraction of contemporary trends and styles in Parisian Street markets and fashion houses.<sup>3</sup>

Retro-marketing aims to create bonds to the consumers with the brand via the yearning for the past. It seeks to stimulate memories and nostalgic feelings to utilize customers’ preferences. In simple words, Retro-marketing aims to generate consumers’ nostalgia, and guiding certain behaviours. It can be used as a retro strategic plan implicating all the marketing mix components; nostalgia pushes the brand identity and makes products more appealing.<sup>3, 9, 15</sup>

Furthermore, Retro-marketing can be described as the re-use of a current product, brand, or service reminiscent of the previous era in today's circumstances to satisfy the buyers in various forms. Besides, Retro-marketing is commonly noticed in three classes. 1) Repro - is to reproduce things that were attractive previously. 2) Retro - mixes the old/aged with the new differently from repro. 3) Repro-Retro - well defined as the improved

brands/products beginning from nostalgia; Retro-retro is also referred to as "Neo-nostalgia." <sup>16</sup>

Retro-marketing is the main and key notion that represents marketing techniques that bring the advantage of the past in marketing products or services. Nevertheless, academics and marketers use other terminologies related to this term, such as "Retro-Branding," "Retro-product," "Retro-Communication," "Retro-Style," "Retro-Packaging," and "Brand-Revitalization." <sup>17</sup>

- **A Retro-Product:** can be defined as a good or service that stimulates memories and promotes a nostalgic sense to the consumer. <sup>18, 17</sup>
- **Retro-Communication:** is defined as a retro/nostalgic trend in the communication process of countless international brands. These campaigns utilize feelings and generate optimistic nostalgic feelings, constructing a substantial relationship with the past. <sup>13</sup>
- **Retro-Branding:** can be defined as a brand plan in which the brand utilizes its iconicity to market new products, preserving the association with the past successful ones (e.g., Volkswagen New Beetle or Ray-Ban New Wayfarer). The Values of retro-branding are iconicity, authenticity, and nostalgia. <sup>19, 17</sup>
- **Brand-Revitalization:** unlike retro-branding, brand-revitalization is considered a linked concept. The brands may use their iconic history to revitalize themselves; however, they don't involve the sensation of nostalgia with such relish. This approach has been used by brands like Lacoste and Fila. The Values in brand revitalization are brand history, brand credibility, and brand heritage. <sup>19, 17</sup>
- **Retro-Style:** refers to the vintage/retro aesthetic of the brand, (retro packaging), which is linked to its unique packaging, (retro shops) the vintage design of stores and facilities of diverse types, or the style of communication that is constructed for the proposed good or service. <sup>20, 9</sup>
- **Retro-packaging:** It is defined as a design that brings the advantage of past memorable designs. It implicates intentionally by developing a "sense of history" or "original essence" in the brand packaging. "Nostalgic Style" packaging is usually used in food, including snapshots that reflect the past; Some scholars also call it "nostalgic packaging." <sup>21</sup>

Nostalgia as a concept has been defined as the desire for the past and a past-focused emotional experience. As a result of the power of nostalgia to influence emotional states that push individuals towards action, this sense has been of attraction to multiple learning areas such as advertising, marketing, political science or sociology.<sup>22, 23</sup>

As mentioned earlier, nostalgia marketing suggests shorter implications compared to Retro-marketing . The base of Retro-marketing should follow the cognitive and emotional processing cycle based on the main concept of the past, remembrance recall, recovery, and an inspirational source in a past time.<sup>24</sup>

Consequently, boosting positive sentiments based on brands/designs/communication drawings on previous experiences promotes positive attitudes and guides customer's behavior. Interestingly, there is a variation in customers' behaviors regarding retro-looking products/brands in line with gender, age, education, and income status.<sup>24</sup>

### **Brand Equity Vs Nostalgic Brand Positioning**

One of the most recognizable marketing concepts is brand equity, which is essential to any brand success. Every year businesses assign a massive budget for constructing, handling, measuring and supporting their brand equity.<sup>25</sup> In the academic context, brand equity as a notion was developed in the 1980s, and then it has been extensively researched from both organizational and customer standpoints. Regardless of the dissimilar standpoints, brand equity is represented as the entire value made by the brand.<sup>26</sup>

Recent studies have indicated that businesses use nostalgic techniques to enhance their brands and brand equity; stronger brand associations will result in more favourable brand reviews, improved purchase intentions, and positive word-of-mouth. Nevertheless, a complete investigation of how nostalgic brand positioning strategies affect brand equity and the other related concepts is still prominently missing in both practice and research. Moreover, it is ambiguous if the technique varies between emerging and developed marketplaces and if brand innovativeness facilitates or inhibits this operation.<sup>27, 28, 29</sup>

Furthermore, marketing researchers and practitioners have lately stated the importance of investigating brand equity. Thus, studies have verified that a brand with strong equity can earn increased brand attachment, stronger brand preference, and active brand loyalty.<sup>25, 30</sup>

## Why Businesses Prefer Retro-Marketing

Nowadays, businesses prefer using the retro style in marketing their products and services locally and globally. Associating history when it is related to local marketing campaigns; it highlights localized tradition, history, and authenticity. In the context of global marketing, retro-marketing is mainly utilized to underline exclusive brand features, history and everlasting values. These retro-marketing objectives are to enrich brand value and maintain brand image.<sup>13, 3</sup>

Similarly, from the company's perspective, there are four major motivations in executing the retro-marketing strategy. They are described as follows: (1) Retro-marketing is a brand management method, that can be viewed as an option to maintaining brand heritage. (2) Since the initial version of the current brand demonstrates itself among customers, it is the pathway to underestimate threats to succeed during a new brand's takeoff. (3) There might be a method to benefit from the current resources and experiences. (4) A retro-brand can be produced in reaction to equivalent attacks from opponents.<sup>3</sup>

Sahin and Kaya (2019)<sup>31</sup> noted that businesses should point out to the customer the proper brand in the proper way, as it should be stated that a new brand in the sense of nostalgic notion is introduced to the right target audience, and the brand must be promoted as instructed. Therefore, old brands that involve retro-marketing in their marketing communication techniques must first stimulate customers' awareness and trust, then select the proper techniques to revitalize the brand already in mind. If they operate in that context, benefits such as earning sympathy, loyalty, and preference will reach alongside cost.

Indeed, what has been reported shows that retro-marketing directs the creation of products and services towards a reintegration of the past and not towards a break with it. Retro-marketing concerns a new product that evokes and enhances an old and disused product, but with an experience rooted in the consumer culture.<sup>32</sup>

## Examples of Retro-Styles in Advertising for Brands

As mentioned earlier, the business uses retro-style marketing for both local scales and global classes; the purposes of these retro-campaigns concentrated on expanding the brand equity and strengthening the brand position. In that respect, the Coca-Cola company memorialised its 125th anniversary of presence in 2011 through a sequence of celebrations and events in around 200 countries (Figure 1). Coca-Cola's celebration

contained:

- A retrospective television ad.
- Online 'Retro Poster Maker'.
- Outdoor ads.
- Iconic illustrations on pack.



Figure 1: Retro-campaign of Coca-Cola

Source: Sandboxworld, Coca-Cola: Celebrating 125 Years of Happiness. Released on May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2011.

Available at: <https://sandboxworld.com/coca-cola-celebrating-125-years-of-happiness/>

Each campaign component was affected by the brand's iconic and rich heritage over the past decades, carrying to life its lasting appeal by celebrating 125 years of delivering "happiness in a bottle" to customers. The campaign's retro style allowed the company to highlight intangible values associated with this international brand.



Figure 2: Retro-campaign of Chupa Chups

Source: Ads of the world, Chupa Chups: Now with gum. Released on September, 2012 by TBWA Advertising Agency in Barcelona, Spain

Available at: <https://www.adsoftheworld.com/campaigns/now-with-gum>



Additionally, the creator of Chupa Chups lollipop brand launched in 2012, the Retro-marketing campaign “Chupa Chups. Now with gum” to present the newer version of the brand (Figure 2).<sup>13</sup>

### **Definition of Brand Equity**

Constructing strong brands is considered a prime concern for the marketers; as it helps the firm build its own identity in the market, leading to larger margins, decrease vulnerability to competitive actions, and create better brand extension opportunities.<sup>33</sup> The Brand Equity is considered an efficient tool when it is objectively and correctly measured, as it is considered an appropriate metric to evaluate the long-term effect of the marketing decisions.<sup>34</sup>

The marketing practitioners and researchers started to examine the notion of “Brand Equity”; as a concept to measure the brand’s overall value.<sup>35</sup> According to Tanmay, Shradha and Mahesh (2009)<sup>33</sup>, “Brand Equity” is incremental value or utility which added to the product by its brand’s name; correspondingly, research have suggested that this value may be estimated by taking away the utility of the product’s physical attributes from the total brand’s utility.

Atilgan, Aksoy and Akinci (2005)<sup>34</sup> stated that “Brand equity” has been defined by many marketing researchers and practitioners, who stated that it is considered as the set of brand liabilities and assets linked to a brand, symbol, and its name, which subtract from or add to the value provided by a service or product to a firm or/and to the firm’s clients.

Marketing practitioners utilize the concept “Brand Equity” to refer to brand strength or brand description. Fayrene and Lee (2011)<sup>36</sup> used the concept “Customer Brand Equity”; in order to differentiate it from asset valuation meaning. Therefore, the brand’s power depends in what the customers have felt, learned, heard, and seen about the brand; as a consequence of their experiences.<sup>36</sup>

### **Key Dimensions of Brand Equity**

According to Brochado and Oliveira (2018)<sup>37</sup>, brand equity is considered as a multidimensional conceptualization; it was proposed by many marketers and researchers that it consists of five key and main dimensions. These dimensions are defined as the main variables on which the brand equity changes upon. It includes brand awareness, brand loyalty, brand associations, perceived quality, and other proprietary brand assets.

### **Brand Awareness**

Brand awareness is an tremendously important dimension for brand equity.<sup>37</sup> The Brand awareness is the consumers' capabilities to recognise a certain specific brand, even their ability to identify it in particular situations. Also, it encompasses brand identity awareness of different aspects such as brand name, physical characteristics color and packaging.<sup>37</sup> This brand awareness can be considered as having different degrees that ranges from, the lowest level represented in the brand recognition reaching to the highest degree that is the brand dominance; this explained as the point to which a brand referred to is considered the only brand recalled by the consumers.<sup>37</sup>

### **Brand Loyalty**

Brand loyalty is considered as one of the main factors that influences brand equity. Brand loyalty could be defined based on the attitudinal, behavioural, and choice perspectives made by the customers.<sup>37</sup> The behavioural perspective reflected in the extent to which customers focus their purchases over time in a repeated way over particular brand. The attitudinal perspective represented in consumers' intentions to be loyal to a certain brand and, therefore, incorporates consumers' dispositions and preferences towards that brand, which is, the intention to make that brand a primary choice in their purchases.<sup>37</sup>

Lastly, the choice perspective concentrates over the purchases' reasons or its factors that could affects choices.<sup>38</sup> The loyal consumers tend to show more favourable responses to certain brand than switching or non-loyal consumers do, purchasing that brand and resisting switching to another one, even while remaining price conscious.<sup>38</sup> Research found that there is direct relationship between brand loyalty and brand equity; as the more consumers are loyal to brands, brand equity will increase.<sup>38</sup>

### **Brand Association**

Saputra (2022)<sup>38</sup> explained that brand association is another component essential for brand equity, that believed to contain whatever is attached to a brand in consumers' memory. The brand association, in any form, tends to reflect the products' features in consumers' mind that includes a set of ideas, facts, images, or any elements which have built a well relationship with brand knowledge.<sup>38</sup> Consequently, this association includes some meaning attached to brands and composed of multiple episodes, ideas and facts which build up strong network of brand knowledge.<sup>38</sup>

As brand association could be attained from a range of sources, this dimension has different degrees of strength, and there is strong believe that it increases with the number of exposures or experiences to brand related communication and presence of networks of other links that help and assist the brand association.<sup>37</sup> The brand image tends to be created; when a set of associations is ordered and categorized in a meaningful way; it rises when brands have a favourable, positive, unique, and strong brand association in the memories of customers.<sup>37</sup>

### **Perceived Quality**

Shariq (2018)<sup>39</sup> stated that perceived quality is explained as consumers' judgment about a particular product's overall superiority or excellence. It could be also defined as consumers' subjective response to brand/product's different attributes and characteristics. The perceived quality could be summarized in customers' perception of overall product's quality that could be affected by consumption situations, unique needs, and personal product experiences.<sup>39</sup>

It was recognised by the marketers the importance of perceived quality when making marketing decisions regarding their products and brands.<sup>39</sup> The perceived quality has huge influence on consumers' decision making, as it gives an accurate basis on which consumers able to choose a brand among other competing brands. High perceived quality reflects that consumers' recognition for the superiority and differentiation of a brand in relation to other competing brands, that allows brands to charge premium prices.<sup>39</sup> Thus, the more the consumer perceived the brand with high quality service, the stronger the brand equity will be toward the brand.<sup>39</sup>

### **Other proprietary brand assets**

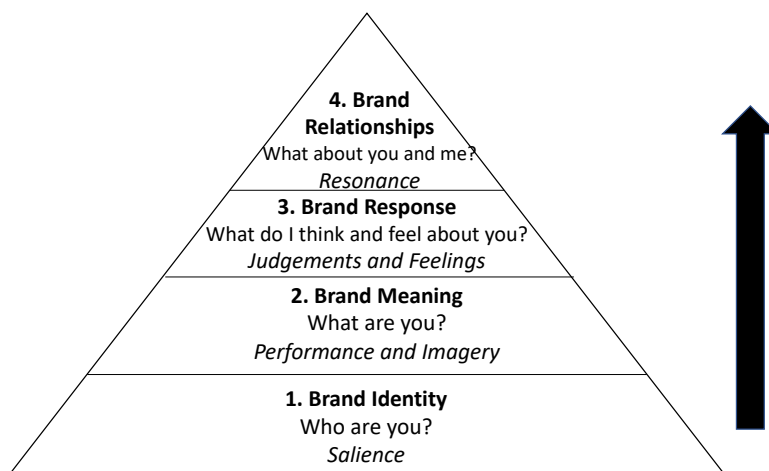
The Proprietary assets is considered one of the determinates for the brand equity which reflected in the following elements: patents, trademarks, and channel relationships.<sup>37</sup> These kinds of assets are perceived as valuable because they tend to be capable to prevent competitors from attacking the company even it prevents the erosion of competitive advantages and loyal customer base.<sup>39</sup> It is perceived as vital elements that ensure that other brands would not be capable to compete through operating under similar name or using similar packaging; that may confuse the consumers and compete away from a brand's customer base.<sup>39</sup>

### Theoretical Framework:

#### Keller's Model of Brand Equity:

The importance of brand valuation lies in the interaction of the parties in the market, the offering agent, and the consumer; This evaluation has repercussions on economic, satisfaction and quality benefits, among others. Therefore, it is the function of companies to make measurements of brand value to know the perspective of consumers regarding the product to be purchased, and in this way manage the development of the brand.<sup>40</sup>

Kevin Lane Keller (1993)<sup>41</sup> defined brand equity is defined as the differential effect that knowledge of the brand name has on the consumer's response to marketing actions. He asserted that the study of Brand Equity has been in progress for more than three decades, and since the 1980s a whole line of research has been developed on the subject. One of the reasons that explain the importance of its development is the characteristics of the market. Thus, in an environment characterized by high levels of demand and competitiveness, knowing the behavior of the consumer and his reactions to the various stimuli that are presented to him becomes necessary to make the right strategic and tactical decisions.<sup>41</sup>



**Figure 3:** Keller's Model of Brand Equity

Kevin Keller (1993<sup>41</sup>; 2001<sup>42</sup>; 2003<sup>43</sup>) made one of the main contributions to branding theories. He introduced the concept of wit customer-based brand equity and the brand hierarchy as shown in (Figure 3).<sup>43</sup>

According to Keller, brand equity is the impact that brand awareness has on consumers' feedback to a marketing of brand, with the impact occurring

when the brand is recognized and when the customer has positive, powerful, and distinctive brand associations.<sup>41</sup> Moreover, the Consumer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) model defines four levels that correspond to customer inquiries and serve as a “branding ladder” with each step requiring the accomplishment of the one before.<sup>42</sup> Also, these processes include several sub-dimensions and six brand building pieces.<sup>41</sup> The goal is to climb to the top of the pyramid, where a harmonious relationship with clients exists, in order to develop a powerful brand. In a nutshell, the CBBE model’s initial phase is to establish the right “brand identity.” The goal of responding to the first inquiry buyers ask about brands, “Who are you?” is to establish a connection between the brand and a certain product category or need.<sup>43</sup> The first step consists of the “salience” brand building block.

The second step involves giving customers an answer to the query “What are you?” by creating “brand meaning” in their brains and creating linkages between brand and specific attributes.<sup>42</sup> This step consists of the two brand development pieces “performance” and “imagery.”

The following step is “brand response,” in which the appropriate consumer reactions to the brand recognition and meaning are evoked.<sup>43</sup> These decisions are made using the “judgments” and building blocks of “judgments” and “feelings” and provides an answer to the query, “What about you?” The CBBE pyramid’s ultimate level, “relationships” is where brand responsiveness is transformed into a strong, active loyalty bond between customers and the brand.<sup>42</sup> The top of the brand-building pyramid and the answer to the customer’s question, “What about you and me?” is “resonance.”

Keller’s theoretical framework offers direction for creating, assessing, and managing brand equity. Although (Keller, 2003)<sup>43</sup> asserts that the model may be used in both a B2B and consumer environment, it does not seem to have been tried out for industrial brands. There has been much discussion on the similarities and differences between corporate and consumer marketplaces, with organizational buyers finding to vary in many ways.

Keller described the brand image as perceptions that occur because of the reflection of the associations related to the brand in consumer memory. Brand associations also include the meaning of the brand to which other informative nodes in memory are connected to each other by brand nodes for the consumer. Consumers constitute depictions for a product or brand that symbolizes their emotions or is an extension of these emotions, which increases the value of the brand. The dependence on a brand that is

compatible with the self of the consumer is extremely high and the perceptions of the brand are much more positive.<sup>44</sup>

Moreover, Keller explained that brand reputation reflects the total impact of past marketing activities of businesses and affects the consumer's thoughts on the brand in the future.<sup>44</sup> In this context the current study intends to know how the retro-marketing might affect the consumers' brand selection and purchase decisions.

### Research Questions:

The study employed Keller's Brand Equity Model to examine the brand equity of Egyptian retro brands *Spiro Spatis* Beverage, *Corona* Chocolate, *Kaha* products, among Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Millennials. The research questions hereby examine the variables set by the model:

1. To what extent the participants can identify the retro brands?
2. To what extent the participants can identify the attributes of the retro brands?
3. What are the feelings associated with these retro brands?
4. What are the participants judgements about the retro brands?
5. What is the relationship between the participant and retro brands?

### Research Methodology:

This study aims at examining the use of retro-marketing to determine the brand equity of three Egyptian retro-brands including *Spiro Spatis* beverage, *Corona* Chocolate and *Kaha* products, among Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Millennials within the framework of Keller's Brand Equity Model. The study employs the qualitative research methodology of structured in-depth interviews, where 30 participants are in-depth interviewed; among which 10 participants are baby boomers, 10 participants are generation X, and 10 participants are Millennials. The comparative method is then used to compare between the three generations. The duration of each interview is 30 minutes.

The study used a *purposive sample* of 30 participants who are selected based on specific characteristics possessed. The criteria used for choosing the participants are mainly the age range, in which they are selected to represent the three generations; in addition to the educational level, where the participants should have received tertiary education. In the current study, the sample comprises 10 participants born within the years 1946-

1964 to represent the Baby Boomers generation; 10 participants born within the years 1965-1980 to represent generation X; and 10 participants born within the years 1981-1996 to represent the Millennials generation.

The interview guide consists of five parts as assorted in the research questions; the first part consists of questions intending to examine the brand recognition. The second part examines the participants' knowledge of the attributes of these retro-brands. The third part consists of questions to discover the feelings and associations that the participants have towards these brands. The fourth part includes questions to learn about the judgements that participants make towards these brands. The fifth part includes questions aiming at knowing the relationship between the participants and these retro-brands.

### **Results:**

In-depth interviews were conducted with 30 participants. Ten participants are Baby Boomers; 10 participants are generation X; and 10 participants are Millennials whose responses are collected, analyzed, and compared. The data collection lasted from 12<sup>th</sup> September 2022 to 6<sup>th</sup> November 2022. The research questions intend to answer the brand equity levels proposed by Keller (2003)<sup>43</sup>. Following are the most significant results of the research questions under study:

#### **1. Brand Identity**

Results have shown that baby boomers and generation X in general know the three retro-brands, describe their logos, and packages. On the contrary, the millennials tend to know one or two of the brands or have just heard about them.

BB (1): *"I remember the logo of Spatis was on the form of bee, corona has like an animal I think it was like a gazelle and kaha had like a big character which has a chef uniform."*

*"corona i remember had dark bleu and yellow ..... spatis had like green glass package with metal cover on it was so much alike the seven up glass package. Kaha had many products juices, jams and Tomatos liquids, kaha's packages were made of tin cans which was colored in white and even sometime it was a problem in the package because it becomes sometimes rusted."*

BB (2): *"Spiro: it has a mosquito or a house fly with arabic and english brand name, Corona: it has a deer jumping, kaha: I just remember the color, which was greens."*

BB (3): *"Corona the gazalle, Kaha the fruit cook, Spatis with the bee drawing on the bottle cap and we used to call it Spatis 'eldebana'."*

*“Corona had a different design for each flavor, and they were made of paper. Kaha metal container and Spatis has green glass bottles.”*

BB (4): *“I remember the corona had cover green and bleu colors, while the spatis had green color for the package and kaha had white color with yellow strap ..... The package of spatis was transparent glass bottle. Kaha had big jams packages made from metal and also i remember it had juices in small metal containers.”*

GX (1): *“Corona, green logo-Spatis, Bee in the middle green logo and arabic letters in white- Kaha Orange and Kaha orange and green chef.”*

GX (2): *“I remember the logo of corona well it was white round with deer inside it and the name of corona is written below it. The logo of spatis was green circle and white with bee sign over it. Kaha was like a character in green and red/orange color and this character was wearing like white hat.”*

GX (3): *“Logo of Corona was red, blue, green with picture of deer, written on it since 1919. Kaha’s logo was written on arabic قهبا with shape of fruit like chef smiling and holding spoon.”*

GX (4): *“Kaha is cans; Corona is silver foil wrapping with another paper wrap; spatis: a glass bottle.”*

M (1): *“Kaha was a fruit icon.”*

M (2): *“Corona most probably a face in a circle; I don’t know the logos of kaha and spiro spatis.”*

M (3): *“Corona is a text logo of the word Corona, I don’t know spatis or kaha logos.”*  
*“Corona has a foil wrapping which then wrapped in paper. I don’t know about the other two.”*

M (4): *“Corona was a deer animal logo. I don’t remember the logo of the others, I only recognised the names.”*

M (5): *“I remember that corona had a blue package. And that spatis bottles was always sticking to my hands as they always required a wash. And I don't remember much about Kaha.”*

M (6): *“Corona is a rectangular slofan wrapping; spatis has transparent glass bottle with transparent wrapping; I don’t know about kaha.”*

## **2. Brand Performance**

Baby Boomers as well as Generation X are completely aware of the features and attributes of the three retro-brands, whereas the Millennials do not completely know the attributes of those brands.

BB (2): *“the three products were with very good quality and corona was the most known in Egypt for its taste while spatis had like a lemon taste while kaha had many products of jams and juices and it had also excellent quality in comparison for the time it was made in.”*

BB (3): *“Spiro Spathis cotains much soda but a poor flavor, Corona is one of the best Egyptian chocolates.....Kaha the tomato paste is similar to all the competitors, but the jam is really unique and full of organic natural flavor.”*



BB (5): *"I used to feel that corona chocolate had more raw chocolate because the concentration of the chocolate was high unlike the other milky chocolates in the markets today. Spatis was more like soda water, and it had transparent color, and it was mostly used in the birthday events and celebrations. Kaha products were different for example there were jams, juices and tomato paste which i still use until now."*

GX (5): *"Kaha is canned food like beans, jam, juice, tomato paste. Corona is chocolate and biscuits; Spiro is soft drink but doesn't taste good and is low in quality."*

GX (6): *"Corona was one of few brands during the past 100 years that offered a wide range of chocolate, biscuits, candies and bobons. Kaha has a 90 years history in preserved foods market with a very good quality."*

M (3): *"Corona is chocolate; I don't about the other two brands."*

M (6): *"Corona is a high-quality chocolate; Spatis is a soft drink with a good fizzy; I don't know about kaha."*

### **3. Brand Response**

These retro-brands induce memories for the participants especially the Baby Boomers and Generation X. All of them almost agreed that these brands remind them with their childhood and family gatherings. The brands bring about the nostalgic feelings to respondents of these two generations. The Millennials, on the other hand, do not have memories in this regard.

BB (1): *"It reminds me with my primary school days and my teenage years, and I used to like the taste of these brands. It reminds me how we had only very few tastes and varieties for choices ..... we used to be excited and happy to eat and taste those brands. Especially Corona, I have a personal attachement with it as it reminds me of some family members who used to be close to me in my teenage years."*

BB (2): *"I feel the yearning to the old days and nowadays I feel proud that we had these brands and that it tries to survive among the other new established brands.....I feel happy and excited to try it from time to time."*

BB (8): *"I feel happy, because it reminds me of the old days when I was a little girl."*

GX (3): *"It usually remind me with my young age, and I feel a certain kind of warmth, nostalgia, and happiness when I remember those days."*

GX (5): *"Nostalgia, fun with friends and kins."*

M (5): *"I didn't try it when I was a child; I just tried it recently when they did their rebranding campaign, so it is not attributed with memories or feelings."*

M (7): *"it doesn't remind me of anything, because it wasn't available during my childhood, or they just have one flavor, probably milk chocolate with poor packaging and quality; I just feel curious with their reinnovation, so I tried it."*

#### 4. Brand Relationships

Results have shown a close connection and active relationship between Baby Boomer and Generation X respondents, and those retro-brands. The connection relates to their childhood, school days, and tranquility days. Millennials, on the contrary, do not find a connection regarding these retro-brands.

BB (1): *"It is related to me with the feeling of excitement, satisfaction, and happiness as it reminds me with my old days."*

BB (2): *"my childhood and teenage years are attached to these old products so ..... i would buy instantly to remember the taste of these products."*

BB (3): *"I believe that old things are all about the classical era, so I feel connected to everything revived."*

GX (2): *"I feel connected to those brands, and they bring about memories of the 80s which was calm."*

GX (4): *"Nostalgia."*

M (1): *"I don't think there's a connection."*

M (3): *"No connection."*

M (5): *"..... I don't connect much to retro brands."*

Baby Boomers tend to provide more details about their experiences and memories with these retro-brands. They show a great interest describing their feelings and connections towards the retro-brands. They believe that reviving these brands is a good opportunity and encouraging the reviving of more old brands although they admit the risks of high competition. Generation X and millennial respondents, on the contrary, do not find an opportunity in reviving such brands; they believe it is an absolute risk because new generations will always reject old brands and prefer new brands.

BB (1): *"old generations who are attached and remember these brands..... hope these brands would come back into the market.....there is a high level of competition among the local and international brands....."*

BB (2): *"..... I think that the more the brand or product is old then the more from my opinion its quality will be trusted, so i believe it has huge opportunity based on its long time in the Egyptian market..... it has huge and big competition among the other brands ....."*

BB (4): *"these brands had a kind of nostalgic connection with its old target audience which may be easier in penetrating again the market..... these brands may face difficulty in targeting the new generations and also with the high prices that are in the market the retro-brands may relaunch with high prices too that are not different from the new brands."*

BB (6): "... these brands have already a kind of trust among our generation, however it needs to work more on developing in its packages and the way of promotion in order to reach to the new generations..... the risks may be the high competition as there is high varieties now among the other products."

GX (1): "Many people don't know it now.... many competitors."

GX (5): "it will face alot of competition now especially international ones."

GX (6): "New generations are not accepting old brands."

M (5): "I don't think there's an opportunity.....fierce competition whether among the Egyptian or imported brands."

M (7): "the main risk will be the competition....."

M (10): "little brand awareness and few loyalties left..... the market is already saturated with powerful competitors, who are offering a range of better-quality products."

### **Discussion:**

This study has touched on retro-brand marketing; how Brand Identity, Brand Performance, Brand Response; as well as, Brand Relationships formulate among Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Millennial generations' minds and decisions.

The results of this paper have supported that retro strategic plan implicating all the marketing mix components; nostalgia pushes the brand identity and making the product more appealing (Özkan Pir, 2019<sup>3</sup>; Gajanova & Zdenka, 2020<sup>9</sup>; Hajlaoui & Gharbi, 2020<sup>15</sup>); as baby boomers and generation X in general identify the three Egyptian retro-brands through describing their logos, and packages; however, it wasn't supported by the millennials, as they can barely recognize the brands. Shariq (2018)<sup>39</sup> highlighted the importance of perceived quality and how it is related to brand equity. As a result, the sample of this study focused on the brands' attributes and characteristics, as the notion of perceiving certain qualities could impact personal experience and thus affect the overall brand's equity.

Additionally, this study examines the brand's performance, particularly how a specific brand may shape peoples' minds and how they can understand brand meaning. The findings show empirically that the majority of the Baby Boomers and Gen X generations are well aware of the attributes and features of the three retro-brands "*Spiro Spatis* Beverage, *Corona* Chocolate, and *Kaha* products"; however, the Millennial generation had limited brand awareness and experience. This matches with what (Keller, 2001)<sup>42</sup> on people who lack complete information on brand attributes become

uncertain about brands, and the ambiguity affects their evaluations of brands.

At the same time, it is worth highlighting that Brand Response can shape consumer reactions toward the brand as it is the degree to which consumers recognize, feel, and judge a brand for its accepted brand features or characteristics (Keller, 2003<sup>43</sup>; Brochado & Oliveira, 2018)<sup>37</sup>. For instance, Baby Boomers and Generation X agreed that they remember all three retro-brands and could relate them to their childhood memories and family gatherings. On the contrary, the young generation did not recognize these retro-brands; for example, phrases like “*I didn't try it when I was a child*” or “*it doesn't remind me of anything*”. It also supports (Sciammarella, 2021)<sup>32</sup> assertion that retro-products reintegrate the consumer with an experience from the past. Such results complete perfect insight into what was mentioned by Keller (2003)<sup>43</sup>, that lower levels of brand recognition are insignificant in the consumer's brand response. Hallegatte, (2015)<sup>7</sup> mentioned that demographics have modified the relationship of societies with their recent past, particularly the 1960s and 1970s and this recent past, desired by baby boomers, valued by society, which was accepted by the results that have shown a close connection and active relationship between Baby Boomer and Generation X respondents with those retro-brands having a great brand relation. Millennials quite the reverse do not find any connection regarding these retro-brands. Also, Baby Boomer and Generation X respondents will achieve the goal is to climb to the top of the pyramid, where a harmonious relationship with clients exists, in order to develop a powerful brand (Keller 2003)<sup>43</sup>.

Furthermore, the study indicated that there is a significance associated with the brands' association among Baby Boomers and Generation X, which is made up of countless memories, concepts, and facts that create a robust network of brand knowledge and can directly affect the brand equity as reflected by Saputra (2022)<sup>38</sup>.

### **Conclusion:**

Finally, it has been apparent that there has been a growing interest in the issue of retro marketing, in particular retro branding. In general terms, this paper had examined the rise of three retro brands in an attempt to progress on a submissive theory that contributes to marketing principles and practice. The study employed Keller's Brand Equity Model to examine the brand equity of Egyptian retro brands *Spiro Spatis Beverage*, *Corona*

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Chocolate, *Kaha* products, among Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Millennials.

The “retro” trend in marketing communication strategy of Egyptian brands seems to have interest among different generations with variations, if they can reclaim it into modern trends. As a result, this state creates positive effect on identity, performance, relationship, and response. There is no doubt that the demographic criteria, especially the age range factor, is one of the most powerful variables in this study, as the findings supported the notion that Millennials are desirable consumers due to their spending capacity. However, marketers and advertisers of these retro brands must change their marketing strategy to reach this generation. Considered an excellent method for attracting the attention of Baby Boomers and Generation X, by applying nostalgic marketing. In the study context, the focus was on the nostalgia induced by millennials' personal memories. In fact, retro marketing can be more effective when, alongside the memories, it concurrently provides new products, services, and experiences that deliver on consumers' modern needs.

Since this study is a qualitative exploration through conducted interviews, the result might not be necessarily generalizable. However, this study should be considered when examining retro marketing in Egypt, as it is an effective exploration into understanding the phenomena of different products thoroughly. With research suggesting that nostalgic marketing and brands are interesting to investigate, the next step could be to examine the cultural and/or national impacts on a millennial's tendency toward nostalgic marketing. For instance, culture influences the differences between consumers internationally, and not all marketing strategies are transferable between cultures. It is therefore intriguing to investigate whether nostalgia propensity varies among cultures and ethnicities. Similarly, the research can be expanded by applying quantitative techniques and doing surveys among different target segments.

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