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MEDIATING ROLE OF BRAND IMAGE ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BRAND REJUVENATION AND CONSUMER PURCHASE INTENTION

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Abstract

This study explores the mediating role of brand image in the relationship between brand rejuvenation strategies—such as product innovation, rebranding, and marketing campaigns—and consumer purchase intentions. The study aims to theorize and clarify the pathways through which brand rejuvenation influences consumer behavior through brand image perceptions. Drawing on an extensive review of existing literature, this paper synthesizes theoretical insights from studies on brand management, consumer behavior, and marketing strategy. The conceptual framework proposes that brand rejuvenation initiatives impact consumer purchase intentions indirectly, mediated by changes in brand image perceptions. The conceptual analysis highlights that effective brand rejuvenation enhances brand image, leading to favorable consumer perceptions and increased purchase intentions. Specific strategies such as rebranding, innovative product offerings, and targeted marketing campaigns are theorized to reinforce positive brand associations and consumer loyalty. Based on the findings, this study recommends that brand managers continuously innovate their product offerings to meet changing consumer preferences and technological advancements. Similarly, brand managers should engage in strategic rebranding efforts to refresh the brand's identity and ensure it remains aligned with the evolving market trends and consumer expectations. Likewise, brand managers should implement targeted marketing campaigns that effectively communicate the brand's rejuvenation efforts, thereby enhancing consumer awareness and fostering positive brand associations.

Key words: Brand Image; Brand Rejuvenation; Innovation; Purchase Intention, Rebranding.

1. Introduction

In the highly competitive and dynamic marketplace, maintaining customer purchase intention over time poses a significant challenge for brands. Research has consistently shown that consumer purchase intention tends to decline as brands age and market saturation increases. Factors such as market competition, changing consumer preferences, and the perceived staleness of a brand can contribute to this decline (Johnson, Brown, & Anderson, 2017; Smith & Park, 2019). As consumer expectations evolve, brands must innovate and adapt to stay relevant and maintain a positive brand image. Brand rejuvenation, encompassing strategies like product innovation, rebranding, and targeted marketing campaigns, has emerged as a crucial approach to counteract the decline in purchase intention. By introducing new products, refreshing brand identity, and engaging in modern marketing practices, brands can revitalize their image and re-engage consumers (Kim, et al. 2020; Merrilees, 2005). This renewed brand image can significantly influence consumer perceptions and associations, which are pivotal in driving purchase intention (Garcia & Lopez, 2023).

Indeed, empirical evidences support the effectiveness of brand rejuvenation strategies in improving brand image and, consequently, consumer purchase intention. For instance, a study by Hsieh and Chang (2021) found that successful brand rejuvenation efforts led to significant improvements in brand image, which in turn enhanced customer loyalty. Similarly, Patel and Singh (2024) highlighted the role of digital marketing in shaping brand image and driving consumer behavior. By proactively engaging in these strategies, companies can not only retain existing customers but also attract new ones, thereby driving growth and profitability Keller (2009). Product innovation is a key dimension of brand rejuvenation, and it involves the development and introduction of new or improved products to meet evolving consumer needs. This strategy not only enhances the brand's relevance but also stimulates consumer interest and loyalty (Claudy, Garcia, & O'Driscoll, 2015).

Similarly, rebranding efforts, which include updating logos, slogans, and overall brand messaging, help in refreshing the brand's market presence and appeal (Miller, et al. 2014). Furthermore, targeted marketing campaigns play a vital role in communicating these changes to consumers, thereby reinforcing the brand's new image and increasing its attractiveness (Keller, 2009). Another important concept explored in this conceptual paper is brand image, which encapsulates consumers' perceptions, associations, and emotional responses towards a brand (Keller, 2020). Brand image plays a pivotal role in mediating the relationship between brand rejuvenation strategies and consumer purchase intention. By shaping consumers' perceptions of a brand's attributes, values, and distinctiveness in the marketplace, brand image influences their purchase decisions and enhances brand equity (Hsieh & Chang, 2021).

However, in today's highly competitive and ever-evolving market landscape, brands face the constant challenge of maintaining relevance and appeal to consumers. Therefore, brand rejuvenation strategies, encompassing rebranding, product innovation, and targeted marketing campaigns, are considered crucial for sustaining brand equity and fostering consumer engagement. Conversely, despite the recognized importance of these strategies, there are notable gaps in first, understanding how brand rejuvenation efforts translate into consumer purchase intentions, specifically through the mediating role of brand image. Second, marketers often struggle in effectively implementing brand rejuvenation strategies that not only refresh the brand but also drive consumer purchase behaviors (Merrilees et al. 2017). These practical gaps result in suboptimal resource allocation and missed opportunities to strengthen brand-consumer relationships. Consequently, identifying the mechanisms through which brand rejuvenation impacts purchase intentions can provide actionable insights for marketers and brand managers to design more effective and targeted strategies.

Thirdly, while existing literature extensively covers the individual impacts of brand rejuvenation strategies and brand image on consumer purchase intention (Johnson, Brown, & Anderson, 2017; Kim, et al. 2020; Hsieh & Chang, 2021; Garcia & Lopez, 2023; Patel & Singh, 2024), there is dearth of literature that explore the integrative role of brand image as a mediator in this relationship. Addressing these practical and literature-based gaps is crucial for advancing theoretical understanding and enhancing practical applications in brand management. Therefore, this is study aims to fill these gaps by proposing a conceptual framework that delineates the mediating role of brand image in the relationship between brand rejuvenation and consumer purchase intention. By doing so, it will provide valuable insights into the intermediate processes that drive consumer purchase behaviors, offering a nuanced understanding of how brand rejuvenation efforts can be optimized to achieve desired outcomes.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Conceptual Issues

Brand Rejuvenation

Brand Rejuvenation could be defined as changing how consumers see a firm's brand with the main idea being to extend the maturity stage of the brand lifecycle and be able to reverse or restart growth during the recession stage to ensure the sustainable survival of the brand (Zhou, 2024). Brand rejuvenation focuses on repairing the unique and identifiable image of brands in consumers' minds, starting with its market positioning and creatively reviving the brand's identity through strategic brand management tools and techniques. Brand rejuvenation is also seen as typically involving revitalizing brand identity through initiatives such as product innovation, rebranding, and marketing campaigns aimed at refreshing brand image and reconnecting with consumers (Keller, 2020). While Aaker (1991) argued that brand rejuvenation involves comparatively less risk and cost than developing a new brand, which is substantially more expensive and has a higher probability of failure. Empirical evidences indicate that effective brand rejuvenation can enhance brand equity, attract new customers, and mitigate brand fatigue, thereby sustaining long-term competitiveness (Aker & Joachimsthaler, 2000; Nassimi et al., 2019)). Likewise, empirical evidence suggests that rejuvenating established brands enhances customer purchase intentions and increases customer loyalty (Kolbl, Ruzzier & Kolar, 2019).

Brand Image

The company's positive reputation is evident through the ethics and appearance of its employees, as well as the esteemed name of the company in consumers' minds (Arfianti, 2014; Sujadi & Wahyono, 2015). Brand image is essentially a reflection of the brand retained in customers' memories. Simply put, it is what comes to mind when a customer encounters a brand (Saleem & Raja, 2014). Another perspective defined brand image as a collection of associations and perceptions that consumers hold about a brand, typically organized into a meaningful framework. It is also regarded as the stored reflection in a customer's mind and the immediate thoughts when a brand is brought to the forefront (Saleem & Raja, 2014; Forozia, Zadeh, & Gilani, 2013). Brand image encompasses consumers' perceptions, associations, and emotional connections with a brand (Keller, 2020). It is shaped by various elements such as a brand's visual identity, messaging, product quality, and overall brand experience (Hsieh & Chang, 2021). A strong brand image positively influences consumer attitudes, purchase intentions, and loyalty (Aaker, 1996; Abin, Mandagi and Pasuhuk, 2022). Research indicates that a favorable brand image can help differentiate a brand from its competitors, mitigate negative publicity, and contribute to sustained consumer preference and trust (Keller, 2020).

Purchase Intention

Consumer purchase intention refers to the predisposition of a consumer towards buying **a** particular product or service, reflecting their willingness and readiness to engage in a transaction under current market conditions and circumstances (Cui & Li, 2020). Purchase intention is essentially a person's desire to shop for a product either directly or after acquiring information about it (Saputra, Lubis, & Nizam, 2020). Therefore, purchase intention is a person's desire to transact for the desired product after understanding its attributes and benefits. Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) posited that behavioral intention is influenced by three basic determinants: an individual's attitude towards the behavior, social pressure to perform or not perform the behavior based on one's perception, and the individual's perceived control over performing the behavior. Consequently, purchase intentions emerge after a consumer gathers various pieces of information about the product to be purchased (Kotler & Keller, 2018; Mohmed, Azizan, & Jali, 2013; Chinomona, 2013). Following this information acquisition, consumers plan to buy the product or service at an opportune time (Liat & Wuan, 2014).

2.2 Theoretical Framework

The mediating role of brand image on the relationship between brand rejuvenation and consumer purchase intention can be explained from different perspectives. To explain this relationship, the present study adopted the Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner 1986) as underpinning theory and the Affective Commitment Theory (Meyer & Allen 1991), as the supporting theory.

Social Identity Theory

Social Identity Theory (SIT) proposed by Tajfel and Turner in the 1980s, explores how individuals derive a part of their self-concept from their membership in social groups. This theory posits that people categorize themselves and others into in-groups (groups to which they belong) and out-groups (groups to which they do not belong). The theory suggests that individuals strive for a positive social identity and enhance their self-esteem by identifying with groups that they perceive positively. In the context of this study on brand rejuvenation, brand image, and consumer purchase intention, Social Identity Theory suggests that consumers may perceive brands as symbolic extensions of themselves. When brands undergo rejuvenation efforts such as rebranding or product innovation, they may signal changes in their identity or values that resonate with consumers' desired social identities. This alignment can lead to stronger brand identification, increased brand loyalty, and higher purchase intentions as consumers seek to maintain or enhance their own positive self-image through their brand choices.

Affective Commitment Theory

Affective Commitment Theory, rooted in organizational behavior literature, explores the emotional attachment individuals develop towards organizations, brands, or groups. Developed by Meyer and Allen (1991), the theory emphasizes the emotional bonds individuals form based on their experiences and perceptions of shared values, goals, and experiences with the entity. Within the context of this study, Affective Commitment Theory suggests that brand rejuvenation efforts that enhance brand image can foster stronger emotional connections between consumers and brands. When brands demonstrate consistency, quality improvements, or ethical alignment through rejuvenation strategies, they can evoke positive emotions and a sense of attachment among consumers. This emotional attachment, in turn, can lead to higher levels of brand loyalty and increased purchase intentions as consumers are motivated to maintain their relationship with brands that resonate emotionally and reflect their values. These theories provide valuable frameworks for understanding how brand rejuvenation strategies impact consumer behavior through changes in brand image and emotional connections. By applying Social Identity Theory and Affective Commitment Theory to the study variables of brand rejuvenation, brand image, and consumer purchase intention, marketers can gain insights into the psychological mechanisms underlying consumer brand preferences and loyalty in dynamic market environments.

2.3 Empirical Review

Patel and Singh (2024) investigate the impact of marketing campaigns, particularly through digital media, on brand equity and brand image. The study, conducted with 600 participants in the technology sector, finds that digital marketing campaigns significantly enhance brand image, contributing to overall brand equity. The research highlights the effectiveness of digital media in reshaping brand perceptions and engaging consumers in the digital age. The current study differs as it employed three brand rejuvenation strategies upon which brand image is probed to mediate their relationship with consumer purchase intention.

Garcia and Lopez (2023) examined the relationship between rebranding efforts and consumer trust, focusing on the mediating role of brand image consistency. Using a sample of 450 consumers in the financial services sector, the study reveals that consistent rebranding initiatives significantly enhance brand image, which in turn fosters consumer trust. The research underscores the importance of maintaining core brand attributes during rebranding to ensure positive consumer perception and trust. While the study focused on customer trust, the current study focuses on purchase intention.

Martin and Nguyen (2022) explore the effects of innovative branding strategies, including rebranding and product innovation, on consumer perception and brand loyalty. Through a survey of 500 consumers in the fashion industry, the study finds that innovative branding strategies significantly enhance brand image, which in turn boosts brand loyalty. The research emphasizes the role of continuous innovation in maintaining a strong brand image and fostering long-term consumer relationships. The study focused on brand loyalty and hence differ from the current study.

Hsieh and Chang (2021) investigate the impact of brand rejuvenation strategies on customer loyalty, focusing on the mediating role of brand image. The study utilizes a survey of 350 consumers of a rejuvenated brand in the technology sector. The findings indicate that rebranding, product innovation, and targeted marketing campaigns significantly enhance brand image, which in turn, positively affects customer loyalty. The study highlights that a refreshed brand image helps in aligning consumer perceptions with the brand’s updated identity and offerings. While this study checked on the mediating role of brand image, it focused on its effect on the relationship between brand rejuvenation and customer loyalty unlike the current study that seek to look at it from the angle of consumer purchase intention.

Kim et al. (2020) explore how product innovation and rebranding influence brand equity, with a specific focus on brand image. Through a quantitative analysis of 400 consumer responses in the consumer electronics industry, the study finds that both product innovation and rebranding significantly contribute to a positive brand image. Enhanced brand image, in turn, reinforces overall brand equity. The study underscores the importance of integrating innovative product features with a cohesive brand narrative to maintain and enhance brand image. The study focused on only two dimensions of brand rejuvenation (product innovation and rebranding) against brand equity. The current study seeks to focus on an additional dimension of marketing campaign with focus on consumer purchase intention.

Smith and Park (2019) examine the impact of marketing campaigns on brand image, considering the moderating effect of brand familiarity. The study, conducted in the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) sector, utilizes experimental design with 300 participants. The results reveal that marketing campaigns effectively enhance brand image, especially for brands with moderate to high familiarity. The study emphasizes that well-executed marketing campaigns can refresh and reinforce brand image, particularly when consumers are already somewhat familiar with the brand. The study focused on one of the strategies of brand rejuvenation while the current study focuses on three strategies.

Lee and Carter (2018) investigate the relationship between rebranding and consumer perception, focusing on the consistency of brand image. The study analyzes data from 250 consumers of a rebranded retail brand. Findings suggest that successful rebranding initiatives, which maintain consistency in core brand attributes while introducing new elements, significantly enhance brand image. The study argues that consistency in brand image is crucial for consumer acceptance of rebranding efforts and for the overall effectiveness of the rejuvenation strategy. The study focuses on rebranding and consumer perception. The current study however focuses on three strategies of brand rejuvenation and the mediating role of brand image on their relationship with consumer purchase intention.

Johnson et al. (2017) explore how product innovation impacts brand image and customer satisfaction in the automotive industry. The study uses a mixed-method approach, combining surveys and interviews with 400 car owners. Results indicate that product innovation significantly enhances brand image, which in turn, increases customer satisfaction. The study highlights the importance of continuous innovation in maintaining a positive brand image and meeting evolving consumer expectations. The focus of their research was on customer satisfaction which differs from that of this study which is on consumer purchase intention.

3. Data and Methods/Conceptual Framework

This study is solely a conceptual study; therefore, it is not an empirical study that is based on collected data. Being a conceptual study, the study relied on previous empirical investigations and the relevant gaps identified in the literature to demonstrate the mediating role of brand image on the relationship between brand rejuvenation strategies and consumer purchase intention as depicted in Figure 1.

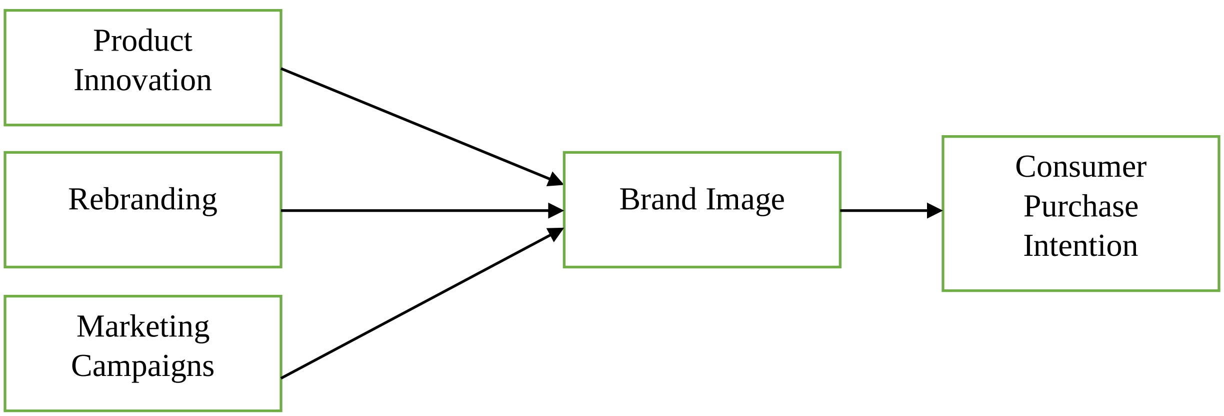

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study; Source: This Study

From Figure 1, product innovation, rebranding and marketing campaigns results into improving brand image, customer preferences and evolving expectations about a product (Hsieh & Chang, 2021; Johnson et al., 2017; Kim et al., 2020; Lee & Carter, 2018; Patel & Singh, 2024; Smith & Park, 2019). The tripartite of product innovation, rebranding and marketing campaigns are constituents of brand rejuvenation which has as its core aim extend the maturity stage of the brand lifecycle and be able to reverse or restart growth during the recession stage to ensure the sustainable survival of the brand (Zhou, 2024). Consequently, based on existing empirical evidences, these three components of brand rejuvenation are discussed conceptually to demonstrate their role in enhancing consumer brand purchase intention in ensuing section.

4. Discussion of Findings

Product innovation is undertaken either from the internal side based on knowledge, capacities, resources and the technologies used in the company or from external side which focuses on the consumers' needs and the owners' expectations. From either internal or external side, product innovation entails the development of new products, making changes in the current product design or using new techniques and means in the current production methods (Dorin, 2018; Reguia, 2014). These activities are undertaken to ensure sustainable survival of brand (Zhou, 2024) by ensuring that positive brand image is achieved among customers which in turn results in achieving positive purchase intention of consumers of brand. By undertaking product innovation existing consumers of brand that seeing themselves as select group and an extension of themselves may continue to consume the innovated product in consistence with social identity theory (Hsieh & Chang, 2021). Similarly, this could be explained by the Affective commitment theory which suggests that brand rejuvenation efforts that enhance brand image can foster stronger emotional connections between consumers and brands. Product innovation being one of the components of brand rejuvenation is capable of enhancing brand image which in turn foster positive consumer purchase intention to sustain the emotional connections that the consumers have for the brand (Patel & Singh, 2024).

Rebranding either by the market strategy of giving a new name, symbol, or change in design for an already-established brand as another component of brand rejuvenation enhances brand image and meeting up with consumers evolving expectations about brand (The Economic Times, 2024; Kim et al., 2020). Empirical evidences have found that rebranding enhances brand image (Kim et al., 2020; Lee and Carter, 2018). Consequently, by continuously sustaining positive brand image, consumers positive purchase intentions could be argued as assured. This argument is perhaps supported by social identity theory as consumers maintain positive intention of purchasing the rebranded product which the consumers could be viewing as belonging to their group (Hsieh & Chang, 2021). Likewise, Affective commitment theory could explain rebranding as brand rejuvenation effort that enhances brand image resulting into existing consumers sustaining their emotional connections of positive purchase intentions with the rebranded brand (Patel & Singh, 2024; Smith & Park, 2019).

Marketing Campaigns promote products through different types of media, such as television, radio, print, online platforms, demonstrations, video conferencing, and other interactive techniques. As a brand rejuvenation strategy, marketing campaigns are undertaken to build brand image, when introducing a new product, increasing sales of an existing product in the market, or even reducing the impact of negative news (Tarver, 2020). However, the focus of this study is on increasing sales of an existing product in the market which empirical findings have revealed that it significantly enhances brand image (Hsieh & Chang, 2021; Patel & Singh, 2024; Smith & Park, 2019). Consequently, by enhancing brand image the intention of consumers of brand to purchase a brand is sustained thereby sustaining the survival of brand (Zhou, 2024). Looking at this within the context of social identity theory, by undertaking marketing campaigns, consumers of brand may sustain their positive intentions to continue purchasing the brand. Likewise, looking at this argument from the perspective of Affective commitment theory, arguably the theory explains the position that customers may continue sustaining their positive intentions to purchase a brand as the brand undergoes marketing campaigns.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The purpose of this study is to see if brand image can mediate the relationship between brand rejuvenation and consumer purchase intention. According to the empirical evidences reviewed, the rebranding, product innovation and marketing campaign dimensions of brand rejuvenation positively affect brand image. More so, brand image plays significant role on consumer purchase intention. Hence the study proposes a conceptual model and hypotheses, which need to be empirically validated. Based on the findings from the literature review, it is recommended that companies focus on a holistic approach to brand rejuvenation by simultaneously investing in product innovation, rebranding, and comprehensive marketing campaigns. Firms should undertake:

1. Product Innovation: Continuously innovate their product offerings to meet changing consumer preferences and technological advancements. This can enhance the perceived value and relevance of the brand.
2. Rebranding: Engage in strategic rebranding efforts to refresh the brand’s identity and ensure it remains aligned with the evolving market trends and consumer expectations.
3. Marketing Campaigns: Implement targeted marketing campaigns that effectively communicate the brand’s rejuvenation efforts, thereby enhancing consumer awareness and fostering positive brand associations.

Additionally, companies should monitor and measure the impact of these strategies on brand image to ensure they are effectively driving consumer purchase intentions.

Future Studies Direction

Future research should explore the following areas to deepen the understanding of the mediating role of brand image in the relationship between brand rejuvenation and consumer purchase intention:

1. Quantitative Validation: Empirically test the proposed conceptual framework and hypotheses using quantitative methods to validate the mediating role of brand image.
2. Contextual Factors: Examine how contextual factors such as industry type, market maturity, and cultural differences influence the effectiveness of brand rejuvenation strategies and their impact on brand image and purchase intention.
3. Longitudinal Studies: Conduct longitudinal studies to assess the long-term effects of brand rejuvenation efforts on brand image and consumer purchase intention, providing insights into the sustainability of these strategies.
4. Consumer Segmentation: Investigate how different consumer segments respond to brand rejuvenation efforts, allowing for more targeted and effective marketing strategies.
5. Integration of Digital Channels: Explore the role of digital marketing and social media in enhancing brand rejuvenation efforts and their impact on brand image and consumer purchase intentions.

By addressing these areas, future research can provide more comprehensive insights and practical recommendations for businesses seeking to leverage brand rejuvenation to enhance their brand image and drive consumer purchase intentions.

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