

Chapter 11

Consumer Decision Making From a Beloved Brand: The Aspirin Case

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to understand the main determinants that influence consumer decision-making processes applied to the purchase of the brand Aspirin. For this, a set of explanatory variables was considered that not only translated the general health habits of the population but also two variables that measure the establishment of a strong emotional relationship with the brand: self-brand engagement and brand love. The authors used a survey to collect the data, and in their treatment, they applied a factorial analysis and a logistic regression to explain consumer behavior. Emotional factors (self-brand engagement and brand love) are the most important factors in the consumer decision-making process of the Aspirin brand. The multifaceted black box of the consumer is also observed in the scope of over-the-counter (OTC) drugs, which is the case of Aspirin. Marketers, health professionals, and public policymakers face a new challenge alongside the patient's health.

1. INTRODUCTION

The paradigm of consumer brand relationship has generated a wide academic interest, namely regarding the understanding of the various relational behaviours of consumers with the brands (Fornier, 1998; Fetscherin & Heirich, 2014; Novak & Hoffam, 2019; Veloutsou, 2007; Veloutsou & Moutinho, 2009).

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The seminal work of Fournier (1998) considers that the diversity of consumer relationships with brands can be conceptualized in a number of ways, including according to the functional and/or symbolic benefits of product/brands. The value of the functionality-based relationship considers the brand's functional role, associated with the objective benefits and inherent characteristics of brand attributes (Hwang & Kandampully, 2012; Fernandes & Moreira, 2019; Keller, 2012).

The concept of consumer brand relationship is still subject to much discussion (Dessart, Veloutsou & Morgan-Thomas, 2016; Dwivedi, 2015; Gambetti & Graffigna, 2010; Schultz, 2013; Vivek et al., 2012). In addition, consumer brand relationship nomological linkages are still underdeveloped and studies remain largely conceptual, which can create empirical opportunities to examine key relationships that have management implications (Brodie et al., 2011).

Consumer brand engagement always denotes an interaction between consumers and brands. Also, following the work of Fournier (1998) it is widely recognized that brands and consumers interact in partnership in a variety of ways. And this existing consumer brand engagement interaction is recognized by many academic authors, such as, Hollebeek et al. (2014) and Vivek et al. (2012). Thus, it can be considered that functional brands also cause interaction between consumers, leading to a strong relationship between consumers and brands, especially if there is a long time brand usage duration.

In current literature on brand love, the concept of brand love is often used as a holistic term and used for different studies (Bauer, Heinrich & Martin, 2004; Patwardhan & Balasubramanian, 2011). All of these studies make an important contribution to the understanding of the brand love conceptualization and dimensionality, but unfortunately do not warrant discussion of the appropriate relationship theory behind the construct (Fetscherin, 2014).

This is important given that the relationship is part of the consumer-brand relationship equation (Fournier, 2009) and explains the emotional connection consumers have with brands. Thus, the equation consists of three parts: the consumers, the brand, and the relationship between them.

Brand love has become a major research topic because functional differentiation across close brands and building and reinforcing emotional links between consumers and brands are becoming increasingly crucial for business management (Grissafe & Nguyen, 2011; Rodrigues & Rodrigues, 2019).

With this research, we intend to analyse what are the explanatory factors of the consumption of a functional health brand. We evaluate the Aspirin case as a brand and it was not distinguished from the existence of generic medication. The medication, as known as acetylsalicylic acid, was called for the first time Aspirin by the pharmaceutical multinational company, Bayer, in the end of the 19th century, and sold it around the word (Mann & Plummer, 1991). The Aspirin was Bayer's brand name, but the company has been selling or losing rights in several countries. In this moment, the acetylsalicylic acid is included in the list of essential medicine of the World Health Organization (WHO) as the safest and most effective medicines needed in a health system (WHO, 2019). In this paper, we evaluate the explanatory factors of the Aspirin as a brand independently of the company that market it. For this, a set of explanatory variables was considered, that not only translated the general health habits of the population but also two variables that measure the establishment of a strong emotional relationship with the brand: self-brand engagement and brand love, thus fulfilling a gap in the academic literature that little attention has attracted regarding this aspect of the consumer brand relationship.

This research contributes to the scientific advance in the brand area. There is still little empirical research on beloved brands in the pharmaceutical sector. The pharmaceutical industry is known for spending billions of dollars in marketing and advertising prescription medicines and over-the-counter (OTC) drugs. The main factor that differentiates the OTC drugs is that they do not need a doctor's prescription

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