THE EFFECT OF VALUE NETWORK INTEGRATION ON EVALUATIONS

OF MODERN, CLASSIC AND RETRO BRANDS

By

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THE EFFECT OF VALUE NETWORK INTEGRATION

ON EVALUATIONS OF MODERN, CLASSIC

AND RETRO BRANDS

Abstract

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This dissertation fills an important gap in the consumer value and brand literature by demonstrating that value network integration (defined as the perceived overlap between two value networks—modernism and conventionalism) might have important effects on consumers' evaluations of modern, classic and retro brands. In essence, it is an investigation into how consumers respond to different styles of brands (modern, classic and retro) depending on their value network integration (VNI) levels.

Bringing together various streams of relevant research and highlighting gaps in the literature, the first essay presents a theoretical framework for studying modern, classic and retro brands and outlines future directions for consumer researchers. In particular, drawing from the modernization, brand and value literature, this paper discusses the role of an individual difference variable (VNI) as well as situational variables (environmental cues and regulatory focus) in explaining variations in evaluations of modern, classic and retro brands. Second essay is an empirical test of the proposed framework. More specifically, it shows that when low VNI

consumers are exposed to modernism and conventionalism cues, they react to these cues and act in a cue-incongruent way. In contrast, high VNI consumers assimilate to these cues and act in a cue-congruent way. The interaction effect between level of VNI and environmental cues determines the consumer's choice of classic or modern brands. Drawing from identity fragmentation literature, this essay also proposes that the level of VNI affects evaluations of retro brands: High VNI consumers rate retro brands more positively than do low VNI consumers. Moreover, the type of regulatory focus also influences such evaluations: While a focus on promotion results in more favorable evaluations of retro brands by consumers, a focus on prevention leads to less favorable evaluations of retro brands. This effect is explained by the cognitive mechanism underlying regulatory focus. The contribution of this research to consumer value theory and brand research is discussed and possible managerial implications for market segmentation, product positioning and ad framing are suggested.

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To my family, for their endless encouragement…

Ve tekrar teşekkürler Erdem'ciğim, desteğin, yardımların ve en önemlisi de sabrın için…

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

In their daily lives, consumers are bombarded with various marketing messages. Those messages variously aim to appeal to the consumer's sense of what is new and modern (modernism) and what is traditional or conventional (conventionalism). While some messages target conventional values (for example, Coca-Cola's ads that focus on regional traditions such as festivals and holidays), others focus more on modern values (for example, ads by Apple Computers that focus on their computers' efficiency, sleek design, and speed). Yet other brands seek to combine these elements in a retro style. Ads for the Volkswagen Beetle are a good example. Combining both classical and modern elements, Volkswagen ads tout its cars' advanced automotive features, which are packed into a car that bears the conventional look and design of its models from the 60s. By doing so, Beetle positions itself as an exclusive brand.

As a majority of brand choice decisions are made inside the store and consumers purchase what is available (Inman, Winer and Ferraro 2009), it is essential for marketers to understand what modern, classic and retro brands mean to consumers and more importantly, examine the factors that might explain the variations in consumer evaluations of such brands. Drawing from frame switching theory, brand and value research as well as literature on modernism, this dissertation explores how consumers respond to these different styles of brands (modern, classic and retro) based on environmental cues that are easily manipulated by marketers (e.g., via ad design and framing) and the degree of amalgamation of modern and conventional values (value network integration).

Research in the domain of frame switching (e.g., Cheng, Lee and Benet-Martinez 2006) has shown that contradictory frames (e.g., Chinese identity as being interdependent versus American identity being independent) can be integrated and that the degree of integration impacts individuals' reactions to environmental cues and subsequent behaviors. In a similar vein, acculturation studies and biculturalism theories (e.g., Briley, Morris and Simonson 2005), identity compartmentalization (Firat and Venkatesh 2005) and post-modern approaches (Ahuvia 2005; Belk 1988) recognize that individuals may hold multiple identities and consciously or unconsciously go back and forth between them. Consistent with these perspectives, this dissertation suggests that consumers possess values of both conventionalism and modernism and that it is the context that determines which value has most weight in a given situation, and therefore, most influence over consumers' behaviors and choices.

In the current studies, I explore the relationship between the level of value network integration (VNI), defined as the perceived overlap between two value networks (modernism and conventionalism), and how consumers evaluate modern, classic and retro brands. The set of studies presented here offers a unique theoretical contribution to consumer value and brand literatures by advancing an understanding of the process of, and the factors related to, consumers' decision-making.

RESEARCH CONTEXT AND AGENDA

As described earlier in this chapter, the key aim of this dissertation is to discover and explicate the role of value network integration (VNI) in understanding consumer behavior. I present two papers, one conceptual (Essay One), the other empirical (Essay Two).

Essay One (Chapter Two) lays the conceptual foundation by reviewing value, identity fragmentation, modernization and brand literatures, highlighting gaps in the research, and finally suggesting a theoretical framework with specific propositions for consumer researchers. Specifically in this essay, there will be discussion of potential individual as well as situational variables in explaining variations in consumers' evaluations of modern, classic and retro brands. In addition, reviewing earlier work provides the opportunity to discuss future research directions. This chapter also introduces the key constructs used throughout the remainder of the dissertation.

Essay Two (Chapter Three) examines the interaction effect of value network integration (VNI), which is the perceived overlap between value networks of modernism and conventionalism, and the presence of environmental cues that influence consumers' choice of modern or classic brands. In particular, it is predicted that high VNI consumers will assimilate easily to environmental cues, and thus make their choices depending on the prevalence and types of cues offered (modern or conventional), and that low VNI consumers will react to the cues, and thus, when exposed to cues of conventionalism or modernism, they will prefer the style opposite to the cues provided (i.e., when exposed to conventional cues, they will choose the modern brand, and vice versa).

Essay Two not only explores two brand types at either end of the modern/classic continuum, but also investigates retro brands, which combine both modern and classic elements. This essay strives to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the impact of value network integration on evaluations of retro brands? Put another way, to what degree does the incorporation of modernism and conventionalism influence consumers' evaluations of retro brands, which combine seemingly opposite values?

2. Do certain types of regulatory focus (specifically, prevention and promotion focus) impact consumer evaluations of retro brands?

An answer to the first question is of both theoretical and practical importance. It will allow a better understanding of the relationship between VNI and retro brand evaluations, and therefore it will allow for more effective marketing to high VNI consumers, those who embrace both modern and conventional values. Specifically, the anticipation is that the level of VNI will influence both consumers' evaluations of retro brands: High VNI consumers will evaluate retro brands more positively than do low VNI consumers.

As will be discussed thoroughly in Essay Two, consumers react differently to promotion and prevention foci. Therefore, it can also be assumed that consumers' retro brand evaluations may change depending on the priming condition (prevention and promotion focus). Particularly, Essay Two will seek to demonstrate that the type of regulatory focus may affect consumers' evaluation of retro brands. A promotion focus compared with a prevention focus leads to more favorable retro brand evaluations, due to the elaboration mechanism fundamental to such foci. The answer to the second question is significant as it has both obvious theoretical and managerial implications. By showing that a situational variable can be manipulated to modify consumers' evaluations towards retro brands, I hope to contribute to brand literature and provide managers with specific guidelines on effectively positioning and marketing their retro products.

Essay Two includes a series of pre-tests and experiments that will be supplemented by an additional test conducted with a panel of North American consumers. These added studies are expected to validate the previous experiments externally and discover possible contingency factors (e.g., demographic variables) in the proposed framework.

My hope is that this dissertation will substantially augment and enrich our understanding of the impact of values both in consumer behavior and brand research.

ORGANIZATION OF THE DISSERTATION

To achieve the aforementioned research objectives, Chapter Two (Essay One) provides an overview of research on consumer values, modernization approaches, identity integration and brand literatures to identify gaps in the literature that have inspired this dissertation. This is the conceptual essay that provides consumer researchers with intriguing future avenues for research. Chapter Three (Essay Two) brings together research on frame switching, values, modernization and brands, and offers predictions for high versus low value network integration (VNI) consumers. This chapter includes a series of pre-tests along with three major studies, two conducted among students and the other using a consumer panel. These studies empirically test the role of value network integration in consumers' evaluations of modern, classic and retro brands. A priming paradigm drawn from identity integration literature is employed to test the boundary conditions of this model. The methods section includes a complete description of the data collection process and the research methods presented with a full discussion on results.

Chapter Four discusses the major findings of Essays One and Two, tying them to theoretical and managerial implications.

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CHAPTER TWO

ESSAY ONE:

ON THE CONSUMPTION OF MODERN, CLASSIC AND RETRO BRANDS: THE VALUE NETWORK INTEGRATION PERSPECTIVE

ABSTRACT

This conceptual piece examines consumer values as they impact evaluations of different types of brands, namely classic, modern and retro brands. Following a brief review of the literature is a section on the nature of values, focusing on dynamism (i.e., consumers shifting from one value to another) and multiplicity (i.e., consumers holding seemingly opposite values). Next is a discussion on integration of values in the context of modernism and conventionalism. An examination of current definitions of modern, classic and retro brands allows comparison among the three styles, with the purpose of understanding how consumers may respond to them. The objective of this paper is to underscore the gaps in the literature, develop a conceptual framework and propose future research directions. Specifically, value network integration, the degree of amalgamation of modern and conventional values, is a potential individual difference variable that may be useful in examining consumer evaluations of modern, classic and retro offerings. Possible contingency factors (e.g., priming through situational cues and regulatory focus) in examining such brands are suggested. The essay closes with a discussion of managerial and theoretical implications of the proposed framework.

INTRODUCTION

Several years ago, Golf GTI aired a commercial with the slogan "the original, updated." The ad featured Gene Kelly performing modern dance moves in the most famous scene from the classic movie, *Singing in the Rain*. Singing and playing with the rain as he travels up the street, Kelly dances up to a Golf GTI.

Through computer generated imagery, this commercial achieved a nearly perfect melding of modern and conventional elements, making the ad one of the most memorable in recent memory. Although the ad was effective, consumer reaction was mixed. People found the ad both "cool" and disturbing. While the retro themes were appealing to most, some consumers found the ad's elements irreconcilable, and were uneasy about the way in which conventional elements were employed to market something commercial, something modern. Other individuals were more comfortable with the commercial's juxtaposition of opposites.

In their daily lives consumers often come into contact with such conflicting and sometimes opposing themes. The ad for Golf GTI serves as an example of how classic themes (Gene Kelly, *Singing in the Rain*, etc.) are often employed in a commercial to market something new and modern, in this case an automobile with features such as engine power, an ingenious twin-clutch system, and more. Bringing back images or themes from the past, marketers of such products seem to promise to take consumers back to the good old days when life was better (Sullivan 2009). Perhaps this is the very reason why more of these offerings appear during troubled times such as financial crises and social transformations (Guffey 2006).

Such brands that are reproductions of once popular offerings are often referred to as retro brands (Brown, Sherry and Kozinets 2003). Whereas retro brands bring together classic and modern elements, classic and modern brands focus on their respective aspects. Classic brands

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aim for conventional values (such as the Coca-Cola ads that focus on regional traditions such as festivals and holidays) and signify traditions and linkages to the past. Modern brands, on the other hand, focus on modern values (such as the ads for Apple Computers that focus on their products' efficiency, sleek design, and speed) and position themselves as contemporary.

As strong brands are built on strong brand meanings, it is extremely important to explore how, why and when a brand's meaning come to matter in consumer behavior (Holt 2004). Current research offers clear definitions of modern, classic and retro brands, and compares and contrasts them in order to understand how consumers respond to these different styles. This work adds to that literature by providing consumer researchers with a testable theoretical framework that draws attention to both situational (contextual signals and regulatory focus) and individual (value network integration) factors to explain differences in consumer perceptions of such brands. Overall, by suggesting a series of propositions, this essay issues a call for further study of the relationship between the amalgamation of modern and conventional values (VNI) and contingency factors in examining consumer preferences for modern, classic and retro brands.

MODERN, CLASSIC AND RETRO BRANDS

Why consumers gravitate toward certain brands has been a fundamental area of concern for marketing scholars and practitioners. It has been well-established in the literature that brands carry and communicate symbolic meanings (Aaker 1997; Batey 2008) and that the meaning embedded in brands may represent human values and beliefs (Aaker et al. 2001). Consumers look for a match between their own value and brand values when making purchasing decisions (Gutman 1982; Fournier 1998).

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Although the literature on brand personality (Aaker 1997; Aaker et al. 2001) accounts for the role of brands as carriers of meanings, it does not clearly discuss the different meanings that "classic" and "modern" brands convey to consumers. Further, retro brands have received limited attention in the marketing literature. To date, only a few studies have explicitly addressed this phenomenon (e.g., Arnould and Thompson 2005; Brown, Sherry and Kozinets 2003; Leigh, Peters and Shelton 2006). Although retro brands offer intriguing research avenues for researchers, this stream of research is still in its theoretical infancy (Arnould and Thompson 2005). Prior literature has not systematically analyzed consumer evaluations of modern, classic and retro brands or used consistent terminology for uncovering the nature of these types. The chief contribution of the current work is to clearly compare and contrast these brand styles and offer possible explanations for the observed variations in consumer evaluations of such brands.

Modern and Classic Brands

In order to reach consumers who have a case of information overload, companies strive to attract attention by offering novel designs with their products and promotions, in the process eliciting positive attitudes and eventually inspiring and motivating consumers to try their offerings. A common technique is to focus on classic themes and images and thereby to position the service or product as a traditional, moderate, established and long-honored brand. Companies such as Macy's and Coca-cola often utilize this method. Emphasizing their products' strong links to the past, these companies imply that they have been around for a long time and that their products are part of the culture.

In contrast, other companies position their products and services as novel or modern, and center design and promotion on themes such as speed, efficiency and sleek appearance. These companies generally offer consumers a design that can fulfill the requirements of the busy urban

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lifestyles. The clothing brand Abercrombie and Fitch as well as the beverage company Jones

sodas seem to fall under this category. With their focus on being an alternative, they try to set

themselves apart from the old, the boring and the conventional. They offer instead the new, the

exciting and the modern. One may argue that a classic brand, too, must change and adapt to

modern lifestyles if it is to survive in today's marketplace, and whether that makes it a modern or

a classic brand is also open to question. While packaging, labels, and distribution methods of

classic brands naturally evolve as a response to ever-changing market conditions, however, the

content of classic brands remains the same. Classic brands want to be seen as part of tradition

and they are therefore resistant to change their essence (Thompson, Pollio and Locander 1994).

In contrast, modern brands foster the image of being new and contemporary. They situate

themselves as opposite to everything that consumers might see as old, ordinary or traditional.

They aim to be seen as open to change, independent, forward-looking and dynamic (De

Chernatony and Cottam 2006). The disparity in feel, look and image keeps modern and classic

brands apart.

While classic brands are defined as traditional and long-honored brands reflecting

conventional values, modern brands are defined as contemporary and forward-looking mirroring

modern values. Between these two styles is a third style that blends certain elements of the

modern and the conventional in branding. These brands have been labeled "retro" by previous

researchers (e.g., Brown, Sherry and Kozinets 2003) as well as by popular media.

Retro Brands

> The western world is engaged in a massive process of rewinding, replaying, reviewing
> and re-presenting the long march of history in order to salve our collective consciences
> concerning the complete mess we made of the century just past (Baudrillard 1994, 26).

> Retro brands are popular today as never before (Franklin 2002; Naughton and Vlasic

1998; Wansink 1997). With the future of the economy remaining uncertain and perilous and

with consumers continuing to face hard times, they tend to look at the past through rose-colored glasses, finding solace in reminders of better times. Economic turmoil and transformation seem to spur more and more brand revivals or retro brands, especially in hedonistic product categories such as confectionery, snacks, drinks and comfort foods. Guffey (2006) suggests that retro is a mechanism to slow down the rate of transformation in contemporary culture. Marketing that features retro themes and images seeks to banish from consumers' consciousness whatever crises—whether financial or social—they face in their daily lives. According to this theory, by looking back, retro brands enable individuals to move forward.

In this paper, a retro brand is defined as an authentic reproduction of a past brand that blends modern and updated features and classic and traditional elements. This branding technique is associated with invented traditions, brand revival (Brown, Sherry and Kozinets 2003; Leigh, Peters and Shelton 2006; Beverland and Luxton 2005), a harmony of past and present (Brown 1995, 1999, 2001) and repackaging nostalgic visions (Thompson and Arsel 2004).

The Golf GTI commercial that features Gene Kelly performing modern dance moves in that famous scene from Singing in the Rain is a perfect example of a retro design in ads. Brands such as Moxie or Nesbitt's Orange Soda, Dickies clothing, Bazooka bubblegum, VW Beetle and Mini Cooper automobiles, Necco Wafers and Willy Wanka candy are all regarded as retro brands. Another example is the TAG Heuer watch, which looks like the 1930s original but now features a solar-powered microchip in place of what was once a mechanical escapement. The reproduction Bush transistor radio still has the tuning dial of its 1950s progenitor, but the station settings are modern and a socket for headphones is provided (Brown 2001). These offerings are come-backs and born-again brands.

It must be noted, however, that retro brands stick to their essential identity even though they are complete remakes of historical brands. In that sense, retro brands are different from classic brands. In a qualitative study Pimentel and Reynolds (2004) classify Coca-Cola and Levi's brands as traditional and classic. These brands evolve and pass from generation to generation, evoking a sense of continuity that ties us to their past and shows their "staying power." Unlike retro styles, however, they are not offered as *remakes* of historic brands. Rather than emphasizing continuity, as do classic brands, "retro implicitly ruptures us from what came before" (Guffey 2006, 28). It is that rupture that distinguishes a retro brand from a classic brand.

In sum, existing theoretical accounts suggest that modern brands are forward-looking and dynamic in comparison to classic brands, which are long-honored and traditional. While classic brands signify stability, retro brands imply a break with the past at the same time as they re-make old offerings.

TOWARD A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

How do consumers react to modern, classic and retro brands and images? How can the variations in evaluations of such brands be explained? What are the individual variables and situational cues that might be controlled by marketing managers in responding to such variations? Despite evidence that consumer values (Aaker 1997; Belk 1988; Gutman 1982; McGuire 1976), situational cues (Hong, Morris, Chiu and Benet-Martinez 2000; Luna, Ringberg and Peracchio 2008) and consumers' salient identities (Aaker 1999; Kirmani 2009; Oyserman 2009; Reed 2004) affect behavior and brand preferences, researchers know little about the nature of the variations in evaluations of classic, modern and retro brands and the factors that affect

such differences. It is, therefore, the objective of this paper to develop a conceptual framework to study these differences in evaluations and to propose future research directions.

This section briefly reviews the key variables, namely consumer values emphasizing dynamism (i.e., consumers shifting from one value to another) and multiplicity (i.e., consumers holding seemingly opposite values), value network integration (VNI), modernism and conventionalism. This theoretical discussion serves as the basis for the model and propositions arising from it.

Nature of Values

As early as the 70s, consumer researchers recognized the need to study values as key constructs in understanding consumption decisions (e.g., McGuire 1976). Hence, values have been heavily studied in brand research (Aaker 1997; Aaker et al. 2001; Batey 2008), choice evaluations (Allen, Gupta and Monnier 2008), new product adoption contexts (Wang, Dou and Zhou 2008), cause-related marketing (Bigne-Alcaniz, Curras-Perez and Sanchez-Garcia 2009), managerial practices (Smith, Peterson and Schwartz 2002), involvement in co-production of products (Etgar 2008) and managerial strategy studies (Sousa and Bradley 2006). In marketing and consumer behavior research, values are generally seen as goal-directed cognitive structures that shape behavior across consumer domains and contexts. The consensus of this research is that values influence decisions of both consumers and managers (Schwartz 1992, 1994, 2007; Schwartz and Bardi 2001). In a consumption context, for instance, while consumers may have a positive or a negative attitude toward Brand X, their general disposition toward what the brand represents (e.g., power, security, achievement, etc.) transcends the influence of the specific context (Rokeach 1973; Davidov, Schmidt and Schwartz 2008).   In that sense, a consumer who is given a choice between two brands may prefer, ceteris paribus, the brand that is most

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congruent with deeply held values (e.g., an achievement oriented individual will choose a brand that represents success and victory) (Schwartz 1992; Smith, Peterson and Schwartz 2002).

Multiplicity and the dynamic nature of values. As discussed above, values have generally been recognized as having specific and enduring traits (Rokeach 1973). More recent research in the study of values, however, has shown that individuals possess a variety of values, some of which may be conflicting (Pouliasi and Verkuyten 2007; Verkuyten and Pouliasi 2006), and that the context of the choice at hand may determine which value one emphasizes (Feather 1995; Verplanken and Holland 2002). When a situation requires a choice between two conflicting values, individuals may go back and forth between them (Fries et al. 2005; Howes and Gifford 2009; Sverdlik and Oreg 2009). Within this framework, it is postulated that values may be multiple (referring to the possibility that two opposite values can be held simultaneously) and dynamic, as it is possible to switch from one value to another.

Value network integration. Following the work of these researchers, I suggest that there are individual differences in consumers' level of integration of two conflicting values or in some cases value networks that are interconnected human values (Owen-Smith and Powell 2004). Value network integration (VNI)—the degree to which two seemingly opposite value networks are psychologically incorporated—has important consequences on attitudes, perceptions and behavioral intentions (Benet-Martinez, Lee and Leu 2006; Cheng, Lee and Benet-Martinez 2006). High VNI individuals hold both values together and feel that both can co-exist. For such individuals, there is nearly a complete overlap between those seemingly opposite structures. They are comfortable using either, depending on what the context dictates. In contrast, low VNI

individuals perceive these two value networks as disconnected. For low VNI individuals, those two values are disparate structures that are irreconcilable (Stapel and Blanton 2004; Stapel and Koomen 2001). This view acknowledges that these dissimilar structures exist side by side (Giddens 1991) and that identities are fragmented (Ahuvia 2005), but maintains that, while some individuals can reconcile separate, even contradictory identities, many others constantly struggle keeping these multiple frames detached (Ahuvia 2005).

This phenomenon has been studied in relation to cultural frame switching and biculturalism (Benet-Martinez, Lee and Leu 2006; Cheng, Lee and Benet-Martinez 2006; Lau-Gesk 2003; Luna, Ringberg and Peracchio 2008; Mok and Morris 2009; Zou, Morris and Benet-Martinez 2008), personality changes (Ramírez-Esparza, Gosling, Benet-Martínez, Potter and Pennebaker 2006), work-gender interactions (Sacharin, Lee and Gonzalez 2009), incorporation of well being and achievement values (Fries et al.2005) and value conflicts on environmental issues (Howes and Gifford 2009). In this paper, value network integration is studied in the context of modernism and conventionalism networks, which provides a fertile ground for research both because of its obvious utility in predicting consumer behavior and making marketing decisions (especially for modern, classic and retro brands) and its theoretical significance (on brand and consumer value research).

Modernism and Conventionalism as Value Networks

This section presents a discussion of two paradigms, one that holds modernism and conventionalism as two opposite and irreconcilable values (e.g., Inkeles and Smith 1970, 1974) and the other, more contemporary in outlook, that sees the possibility of holding two contradictory values together (e.g., Giddens 1991).

Modernism and conventionalism as separate value networks. The literature on

modernism treats individual modernity as a combination of values (Inkeles 1969, 1977, 1983;

Inkeles and Smith 1970, 1974). According to the modernization project led by Inkeles and

colleagues, there are psychosocial attributes that distinguish the modern from the non-modern

individual. In this literature, modernity is viewed as a multifaceted concept, "a syndrome, a

complex form of qualities rather than a single trait" (Inkeles and Smith 1974, 17). Capitalism

and imperialism may export brands and modern living styles but cannot export individual

modernity. Modernity thus signifies "an inner readiness rather than specific skills a group may

possess because of the technology attained" (Inkeles 1983, 37). Since modernity mirrors a set of

interconnected human values, referred to as a value network (Owen-Smith and Powell 2004), it

is possible for individuals living in the same society to possess modernity at different levels.

While individuals who are high on modernism are likely to be independent, open to change

(Inglehart and Baker 2000), rational, individualistic, materialistic and future-oriented (Hwang

2003; Inglehart 1997; Inglehart and Carballo 1997; Ray 1997), those low on modernism tend to

be more conforming as well as traditional. Compared with moderns, non-moderns are less

materialistic. They also tend to be past-oriented, religious and group-oriented (Triandis 1989).

In this paper, non-modern individuals are referred to as "conventional." Conventionalism is a

value network marked by excessive concern with, and inflexible observance of, social customs

and traditions. It also reflects adherence to established norms and accepted values (American

Psychological Association 2007). In that sense, conventionalism is broader than traditionalism.

Whereas traditionalism is the propensity to adhere to political, religious and cultural traditions,

conventionalism also includes general obedience to standards of behavior. Thus, conventionals

not only abide by the ethics of traditionalism, but also conform to their religion's teachings as well as practicing the ethic of frugality (Ray 1997).

Seen in this light, conventionalism and modernism are two opposed value networks, polar opposites (Clifford 1971; Kluckhohn 1968; Maercker 2001, 2004). The logic of this view is that some people are modern, while others are conventional. (See Table 2.1 for the descriptors of modernism and conventionalism).

<div align="center">

TABLE 2.1

DESCRIPTORS OF MODERN AND CONVENTIONAL INDIVIDUALS

</div>

Modern individual	Open to change	Independent
	Rational	Individualistic
	Future time-oriented	Materialistic
	Secular	
Conventional individual	Past time-oriented	Frugal
	Obedient	Religious
	Traditional	Moderate
	Group-oriented	

I turn now to an alternative paradigm which suggests that the boundary between modernism and conventionalism is neither fixed nor clear, as it has often been portrayed by past scholars. Furthermore, there are individuals who may identify with both networks, and that therefore, perhaps it is their level of integration between competing value networks rather than the degree of their endorsement of either value network that impacts attitude and behavior.

Embracing modernism and conventionalism. This second approach postulates that modernity may live alongside many orientations that might be considered as conventional (Inglehart and Baker 2000*)*. Traditions, still prevalent in modern forms, interact with one another to form a hybrid structure. In his famous work on modernity, Giddens (1991) describes modernity as a massive, unstoppable and inexorable force. However, although powerful, modernism does not necessarily replace established systems. This perspective rejects the idea of simple distinctions between conventionalism and modernism (Ritzer 1997) and accepts that consumers constantly find themselves in situations involving conflicting scenarios (Ahuvia 2005; Firat and Venkatesh 1995). Modern themes of contemporariness, consumerism, materialism, efficiency and effectiveness live side by side with family, history, loyalty, time honored legends, respect for the past, customs and conventions. According to this second approach, identities are fragmented and it is possible for individuals to hold opposing values (Ahuvia 2005; Belk 1988; Myerson et al. 2010). Moreover, empirical findings in the literature on frame switching imply that it may be possible to integrate seemingly contradictory value networks at different levels (e.g., Hong et al. 2000). Following that logic, I argue that there are individual differences in consumers' level of integration of modernism and conventionalism (VNI) that have important consequences for consumer behavior. High VNI individuals hold modernity and conventional values together and feel that both can co-exist (For example, high VNIs identify with the statement "I can easily combine conventionalism and modernism."). Such individuals are comfortable using either, depending on the context. On the contrary, low VNI individuals perceive these two networks as disengaged (Low VNIs identify with the statement "I believe that modernism and conventionalism are distant.").

Although values comprise important aspects of our self identity and often guide behaviors, we are not always aware of them (Verplanken and Holland 2002). It has been shown that priming values (for a detailed review on activation through priming, see Sela and Shiv 2009) enhances individuals' attention to a specific value (Bargh 1997; Freitas, Gollwitzer and Trope 2004; Maio, Olson, Allen and Bernard 2001; Torelli and Kaikati 2009). These findings are useful in explaining the contrast and assimilation effects as discussed below.

Contrast (reactance)-assimilation effects. Assimilation and contrast (reaction) effects refer to activation (or deactivation) of domain specific knowledge, value, frame or identity structures. While assimilation effect refers to behaving in accordance with the signals in the environment, contrast (reaction) effect indicates cue-incongruent activities (Freitas, Gollwitzer and Trope 2004). The notion of these effects is rooted in the assumption that individuals often possess seemingly different and even conflicting values, and therefore that the values applied to any particular decision are reliant on situational signals (Pouliasi and Verkuyten 2007; Verkuyten and Pouliasi 2006) as well as on how well these seemingly conflicting value networks are integrated (e.g., Benet-Martinez, Lee and Leu 2006). Individuals who are high on integration (those who see that both values can easily co-exist) will assimilate to the environmental cues and act in a cue consistent way and those who are low on integration (those who think these two values are irreconcilable) will react to the cues and act in a cue inconsistent way. These effects are ubiquitous when the situation at hand requires a choice between two conflicting values (Fries et al. 2005; Howes and Gifford 2009; Sverdlik and Oreg 2009). For instance, an Asian American consumer who is given a scenario that involves a conflicting choice such as a preference between a brand that emphasizes American values (such as independence)

and a brand that focuses on Asian values (such as interdependence) will look for cues (salient themes related to America or China) in the environment to assist them with this difficult choice. Whether they will act in accordance with the salient cues or not, however, depends on the perceived level of incorporation of American and Chinese values (VNI). Similarly, a choice between a modern versus a classic brand will require a similar process leading consumers with different VNI levels to seek out signals (salient themes related to modernism or conventionalism) to guide their decision making. Again, the subsequent consumer behavior will be a function of the salient cues and individuals' VNI level.

Summary of the literature. Values are central in understanding consumer behavior. They guide consumer preferences such as brand choice (Aaker 1997; Batey 2008; Fournier 1998). Existing theoretical accounts and experimental tests seem to be in agreement on several points. First, values can be integrated. That is to say, it is possible to hold seemingly opposite values (e.g., Verplanken and Holland 2002). Their level of integration, however, is different for each person (e.g., Cheng, Lee and Benet-Martinez 2006). Next, values are dynamic. Depending on the situation, when one value is deactivated, another may be activated. Thus, a person may switch from one value to another as the environment dictates (Cheng, Lee and Benet-Martinez 2006; Verkuyten and Pouliasi 2006). Finally, modernism and conventionalism are networks of values and evidence suggests most individuals hold both of them (e.g., Giddens 1991). For a review of relevant perspectives on this subject, see Table 2.2.

Armed with these definitions, it is now possible to suggest a conceptual framework to study the relationship among VNI, situational factors and consumer perceptions of modern, classic and retro brands.

TABLE 2.2 SUMMARY OF LITERATURE

	Key Points	Main Findings	Selected Work
Consumer Values	Values as Guiding Principles of Attitudes and Behaviors	-Values influence decision outcomes of individuals. -Values are key constructs in understanding consumer behavior and marketing actions.	- Davidov, Schmidt and Schwartz (2008); Rokeach (1973); Schwartz (1992, 1994, 2007); Schwartz and Bardi (2001) - Aaker (1997); Aaker et al. (2001); Allen, Gupta and Monnier (2008); Bigne-Alcaniz, Curras-Perez and Sanchez-Garcia (2009); Fournier (1998); Gutman (1982); McGuire (1976); Wang, Dou and Zhou (2008)
	Multiplicity and Dynamic Nature of Values	- Individuals may integrate conflicting values (multiplicity). -Individuals may shift from one value to another (dynamism).	- Pouliasi and Verkuyten (2007); Verkuyten and Pouliasi (2006) - Benet-Martinez, Lee and Leu (2006); Cheng, Lee and Benet-Martinez (2006); Feather (1995); Fries et al.(2005); Howes and Gifford (2009); Sverdlik and Oreg (2009); Verplanken and Holland (2002)
	Priming Values	-Assimilation effect refers to behaving in line with the prime; contrast (reaction) effect implies prime-incongruent activities.	-Freitas, Gollwitzer and Trope (2004); Maio, Olson, Allen, and Bernard (2001); Torelli and Kaikati (2009)
Two Main Approaches to Modernism	Modernism and Conventionalism as Separate Value Networks	-Modernism and conventionalism represent two polar points.	- Clifford (1971); Hwang (2003); Inkeles (1983); Inkeles and Smith (1974); Kluckhohn (1968); Maercker (2001, 2004); Ray (1997); Triandis (1989)
	Embracing Modernism and Conventionalism	-Individuals simultaneously hold modernism and conventionalism.	- Giddens (1991); Inglehart and Baker (2000); Myerson et. al. (2010); Ritzer (1997)
Modern, Classic and Retro Brands	Modern and Classic Brands	-Modern brands are up to date and forward looking while classic brands are long-honored and traditional. Classic offerings signify continuity.	- De Chernatony and Cottam (2006); Pimentel and Reynolds (2004); Thompson, Polllioand Locander (1994)
	Retro Brands	-Retro brands are come-backs that combine classic and modern elements They signify rupture from the past.	- Arnould and Thompson (2005); Brown (1995, 1999, 2001); Brown, Sherry Jr., and Kozinets (2003); Franklin (2002); Guffey (2006); Leigh, Peters and Shelton (2006); Thompson and Arsel (2004).

PROPOSITIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Propositions on Modern and Classic Brands

It has been shown in the literature that modernism signifies rationality, future time orientation, materialism, independence and open-mindedness, while conventionalism reflects an orientation toward religion, tradition and conformity (Clifford 1971; Inkeles 1969, 1977, 1983; Inkeles and Smith 1974). Research has also shown that it is possible to possess modernism and conventionalism simultaneously (Cheng, Lee and Benet-Martinez 2006; Feather 1995; Verplanken and Holland 2002). Note that both values are part of the self. Individuals recognize that multiple values can contribute to the self but while some see modernism and conventionalism as compartmentalized, others see them as blended. To resolve these conflicts, some individuals form links between the different values acknowledging their overlap. Those individuals feel that these seemingly diversified components contribute positively to the self. However, others may feel that this experience is not a positive one failing to connect values of disparate nature. I argue that the consumer's degree of value integration (VNI) may have important consequences for consumer behavior. While some consumers are high on VNI (that is to say they embrace both modernism and conventionalism and feel comfortable possessing both), others are low on VNI (meaning that they see these two values as irreconcilable). Assimilation hypothesis and frame switching theory (e.g., Benet-Martinez et al. 2002; Benet-Martinez and Haritatos 2005; Cheng, Lee and Benet-Martinez 2006) as well as priming experiments capturing this phenomenon have shown that when exposed to images or themes of one value, high integrative individuals in general exhibit the characteristics of that value on subsequent tasks (Zou, Morris and Benet-Martinez 2008). Therefore, when high VNI consumers see conventional cues such as Christmas trees, Thanksgiving dinners, family get-togethers and other themes

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related to family and traditions, they assimilate to these cues. When, after receiving such cues, they are given a choice such as a preference for a modern brand that signifies modernism values such as contemporariness versus a classic brand that reflects conventional values such as traditions and a continual link to the past (Pimentel and Reynolds 2004), they tend to choose the classic brand. Conversely, modern cues (themes related to speed, advanced technology and efficiency) will trigger consumers' value of modernism yielding a choice of a modern brand. These cues prime consumers, activating both their cognitive networks and their judgment schemas, making them more likely to be influenced in that direction in their subsequent judgments and behaviors (Bargh 1997; Zou, Morris and Benet-Martinez 2008). On the contrary, low VNIs see little or no overlap between modernism and conventionalism. Frame switching theory (e.g., Benet-Martinez et al. 2002) suggests a reverse priming (contrast) effect for such individuals. When exposed to certain cues in the environment, consumers who are low on VNI react to these signals and act in a cue-incongruent way (Stapel and Blanton 2004; Stapel and Koomen 2001). This reaction is explained by the tension caused by the constant struggle to keep these opposite values separate (Cheng, Lee and Benet-Martinez. 2006). Note that the decision context is very important here. The task should require a conflicting scenario (e.g. choice between two opposite items) in order to elicit these effects. The effect of this reaction can be seen in the decisions they make as consumers.

Therefore,

> **P1:** There will be a significant interaction effect between value network integration and situational cues on brand preference. That is, **a)** Individuals who are high on VNI, when exposed to positive cues either of modernity or of conventionalism, are more likely to purchase the brand associated with the particular values to which they have been exposed (Assimilation Effect); **b)** Individuals who are low on VNI, when exposed to positive cues either of modernity or of conventionalism, are more likely to purchase the brand that is *not*

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associated with the particular values to which they have been exposed (Reaction/Contrast Effect).

Summary of the proposed framework. In sum, there are two paradigms, each deriving from different assumptions about values. The first paradigm views values as guides to behavior that override any cues that are specific to the context or situation (e.g., Rokeach 1973). Accordingly, modernism and conventionalism are seen as two separate value networks (e.g., Inkeles and Smith 1974). The alternative paradigm, which I adopt here, maintains that values can be integrated (Pouliasi and Verkuyten 2007), and therefore that modernism and conventionalism live side by side within all individuals (e.g., Giddens 1991). Drawing from frame-switching theory (Benet-Martinez et al. 2002), the level of VNI (the perceived overlap between conventional and modern values) affects brand choice. While low VNIs react to the cues (modernism and conventionalism signals in the environment) and are more likely to choose brands that are not associated with those cues, high VNIs readily assimilate to these cues and are more likely to choose brands based on contextual and situational factors. That, is high VNIs act in cue-consistent ways (Stapel and Blanton 2004; Stapel and Koomen 2001).

Discussion thus far has centered on modern and classic brands. Next is a section on retro brands that blends modern and classic themes.

Propositions on Retro Brands

A retro brand is defined as a reproduction of a past brand that combines classic and modern elements. Such brands evoke the consumer's sense of familiarity and custom, while simultaneously emphasizing uniqueness, newness and exclusivity (Brown, Sherry Jr., and Kozinets 2003). Brown and colleagues (2003) argue that retro brands may ease the tension between modernity and conventionalism; retro brands possess the personality of the old brand

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but at the same time they are up-to-date. Retro images seem to take consumers to a place that is safer, more comprehensible and less commercial than images of modernity (Sullivan 2009).   It has been suggested that, when consumers are yearning for the past, especially during troubled times, retro brands enter the market with a promise to take consumers to the good old days when life was easier and finances more secure (Cohen 2008; Sullivan 2009). While retro brands accentuate the chasm between present and past, that great divide functions as a safety mechanism that protects individuals from modern worries in times of industrial decline and ecological failure (Guffey 2006).

Retro brands simultaneously signify progress, characterized in secular, scientific and future-looking themes, and evoke a sense of loss, characterized by images and themes associated with past times and traditions. Brown and colleagues (2003) draw attention to this inherent paradox and warn marketers that such brands may in effect create tension for some consumers. Combining irreconcilable elements, these brands may suggest an unnatural association, creating a kind of Jekyll-and-Hyde product that has two conflicting personalities simultaneously existing in one body.

It can be argued that in some cases, or for some consumers, retro brands imply an uneasy balance between seemingly opposite elements, creating consumer confusion and even a sense of deception. In other cases, and for other consumers, however, retro brands offer a sense of equilibrium between past and future, convention and modernity, old and new. Although extremely important for both marketing theory and practice, the variables, situational or individual, that may help us comprehend this variation among consumers have not received sufficient scholarly interest. To my knowledge, there is no study that has empirically investigated retro brand evaluations. In the following sections, there will be a discussion of a

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series of variables that might be tested to more fully capture the nature of retro brand evaluations.

The impact of value network integration on evaluations of retro brands. The possibility of integration of seemingly opposite value networks of modernism and conventionalism derives from previous value integration studies (e.g., Cheng, Lee and Benet-Martinez 2006; Pouliasi and Verkuyten 2007; Verkuyten and Pouliasi 2006). High value network integration (VNI) consumers are those who embrace values of both conventionalism and modernism, and low VNIs are those who keep those two networks separate. By definition, retro brands are brands that combine conflicting themes (modern and classic themes). Thus, certain consumers are likely to find the retro concept unacceptable and disturbing. This especially holds for those who see that modernism and conventionalism are irreconcilable. To some, however, retro suggests a harmony of past and present (Brown, Sherry and Kozinets 2003; Leigh, Peters and Shelton 2006; Beverland and Luxton 2005). I argue that those individuals who enjoy retro themes are the ones who are comfortable possessing both modernism and conventionalism. Following that logic, it can be assumed that high VNIs will have more favorable attitudes toward retro brands compared with low VNIs. The perception of retro brands as evoking an equilibrium versus an uneasy balance may therefore be explained by the level of VNI. Thus,

> **P2:** High VNI consumers will have more favorable evaluations of retro brands compared with low VNI consumers.

Next is a discussion of a possible situational factor that may be manipulated by marketers to affect consumers' retro brand evaluations.

The role of regulatory focus in retro brand evaluations. Higgins (1997) posits two different self-regulatory modes that can be temporarily induced through priming: The regulation

of behavior according to ideals (promotion focus), and the regulation of behavior according to responsibilities (prevention focus). These two regulatory foci have different strategic inclinations. The promotion focus emphasizes the pursuit of positive outcomes (i.e., growth, advancement, accomplishment) whereas the prevention focus is related to the avoidance of negative outcomes focusing on safety and security. Thus, with a promotion focus, the strategic inclination is eagerness. With a prevention focus, however, the inclination is vigilance to assure security (Crowe and Higgins 1997). These two types of regulatory focus were shown to affect the way in which individuals process information (Friedman and Forster 2001). That is, while vigilance inclination that is induced by a prevention focus leads to simpler and more concrete information processing, eagerness inclination that is triggered by a promotion focus leads to more abstract thinking and cognitive flexibility, bolstering creativity (Friedman and Forster 2001).

Current work focuses on retro brands that combine opposite elements. Recall Brown and colleagues' (2003) Jekyll-and-Hyde analogy, in which retro brands elicit continuous struggle between themes (modern and classic). As discussed above, consumers' reactions towards such brands differ. While some enjoy this duality, others recognize the constant tension. This suggests that there exist individual differences in consumers' VNI. In addition, drawing from the regulatory focus framework as cogently theorized by Higgins (1997), there is a very strong tool for marketing managers to manipulate communications to affect consumers' evaluations of retro brands. By modifying the message frame of an ad (giving it more of a promotion focus or a prevention focus), marketers may significantly change retro brand evaluations of consumers. While a promotion focus is likely to lead to relational elaboration, emphasizing the links between

contradictory elements, a prevention focus will lead to item specific processing, highlighting the conflicts. Therefore,

> **P3:** Regulatory focus will have a significant main effect on retro brand evaluations, with a promotion focus leading to more favorable retro brand evaluations compared with a prevention focus.

In consumer behavior, Zhu and Meyers-Levy (2007) studied the role of regulatory foci on elaboration of information by manipulating both the regulatory focus of the participants and the thematic ambiguity of the visuals in the ads. In a condition where an ad had low thematic ambiguity, the themes in the ad were meaningfully related to each other and the focal product, whereas in a condition where an ad had high thematic ambiguity, the ad's visuals did not have an obvious relationship with each other. These scholars discovered that individuals who adopt a promotion focus engage in relational elaboration (integrating dissimilar themes), while those who adopt a prevention focus engage in item-specific elaboration (evaluating items in isolation). Hence, promotion focus leads to positive evaluations of disconnected pieces of information in the condition of high thematic ambiguity. Prevention focus individuals, however, were frustrated by the disengaged pieces of information presented in such ads, due to their tendency toward item-specific processing, which emphasizes the gap between themes. In a similar vein, current work focuses on retro brands and suggests a parallel cognitive mechanism.

Figure 2.1 is a visual depiction of the proposed framework. Drawing from the assimilation and contrast hypotheses as well as from the literature that suggests the possibility of value integration, the interactive effect of VNI and situational primes will influence consumers' preferences for modern versus classic brands (P1). In addition, the level of VNI may significantly affect on how retro brands are perceived (P2). Moreover, the type of regulatory focus might have a major impact on retro brand evaluations (P3).

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FIGURE 2.1

THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK
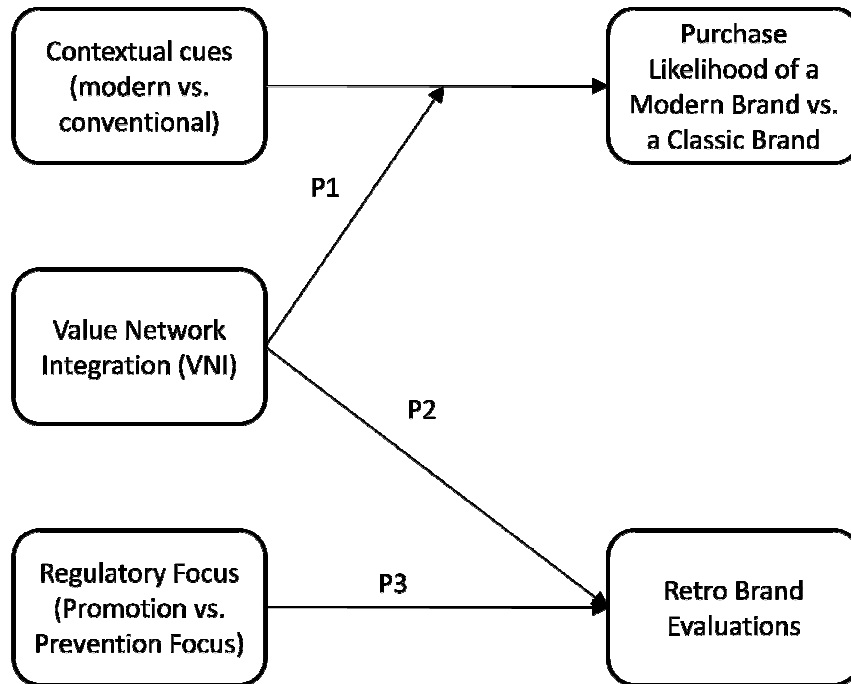
DISCUSSION AND ADDITIONAL DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This paper is a conceptual piece based on research on consumer values, mainly modernism and conventionalism, value network integration and modern, classic and retro brands. Throughout the paper, my aim has been to stimulate scholarly debate on these subjects and suggest several specific propositions that can be empirically tested by consumer researchers. This is a very rich area for scholarly inquiry. Below are some additional areas for future research:

First, there is a need to distinguish between the concepts of nostalgia-proneness and retro-friendliness. Those two terms are far from synonymous. Although both classic and retro images

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may lead to nostalgia, a sense of personal loss and longing for an idealized past (Pickering and Keightley 2006), nostalgia proneness (c.f., Holbrook and Schindler 1989, 1994, 1996) by itself cannot explain "retro-proneness" or "retro-friendliness" (for a broader review of nostalgia in marketing, also see Belk 1991; Harris 2000; Leadbeater 2002; Redhead 2000; Stern 1992). Retro-friendliness is a special case of nostalgia-proneness. Although both classic and retro brands signify experiences from the past, thus include elements of nostalgia, retro implies a combination of past and present, modern and classic. I invite consumer researchers to measure value network integration (which might drive retro-friendliness) as well as nostalgia-proneness to be able to establish discriminant validity between those two terms.

Second, this paper has important consequences for market segmentation. Past surveys show that there are marked differences in people's attitudes towards retro brands. The gay community, for instance, is reputed to be retro-friendly, as are women (Brown 2000). Cohen (2008) notes that smart marketers have already recognized this paradox and successfully exploited it. Marketers have also discovered that for baby boomers and Generation X-ers, resurrected products are sentimental eliciting positive affect. As for young consumers, brands from the past can seem fun (Cohen 2008). If such brands are positioned appropriately, it may open revenue streams. I argue that consumers' retro brand evaluations may be described by value network integration levels. Hence, there is a need to investigate the relation between VNI and key demographic variables such as gender, age, culture, and education. Data from representative samples are necessary to be able to build solid segmentation frameworks.

Third, any identity integration measure (Cheng, Lee and Benet-Martinez 2006) that aims to assess the perceived degree of overlap between two opposite identities should be validated in research focusing specifically on the values of modernism and conventionalism. Although

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modified and applied in several other contexts (e.g., Sacharin, Lee and Gonzalez 2009), identity

integration measures have not been specifically tested within the current framework of

modernism and conventionalism.   Necessary psychometric procedures (EFA, CFA, test-retest

reliability checks) should be undertaken.

Finally, this research (especially if conducted among representative consumers) will

provide managers with specific guidelines for market segmentation and positioning of products.

Moreover, it will present a series of suggestions as to how to manipulate the situational cues

(e.g., advertisements, store design, packaging). An inquiry into the retro brands that are

currently on market is in order. Marketers must be extremely careful about their retro brand

designs and in decisions about positioning their brands as retro, modern or classic. There is a

thin line between looking retro and, as Sullivan puts it, looking "mired in the past, outmoded and

uncool" so marketers should "leverage the best of your past to differentiate your brand in the

present" (Sullivan 2009, 8). Are the current retro brands positioned effectively? Are marketing

messages appropriately targeting the right market segments? Although there are obvious

theoretical differences between retro and classic brands (i.e., retro signifies rupture whereas

classic implies continuity), can such differences be easily distinguished by consumers? How

much differentiation (from the original) is needed for retro brands to be successful? These and

similar questions need to be answered to fully exploit the potential of retro brands.

CONTRIBUTIONS

Testing the proposed framework has both theoretical and practical implications. From a

theoretical perspective, the suggested framework distinguishes modern, classic and retro brands

and suggests that there are individual as well as contextual variables that might shape consumers' perceptions of these brands.   The discussion in this paper centers on the possibility of holding contradictory values (modernism and conventionalism) and the implications for evaluations of different brand styles (modern, classic and retro). Value network integration might have important consequences for how these three styles of brands are evaluated. The interactive effect of situational cues and VNI on modern and classic brand perceptions as well as the influence of VNI combined with regulatory focus on retro brand evaluations provides a starting point for further investigation.

From a managerial perspective, the proposed model suggests possible ways to position various styles of products (modern, classic or retro), given the target market's VNI levels. Moreover, the current framework proposes that the choice of message frame (promotion versus prevention) or theme selection (modern versus conventional) in marketing campaigns might be adjusted depending on the promoted brand type. As most purchasing decisions are made inside the store, the in-store marketing activities (store design, packaging, communications, promotional activities) should be tailored according to the target segment as well as the product at hand. Current framework suggests that identification of high versus low VNI consumers is crucial as high VNIs tend to assimilate to the situational cues whereas low VNIs react to the very same signals. Through product design, ad and commercials, logo and packaging, it is possible to create a modern experience or a conventional experience, affecting consumers' likelihood to purchase a modern versus a classic brand. As low and high VNI consumers react differently to the very same cues, these communication and promotional activities should be tailored according to the needs and wants of high and low VNI consumers. This information is also useful in marketing of retro brands. Theory suggests that high VNI individuals' retro brand evaluations

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are more positive than those of low VNIs. Directing marketing efforts toward high VNIs and developing the retro products to meet the needs of those segments, marketers may ultimately turn high VNI individuals into customers of retro offerings. Moreover, the prediction that promotion focus is a more appropriate communication strategy for retro brand marketing gives managers a powerful instrument to manipulate in order to affect consumer evaluations of such brands.

CONCLUSION

The conceptual framework suggested here is an attempt to conceptually analyze modern, classic and retro brands in an empirical manner and an invitation for consumer researchers to test a series of propositions. The present paper shows not only the importance of external influences (priming via situational cues or regulatory focus) on consumer behavior but also the necessity of considering diversity across consumers (VNI levels). It is my hope that this paper incites scholarly discussion on brands and brand meanings and other possible frameworks and models to study these phenomena of practical and theoretical importance.

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CHAPTER THREE

ESSAY TWO:

THE EFFECT OF VALUE NETWORK INTEGRATION ON THE EVALUATIONS OF MODERN, CLASSIC AND RETRO BRANDS

ABSTRACT

Bringing together modernization approaches, brand literature, frame switching and value theories, this paper presents a framework to study modern, classic and retro brands. A series of focus group studies, interviews, lab experiments and a consumer panel study revealed that evaluations of such brands systematically differ between consumers. This paper shows that environmental cues impact consumers' evaluations of brands as a function of value network integration (VNI), defined as the consumer's perceived degree of overlap between modernism and conventionalism. In other words, this essay demonstrates that consumers shift from one value network to another depending on the contextual signals and that the interactive effect between VNI and situational cues has crucial consequences for brand preference (i.e., likelihood to purchase a modern over a classic brand or vice versa). Moreover, retro brand evaluations of consumers are varied and that variation can be explained by the degree of VNI as well as by a situational prime (regulatory focus) that can easily be manipulated by marketers. Specifically, it was shown that high VNI consumers rate retro brands more favorably than do low VNIs. In addition, a promotion focus leads to more positive retro brand evaluations compared with a prevention focus. These findings contribute to a theoretical understanding of the concept of value network integration and its effect on consumer preferences for modern, classic and retro brand styles, an area of study that has the potential to provide marketing managers with the conceptual as well as practical tools for marketing such brands.

INTRODUCTION

The TAG Heuer Targa Florio watch was released in 2001 as a tribute to the renowned Italian road race, inspired from the Heuer Flieger (Pilot) watches of the 1930s. Despite being a complete revival of the timepiece worn by the F1 world champion Juan-Manuel Fangio, the new generation Targa Florio is loyal to its predecessor in its contemporary feel (see www.calibre11.com/targa-florio). The TAG Heuer watch draws its look from the 30s original, but it has been updated with state of the art technology. This new version offers features such as automatic chronograph movement and water resistance up to 30 meters; instead of a mechanical escapement, there is now a solar-powered microchip (Brown 2001). With its perfect melding of classic and modern elements, the TAG Heuer watch serves as an ideal example of a retro brand that signifies progress characterized by scientific and future-looking themes while bringing about a sense of loss associated with past times (Brown, Sherry and Kozinets 2003).

Retro brands are trendy today as never before (Franklin 2002; Naughton and Vlasic 1998; Wansink 1997). While the future of the economy remains uncertain, consumers seem to appreciate the reminders of better times and to look for icons that help them escape from the rapid transformation and turmoil (Guffey 2006; Sullivan 2009). Alternatively, one of the common techniques that marketers employ is to focus on the classic themes and then to position the service or product as a traditional and established brand. Companies such as Macy's and Coca-Cola utilize that method. Emphasizing their strong connection to the past, they imply that they have been around for a long time and that they are classic. On the other hand, there are companies that position their products and services as modern, by centering on themes such as contemporariness, speed, and efficiency. These products generally offer consumers a design that

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appeals to their busy lifestyles. The clothing brand Abercrombie and Fitch and the beverage company Jones sodas position themselves as modern.

A great deal of research has demonstrated that brands are endowed with certain values and symbolic characteristics and convey meanings beyond their mere attributes and functions (e.g., Aaker 1997; Aaker et al. 2001; Ahuvia 2005; Batey 2008; Belk 1988, 1991; Fournier 1998; Schroeder 2009; Keller 1993; Kirmani 2009). Although past research accounts for the role of brands as carriers of meanings, it does not clearly discuss when, how and why brand meanings affect consumer behavior (Holt 2004) and what exactly "classic" and "modern" brands convey to consumers. Furthermore, retro brands have received scant attention in the marketing literature with a few notable exceptions like Arnould and Thompson (2005), Brown, Sherry and Kozinets (2003) and Leigh, Peters and Shelton (2006). Surprisingly, prior literature has not systematically analyzed consumer evaluations of modern, classic and retro brands, nor has consistent terminology been used for uncovering the nature of these types. The chief contribution of the current work, therefore, is to clearly compare and contrast modern, classic and retro brands, and to offer possible explanations for the observed variations in consumer evaluations of such brands.

The results of three empirical studies that evaluate consumer values associated with modernism and conventionalism are reported and the multiplicity and dynamic nature of such values are explored. Study 1 investigates the role of VNI and situational cues in explaining modern versus classic brand preference. Study 2 explores retro brand evaluations as a function of VNI. Study 2 also takes a closer look at the retro brand evaluations by testing the effect of a situational prime-regulatory focus. Finally, Study 3 conducted among North American

consumers replicates the findings of Study 2 and establishes external validity for the proposed framework.

This essay begins with a literature review on values associated with modernism and conventionalism, focusing particularly on the multiplicity and dynamic nature of such values, in order to develop a conceptual framework to study modern and classic brands. Study 1 tests that model. Then a review of the literature on retro brands is presented followed by a series of suggestions of possible factors that might impact retro brand evaluations. Study 2 and Study 3 test those hypotheses. The paper concludes with a discussion of implications and future research directions.

CONSUMER EVALUATIONS OF MODERN AND CLASSIC BRANDS

A brand is "a term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods or services of a seller and to differentiate them from those of competitors" (De Chernatony and Riley 1997, 90). One of the common techniques to differentiate an offering is to position the product or service as modern, by emphasizing urban themes of speed and efficiency. Offered as alternatives to the old, the boring and the conventional, modern brands appear new, exciting and forward-looking (De Chernatony and Cottam 2006). On the other end of the spectrum, classic brands are positioned as traditional, established and long-honored. Focusing on their strong connections to the past, they suggest permanence and stability. Classic brands imply that they have been around for a long time and are part of the culture (Thompson, Pollio and Locander 1994). That is not to say that classic brands never change; they, too, naturally evolve and adapt to ever-changing market conditions. However, their content remains the same. In this paper, classic brands are defined as traditional and long-honored brands and modern

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brands are defined as contemporary and forward-looking. The chasm between modern and classic brands in feel, look and image is what keeps them apart.

An important question that has received little attention in brand literature refers to contextual as well as individual factors that affect modern versus classic brand preferences. In the present research, it is argued that the interactive effect of situational primes and consumers' perceptions of the compatibility between the values of conventionalism and modernism has an influence on brand evaluations.

Integration of Modernism and Conventionalism

One simple prediction is that the values a consumer holds impact their evaluation of modern and classic brands. It has been established in the literature that consumer values impact consumer decision making and brand preferences (Aaker 1997; Allen, Gupta and Monnier 2008; Batey 2008; Belk 1988; Fournier 1998; Gutman 1982; McGuire 1976). In this paper, value network integration (VNI), the consumer's perceived degree of overlap between modern and conventional values, is a key variable in explaining consumer responses to modern, classic and retro brands. It is argued that VNI carries greater weight than do individual values of modernism and conventionalism in explaining brand preferences.

As brand preferences are deeply rooted in consumer values, first, two paradigms about the nature of individual values will be reviewed. One perspective views values as goal-directed cognitive structures that guide behavior across consumer domains (Davidov, Schmidt and Schwartz 2008; Rokeach 1973; Schwartz 1992, 1994, 2007; Schwartz and Bardi 2001; Smith, Peterson and Schwartz 2002). This paradigm sees values as enduring and having a trait-like nature (Rokeach 1973). In that sense, modernism and conventionalism are seen as two polar points (Clifford 1971; Inkeles and Smith 1974; Kluckhohn 1968; Maercker 2001, 2004). While

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individuals who are high on modernism are likely to be independent, open to change (Inglehart and Baker 2000), rational, individualistic, materialistic and future-oriented (Hwang 2003; Inglehart 1997; Inglehart and Carballo 1997; Ray 1997), those who are low on modernism (conventionals) tend to be conforming and traditional, past-oriented, religious and collectivist (Triandis 1989). Conventionalism reflects adherence to established norms and accepted values (American Psychological Association 2007). Conventionals not only abide by ethics of traditionalism, but also conform to religion as well as ethics of frugality (Ray 1997). Since both modernism and conventionalism mirror sets of interconnected human values, these structures are referred to as value networks (Owen-Smith and Powell 2004).

Recent advances in the study of values, however, have suggested that individuals may hold a variety of values, some of which may be conflicting (Pouliasi and Verkuyten 2007; Verkuyten and Pouliasi 2006) and that context may impact what value one emphasizes (Feather 1995; Fries et al. 2005; Howes and Gifford 2009; Sverdlik and Oreg 2009; Verplanken and Holland 2002). This second approach postulates that modernity may live alongside many orientations that can be considered as conventional (Inglehart and Baker 2000). This perspective rejects the idea of simple distinctions between traditionalism and modernism (Giddens 1991; Ritzer 1997) and accepts that consumers constantly find themselves in situations involving conflicting scenarios (Ahuvia 2005; Belk 1988; Firat and Venkatesh 1995). Individuals do not necessarily have chronic ascriptions to modernism or conventionalism; they may be holding both. In that sense, it is not very meaningful to investigate the impact of modernism and conventionalism as separate value networks on attitudes, intentions and behaviors; it is the level of incorporation of the two that may be more significant.

In this essay, I adopt the second paradigm, which is rooted in the assumption that most individuals possess seemingly different and even conflicting values and that the value applied to a decision task is dependent on contextual cues (Pouliasi and Verkuyten 2007; Verkuyten and Pouliasi 2006). Here, I go a step further than past researchers and, drawing from the assimilation and contrast hypotheses as well as frame switching theory (c.f. Benet-Martinez, Lee and Leu 2006), suggest that it is the synergistic influence of situational signals and value network integration that determines consumers' brand preferences.

Value Network Integration (VNI) and contrast (reaction)-assimilation effects. As discussed above, VNI is the perceived level of amalgamation of value networks of modernism and conventionalism. While some consumers are high on VNI (that is to say that they embrace both modernism and conventionalism and feel comfortable possessing both sets of values), others are low on VNI (meaning that they keep both value networks separate). It is the degree of perceived overlap between modernism and conventionalism that differentiates high and low VNIs. According to this perspective, high VNI individuals recognize that multiple values contribute to the self. They form cognitive links between the different and conflicting values. For such individuals, seemingly opposite values peacefully co-exist. Although low VNIs possess both values, they view modernism and conventionalism as compartmentalized, continuously trying to keep them separate. They see almost no overlap between those values. That does not mean, however, that those two values are contradictory. For low VNIs, modernism and conventionalism are just independent.

The assimilation hypothesis and frame switching theory (c.f., Benet-Martinez, Leu, Lee and Morris 2002; Benet-Martinez and Haritatos 2005; Cheng, Lee and Benet-Martinez 2006;

Hong, Morris, Chiu and Benet-Martinez 2000) as well as priming experiments exploring this process have shown that when exposed to positive themes of one value network, high integrative individuals display the characteristics of that value on successive tasks (Zou, Morris and Benet-Martinez 2002). An assimilation effect in this context refers to activation of domain specific knowledge, value, frame or identity structures as a result of exposure to primes. The priming task is what leads to an excitation in consumers' cognitive networks related to a given value, and this enhances the their ability to access the corresponding judgment schemas, making those schemas more likely to become activated as guides to subsequent judgments and behaviors (Zou, Morris and Benet-Martinez 2008). Brand experience has been recently conceptualized as "sensations, feelings, cognitions, and behavioral responses evoked by brand-related stimuli that are part of a brand's design and identity, packaging, communications, and environments" (Brakus, Schmitt and Zarantonello 2009, 52). In that sense, the experience that the consumer goes through determines her brand choice. When high VNI consumers see positive conventional cues in their environment (through marketing communications, packaging, brand design) such as a Christmas tree, a Thanksgiving dinner, family get-togethers and other tradition-related themes, they will assimilate to these cues. When they are given a choice task such as a preference for a modern brand that signifies contemporariness versus a classic brand that reflects traditions and a continual link to the past (Pimentel and Reynolds 2004), they will prefer a classic brand. Conversely, positive modern cues that suggest speed, advanced technology and efficiency will activate modernism, and thus yield a preference for modern brands.

Thus,

> **H1a:** When individuals who are high on VNI are exposed to positive cues that highlight either modern or conventional values, they are more likely to purchase the brand that most closely aligns with those values (Assimilation Effect).

It is quite the reverse for low VNIs. Low VNIs see little or no overlap between modernism and conventionalism. As a reaction, low VNIs must exert continuous effort to keep these values disconnected, resulting in tension and a fragmented sense of self. Therefore, when these individuals are faced with a conflict creating choice (a preference between a modern versus a classic brands), instead of assimilating to the salient cues (as do high VNIs), low VNIs are pulled in rival directions, leading to a contrast effect. Note that being exposed to two opposite options (modern versus classic brand) triggers this reactance effect.

In essence, the notion of value conflict can be conceptually linked to classic cognitive consistency theories such as cognitive dissonance theory (Festinger 1957). This theory maintains that incongruent cognitions will create stress. Therefore, individuals are engaged in a continuous struggle to align values in a consistent manner. As values develop over the course of a lifetime (Rokeach 1973), an individual may continue holding seemingly opposing values such as modernism and conventionalism for long periods of time (Kahle, Beatty and Homer 1986). Sheldon and Kasser (1995) add, however, that individuals strive to integrate the different aspects of personality into a relatively harmonious whole. For some (high VNIs), value realignment may serve as an important means of coping with values conflict. However, for many others (low VNIs) this type of realignment may be difficult. Frame switching theory (c.f., Benet-Martinez et al. 2002) suggests a reverse priming effect for such individuals. When exposed to certain cues in the environment, consumers who are low on VNI react to these signals and act in a cue-incongruent way due to their perception that these positive cues are incompatible with their values (Stapel and Blanton 2004; Stapel and Koomen 2001). In other words, those salient signals remind them of the reverse value. This reaction is explained by the constant struggle consumers experience trying to keep these opposite values isolated (Cheng, Lee and Benet-

Martinez 2006). Low VNI individuals process the positive cues as being not realistic which

produces a reaction effect. Contrast (reaction) effect in this context refers to deactivation of

domain specific knowledge, value, frame or identity structures as a result of exposure to primes.

Therefore,

> **H1b:** When individuals who are low on integration are exposed to positive
> modern or conventional cues, they are more likely to purchase the brand opposite
> of those cues (Contrast Effect).

Figure 3.1 depicts the model highlighting the hypothesized value-cue congruity process.

As seen from the model, when high (low) VNI individuals are exposed to conventional signals

such as a Christmas tree and a Thanksgiving dinner or modernism cues such as laptops and

themes that reflect urban lifestyles such as skyscrapers, they will assimilate (react) to these cues

and act in prime congruent (prime-incongruent) ways. While high VNIs are likely to purchase

the brand that most closely aligns with those values reflected by the cues, low VNIs are likely to

purchase the brand opposite of those signals.

FIGURE 3.1

THE PROPOSED VALUE-CUE (IN)CONGRUITY PROCESS
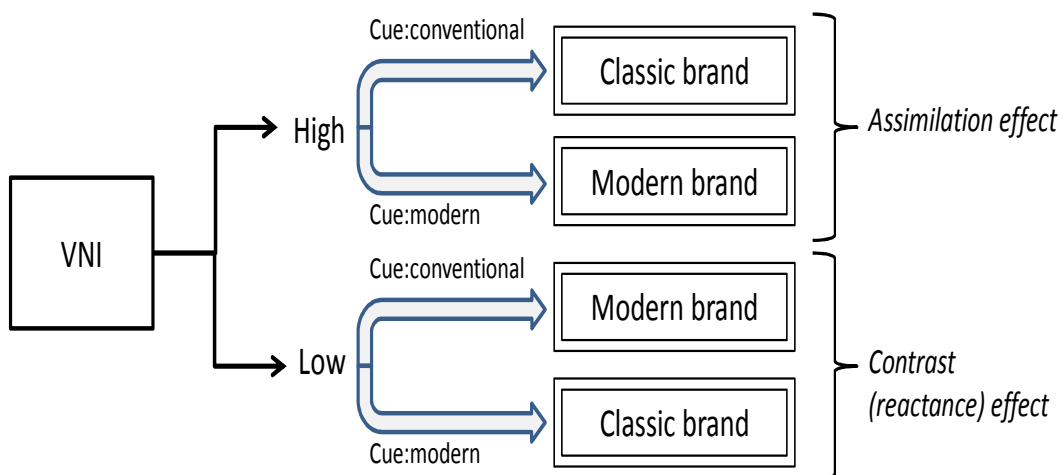
PILOT STUDIES

In this section, two pilot studies are presented. These studies test Hypothesis 1 that suggests that consumers' preferences of modern versus classic brands are a function of the interactive effect of contextual cues and the level of amalgamation of modernism and conventionalism (VNI). These tests also serve as a trial area for the priming materials. Moreover, to rule out the alternative explanation that individual value networks of modernism and conventionalism may be predictors of modern versus classic brand preference, in these studies, consumers' modernism and conventionalism as well as their VNI levels were measured to see which variable (chronically salient values or integration of the two values) is a better predictor of the modern versus classic product preference. Zhang and Khare (2009) claim that although individuals may hold conflicting identities, there is a tendency to lean toward one value which becomes the chronically accessible value. One might argue that it is the chronically salient value (modernism or conventionalism) that determines which brand one will choose. In the current paper, it is contended that it is more meaningful to study the level of integration of modernism and conventionalism (or VNI) than to investigate the effects of each value separately. Moreover conventionalism and modernism do not represent polar points; they rather live side by side and individuals hold both these values (Giddens 1991; Inglehart and Baker 2000; Ritzer 1997). Our data also support this position that individuals are not chronically modern or conventional; they possess both value networks. Thus, neither the difference between modernism and conventionalism nor the stand alone values impact subsequent behavior. As will be demonstrated by the following studies, in certain contexts, it is the perceived degree of

incorporation of seemingly conflicting values that affects perceptions and behaviors (c.f. Benet-Martinez, Leu, Lee and Morris 2002; Benet-Martinez and Haritatos 2005).

Priming Materials

Through priming, characteristics which are assumed to have a high degree of constancy, such as values, can be altered without the intention of an individual. Thus, priming can have a strong effect on subsequent perceptions and behavior (Bargh 1997, 2002). Since priming a particular aspect of the self increases one's retrieval of cognitions pertaining to that realm and determines what values one applies to a specific context (Freitas, Gollwitzer and Trope 2004; Maio, Olson, Allen and Bernard 2001; Torelli and Kaikati 2009), a priming paradigm is useful to test Hypothesis 1. In the first pilot study, the priming procedure is drawn from the frame switching studies in which participants are shown a sequence of words to activate their respective frames (c.f. Cheng, Lee and Benet-Martinez 2006; Hong et al. 2000). The themes employed in the priming procedures are drawn from a s series of focus group studies conducted with participants at a North American university. In these sessions, individuals were asked to freely discuss their thoughts on modernism and conventionalism to determine themes that are relevant in the current study. After this task, they were asked to list as many positive phrases, words and icons related to both values as possible. Table 3.1 depicts the full list of words that reflect modernism and conventionalism that focus group participants agreed upon. In the first pilot study, the words reflecting modernity are used in the modernism condition and the words reflecting conventionalism were used in the conventionalism condition. As will be discussed in the following sections, this procedure was not sufficient to stimulate the respective value. Therefore, a stronger, a more complex priming procedure was employed in the second pilot study. Note that the pictures used in these studies are drawn from the focus group studies. The

pictures reflect icons and themes that were brought up during those sessions when individuals were prompted to discuss the meanings modernism and conventionalism convey to them. Then based on the examples raised in these discussions, pictures that signify specific value (modernism and conventionalism) in a broadly consistent manner were collected. With this second study, it was discovered that using pictures along with words serves as a better priming instrument, revealing the anticipated directionality. Please see appendix for the instruments and priming materials employed in the following studies.

TABLE 3.1

LIST OF PRIMING WORDS

Words reflecting Modernity	Sleek	Independent
	Fast	Forward-looking
	Efficient	Exciting
	Up-trend	Creative
	Unique	Cool
	Familiar	Pride
Words reflecting Conventionalism	Togetherness	Friendly
	Belonging	Safe
	Simple	Good memories
	Economical	Stability

Pilot Study 1: Priming with Words

Procedure. Eighty-four students (50 % Female; $M_{Age} = 21$) received course credit in an undergraduate business course at a North American university in exchange for their

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participation in the study. A three-stage process was employed to collect the data. Participants were told that they were participating in three unrelated studies that had been merged into one session. In stage 1, several individual difference variables, including Value Network Integration (VNI) (Benet Martinez and Haritatos 2005) and an alternative integration assessment referred to as the zipper measure (Aron, Aron and Smollan 1992) were obtained. In stage 2, participants viewed the priming words (Table 3.1) related to modernism or conventionalism depending on the condition to which they were assigned. The procedure is drawn from the frame switching studies in which participants are shown a sequence of words to activate their respective frames (c.f. Cheng et al. 2006; Hong et al. 2000). Next, they were asked to rate the words on modernism and conventionalism dimensions. The priming words were listed on a piece of paper handed out to participants before the actual experiment. This task was followed by a 10-minute filler task included to reduce any potential attentiveness of the association between collection of the individual difference measures, modernism-conventionalism manipulation and the product preference task. This filler task involved rating and choosing between different sets of unrelated pictures (Ferraro, Bettman and Chartrand 2009). In stage 3, participants completed the product preference task. For the product preference task, participants were asked to evaluate a modern and a classic version of a fictitious soda product. For the modern version, they were told that the manufacturer plans to market the product as a forward-looking, dynamic and modern brand while the classic version emphasized past themes and traditions. These portrayals of modern and classic brands echo the procedures utilized by De Chernatony and Cottam (2006) and Zhang and Khare (2009). The soda product was chosen for this task as soda is a low involvement product which is often employed in brand perception and purchase intention studies in consumer research (c.f. Vanhouche and van Osselaer 2009).

Measures. Value Network Integration (VNI) (Benet Martinez and Haritatos 2005) and zipper scale (Aron, Aron and Smollan 1992) scores were collected. In addition to the VNI and the Zipper measures, individuals' modernism and conventionalism levels were assessed with the following items "To what extent are you a modern individual? and "To what extent are you a conventional individual?" (Zhang and Khare 2009). These items specifically measure the degree of chronic modernism and conventionalism values that is impossible to derive from the VNI scale that focuses mainly on the extent to which these value networks are amalgamated. It is important to measure these items as this paper suggests that it is the level of VNI (rather than the chronic values) that determines brand preferences in this context. The theoretical descriptors of modernism and conventionalism were listed on top of each page in a table readily available to participants. Participants were specifically asked to review those words before answering the questions. Purchasing intentions were assessed by the following items: If prices are the same, "It is likely that I will buy the Modern soda brand versus the Classic soda brand"; "I will purchase the Modern soda brand versus the Classic soda brand next time I want a soda"; "I will definitely try the Modern soda brand versus the Classic soda brand." (Erdem and Swait 2004; Putrevu and Lord 1994). The composite score is the average of the three items ($\alpha = .73$). All scale items were measured on a 1-7 (1 = *strongly disagree,* 7 = *strongly agree*) Likert scale.

Five items in the VNI scale are averaged to form a VNI measure ($\alpha = .89$). A zipper scale is used as an alternative to VNI. A zipper scale allows respondents choose the picture that best describes their VNI level from a set of Venn-like diagrams each representing different degrees of overlap of two circles. The figures were designed so that the total area of each circle is constant and the area of intersection progresses linearly, creating a seven-step, interval-level

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scale (c.f. Aron, Aron and Smollan 1992). Note that a modified version of the identity

integration scale (Benet- Martinez and Haritatos 2005) was administered to assess the level of

integration of modernism and conventionalism. This scale predominantly tests the extent to

which individuals identify with and embrace both value networks of conventionalism and

modernism. VNI scale is utilized in this context since, to my knowledge, there is no other well-

established scale other than the one proposed by Benet-Martinez and colleagues to measure the

perceived degree of connectedness between two frames, values or identities. The current scale in

its original form is regarded as the first instrument to fully capture the nature of identity

integration as an individual difference variable (Benet- Martinez and Haritatos 2005). Thus, it

perfectly fits within the current framework. This paper treats VNI as an individual difference

variable and considers conventionalism and modernism as value networks. Here, it is anticipated

that VNI rather than the ascriptions to modernism and conventionalism is a key variable in

predicting brand preferences.   Note that the correlation between the zipper scale and VNI was

high; hence VNI is used in the following analyses ($r = .63$, $p < .01$). Note that the VNI scale is

unidimensional. The instrument has a high reliability ($\alpha = .89$) with acceptable loadings ($> .70$)

(Brown 2006).

Perception of Cues. Individuals were asked to rate the words on the dimensions of

conventionalism and modernism assessed by the statement, "Please rate the extent to which the

words reflect 1 (*conventional themes*)-7 (*modern themes*)."   The priming cues were perceived

as intended as participants in the modern priming condition rated the words as more modern than

the participants in the conventional priming condition ($M_{\text{Modern Prime}} = 5.08$, $M_{\text{Conventional Prime}} =$

2.50; $F(1, 82) = 109.81$, $p < .001$).

Test of Hypothesis. Based on Hypothesis 1, it is expected that individuals who are high on VNI, when they are exposed to modern (or conventional) cues, will act in prime-congruent ways, and hence are more likely to purchase the modern (classic) brand (H1a). On the other hand, those who are low on VNI, when they are exposed to modern (or conventional) cues, react to those cues and behave in prime-incongruent ways, and hence are more likely to purchase the classic (modern) brand (H1b). To test this hypothesis, a linear regression analysis was conducted in which VNI and condition (modern condition coded "0" and conventional condition coded "1") were entered first, and VNI x condition interaction were regressed next onto likelihood to purchase a modern brand versus a classic brand. Although the primes were perceived as intended, result showed no significant interaction effect between VNI and cues ($\beta = .02$, $t(80) = .09$, $p = .93$). Thus H1 was not supported. To check the directions of the means, two separate one-way ANOVAs were conducted among high VNIs who scored at or above the scale midpoint, 4 and among low VNIs who scored below the scale midpoint. Independent variable was condition (two levels) and dependent variable was likelihood to purchase a modern brand (7) versus a classic brand (1). Neither the assimilation effect for high VNIs ($M_{\text{Modern Prime}} = 4.54$, $M_{\text{Conventional Prime}} = 4.49$; $F(1, 38) = .48$, $p > .1$) nor the contrast effect for low VNIs ($M_{\text{Modern Prime}} = 4.18$, $M_{\text{Conventional Prime}} = 4.31$; $F(1,42) = .52$, $p > .1$) was present.

With this study, individuals' modernism and conventionalism were also assessed ($M_{\text{Modernism}} = 5.02$, $SD = 1.17$; $M_{\text{Conventionalism}} = 4.38$, $SD = 1.51$). Note that individuals on average scored higher than the mid-point,4, on each dimension suggesting that individuals do not necessarily view modernism and conventionalism as polar points. In addition, there are no individuals who scored really low (1) on one dimension and really high (7) on the other,

suggesting that there are no chronic moderns and conventionals in our sample. Maximum difference score between modernism and conventionalism is +/- 4. Moreover, VNI scores had a mean of 5 and standard deviation of 1.67. To test whether individual values impact brand preferences, separate linear regression analyses were run where modernism and conventionalism scores were entered as independent variables and purchase intentions were entered as the dependent variable. Results show that neither modernism ($\beta = .10$, $t(82) = .71$, $p = .48$) nor conventionalism ($\beta = -.15$, $t(82) = -1.33$, $p = .19$) alone predicts brand preferences. Drawing from Zhang and Khare (2009) procedure, the value difference score (modernism score-conventionalism score) that might reflect chronically salient values were also used to predict brand preferences. Note that higher difference scores reflect a tendency towards modernism and lower scores show a tendency towards conventionalism. A regression analysis was conducted to test this alternative prediction where the difference score was entered as the independent variable and purchase intentions were entered as the dependent variable. Results show that difference scores do not predict brand preferences ($\beta = .14$, $t(82) = 1.53$, $p = .13$).

Discussion. The results of pilot study 1 failed to support Hypothesis 1. However, this study showed that the extent to which one identifies herself with modernism or conventionalism in this context is not a good predictor of brand preference as individuals in general hold both values. The failure to support H1 can be due to the priming manipulation. In this study, a sheet with respective priming words was given to participants. Going back to the focus group study, more themes and icons related to each value network were extracted and two different materials highlighting images and words related to modern and conventional themes were prepared. These materials are employed to prime individuals in the next study.

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Pilot Study 2: Using Pictures and Words as Primes

   Procedure.   Fifty-five students (54.5 % Female; $M_{Age} = 22$) received course credit in an undergraduate business course at a North American university in exchange for their participation. Participants were randomly assigned to one of two between participants conditions: modern theme and conventional theme condition. A three-stage process that was discussed in the previous study was employed. In stage 1, Value Network Integration (VNI) (Benet Martinez and Haritatos 2005) as well as modernism and conventionalism (Zhang and Khare 2009) were collected. In stage 2, participants viewed the priming words and pictures related to modernism or conventionalism depending on the condition to which they were assigned. This time, in the modernism condition, color pictures depicting high-tech products such as a cell phone and a laptop as well as a modern interior design that reflects urban and contemporary living styles were scattered on a piece of paper along with words mirroring modernism such as "efficiency", "fast" and "up-trend." In the conventionalism condition, apart from the words "togetherness", "family" and "belonging", there were images of a thanksgiving dinner, a Christmas tree and a baseball game depicting a father and a son. Next, they were asked to rate the themes on modernism and conventionalism dimensions. This task was followed by a 10-minute filler task (Ferraro, Bettman and Chatrand 2009). In stage 3, participants completed the product preference task. For that task, participants were asked to evaluate a modern and a classic version of a fictitious soda product. Note that the only difference in this study is the priming procedure. Whereas pilot study 1 used words as the priming instrument, pilot study 2 employs both words and pictures to prime individuals.

Measures. Value Network Integration (VNI) (Benet Martinez and Haritatos 2005), modernism and conventionalism (Zhang and Khare 2009) and purchasing intentions (Erdem and Swait 2004; Putrevu and Lord 1994) were assessed by the procedures described in the previous study. The composite purchase intention score is the average of the three items ($\alpha = .71$) and the VNI score is the average of the five items ($\alpha = .91$). All scale items were measured on a 1-7 (1 = *strongly disagree,* 7 = *strongly agree*) Likert scale.

Perception of Cues. Individuals rated the themes on the dimensions of conventionalism and modernism measured by the statement, "Please rate the extent to which the themes reflect 1 (*conventionalism*)-7 (*modernity*)." Participants in the modern priming condition rated the themes as more modern than the participants in the conventional condition ($M_{\text{Modern Prime}} = 5.17$, $M_{\text{Conventional Prime}} = 2.78$; $F(1,53) = 54.30$, $p < .001$).

Test of Hypothesis. According to the assimilation hypothesis, high VNI consumers when exposed to modern (or conventional) themes, they will act in prime-congruent ways; thus, prefer the modern (classic) brand (H1a). Conversely, low VNI consumers will counter to those cues and behave in prime-incongruent ways, and hence prefer the classic (modern) brand (H1b). To test this hypothesis, a linear regression analysis was conducted in which VNI and condition (modern condition coded "0" and conventional condition coded "1") were entered first, and VNI x condition interaction were regressed next onto likelihood to purchase a modern brand versus a classic brand. Results showed a non- significant interaction effect between VNI and cues ($\beta = -.26$, $t(51) = -1.56$, $p = .12$), which fails to support H1. Separate one-way ANOVAs were conducted among high VNI individuals who scored at or above the scale midpoint, 4 and among

low VNIs who scored below 4. The independent variable was condition and the dependent variable was likelihood to purchase a modern brand (7) versus a classic brand(1). When looked closely at the means, one can observe an assimilation effect for high VNIs ($M_{\text{Modern Prime}}$ = 4.54, $M_{\text{Conventional Prime}}$ = 3.76; $F(1,28)$ = 3.22 , p = .08). Although the F value does not reach the significance level, the hypothesized directionality is existent. The finding that high VNIs assimilate to the cues and act in cue-consistent ways provides a promising result for H1a. The expected contrast effect for low VNIs, however, is not prevalent ($M_{\text{Modern Prime}}$ = 3.41, $M_{\text{Conventional Prime}}$ = 3.59; $F(1,23)$ = .17, p = .68), failing to support H1b.

In this study, individuals' modernism and conventionalism scores ($M_{\text{Modernism}}$ = 4.94, SD = 1.21; $M_{\text{Conventionalism}}$ = 4.36, SD = 1.12) were also measured. In addition, VNI has a mean of 4.78 and standard deviation of 1.03. To test whether stand alone values impact brand preferences, two linear regression analyses were run where modernism and conventionalism scores was entered separately as independent variables and purchase intentions were entered as the dependent variable (β = -.007, $t(53)$ = -.048, p = .96 for modernism; β = .05, $t(53)$ = .38, p = .70 for conventionalism). Moreover, the difference score (modernism-conventionalism) did not predict the dependent variable (β = -.027, $t(53)$ = -.28 , p = .77). The results imply that neither individual values nor the difference between values are influential in predicting purchase intentions.

Discussion. The results of pilot study 2 failed to support Hypothesis 1. However, results did show that high VNI individuals may in effect shift from one value network to another depending on the contextual signals. Although the findings are promising, the results are not significant. However, there is clearly an increase in the effect sizes going from pilot study 1

(Cohen's d = .03) to pilot study 2 (Cohen's d = .57). Although this value can be considered a medium effect size (Rosenthal and Rosnow 2008), the pictures and words may be still short of eliciting the expected reactions. A more realistic scenario, perhaps using a video depicting pictures and words that include music may be more effective. Exposure to such a strong prime also may create a more realistic scenario resembling a situation at a marketplace where consumers constantly come across a variety of visual, aural, and tactile inputs. While their final effects may be dependent upon the consumer's interpretation of the environment (Snodgrass, Russell, and Ward 1988), these dimensions of the retail environment have been documented to affect consumer behavior (Turley and Milliman 2000). Besides, a growing body of research shows evidence for the strong influence of musical primes on affect, evaluations and preferences (c.f. Sollberger, Reber and Eckstein 2003; Rossell and Nobre 2004). Thus, in Study 1, videos including words, pictures along with music were utilized to prime individuals. As the next section suggests, it is a much stronger and a more appropriate priming procedure for the current study. Cohen's d is .87 in the next study which is generally regarded as a large effect size (Rosenthal and Rosnow 2008).

Test of the Videos

Based on the focus group studies, two 90-second video clips highlighting images, icons and music related to modern and conventional themes were put together. In the conventional video clip, Rock and Roll music played in the background while images of Thanksgivings, BBQ parties, camp fires, family get-togethers and Christmas trees showed on the screen. Between the images, words and phrases reflecting positive conventional themes were flashed. In the modern video clip, techno music played while images of skyscrapers, modern interior designs, robots, advanced computers and cell phones were displayed. Between the images, words and phrases

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reflecting positive modern themes were flashed. Each picture was followed by a randomly

selected word that reflects the theme of the respective condition. Each image and word stayed

on the screen for approximately 5 seconds. Both the musical piece played in the background as

well as the images were selected based on the focus group discussions.

Before launching the actual experiment, fifty undergraduate students (50 % Female; M

$_{Age}$ = 21) at a North American university tested the videos. The goal was to determine

individuals' perceptions of such videos.   The test took place at a behavioral lab where

participants were seated at separate computer stations with headphones. Participants were

randomly assigned to videos that depicted either modern or conventional themes. They were

told that the themes in the videos were planned to be utilized in a commercial. After viewing the

video for 90 seconds, they were asked to rate the video by the item "Please rate the extent to

which the themes in the video reflect 1 (*conventionalism*)-7 (*modernity*)." Participants in the

modern video condition rated the themes in the video as more modern than the participants in the

conventional video condition (M $_{Modern\ Prime}$ = 5.36, M $_{Conventional\ Prime}$ = 2.67; F (1,48) = 51.80 , p

< .001).

STUDY 1

The aim of Study 1 is to test Hypothesis 1 and provide evidence that consumers'

preference for modern and classic brands depends on the interaction between two variables: VNI

and the environmental cues (positive modern cues and positive conventional cues). As the pilot

study 2 implies, individuals who are high on VNI shift from one value network to another

depending on the condition. Although the results are not significant, the directionality of the

findings is promising. High VNIs are likely to purchase modern (classic) brands when they see

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modern (conventional) cues. Thus, the hypothesized assimilation effect is prevalent. However, the expected contrast effect is not present for low VNIs. The current study utilizes the same measures as pilot study 2. However, the priming procedure is different. Whereas pilot study 2 uses pictures and words as the priming material, Study 1 utilizes videos.

Method

Procedure. Participants were a hundred and fifteen undergraduate students (55.6 % Female; $M_{Age} = 22$) at a North American university who participated in exchange for course credit. Upon arrival at the lab, participants were seated at a computer station. Headphones were provided. The lab administrator made sure that the sound was on and that the headphones were used. Participants were randomly assigned to one of two priming conditions (conventionalism and modernism conditions). A 90-second video that reflects positive modern or conventional icons, symbols, music and words were shown to participants depending on the condition to which they were assigned. Participants were told that this was a trial commercial for a company and asked for their thoughts. They were also asked to rate the extent to which the video depicted modern versus conventional themes. For the product preference task, participants were asked to evaluate a modern and a classic version of a soda product (De Chernatony and Cottam 2006; Zhang and Khare 2009).

Measures. Two months prior to the actual experiment, VNI (Benet Martinez and Haritatos 2005) and scores of modernism and conventionalism (Zhang and Khare 2009) were collected. Five items in the VNI scale are averaged to form a VNI measure ($\alpha = .91$). Purchasing intentions were measured by the following items: If prices are the same, "It is likely that I will buy the Modern soda brand versus the Classic soda brand"; "I will purchase the

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Modern soda brand versus the Classic soda brand next time I want a soda"; "I will definitely try the Modern soda brand versus the Classic soda brand." (Erdem and Swait 2004; Putrevu and Lord 1994). The composite score is the average of the three items (α = .87). All scale items were measured on a 1-7 (1 = *strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree*) Likert scale.

Results and Discussion

Perception of Videos. The item asked participants to rate the videos on the dimensions of conventionalism and modernism assessed by the statement, "Please rate the extent to which the themes in the video reflect 1 (*conventional themes*)-7 (*modern themes*)." Participants in the modern video condition rated the video as more modern than the participants in the conventional video condition ($M_{\text{Modern Prime}} = 5.40$, $M_{\text{Conventional Prime}} = 3.17$; $F(1, 113) = 50.72$, $p < .001$), showing that modernism-conventionalism videos were perceived as intended.

Test of Hypothesis. Hypothesis 1 suggests that those who are high on VNI, when they are exposed to modern (or conventional) cues, will assimilate and act in cue-congruent ways, and hence are more likely to purchase the corresponding brand (H1a). On the other hand, those who are low on VNI, when they are exposed to modern (or conventional) cues, react to those cues and behave in cue-incongruent ways, and hence are more likely to purchase the brand with the opposite style (H1b). To test Hypothesis 1, a linear regression analysis was conducted in which VNI and condition (modern condition coded "0" and conventional condition coded "1") were entered first, and VNI x condition interaction were regressed next onto likelihood to purchase a modern brand versus a classic brand. Results revealed a significant interaction between VNI and condition ($\beta = -.37$, $t(111) = -2.85$, $p < .01$), which supports H1. To further test this significant interaction, two separate one-way ANOVAs were conducted, one among high VNIs and one

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among low VNIs dividing the sample from the VNI mid point, 4. Note that VNI scores had a

mean of 4.07 and standard deviation of 1.39. The independent variable was the video condition

and the dependent variable was the likelihood to purchase a modern brand (7) versus a classic

brand (1). Findings support H1a and depict that high VNIs assimilate to the cues and act in

prime-consistent ways ($M_{\text{Modern Prime}} = 4.76$, $M_{\text{Conventional Prime}} = 3.17$; $F(1,68) = 30.29$, $p < .01$).

However, H1b was not supported. The anticipated contrast effect is non-existent ($M_{\text{Modern Prime}} =$

4.18, $M_{\text{Conventional Prime}} = 3.88$; $F(1,43) = .43$, $p = .51$) (see Figure 3.2).

Individuals' modernism and conventionalism values ($M_{\text{Modernism}} = 5.23$, $SD = 1.61$;

$M_{\text{Conventionalism}} = 4.07$, $SD = 1.30$), as in previous studies, were not found to be significant

predictors of brand preferences ($\beta = .057$, $t(113) = .73$, $p = .47$ for modernism; $\beta = -.05$, $t(113) =$

$-.79$, $p = .43$ for conventionalism). Further, the impact of the difference score (modernism-

conventionalism) on brand preferences was not significant ($\beta = .083$, $t(113) = 1.28$, $p = .20$).

FIGURE 3

THE RESULTS OF STUDY 1

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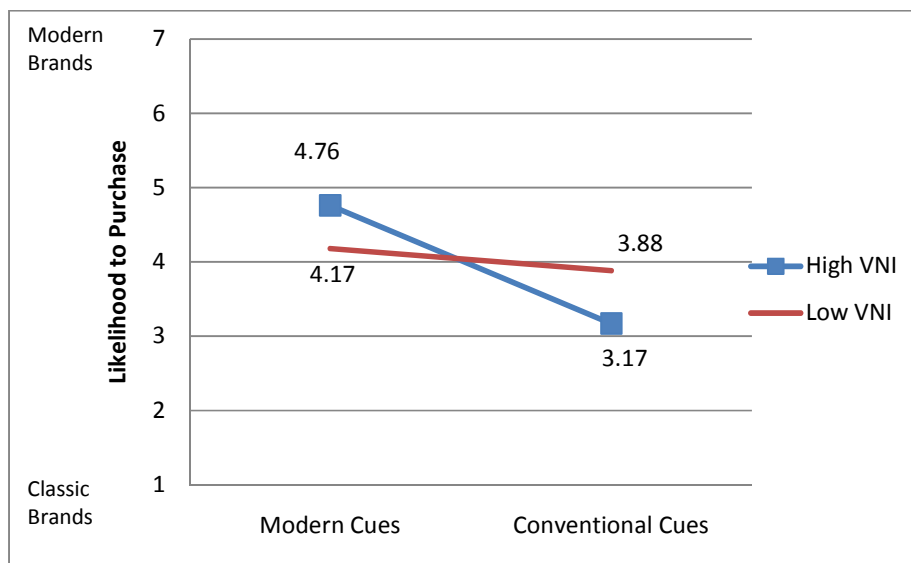
Discussion. The results of Study 1 demonstrate that consumers' purchase intentions are a function of the interactive effect of VNI and situational cues in the environment. Although the expected assimilation effect was present for high VNI consumers suggesting that the priming task activates the cognitive network related to a given value and increases the likelihood to purchase a brand that is value congruent (Zou, Morris and Benet-Martinez 2008), this study was not able to illustrate the contrast effect that was expected among low VNIs

For a contrast effect to occur, a) there should be a conflict creating choice, b) a tension that arises as a result of struggle to keep both values detached, c) strong priming cues to trigger both assimilation and contrast effects, d) cognitively involved individuals as they need to overcorrect information rather than simply assimilate to the cues (Blanton and Stapel 2008). In the current studies, a) there was a conflict creating scenario (e.g. preference between a modern versus a classic brand), b) tension that arises as a result of low integration may not be prevalent to create a contrast effect due to the nature of the sample or nature of the value networks, c) priming cues were strong enough to elicit assimilation effects, d) participants may not have been cognitively involved.

The most plausible reason for the lack of this effect could be that low VNIs in the context of modernism-conventionalism do not exert adequate effort negotiating between their identities and keeping them apart. The contrast effect is generally linked to the strenuous and sometimes overwhelming elaboration of identity cues to avoid activating the "unwanted" identity. This situation can lead to over-activation of the "unwanted" identity, leading low integrative individuals to display a reverse priming effect (Glaser and Banaji 1999). In this study, the data were collected from North America, where tension between modernism and conventionalism is not as pronounced as in some parts of the world. Although we can still speak of different levels

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of integration, the lack of any real tension between values may be the reason for the failure to support the contrast effect. Again, this may be due to the nature of the sample (i.e. for North American consumers, simultaneous possession of modernism and conventionalism does not create that much of a contradiction, failing to trigger a contrast effect) or nature of the value networks (i.e. modernism and conventionalism do not imply a conflicting scenario at least not as much as do well being and achievement or cultural values).

Another reason might be that the participants were uninvolved with the studies, therefore, failing to exert the elaboration necessary to overcorrect the salient cue. This explanation, however, is not as convincing as the one just discussed as we see systematic differences between high and low VNIs on how they react to the cues. Blanton and Stapel (2008) argue that the assimilation effect is the default reaction to the cues; it is the easiest and the most straightforward response. Although the assimilation effect is present among high VNIs, we do not observe the same response among low VNIs, showing that it is not low involvement across the sample that is responsible for the lack of a contrast effect.

Note that values of modernism and conventionalism separately do not predict brand preferences, once again showing that it is the degree of the perceived overlap between modernism and conventionalism (not the individual values) that impact individuals' purchase intentions of modern and classic brands. As discussed above, in our samples, there are no chronic moderns and conventionals. That is to say individuals possess both modernism and conventionalism. The maximum difference score between modernism and conventionalism is +/- 4 throughout the samples. Further, the difference scores do not predict brand preferences suggesting that VNI is a better predictor of brand preferences in this context.

As discussed above, modern brands are up-to-date and forward-looking while classic brands are long-honored and traditional (De Chernatony and Cottam 2006; Pimentel and Reynolds 2004; Thompson, Pollio and Locander 1994). Between those two themes (modern and classic) are the born-again brands, often referred to as "retro brands," that seem to combine modern and classic elements (c.f., Brown, Sherry and Kozinets 2003). Next, is a discussion on retro brands.

Uneasy Balance or Equilibrium? Consumer Evaluations of Retro Brands

In this paper, a retro brand is defined as an authentic reproduction of a past brand that blends modern and updated features and classic and traditional elements. This branding technique is linked with invented traditions, brand resurrection (Beverland and Luxton 2005; Brown, Sherry and Kozinets 2003; Leigh, Peters and Shelton 2006), a harmony of past and present (Brown 1995, 1999, 2001) and repackaging of past times (Thompson and Arsel 2004). Brands such as Moxie or Nesbitt's Orange Soda, Tag Heuer watches and Dickies clothing, Bazooka gum, VW Beetle and Mini Cooper automobiles are regarded as come-back and retro (Brown 2001).

Brands deliver mythic meanings that help "repair the culture when and where it is in particular need of mending" (Holt 2004, 48). Hardships, thus, provide opportunities for birth of strong brands. Guffey (2006) adds that retro is a perfect apparatus to slow down the rate of transformation in contemporary culture. Especially in times of crises, individuals find comfort in familiar places and constantly look for items that are recognizable and give a sense of security. Consumers welcome brands that are almost forgotten to remind them of the good old days (Sullivan 2009). Note that retro brands are complete remakes of historical offerings (Arnould and Thompson 2005; Brown 1995, 1999, 2001; Brown, Sherry and Kozinets 2003; Franklin

2002; Leigh, Peters and Shelton 2006; Thompson and Arsel 2004), thus signify rupture from the past (Guffey 2006). In that sense, retro brands are dissimilar to classic brands. Classic brands evolve and pass from generation to generation. Unlike retro brands, however, they are not offered as revisions of historic brands. They have been around for a long time. It is that difference that distinguishes a retro from a classic brand. Rather than emphasizing continuity, stability and permanence (as with classic brands), "retro implicitly ruptures us from what came before" (Guffey 2006, 28).

Retro brands signify modernism, as typified by scientific and future-looking themes, while at the same time bring about a sense of loss associated with traditions. Brown and colleagues (2003) draw attention to this innate paradox and warn marketers that such brands may generate tension for some consumers. Combining incompatible elements (modern and classic), these brands may suggest an unnatural association, a kind of Jekyll-and-Hyde product with two conflicting personalities simultaneously subsisting in one body.

It can be argued that, in some cases and for some consumers, retro brands imply an uneasy balance between seemingly opposite elements, creating consumer confusion, while in other situations or for other consumers, retro brands provide consumers with an equilibrium between past and future, conventions and modernity, the old and the new. Although prior research indicates that consumer evaluations of retro brands are varied (e.g., Brown, Sherry and Kozinets 2003), no researcher to my knowledge has empirically studied the factors that might explicate such variations. This section investigates consumers' reactions to retro brands and explores the factors that might impact such evaluations. This study advances research on retro brands by introducing a variable to explain individual differences (VNI) as well as a situational cue (regulatory focus) that may shed light on retro brand perceptions.

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The Impact of Value Network Integration on Evaluations of Retro Brands

The possibility of integration of seemingly opposite value networks of modernism and conventionalism was discussed in earlier sections and by previous researchers (e.g., Cheng, Lee and Benet-Martinez 2006; Pouliasi and Verkuyten 2007; Verkuyten and Pouliasi 2006). In the current paper, VNI is defined as the perceived overlap between modernism and conventionalism and is dependent on how well an individual blends both values. Accordingly, high VNI consumers are those who embrace both values, while low VNIs are those who keep these two networks separate. I argue that, being inherently paradoxical (Brown, Sherry and Kozinets 2003; Leigh, Peters and Shelton 2006; Beverland and Luxton 2005), retro brands are viewed differently by people with different levels of value network integration. While high VNIs, who can easily combine modernism and conventionalism, welcome retro brands, low VNIs, who see both networks as irreconcilable, will evaluate such brands more negatively. By the same logic, it can be argued that high VNIs may have more favorable attitudes toward retro brands compared with low VNIs. The perceptions of equilibrium versus uneasy balance elicited by retro brands may therefore be explicated by the level of VNI. Thus,

> **H2:** Compared to low VNI consumers, high VNI consumers will have more favorable evaluations of retro brands.

Apart from investigating the influence of value network integration on evaluations of retro brands, this paper also seeks to understand the role of situational factors that can easily be manipulated by marketers (through commercials, labeling and packaging) in determining retro brand evaluations. In particular, drawing from the regulatory focus theory of Higgins (1997) and the framework proposed by Friedman and Forster (2001), the effect of the cognitive mechanisms activated by marketing with a promotion versus a prevention focus is studied.

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The Influence of the Cognitive Mechanisms Underlying Regulatory Focus on Evaluations of Retro Brands

Regulatory focus theory postulates two different self-regulatory strategies that can be triggered through priming (Higgins 1997). Appealing to consumers' ideals (promotion focus) or to their sense of responsibility (prevention focus) produces dissimilar outcomes. While the promotion focus emphasizes the pursuit of positive outcomes (e.g., accomplishment), the prevention focus is related to the avoidance of negative outcomes focusing on security. These two types of regulatory foci were shown to differentially influence both the perceptual and conceptual scope of consumers' attention (Derryberry and Tucker 1994) and to have an effect on cognition and information processing (Friedman and Forster 2001). Whereas the inclination toward vigilance that is triggered by a prevention focus leads to concrete information processing, the inclination toward eagerness that is induced by a promotion focus yields more abstract thinking. Therefore, promotion focus is associated with cognitive flexibility and creativity (Friedman and Forster 2001). In consumer behavior, Zhu and Meyers-Levy (2007) investigated the role of regulatory foci in elaboration of information by manipulating both the regulatory focus of the participants and the thematic ambiguity of the visuals. These scholars discovered that thematically ambiguous ads were evaluated as less favorable when individuals were primed with a prevention focus than when primed with a promotion focus. These findings were connected to the elaboration mechanism underlying regulatory focus.

If the cognitive mechanism underlying regulatory focus is different for promotion and prevention foci, perhaps priming consumers' regulatory focus may modify their evaluations of retro brands. Since promotion focus highlights positive associations of contradictory parts and prevention focus highlights contradictions, it is expected that the type of foci influences how

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consumers process retro brands, which combine conflicting parts (classic and modern elements). If H3 turns out to be validated, it will be the first documentation of the existence of a regulatory focus effect in the evaluation of retro brands.

> **H3:** Regulatory focus will have a significant main effect on retro brand evaluations. Promotion focus leads to more favorable retro brand evaluations compared with prevention focus.

STUDY 2

The aim of Study 2 is to demonstrate that consumers' evaluations of retro brands depend on the level of VNI and illustrate the effect a situational cue (i.e., regulatory focus) on retro brand perceptions (H3).

Pre-Test: In-depth Interviews

Researchers have pointed out the inherent paradox in the combining of modern and classic elements in retro brands as a way of explaining why consumer evaluations of such brands are varied (e.g., Brown, Sherry and Kozinets 2003). Researchers have even suggested that these brands have a kind of Jekyll-and-Hyde personality, where two conflicting personalities concurrently exist in one body.

In-depth interviews with 4 men and 4 women ($M_{Age} = 34$) were conducted to uncover whether retro brands indeed convey such paradoxical meanings to consumers. Following are a few excerpts from those interviews.

Alice (age 29) reacts favorably to retro brands. To her, by combining modern and classic elements, retro suggests harmony, a peaceful co-existence. She does not want to choose between the themes that comprise the retro; she is comfortable living with both. She says,

> Retro brands are a good idea; they give you a feel for the past which is a fun journey down memory lane. I think combining past and present elements is a great way to market a product. I like both elements. Why choose one over the other? (Alice, 29)

Consumption of retro products, far from being a private practice, is a collective experience in that it involves symbolic connotations that reflect links between generations. Consumption of retro, in that sense, is viewed as constitutive of a collective identity (Curasi, Price, and Arnould 2004). The following statement by Brian (age 38) points out that a family's identity or relational identities are evoked by retro.

> It is fun to see how my father or others relate and react to Retro brands; it is nice to see what they associate with them and it brings that spirit to me as well. Sort of living their experiences anew or being able to relate to them. One such item is the old diner; back home there is a little whole in the wall diner that I visit and it was really cool to experience that with my dad this summer. Eating homemade burgers, garlic fries, and not caring about the calories or the consequences. The blending of these items should make the selling of these (retro) products easier. One thing that I do like is that it is a good tool to introduce a new product or bring the life back into an old product. Who doesn't like the old retro ads and how it brings back the old ways of life, traditional way of life, or the "good" old days -- it is a good way to bring images to people. Another great retro brand is the rocky road candy bars -- even as a child I liked sharing one with my mother, I don't see them very often anymore, but when I do it definitely brings those good memories back. It also brings back the memories that she shared with me when she ate them as a kid. So I guess a big part of the picture is bringing back memories or being able to share memories with others. (Brian, 38)

Similarly, Adam (age 52) has positive attitudes toward retro brands. When asked to name a few, he immediately thinks of Bazooka gum, which is on the market now. For Adam, retro brands are reminders of the good old days and in a way they take him to a much safer and secure place. As suggested by the theory of retro, by looking back, retro enables individuals to move forward (Guffey 2006; Sullivan 2009), and thus builds a bridge linking past, present and future.

I would love to try Bazooka (gum) if there is a sugar free version. My hopes are to enjoy my children and grandchildren long into the future -- and to perhaps share a part of my history with them through purchasing things that represent my past and letting them know what these things meant to me. I think this is a way they could connect to my past and relate to the fact that I was once young too! (Adam, 52)

While retro suggests equilibrium for consumers like Adam, it presents an uneasy balance, a contradiction for others, as Max's (age 48) comment illustrates:

For me, Jolt, for example, brings back memories of spending time with my older brother. All the sugar in the world, and twice the caffeine…I was sure it would make me the coolest person in the world. Now, I look at Jolt and think of the sugar, the calories, the damage to my teeth, and the thought of it completely turns my stomach. On the other hand, if Jolt were to be adapted to today's sodas and energy drinks by having a low calorie and calorie-free, Jolt would lose the very thing that made it popular with kids "All the sugar in the world." (Max, 48)

Max is clearly not fond of the idea of retro brands. He feels that retro is a forced association of classic and modern elements that are irreconcilable. Furthermore, he feels that a modernized version of an old offering would not have the original spirit. Joan (age 28) likewise views retro branding as a misleading strategy and thinks that bringing a brand from the past and updating it creates consumer confusion, even a sense of deception. For her, retro is a sign of lack of innovation:

I understand why a company may want to market a retro brand. Classic brands can be viewed as just dull…outdated, old fashioned, frumpy, and even inferior. But I believe that retro creates a positive picture just for a brief time. Then consumers realize that it is not the authentic product that they once cherished. It is just a reproduction…and generally a poor one...To me, retro shows marketers' and manufacturers' lack of creativity. (Joan, 28)

These in-depth interviews on the various meanings of retro revealed that consumers' evaluations of retro brands differ. While some consumers really enjoy retro brands and feel that they reflect harmony and equilibrium, others think that such brands are unnatural and suggest an uneasy balance. Although retro brands offer intriguing research avenues for scholars, this stream of research is still in its theoretical infancy (Arnould and Thompson 2005). Study 2 offers several possible factors—individual as well as situational—that might explain the variations in retro brand perceptions.

Method

Procedure. Participants were forty-four undergraduate students (45.5% Female; M_{Age} = 21) at a North American university. Brand loyalty (attitude factor) by Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001) and Kent and Allen's (1994) brand familiarity instruments as well as VNI were collected a month prior to the actual study. At that time, participants were also asked about their perceptions of a series of retro brands (including VW Beetle, TAG Heuer and Moxie Soda), which served as a stimulus check.

Regulatory focus was manipulated using the procedure suggested by Higgins (1997) and Crowe and Higgins (1997). In the promotion focus condition, participants were asked to list present and past hopes and ideals. In the prevention focus condition, participants were asked to list present and past duties, obligations and responsibilities. After this free thought listing task, participants were asked to rate their evaluations of Moxie Soda.

Choice of brand. A soda product was chosen for the brand evaluation task since soda is a low involvement product which is often used in brand research (c.f. Vanhouche and van Osselaer 2009). In this study, a real brand, Moxie Soda, was used to measure participants' evaluations of retro brands. Moxie was originally introduced in 1884 but lost its popularity in the 1930s. In 2007, it was launched again (see http://www.moxie.info). It is emphasized that Moxie is a come-back, a born-again brand that has the original look and flavor but also offers updates. For instance, a sugar free version is now available, and online ordering is possible. Three color pictures of the Moxie soda brand were shown to the participants.

In addition, brand loyalty (Chaudhuri and Holbrook 2001) and brand familiarity (Kent and Allen's 1994) instruments collected prior to the experiment show that Moxie (compared to

other retro brands such as VW Beetle, TAG Heuer, Bazooka gum and Mini Cooper) is not a very well-known product among our participants. Relatedly, individuals' loyalty to Moxie is low ($M_{Familiarity} = 1.86$, $SD = 1.3$; $M_{Loyalty} = 1.56$, $SD = .89$). This reduced biases against the stimuli and makes Moxie an ideal product for the current study

Measures. A modified version of the identity integration scale (VNI) created by Benet-Martinez et al. (2002) was collected. The 5 items in this scale were averaged to form a VNI score ($\alpha = .87$). VNI items were measured with a 1 (*strongly disagree*) - 7 (*strongly agree*) Likert type scale.   This scale was collected a month prior to the experiment. Evaluations of Moxie soda were measured by three seven-point items anchored at "bad/good," "unfavorable/favorable," and "dislike/like" (Pham and Avnet 2004). Three items in this measure were averaged to form a retro brand evaluation score ($\alpha = .77$). Brand loyalty (attitude factor) by Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001) as well as Kent and Allen's (1994) brand familiarity instruments were also administered prior to the main study as both measures were shown to affect evaluations of brands. Brand loyalty (attitude factor) reflects the dedication to the brand beyond mere purchase intentions and repeat buying behavior (Chaudri and Holbrook 2001), and was assessed by these statements, "I am committed to this brand" and "I would be willing to pay a higher price for this brand over other brands." Brand familiarity is defined as the number of product-related or service-related direct and indirect experiences and pieces of knowledge that have been accumulated by the consumer (Kent and Allen 1994; Alba and Hutchinson 1987). This variable was measured with the statements, "I am very familiar with Brand X," "I am very experienced with Brand X," and "I am very knowledgeable about Brand X." Items on respective scales were averaged to form a familiarity score ($\alpha = .67$) and a loyalty score ($\alpha = .74$). A

stimulus check item was conducted with the statement, "I perceive X as a retro brand (a historical product with updated features)." All scale items were measured with 1 *(strongly disagree)*-7 *(strongly agree)* Likert type scales.

Results and Discussion

Stimulus Check. A one-sample T-test was conducted on the ratings of Moxie as a retro brand to evaluate whether their means were significantly different from 4, the scale mid-point. The sample mean of 4.47 ($SD = 1.5$) was significantly different from 4, $t(42) = 2.06$, $p < .05$. The results support that Moxie was perceived predominantly as a retro brand.

Test of Hypotheses. To determine the contribution of VNI to the prediction of retro brand evaluations, retro brand evaluations was regressed on VNI. As expected, VNI was a significant predictor of Moxie brand evaluations ($\beta = .56$, $t(42) = 4.31$, $p < .01$), supporting H2. The two variables are linearly related such that, as VNI level increases, the overall evaluation of retro brands become more favorable. Loyalty and familiarity constructs did not predict evaluations of Moxie, and therefore were not entered as control variables.

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to evaluate the relationship between type of regulatory focus (promotion versus prevention focus) and evaluations of retro brands. The ANOVA was significant, suggesting that condition (regulatory focus) has a main effect on how people perceive retro brands ($M_{\text{Promotion Focus}} = 4.76$, $M_{\text{Prevention Focus}} = 2.74$; $F(1,42) = 13.4$, $p < .01$). Therefore, H3 is supported.

Discussion. The results are consistent with the theory that the level of amalgamation of modernism and conventionalism (VNI) impacts brand attitudes and evaluations. High VNIs are

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comfortable with both values, whereas low VNIs try to keep both values detached (Stapel and Blanton 2004; Stapel and Koomen 2001). As retro brands are paradoxical, combining ostensibly opposite themes, low VNIs experience this as an uneasy balance, while for high VNIs, the condition generates harmony and equilibrium (Leigh, Peters and Shelton 2006; Beverland and Luxton 2005). Additionally, the demonstration that regulatory focus has a significant influence on how individuals evaluate retro offerings provides support for Friedman and Forster's (2001) framework, which suggests a difference in the elaborative mechanism for prevention and promotion foci. While avoidance-related states narrow the focus of attention, approach-related states broaden the focus of attention, supplementing responsiveness to peripheral cues on the perceptual level. This enhances the activation of relatively inaccessible mental representations on the conceptual level (Derryberry and Tucker 1994). The results illustrate that when consumers think of their ideals and aspirations under promotion mode, they highlight the relationships between conflicting themes in retro brands. However, when they are under prevention mode and concentrate on their obligations and duties, they focus on distinctions and contradictions in retro brands. Figure 3.3 displays the findings of Study 2.

FIGURE 3.3

THE RESULTS OF STUDY 2
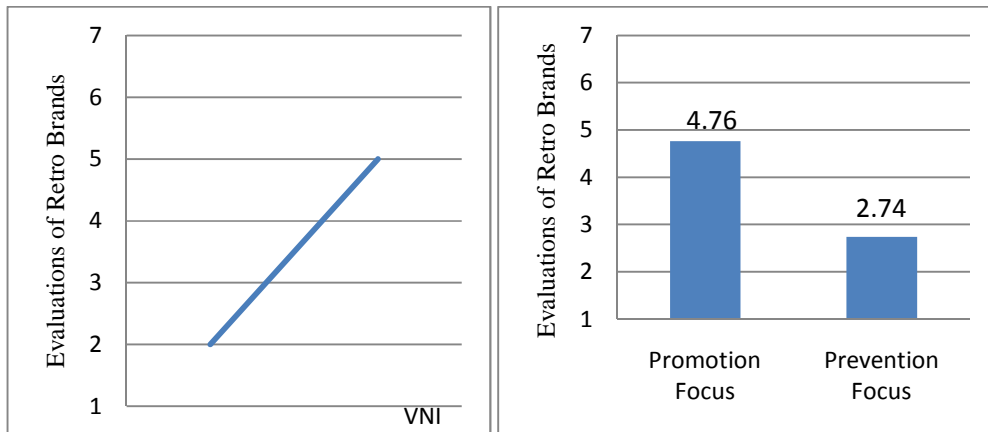
STUDY 3: A TEST OF EXTERNAL VALIDITY

The aforementioned studies were mainly conducted in laboratory settings. The following study enhances the external validity of these behavioral theories by providing a field test using data from an actual consumer panel. To enhance the real-world nature of the data, the following study addresses the limitations and threats of lab studies (e.g. controlled environment, homogenous sample, diffusion of treatment) by building a population like sample and conducting the study in a more natural environment (Lynch 1982; Rosenthal and Rosnow 2008). The sample employed in this study is as diverse as possible (in terms of age, education, income, location and family status).

Sample. To generalize the results and see the robustness of this framework across people, Study 2 was replicated with average consumers from the United States using Qualtrics, which provided us with access to consumers as well as the interface that allows data collection. Note that these data were collected via an online survey. Participants were 302 randomly selected

American consumers (50% Female, $M_{Age} = 45.6$). Forty-three percent of our respondents were married with children with an average annual income of $45,000. On average, they had completed some high school or attended a two year college. Most of our respondents (78%) indicated that they were White/Caucasian.

Procedure and Measures.   After assessing individuals' VNI levels ($M = 5.26$, $SD = 1.27$), regulatory focus was primed (Higgins 1997) by randomly assigning individuals to either prevention focus or promotion focus conditions.   Priming procedure was followed by three items measuring Moxie soda evaluations (Pham and Avnet 2004).   In addition, to be able to generalize findings to the broad-spectrum retro theme, participants were asked to rate retro brands in general using Brown and colleagues' (2003) definition of retro brands using the Pham and Avnet (2004) instrument by the item "A retro brand is a historical brand with updated features. VW Beetle, Mini Cooper, Jolt Soda, Bazooka gum and many other brands are considered as retro. Please rate the extent to which you agree with the following statements on retro brands in general." Evaluations of retro brands were measured by three seven-point items anchored at "bad/good," "unfavorable/favorable," and "dislike/like" (Pham and Avnet 2004).

Test of Hypotheses. To determine the relationship between VNI and retro brand evaluations, retro brand evaluations was regressed on VNI. Consistent with expectations, VNI was a significant predictor of Moxie Soda evaluations ($\beta = .25$, $p < .01$, $t(300) = 4.79$, $p < .01$) as well as of retro brand evaluations in general ($\beta = .24$ $p < .01$, $t(300) = 4.83$, $p < .01$). Thus, H2 was supported.   A one-way ANOVA using regulatory focus as the independent variable was significant, suggesting that regulatory focus has a main effect on Moxie soda evaluations (M

Promotion Focus $= 5.10$, M Prevention Focus $= 3.92$; F (1,300) $= 103.67$, $p < .01$). This effect is also

significant on retro brand evaluations in general (M Promotion Focus $= 5.22$, M Prevention Focus $= 3.91$; F

(1,300) $= 105.22$, $p < .01$). Hence, H3 is supported.

Discussion. This consumer panel study managed to replicate Study 2, and found support

for the hypothesis that VNI as well as regulatory focus affect retro brand evaluations. Collecting

data from a representative consumer panel gave us information on demographic variables that

might help explain variations in VNI and retro brand evaluations. For a review of findings and a

comparison of the student sample ($n = 44$) and the consumer panel ($n = 302$) on certain

demographic criteria, please see Table 3.2. As seen from that table, variables such as age,

education, income and family status did not have a significant relationship with VNI. Moreover,

they did not predict retro brand evaluations. Furthermore, the tests of the interactive effect of

VNI and such demographic variables on retro brand evaluations were not significant. One would

intuitively assume that as people get older, their evaluations of reminders of past times reflected

by retro themes would be more favorable. These non-significant findings, however, are not

surprising given that individuals' reasons for liking retro brands differ. Cohen (2008) claims that

older generations enjoy retro brands because they find those products sentimental. Young

consumers have positive attitudes towards such brands because for them, retro is entertaining.

With this more representative and larger sample, it was discovered that gender has a main

effect on retro brand evaluations (M Women $= 4.84$, M Men $= 4.51$; F (1,300) $= 5.73$, $p < .05$).

These findings are consistent with Brown (2001), who posits that women in general are more

retro-friendly than men and therefore embrace designs that mix modern and classic elements.

Women are more comfortable possessing and reflecting the opposite themes that appear in retro designs.

TABLE 3.2

COMPARISON OF THE CONSUMER PANEL AND STUDENTS

Dimensions	Student Sample	Consumer Panel	Findings
Education level	College Students	Some college graduate	No effect on VNI or retro brand evaluations.
Age	21	45.6	No effect on VNI or retro brand evaluations.
Income	$0-20,000	$20,000-45,000	No effect on VNI or retro brand evaluations.
Location	92% from Washington State	All states are represented.	Sample size does not allow for comparisons.
Gender	%45.5 Female	%50 Female	Gender has a main effect on retro brand evaluations (only in consumer panel).
Family Status	%97 Single	%18 Single	No effect on VNI or retro brand evaluations.
VNI	4.81	4.93	VNI has a main effect on retro brand evaluations (both samples).

A summary of findings. Overall, two pilot studies as well as studies 1-3 provide evidence in support of the proposed framework. The results of Study 1 link an individual difference variable (VNI) to brand preferences by suggesting that situational cues may moderate this connection. Specifically, it was shown that high VNI consumers act in a cue-congruent manner given a conflict creating scenario such as a choice between a modern versus a classic brand. Study 2 illustrates that VNI as well as a situational cue (regulatory focus) have separate main effects on retro brand evaluations. The follow-up study with a consumer panel (Study 3) provides additional evidence that high VNI individuals' retro brand evaluations are more favorable than those of low VNIs and that promotion focus rather than prevention focus leads to more positive retro brand evaluations. Table 3.3 summarizes these findings.

TABLE 3.3

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Hypotheses	Studies	Findings
	Pilot Study 1 (using words as primes)	VNI x cues interaction is not significant.
H1a and b	Pilot Study 2 (using words and pictures as primes)	VNI x cues interaction is not significant $(p = .12)$. H1a is marginally supported $(p = .08)$. H1b is not supported.
	Study 1 (using videos as primes)	VNI x cues interaction is significant $(p < .01)$. H1a is supported $(p < .01)$. H1b is not supported.
H2	Study 2	Main effect of VNI is significant $(p < .01)$. High VNIs retro brand evaluations are more favorable.
	Study 3 (consumer panel study)	Main effect of VNI is significant $(p < .01)$. High VNIs retro brand evaluations are more favorable.
H3	Study 2	Main effect of regulatory focus is significant $(p < .01)$. Promotion focus leads to more favorable retro brand evaluations.
	Study 3 (consumer panel study)	Main effect of regulatory focus is significant $(p < .01)$. Promotion focus leads to more favorable retro brand evaluations.

CONTRIBUTIONS AND LIMITATIONS

Theoretical Contributions

This paper contributes to brand literature by discussing meanings of modern, classic and retro brands and suggesting several individual and situational variables that explain variations in consumer evaluations of such brands. This paper further clarifies the conceptual distinctions between meanings of modern, classic and retro. While classic brands are long-honored brands that highlight the continuity and linkages to the past, retro brands reflect a gap. Retro is a comeback. Modern brands, on the other hand, signify contemporariness and forward-looking themes (De Chernatony and Cottam 2006; Thompson, Pollio and Locander 1994).

This work also adds to the value literature by demonstrating that modernism and conventionalism values can be integrated and that the perceived degree of interconnectedness of the two (VNI) impacts purchase intentions of modern and classic brands as a function of situational signals. In addition, VNI has been also found to correlate with retro brand evaluations.

More specifically, Study 1 showed that high VNI consumers shift from one value network to another depending on the interactive level of an individual difference variable (VNI) and situational cues. In particular, it demonstrated that when consumers see cues related to modernism (or conventionalism), they act in cue-congruent ways and prefer the associated brand. These results are similar to the findings of frame switching studies that have documented the presence of the assimilation effect (e.g., Benet-Martinez, Lee and Leu 2002; Briley, Morris and Simonson 2005; Hong et al. 2000; Luna, Ringberg and Peracchio 2008).

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Study 2, along with the consumer panel study, confirms that VNI and regulatory focus affect retro brand evaluations. Since high VNI consumers embrace both modernism and conventionalism, they enjoy retro brands more than low VNIs. Study 2 also demonstrated that a promotion focus yields more favorable retro brand evaluations than a prevention focus. These results are conceptually consistent with studies investigating the effect of the elaboration mechanism underlying regulatory focus (Derryberry and Tucker 1994; Friedman and Forster 2001; Zhu and Meyers-Levy 2007). While a promotion focus highlights connections, a prevention focus underlines contradictions between modern and classic elements of retro brands. The panel study conducted with a larger sample composed of average American consumers also shows that gender has a main effect on retro brand evaluations. Women were discovered to be more open to retro brands compared to men, a finding that echoes Brown (2001).

Managerial Contributions

As majority of brand choice decisions are made inside the store and consumers purchase what is available (Inman, Winer and Ferraro 2009), it is vital for marketers to know what modern, classic and retro brands mean to consumers and more importantly, study the factors that might explain the variations in consumer evaluations of such brands.

Study 1 demonstrated that given a choice task between a modern versus a classic brand, high VNI consumers look for signals in the environment to make a decision. Acting as chameleons, they adapt and automatically mimic their surroundings (Briley, Morris and Simonson 2005). This finding has implications for the framing of advertisements, store design, packaging, and logo and label choice as reactions to these stimuli comprise brand experience that affects consumer satisfaction and loyalty (Brakus, Schmitt and Zarantonello 2009). Current work suggests that marketers can control those consumer reactions by strategically designing

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their marketing communications. Although low VNI consumers seem to be immune to such manipulations, high VNIs are more open to them.

The current work also has several practical implications for retro marketing. This is an important area of inquiry given the need for product differentiation and the importance of effective positioning and communications. Moreover, the rise of retro product offerings in recent years makes it imperative for marketing scholars to conduct more research in this domain. Study 2 and the consumer panel study show that high VNI consumers' retro brand evaluations are more favorable. Moreover, women in general enjoy retro offerings more than men. This finding implies that by identifying and targeting the right consumers (high VNI consumers or women) who are likely to respond more positively to retro brands, marketers have more information to guide the investment of resources. Directing marketing efforts toward high VNIs and developing the retro products to meet the needs of those specific segments, marketers may eventually turn those individuals into customers of retro offerings.   Developing a positioning strategy for retro products entails gaining a clear understanding of the needs and wants of consumers. Of course, ultimately a company must communicate this positioning. At this point, the finding that the type of regulatory focus predicts retro brand evaluations becomes critical for the design of marketing communications. As discussed, promotion focus is geared to motivate to attain advancement. A prevention focus, by contrast, is geared to motivate people to achieve protection (Higgins 1997). It was illustrated that by emphasizing ideals, hopes and aspirations triggered by the promotion focus, it is possible to induce positive retro brand evaluations. Marketing managers, therefore, should refrain from using prevention focused themes related to obligations, duties and responsibilities in their marketing communications when the product or service is a retro offering. For instance, a retro automobile such as VW Beetle should use

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phrases such as "seize the day" or "be all you can be" that emphasizes hopes and ideals but avoid

slogans such as "be cautious" or "avoid pain" in their marketing campaigns. Table 3.4

summarizes marketing implications of the current framework.

TABLE 3.4

MARKETING IMPLICATIONS

Findings	Implications for Marketing Strategy
H1a) High VNIs assimilate to the cues in the environment.	• Identify high VNI consumers as those are the ones who are open to manipulation via situational cues. • Via product design, ad and commercials, logo and packaging, it is possible to create a modern experience or a conventional experience for high VNIs, affecting their likelihood to purchase a modern versus a classic brand.
H2: High VNIs' retro brand evaluations are more favorable than those of low VNIs.	• Effective segmentation of the market based on VNI level is necessary as high VNIs seem to enjoy retro brands more than do the low VNIs. • Women constitute a proper target segment for retro brands.
H3: Promotion focus (compared with a prevention focus) leads to more favorable retro brand evaluations.	• An ad with a promotion focus (emphasizing hopes, ideals and aspirations) rather than a prevention focus (emphasizing responsibilities and duties) is more appropriate for communicating retro brand meanings.
General Findings	• Values (modernism, conventionalism) are not influential in brand choice (modern versus classic brand). Value network integration (VNI) is a more meaningful variable in this context. • As majority of brand choice decision are made inside the store, managers should be careful in design and message framing. In-store marketing activities should strongly influence consumer behavior.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

There are limitations of this research that may restrict the ability to generalize from the findings. One important question pertains to boundary conditions of the proposed framework. Current research has not tested the model using product categories other than a soda product. Follow up studies should explore whether the framework tested in the present studies will hold with other products, real or fictitious.

Study 1 illustrated the assimilation effect for high VNI consumers and thus partially supported H1. The failure to show the expected contrast effect may simply be due to the composition of the sample. One of the prominent reasons for the contrast effect is that individuals who are low on integration feel a high tension. Data were mainly collected from North American students. I assume that in developing countries where rapid transformations are taking place, where past and present, modern and conventional are constantly at odds and individuals continually find themselves in situations involving conflicting scenarios (Ahuvia 2005; Belk 1988; Firat and Venkatesh 1995), contrast effect may be more prevalent. Moreover, dialectical thinking, that is, the tolerance for holding apparently contradictory beliefs, has been documented to be widespread among East Asians (Peng and Nisbett 1999). Choi and Choi (2002) showed that, compared with Americans, East Asians endorsed contradictory values and displayed self-beliefs that were less consistent (e.g., I'm outgoing but somewhat shy) than Americans. It is of theoretical as well as practical importance to collect data from different cultures to study consumer reactions to modern and classic brands as a function of the interactive effect of VNI and situational cues. It would be also very interesting to investigate how such consumers react to retro offerings. Although theory suggests that individuals from Asian cultures are more prone to

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dialectical thinking (Peng and Nisbett 1999), it has also been documented in the literature that such consumers value what is contemporary, modern and unique (Zhou and Wong 2008).

Our VNI scale was taken from research on identity integration (Cheng, Lee and Benet-Martinez 2006). Although modified and applied in several other contexts (e.g., Sacharin, Lee and Gonzalez 2009), the current research is the first attempt to test the measure in the framework of modernism and conventionalism. The current study shows that the scale is sufficiently reliable and that it could be employed to predict participants' preference for modern versus classic brands as well as their evaluations of retro brands. However, more research is needed to uncover the relationship between VNI and other related constructs. For instance, how is VNI related to the personality traits (agreeableness and openness to experience) suggested by the Big 5 personality framework (McCrae and Costa 1987)? According to the Big 5 framework, agreeable individuals tend to be more accepting and receptive. They are ready and willing to receive new and different ideas favorably. In contrast, other individuals are low in agreeableness are uncooperative. Openness to experience is defined as preference for variety and intellectual curiosity. Individuals who are high on openness to experience tend to be analytical, imaginative and original. How these constructs are different from VNI is important to be able to establish discriminant validity of VNI.

Moreover, there is a need to distinguish between the concepts of nostalgia and retro. Nostalgia is a sense of personal loss and longing for an idealized past (Pickering and Keightley 2006). I suggest that nostalgia proneness (c.f., Holbrook and Schindler 1989, 1994, 1996) alone cannot explain " retro-proneness" or "retro-friendliness." Although both classic and retro brands indicate experiences from the past, and thus contain elements of nostalgia, retro implies a rupture from the past, whereas classic suggests permanence and continuity (Guffey 2006). I urge future

researchers to consider exploring the relationship between value network integration and nostalgia-proneness to be able to illustrate the conceptual differences between those two variables.

CONCLUSION

A series of studies have demonstrated that consumers' evaluations of modern, classic and retro brands are varied and that these variations can be explained by situational variables as well as individual variables. I introduced and tested the influence of a relatively new construct of value network integration (VNI) and illustrated the predictive ability of VNI in explaining modern, classic and retro brand evaluations. Moreover, this paper suggests that it is not the values of modernism and conventionalism that impact brand preferences; it is the perceived level of amalgamation of the two (VNI) that influences such evaluations.

In short, I believe that these studies advance our understanding of the consumption of modern, classic and retro brands by providing evidence that individual (VNI) as well as situational variables (priming via contextual signals and regulatory focus) impact evaluations of such brands. We need to learn more about the conditions favoring and hampering such perceptions and how subsequent behavioral responses unravel.

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CHAPTER FOUR

GENERAL DISCUSSION

My observations in the marketplace inspired me to learn more on classic, modern and retro brands. While some companies emphasize traditions and their ties to past (e.g. Coca-cola), others seem to focus on contemporariness (e.g. Jones soda). There are also offerings that combine both elements (e.g. Moxie soda). As a consumer, I observe that individuals' reactions to such brands are varied. There is also evidence in the literature that brands communicate meanings beyond their mere functionalities and that individual values guide brand preferences (c.f. Aaker 1997). Although this topic seems to provide consumer researchers with a fruitful domain, surprisingly, there is insufficient work that has been conducted in this area. There are only a few researchers (c.f. Brown 2001; Brown, Sherry Jr., and Kozinets 2003) who have studied this phenomenon of practical and theoretical significance. Moreover, these studies are generally interpretive in nature. There is clearly a gap in the literature and hopefully, this dissertation -at least partially- will fill this gap.

Consumers are constantly exposed to environmental cues. It has been documented in the literature that these signals can influence judgments, decision-making and behaviors (Bargh 1997; Sela and Shiv 2009). Drawing from frame switching studies (Benet-Martinez and Haritatos 2005), I tested and found that the interactive effect of situational signals (modernism and conventionalism themes) and value network integration (whether modernism and conventionalism values are seen as blended versus separated) has an impact on the purchase intentions of modern versus classic brands. Moreover, it is not the stand alone values of modernism and conventionalism that impact purchase intentions; it is the level of integration of the two that is a more meaningful variable to study in this context.

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In addition to investigating the nature of modern and classic brands, this dissertation also studied retro brands that are historical products with modern features that are very prominent these days. Some researchers have suggested that when consumers are yearning for the past, especially during troubled times, retro brands enter into the market with a promise to take consumers to the good old days when life was easier and finances were more secure (Sullivan 2009). In that sense, retro brands are going to be more widespread in the coming years, due to the continuing financial crises as well as social transformations (Guffey 2006). Specifically, consumer reactions to retro brands were explored. Through in-depth interviews, it was discovered that consumers' evaluations of such brands are mixed. While some really enjoy retro offerings and think that they are pleasant and in some cases romantic and sentimental; others are uncomfortable with retro brands that juxtapose opposites. To systematically analyze such differences in retro brand evaluations, I utilized two variables: one individual difference variable (VNI) and the other situational (regulatory focus) (Higgins 1997). The results show support for the main effect of both variables on retro brand evaluations. For consumers who are high on integration, retro brands are favorable. However, those who are low on VNI do not enjoy retro brands. In addition, regulatory focus that can easily be controlled by marketers (via modification of marketing communications) has a main effect on retro brand evaluations. In particular, it was discovered that promotion focus that emphasizes ideals and hopes is a more appropriate message frame for retro marketing.

Overall, this dissertation provides managers and consumer researchers with conceptual as well as practical tools. Managers may use the results of this study as guidelines in image selection, positioning, product design and ad management. Understanding consumer values, their influence on evaluations of different styles of brands as well as the moderating effects of

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situational cues, advertisers may design more effective communications and target appropriate

segments with more success. Additionally, current research opens up intriguing research

avenues for consumer researchers who are interested in modern, classic and retro brand

meanings.

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Sullivan, Elisabeth A. (2009)," Believe in Yesterday," *Marketing News*, (September), 8.

APPENDIX

ESSAY TWO MATERIALS

Picture and Word Cues

Fast

Efficient

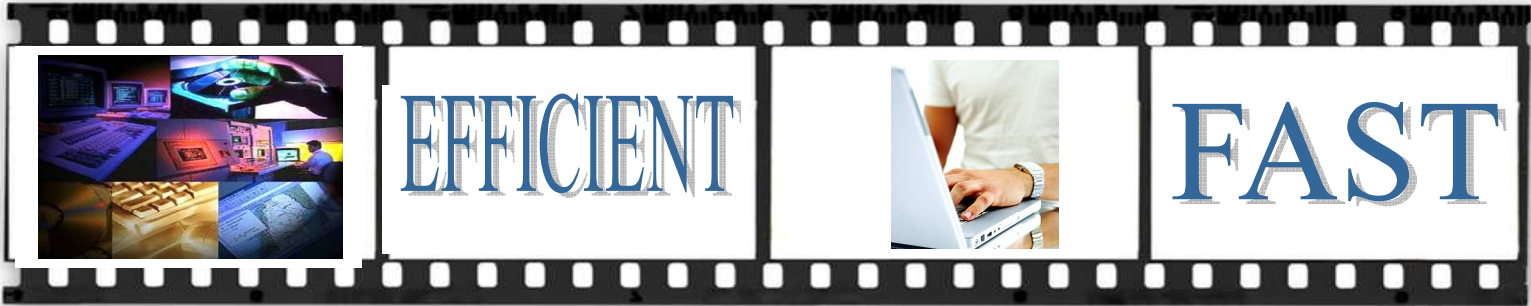Up-trend

Family   Togetherness

          Belonging

Video Cues

NOTE.-The first four scenes of videos are depicted here. The above section displays conventional cues. The below section shows modernism cues. The videos are 90 seconds long; each scene is shown for approximately 5 seconds.

INSTRUMENTS

Consent Form

Researchers

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Study Title Value Networks in Marketing Contexts

Researchers' Statement
The purpose of this form is to give you the information you will need to help you decide whether to be in the study or not. If you have any questions regarding the study, please do not hesitate to ask the researcher. This study is completely **voluntary**. You may quit the study at any time without penalty.

Purpose and the benefits
The goal of this study is to help marketers better understand how consumers evaluate brand names

Procedures
In this study, you will be asked to fill out some questionnaires about your attitudes and evaluations of brands. The survey should take about 7 minutes.

Confidentiality
Data will be summarized and grouped responses will be reported only. Results will not reflect individual responses. Anonymity will be achieved by shuffling the responses.

Risks
We believe that there are no risks associated with this study. If participants prefer not to participate, they may quit the study at any time without penalty. This study is completely **voluntary.**

Participant's Statement
This study has been explained to me. If I have any questions I can ask one of the researchers listed above. This study has been classified as exempt. If you have questions about the study please contact the researchers listed above.

If you have questions about your rights as a participant please contact the WSU IRB at 509-335-3668 or irb@wsu.edu.

Thank you!

Value Network Integration (Benet-Martinez and Haritatos 2005)

Please take a look at the terms that characterize modernism and conventionalism. In the following questions, we would like to ask you the extent to which each orientation characterizes you and the extent to which you do or do not integrate the two sets of values. It is possible that you are high on one, and low on the other, or high on both, or low on both. With that in mind, please answer the following questions (circle one).

Characteristics of Modern versus Conventional Individuals

Modern individual	Conventional individual
open to change	frugal
independent	past time-oriented
rational	obedient
individualistic	religious
future time-oriented	traditional
materialistic	moderate
secular	group-oriented

	Strongly Disagree			Neutral		Strongly Agree	
I combine both values(modern-conventional).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I see modern and conventional values as two distant value systems (R)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I keep modernity and conventional values together.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I feel modern and conventional values can easily co-exist.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I feel part of a combined value system (modern-conventional).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Modernism/Conventionalism Values (Zhang and Khare 2009)

	Not at all			Neutral		Very much	
To what extent are you modern?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
To what extent are you conventional?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Zipper Measure (Aron, Aron and Smollan 1992)

Below is a set of diagrams each representing different degrees of overlap of two values (modernism and conventionalism) represented by the circles.

1= no overlap, 7=nearly complete overlap
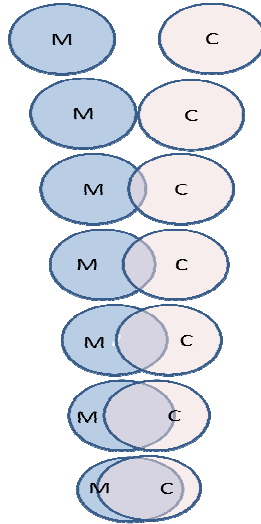
Once again refer to the above picture and please circle the number that best matches the level of overlap of two values (modernism-conventionalism) in your situation.

No overlap   Nearly complete overlap

    1   2   3   4   5   6   7

Cue Checks

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with following statements by circling the appropriate number.

	Conventionalism						Modernity
Please rate the extent to which the words reflect.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Please rate the extent to which the themes reflect.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Please rate the extent to which the themes in the video reflect.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Stimuli Check

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with following statements by circling the appropriate number.

	Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
I perceive X as a retro brand (a historical product with updated features).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Purchase Likelihood of Modern versus Classic Brands (Erdem and Swait 2004; Putrevu and Lord 1994)

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with following statements by circling the appropriate number.

If prices are the same,

	Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree	
It is likely that I will buy the Modern soda brand versus the Classic soda brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I will purchase the Modern soda brand versus the Classic soda brand next time I want a soda.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I will definitely try the Modern soda brand versus the Classic soda brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Brand Familiarity (Kent and Allen 1994)

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with following statements by circling the appropriate number.

	Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree	
I am very familiar with Brand X.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am very experienced with Brand X.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am very knowledgeable about Brand X.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Brand Loyalty (Chaudhuri and Holbrook 2001)

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with following statements by circling the appropriate number.

	Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree	
I am committed to this brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I would be willing to pay a higher price for this brand over other brands.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Retro Brand Evaluations (Pham and Avnet 2004)

Above are pictures of Moxie soda that was originally introduced in 1884 but lost its popularity in the 1930s. It was launched again in 2007.

Please note that Moxie soda is a come-back, a born-again brand that has the original look and flavor but also offers updates. For instance, a sugar free version is now available, and online ordering is possible.

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with following statements by circling the appropriate number.

Brand X is bad					Brand X is good	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Brand X is unfavorable					**Brand X is favorable**	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I dislike Brand X					**I like Brand X**	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Regulatory Focus Manipulation (Higgins 1997)

Please list present and past hopes and ideals.

_____

_____

Please list present and past duties, obligations and responsibilities.

_____

_____