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**Effectiveness and
Perspective of the
Brand Experience
construct: Focus
on the Food and
Beverage market**

Supervisor

Ch. Prof. Francesca Checchinato

Graduand

Luca Angelino
Matriculation
number
873203

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Introduction

Experience is a key feature in the new era of marketing, as Schmitt (1999, p. 53) stated in his seminal work "*Experiential Marketing*": "Experiential Marketing is everywhere. In a variety of industries, companies have moved away from traditional "features-and-benefits" marketing toward creating experiences for their customers".

The literature understood through the years the importance of the concept of experience in marketing fields, highlighting how the modern consumers do not only base their consumption choices on the functional features and benefit provided by a product, but also research different kind of emotions.

If the literature deeply focused and analysed different constructs related to the experience concept, there has not been a great interest on providing an understanding of the experiences generated directly by the brands.

The construct of Brand Experience developed by Brakus, Schmitt and Zarantonello in 2009 specifically had the objective of define a model able to give a picture of the dimensions of experiences related to a brand and the consequence that a brand can have through generation of experience.

Since the model of Brand Experience was born in 2009, the literature on this subject is not wide and further researches are required in order to come up with a complete picture, also outside the academic environment.

For that reason my thesis aim at providing an understanding of the construct of Brand Experience, with the intention of proposing a different perspective that could result useful in order to understand completely the construct and then how it can result effective in a specific environment.

The main research question is: is the generation and development of Brand Experience a weapon for companies within the Food and Beverage market?

In Chapter 1 I will provide a complete analysis experience literature, with focus on the construct of Brand Experience, the model, antecedents and outcomes. The focus will be

shifted to the analysis of the Food and Beverage market in Chapter 2, firstly by identifying the drivers of food and beverage consumption for consumer, and then by taking a snapshot of the actual food and beverage trends that guide the Italian market. A case history based on secondary data will be then examined in Chapter 3, in order to observe how Brand Experience was developed and the relative impact on the brand. The last part of the thesis, Chapter 4, will include a qualitative research based on semi-structured interviews to marketing professionals operating in the Food and Beverage market, in order to highlight: their personal perspective on the concept of Brand Experience, the relationship with the Food and Beverage Market, how it can be developed and the outcomes related to its development. A final summary of the whole thesis, starting from the literature analysis to the qualitative research takeout will be provided in my conclusions.

Chapter 1: The Brand Experience construct

1.1 - Introduction to the chapter

Brand Experience is construct on which this thesis will focus on, a recent construct defined just in 2009 by Brakus, Schmitt and Zarantonello, and for that reason not much deepen.

The objective of the first chapter will then be the complete understanding of the initial model developed by the scholar through a comprehensive literature analysis of the main papers about the construct.

After a historical view of Experience in marketing literature, highlighting the areas of interest about the concept and how it developed through the years, the analysis will then shift with a focus on the first experience-based models.

During the first part of the literature analysis what I aim to achieve is an understanding of the roots that brought to the definition of the Brand Experience model, and define the previous main experience based constructs, in order to subsequently highlighting the differences between each other.

It will be then defined the initial Brand Experience model (Brakus, et al., 2009), providing an understanding of the first definition, the antecedents, outcomes and measurement scale developed by the scholars, together with the elements necessary of further investigation for a comprehensive understanding of the model.

After the assessment of the initial model, through a deep analysis of subsequent papers that discussed the construct of Brand Experience, I will support an integrated model which see the addition of many different antecedents and outcome to the construct, being the focal points of investigation to the following scholars studying the Brand Experience construct (Andreini et al., 2019).

1.2 - The concept of Experience in Marketing literature

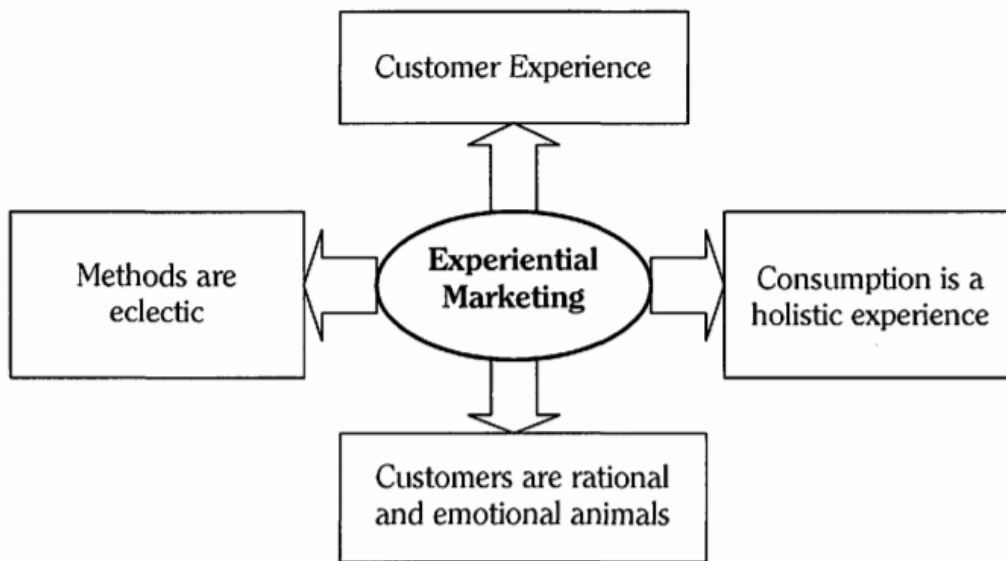
The concept of experience in marketing has been largely discussed and analysed through the years. A first definition of a concept that can be associated to “Experiential Marketing” made its appearance in 1982 within the work of Hirschman and Holbrook (1982), highlighting a critical aspect related to the traditional marketing perspective based on the information-processing theory (Bettman, 1979). While previously viewed the consumer as a logical thinker, solving problems in order to make purchasing decisions, Hirschman and Holbrook relate the hedonic criteria to the consumption behaviour and define the *experiential view*: “Consumption has begun to be seen as involving a steady flow of fantasies, feelings, and fun encompassed by what we call the experiential view.” (Hirschman and Holbrook, 1982). It is important to point out how the experiential perspective was not intended to fully reject the informational-processing approach but rather be a complementing perspective in order to enrich the consumer behaviour field of study.

Experience concept started to be deeply analysed during the 1990s, and at the end of the decade two seminal researches were introduced thanks to Pine and Gilmore (1998,1999) and Schmitt (1999).

Experience is identified as the key feature in the new era of marketing as stated by Pine and Gilmore (1998), introducing the concept of Experience Economy as the fourth stage in the progression of economic value (after commodities, goods and services). They wrote: "As services, like goods before them, increasingly become commoditized, experiences have emerged as the next step in what we call the progression of economic value. From now on, leading-edge companies—whether they sell to consumers or businesses—will find that the next competitive battleground lies in staging experiences." (Pine and Gilmore, 1999, p. 97).

This new perspective of customers defined both as rational and emotional has been taken into account in Schmitt’s seminal work *Experiential Marketing* (1999), where the view of this new type of customers was established as one of the four key characteristics of the framework defining the Experiential Marketing concept (Figure 1.1).

Figure 1.1: Characteristics of Experiential Marketing



Source: Schmitt B. (1999).

Schmitt states that while traditional marketing focused on a rational and analytical view of customers based on historical approach during the industrial age, it resulted not able to provide a response to the business revolution started in late 90's, mainly related to the way of obtaining information, the role of the brand and communication.

Based on the previous statements, Schmitt (1999) developed a strategic framework for experience management based on five dimensions of experiences called SEMs (strategic experiential modules) and ExPro (Experience providers) proposing an approach that focus on customer insights (Experience in Marketing Management).

The two focal researches became a starting point for the discussion and development of the concept of Experience Marketing through the years, since it was established how in consumer behaviour field the hedonic value was part of the consideration set that drive consumer behaviour choice in the new era. Same and Larimo (2012) proposed two different definition of Experiential Marketing and Experience Marketing (Table 1.1), defining Experiential Marketing as part of the Experience Marketing, focusing on specific business objectives, largely on creating or modifying the environments in which customers interact.

Table 1.1: Definitions of Experience Marketing and Experiential Marketing

Experience Marketing	Experiential Marketing
<p><i>Experience marketing is strategic (customer-centric) and holistic marketing of relevant (and meaningful) experiences that takes into account the affective, cognitive and conative perspectives of consumption experience</i></p>	<p><i>Experiential marketing as a marketing planning tool is concerned on tactical and operational level actions where the main question is how to do marketing (campaign) experientially</i></p>

Source: Same S. & Larimo J. (2012).

Experiential marketing helps to market experiences, answers the question about how to do marketing experientially (Same & Larimo 2012); while Experiential Marketing is identified as a tactical and planning tool, Experience Marketing is the marketing which relate to the strategic role that management of experiences has in value creation.

1.3 - Customer Experience

Experience Marketing refer to a broad area in research that mainly focused on the interactions and connections between customers and companies (Schmitt, 2010).

While earlier writings (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1977; Holbrook & Hirschman 1982) initially adopted a rationale or emotional stance to discuss the construct of Costumer Experience, nowadays the general overview refer to a more holistic perspective integrating both cognitive and emotional aspects within the concept, focusing on their role with the interaction customer-company (De Keyser et al., 2015).

Customer Experience is the broadest area of research in Experience Marketing field, focusing on the interactions that a potential customer can have with the company (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016), the customer experience thus is shaped differently based on the stages of customer consumption phases which are defined as: pre-purchase, purchase, and post purchase. Within

the customer consumption phases, defined as the “Customer Journey” by the authors, it is important to identify the touchpoints that can be leverage points in the customer experience. Main definitions of Customer Experience can be summarized within the table below (Table 1.2)

Table 1.2: Summary of Customer Experience main definitions.

Author	Definition
Gentile et al., 2007	“The Customer Experience originates from a set of interactions between a customer and a product, a company, or part of its organization, which provoke a reaction (LaSalle and Britton, 2003; Shaw and Ivens, 2005). This experience is strictly personal and implies the customer’s involvement at different levels (rational, emotional, sensorial, physical and spiritual) (LaSalle and Britton, 2003; Schmitt, 1999). Its evaluation depends on the comparison between a customer’s expectation sand the stimuli coming from the interaction with the company and its offering in correspondence of the different moments of contactor touch-points (LaSalle and Britton, 2003; Shaw and Ivens,2005).”
Meyer & Schwager, 2007	“Customer experience is the internal and subjective response customers have to any direct or indirect contact with a company. Direct contact generally occurs in the course of purchase, use, and service and is usually initiated by the customer. Indirect contact most often involves unplanned encounters with representations of a company’s products, services, or brands and takes the form of word-of-mouth recommendations or criticisms, advertising, news reports, reviews, and so forth.”
Verhoef et al., 2009	“The customer experience construct is holistic in nature and involves the customer’s cognitive, affective, emotional, social and physical responses to the retailer. This experience is created not only by those elements which the retailer can control (e.g., service interface, retail atmosphere, assortment, price), but also by elements that are outside of the retailer’s control (e.g., influence of others, purpose of shopping). Additionally, we submit that the customer experience encompasses the total experience, including the search, purchase, consumption, and after-sale phases of the experience, and may involve multiple retail channels.”
Lemke et al., 2011	“we define customer experience as the customer’s subjective response to the holistic direct and indirect encounter with the firm, including but not necessarily limited to the communication encounter, the service encounter and the consumption encounter.”

De Keyser *et al.*, 2015

“Customer Experience is comprised of the cognitive, emotional, physical, sensorial, and social elements that mark the customer’s direct or indirect interaction with a (set of) market actor(s). In this way, we think of CX as constituting the “raw” data underlying and driving the specific processes that shape consumer behavior. Without CX there is simply nothing that follows. It is the primary result of direct or indirect interactions with a (set of) market actor(s), marked by different levels of uniqueness and composed of multiple elements whose exact manifestation varies across contexts and situations”

Source: Personal Elaboration

Gentile *et al.*, (2007) defined Customer Experience as a set of interactions between a customer and a product or a company, stressing on the exchange of value that those interactions have, defining the distinction between the utilitarian value and hedonic value that a customer evaluate during the interaction with the company. The theme of the interaction thus results a focal point in the development of Customer Experience construct, Meyer & Schwager (2007) highlighted this concept by defining Customer experience as “the internal and subjective response customers have to any direct or indirect contact with a company”. It is thus possible to state that Customer Experience, which is developed through interactions between a customer and a company’s offer, generate value which is co-created and have a positive/negative impact on both sides, based on the type of experience provided by the company within the touchpoints within the customer journey. It must be also emphasized how Customer Experience is assumed to encompass all kind of interactions, both directs and indirects, while not being only the result of purchasing experience as stated by Pine & Gilmore (1998), the concept is perfectly summarized by Verhoef *et al.* (2009, p. 32): “the total experience, including the search, purchase, consumption, and after-sale phases of the experience”. Customer Experience takes a holistic perspective, it includes emotional and rational aspect and it is triggered by any kind of interaction, independently of the nature or form, it includes but is not limited to communication, service and consumption encounter (Schmitt *et al.*, 2014; De Keyser *et al.*, 2015).

1.4 - Brand Experience

“Most of the research on experiences to date has focused on utilitarian product attributes and category experiences, not on experiences provided by brands” (Brakus et al., 2009, p. 53). This evidence can be highlighted taking as example the construct of Customer Experience since, as conceptualized by scholars, is generated by a contact between a customer and a company and is thus based on experiences which relate to the interaction with the company’s offer, without a focus on the brand.

The first conceptual definition of Brand Experience is addressed to Brakus, Schmitt and Zarantorello paper “*Brand Experience: What Is It? How Is It Measured? Does It Affect Loyalty?*” (2009), where the researchers developed the framework and the relative brand experience scale in order to evaluate it.

Conceptualization of the construct of Brand Experience made by Brakus, Schmitt and Zarantorello (2009) is identified as the seminal work and starting point of research on the field since, based on a literature review of papers on “Brand Experience”, almost all research relied on the theoretical perspective of brand experience derived from their work (Andreini *et al.*, 2019).

The researches define Brand Experience as “subjective, internal consumer responses (sensations, feelings, and cognitions) and behavioral responses evoked by brand-related stimuli that are part of a brand’s design and identity, packaging, communications, and environments.” (Brakus et al., 2009, p.53), proposing a framework which delineate four experience dimensions, sensory, affective, intellectual and behavioral, that are evoked when a consumer is subject to brand-related stimuli. Brakus, Schmitt and Zarantorello (2009) are the first researchers to identify the importance and strategical implication of the construct of Brand Experience as they stated: “understanding how consumers experience brands is critical for developing marketing strategies for goods and services” (Brakus et al., 2009, p. 52).

Brand Experience can be stronger or weaker, positive or negative, affecting in a short or long-term consumer’s perception based on how strong is the trace in memory. Moreover, it is not possible to state that a specific stimulus would trigger a certain experience dimension (Brakus et al., 2009), for example seeing the colour of a brand could trigger sensory yet affective and intellectual experience too.

Brand Experience construct affects consumer brand satisfaction and brand loyalty, moreover, in order to function successfully as a predictor of brand satisfaction and loyalty the valence of a Brand Experience does not have to be known for Brand Experience, a stronger and more intense experience of a brand is in and of itself predictive of positive brand outcomes (Schmitt *et al.*, 2015).

It has been assessed the importance of Brand Experience construct, implying a new role for the brand: from being an identifier to a provider of experiences (Schmitt *et al.*, 2015), and it is therefore possible to understand the importance of that pioneering work based on the introduction made previously.

The importance of this work has not been identified just in the academic field, in fact based on a survey to 1000 Chief Marketing Officers made by Freeman (2017) , 59% of the respondents identified Brand Experience getting increased importance as a strategic asset to create ongoing relationships with consumers, taking up to 21-50% of their marketing budgets within the next five years (Andreini *et al.*, 2019).

In the next paragraph it will be defined the dimensions of Brand Experience construct, from the first conceptualization of Brakus, Schmitt and Zarantonello, to the successive evaluation and further researches made by scholars regarding the conceptualized dimensions and both antecedents and outcomes provided by the Brand Experience construct.

1.5 - Brand Experience dimensions

The first set of Brand Experience dimensions identified by Brakus, Schmitt and Zarantonello (2009) were the result of an investigation crossing philosophy, cognitive science and management disciplines.

Review starts from Dewey's (1922, 1925) assessment of experience which include Kantian intellectual experience view, yet adding perceiving, feeling and doing experience.

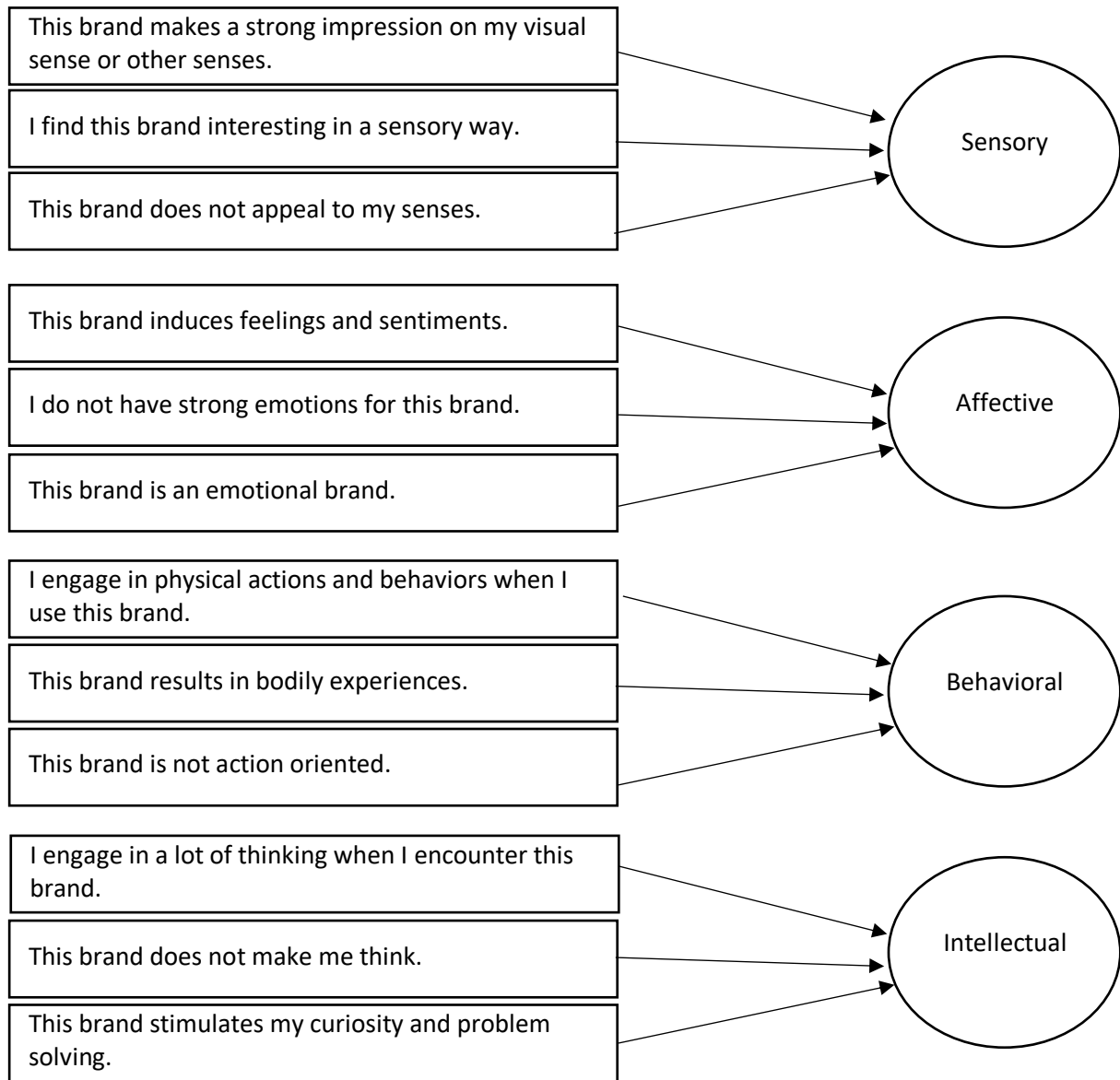
Following Dewey's perspective several research were developed identifying different set of dimensions of experience, Dubé and LeBel (2003) distinguish four "pleasure dimensions": intellectual, emotional, social, and physical pleasures, while Pinker (1997) identifies four "mental modules": sensory perception, feelings and emotions, creativity and reasoning, and

social relationships (Brakus et al., 2009). Schmitt's (1999) identification of five experiences: Sense, Feel, Think, Act and Relate was closely related to Dewey's (1922, 1925), Dubé and LeBel's (2003) and Pinker's (1997) works.

Brakus, Schmitt and Zarantonello (2009) Generated a Brand Experience scale able to validate the five dimensions based on Schmitt's set of experiences. The final model including Brand Experience dimensions (Sensory, Affective, Intellectual, Behavioral) and Brand Experience Scale, which resulted internally consistent and reliable after a set of tests, are showed in Table 3. While the first four dimensions were validated during tests, Relate dimension was denied because it was linked to emotional aspects and not confirmed during the following confirmatory tests. Each dimension is linked to different types of experience generation and are described as it follows:

- Sensory dimension is related to the generation of experience through connection between the brand and the five senses: sight sound, touch, taste and smell, it thus includes aesthetic and sensory elements (Schmitt, 1999; Brakus et al., 2009).
- Affective dimension is related to the generation of experience through creation of feelings and emotions linked to the brand (Schmitt 1999).
- Intellectual dimension is related to the generation of experience through connection between the brand and the cognitive sphere of consumers thanks to creativity engagement and problem-solving activities (Schmitt 1999).
- Behavioral dimension is related to the generation of experience through physical interaction with the brand (Schmitt 1999; Brakus et al., 2009).

Table 1.3: Brand Experience scale and dimensions



Source: Brakus J.J., Schmitt B.H., & Zarantonello L. (2009)

The first set of dimensions included in the Brand Experience model were at the basis of the majority of research studies over the topic in the following years (Oh et al., 2019). While almost all the papers used the concept of Brand Experience without critically analyse or extend the definition proposed by Brakus, Schmitt and Zarantonello (2009), focus of research by scholars has been the identification of antecedents and outcomes, studying the Brand Experience in different fields, furthermore few research tried to extend and discuss the original model they mainly adopted a positivist approach (Andreini et al., 2019). In order to

provide a better and complete understanding of Brand Experience concept it will be described the main findings which helped to move the initial model forward.

The focus of the analysis will cover the study over Relational dimension, the identified and validated Brand Experience antecedents and outcomes, and the discussion on Brand Experience within the online environment.

1.6 - Relational Dimension

Schmitt (1999), in his works *Experiential Marketing*, defined five dimensions including relational marketing as one of them. Relate Marketing was considered to have aspects of all four precedent dimensions (sense, feel, think, act), expanding beyond individual's personal feeling and relating him to something outside his private state (Schmitt, 1999).

Nysveen, Pedersen and Skard (2013) investigated the impact of Brand Experience on service brands. After validating the four dimensions of the model (sensory, intellectual, affective, behavioural), they assessed the importance of relational experience as an experiential dimension; the researchers highlighted 1) the necessity of relation and interaction, in a service-dominant logic, for co-creation of value and 2) how customers experience brands through these creations. Relational dimension and the other four dimensions were also identified and confirmed having positive impact on brand satisfaction, brand loyalty and brand personality.

Co-creation concept was defined as an interactive process between the company, brand and all stakeholders, allowing the customer to influence his own service experience so that it is adjusted to his specific context (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004; Merz et al., 2009). Finding of Nysveen, Pedersen and Skard (2013) on the importance of a relational dimension as predictive of customer satisfaction and loyalty and on relationships as key aspect in brand value creation were validated and highlighted through the years. Relational experiences were identified as a strategic asset in the form of customer-brand, customer-customer interactions about the brand or brand communities, in a future where digital social media and networks as well as the 'sharing economy' are growing (Schmitt et al., 2015). Moreover, if considering brand as a socially-constructed phenomenon, relational dimension allow consumers and

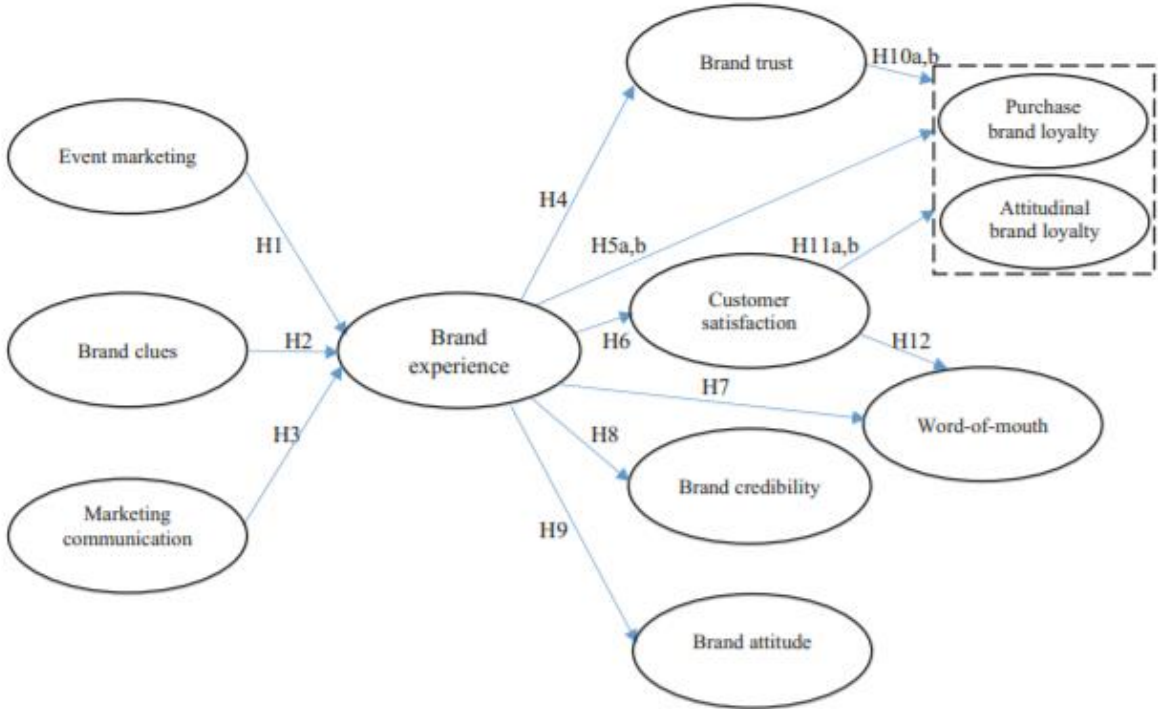
other actors to interact and connect to each-others, moving between psychological, social, cultural and market levels (Andreini et al., 2019).

1.7 - Brand Experience Antecedents

Brakus et al (2009), while developing their conceptual model for Brand Experience construct, stressed out the importance of identifying the antecedents, the brand-related stimuli, which trigger any of the brand experience dimension.

Main contribution on the study of this topic can be addressed to Khan’s and Fatma’s (2017) research, which can be defined as the first empirical research on identification of a model that includes and assess both antecedent and outcome variables of Brand Experience (Figure 2).

Figure 1.2: Conceptual model of Brand Experience



Source: I. Khan, M. Fatma, (2017)

Objective of the study was to provide understanding of the elements that generate brand experience and how Brand Experience influence consumer behaviour (Khan and Fatma, 2017).

The study focused on restaurant brands analysis and identified three main antecedents of Brand Experience: Event Marketing, Brand Cues and Marketing Communication.

1.7.1 - Event Marketing

Event Marketing is defined as 'the practice of promoting the interests of an organisation and its brands by associating the organisation with a specific activity' (Shimp 1993).

Event marketing refers to different forms of events such as: sponsorships, product launches, incentive/reward programmes, product sampling, conferences, roadshows, publicity events, charity fundraisers, competitions/contests, trade shows, exhibitions, corporate entertainment and product visitor attractions, moreover, pop-up shops and street events have also emerged as modes of "unconventional communication" that can be referred to as event marketing (Wood, 2009; Brioschi and Uslenghi, 2009).

Event Marketing can be viewed and perceived as an even more prominent efficient tactic among the experiential marketing environment, thanks to the characteristic of being pre-planned in fact it is possible for marketers to have an increased control, planning and facilitating the kind of experience that could be generated, for example the marketer can control the time of the event and also it's location (Crowther, 2011).

Whelan and Wohlfeil (2006) highlighted an important difference between Event Marketing and classic marketing communication, in particular event sponsorship; the difference stands by the identification of 4 constitutive features for Event Marketing: experience-orientation, self-initiation, interactivity and dramaturgy. The concept behind this differentiation is related to the active role of customers within the context, and the interactivity between themselves and the brand resulting from it, facilitating the rooting of multi-sensual brand experiences.

Taffesse (2016), in his study on Brand Experience within event marketing context, identified the main characteristics of event marketing: high audience involvement, novelty, experiential richness and spatial/temporal transiency; moreover, the scholar defined three main implication coming from his research. Firstly, the study highlighted the effect of consumer interaction with physical and social space where brands are embedded. Secondly, Brand Experience is subjective, meaning that consumers interacting with the same brand in the same event will experience the brand differently from each other. Thirdly, Brand Experience is

referred as a co-creation phenomenon provided by active interaction between brand cues and consumer (Taffesse, 2016).

Table 1.4: Characteristics of Event Marketing

Whelan and Wohlfeil (2006)	
Experience-orientation	As personal lived experiences tend to be stronger than ‘second-hand’ media experiences in determining consumers’ notion of reality, consumers are encouraged to experience the brand reality as active participants rather than being passive recipients and, subsequently, are offered a contribution to their subjective quality of life.
Self-initiation	Because event marketing is aimed at influencing consumers emotionally by staging self-initiated marketing events, the marketer is in full control of the way in which sensual brand experiences are anchored in the world of consumer feelings and experiences.
Interactivity	In contrast to the monological provision of information in classic marketing communications, event-marketing offers a platform for interactive and personal dialogues between participants, spectators and brand representatives.
Dramaturgy	In order for consumers to emotionally experience the lived brand reality, it requires a unique and creative dramaturgy that, similarly to a theatre play, brings the brand image to life and captures the imagination of the target audience. Therefore, the more the event marketing strategy differs from consumers’ everyday life experiences, the higher the degree of activation among consumers.
Taffesse (2016)	
High audience involvement	Event marketing tools, such as trade shows, pop-up brand stores and sponsored events are seamlessly integrated into consumers’ everyday environment and it is often consumers that make the effort to approach marketers. Because of this, consumers tend to perceive event marketing as less intrusive, motivating them to get involved in the events and interact with the companies behind them (Altschwager et al., 2013; Martensen et al., 2007).
Novelty	Novelty can indeed be considered the essence of event marketing as bringing the audience into a lively engagement with a unique set of concepts, ideas, and activities constitutes the heart of event marketing (Drenger et al., 2008; Wood, 2009).
Experiential richness	Consumers are able to explore brands closely, touching and feeling products and interacting with brand representatives, while immersing themselves in the stimulating physical and social space in which brands are situated (Close et al., 2006; Crowther & Dunlan, 2011; Rinallo et al., 2010; Taffesse et al., 2014).

**Spatial/temporal
transiency**

Event-based promotions are spatially and temporally transient as they take place in an interim location and last for a few days (Tafesse & Korneliusson, 2012).

Source: Whelan and Wohlfeil (2006); Tafesse (2016)

Khan and Fatma (2017) identify event marketing as an important antecedent of brand experience because it provides a direct and more lively interaction and deal with the brand (Whelan and Wohlfeil, 2006), in line with Zarantonello and Schmitt (2015) study on event marketing and brand equity, finding that brand experience plays a mediating role in generating brand equity through event attendance.

1.7.2 - Brand Cues

Cues were defined by Crane and Clarke (1998) as “a characteristic event, quality, or object that is external to the consumer that is encoded and used to categorize a stimulus object”.

While Veale et al (2006) described products and services as bundles of attributes used as ‘cues’ by consumers to shape opinions of expected or experienced product quality, Berry et al. (2006) stated that clues create the service experience by influencing customers’ thoughts, feelings and behavior.

The researchers identified three types of clues: Functional, Mechanical and Humanic clues. Functional clues refer to the reliability and competence of the service, Mechanical presentation concern the sensory presentation of the service, while Humanic clues are related to the behavior and appearance of service providers (Berry et al., 2006).

Based on a literature review, Khan and Fatma (2017) summarize brand clues such as slogans and mascots, colors, shapes, design elements, packaging, brand name, customer billing, order and application forms, which have a direct and indirect effect in consumers’ experience with a brand. It can also be added to that list the COO (Country of Origin) which has been studied to affect consumer evaluation and perception of quality and value (Iyer and Kalita, 1997). For that reason brand cues were identified by Khan and Fatma (2017) as antecedent of Brand Experience.

1.7.3 -Marketing Communication

Khan and Fatma (2017), studied the impact of Marketing Communication impact, identifying it to have a positive influence in evoking Brand Experience. Indirectly supporting the study from Khan and Fatma (2017), the research made by Bapat (2020) which focused specifically on the role played by advertising in Brand Experience creation, highlighted the positive impact of advertisement leveraging on sensory, emotional and intellectual dimensions.

Communication can be defined as a process related to the exchange of ideas, information and feelings between two or more people (Mihart, 2012).

Within the process, it is possible to identify two main actors, the sender and the receiver. The sender's objective is to transmit a concept, idea or information to the receiver, in order to do so he will code the message using specific symbols and through specific channels. Objective of the sender is to understand the message received by decoding the message, he will then provide a specific feedback.

Keller (2001, p. 819) summarized marketing communications as "the means by which firms attempt to inform, persuade, incite, and remind consumers – directly or indirectly - about the brands they sell.", moreover it identified the strategic role played by marketing communication not only in providing information about the product offering but also adding additional meaning and value-creating association linking a brand to specific persons, places, experiences and things.

While Schmitt (1999) assessed that experience is required by consumers who face marketing communication, Tsai (2005) focused on the holistic consumer experience, suggesting that the model of Integrated Marketing Communication can be part of a set of functions able to maximize the experience by leveraging on sensory, emotional, social and intellectual dimensions, being capable of affecting the impression of the brand.

1.8 -Brand Experience Outcomes

After the development of the Brand Experience model and scale provided by Brakus, Schmitt and Zarantonello (2009), many different studies tried to examine the impact provided to other constructs. Andreini *et al.* (2019), based on a literature review, summarized previous

identification of the impact of Brand Experience in four macro categories defined as Behavioral, Relational, Cognitive and Performance consequences; However Amoroso (2019), after an exhaustive literature review on the main constructs related to experience, summarized the Brand Experience outcomes just supported by the studies of Khan and Fatma (2017) and de Olivera Santini *et al.* (2018).

It will be then discussed the outcomes found in recent years using the categorization provided by Andreini *et al.*(2019), yet in relation with my personal literature review of research papers from the publishing date of Brakus, Schmitt and Zarantonello (2009) paper which analysed and confirmed a positive influence of Brand Experience to specific constructs.

The main Behavioral construct defined as an outcome of Brand Experience was WoM (Word of Mouth) construct, a positive relationship between Brand Experience and WoM was identified and confirmed in different studies (Chen *et al.*, 2014; Khan and Fatma, 2017; de Olivera Santini *et al.*, 2018). WoM was defined as “informal, person-to-person communication between a perceived non-commercial communicator and a receiver regarding a brand, a product, an organization, or a service” by Walker (2001, p.63). Theoretical basis supporting the positive effect to WoM provided by Brand Experience relate to the confirmed tendency to share and communicate to others an experience if it is evaluated positively and generate pleasure (de Olivera Santini, 2018).

Many different studies analysed and confirmed brand loyalty, inserted within the Relational categorization (Andreini *et al.*, 2019), to be a consequence of Brand Experience construct. The relationship was first evaluated by Brakus, Schmitt and Zarantonello (2009) during the development of the model, finding of a positive relationship between the two constructs was then studied and confirmed by different scholars (Iglesias *et al.*, 2011; Nysveen *et al.*, 2013; Khan & Fatma, 2017; de Olivera Santini *et al.*, 2018). Brand loyalty was defined as “the biased (i.e. non-random), behavioural response (i.e. purchase), expressed over time, by some decision-making unit concerning one or more alternative brands out of a set of such brands, and is a function of psychological (decision making, evaluative) processes” (Jacoby & Chestnut, 1978, p.80). Studies explained how positive, memorable and unique experiences were able to create loyalty among customers, enhancing revisiting and positive predisposition towards the brand (Brakus *et al.*, 2009; Iglesias *et al.*, 2011; Nysveen *et al.*, 2013).

A second Relational construct which has been deeply studied and evaluated as an outcome of Brand Experience was Brand Trust (Ramaseshan and Stein, 2014; Khan and Fatma, 2017;

de Olivera Santini et al., 2018). Brand Trust can be defined as “the confident expectations about the brand's reliability and intentions in situations entailing risk to the consume” (Delgado-Ballester et al., 2001, p.43). Other than playing an important role in identification and prediction of future intentions by consumers, Brand Trust is based on previous types of experience had with the brand, it can be assessed then that the more positive and pleasurable an experience is perceived by a consumer the stronger will be the sense of trust towards the brand (Ramaseshan and Stein, 2014; de Olivera Santini, 2018).

Within the Cognitive/Emotional set, many different consequences of Brand Experience have been identified and validated by scholars, it is predictable how the experience stimuli provided by a brand could impact the mental and emotional processing of a consumer with respect to the subject's brand. Cleff, Lin and Walter (2014), through an empirical study on Starbucks retail stores in Taiwan, highlighted the positive impact of Brand Experience on Brand Image and Brand Awareness, in particular the researchers stressed on how the FEEL dimension was able to build and provide associations to the brand and reinforce brand recognition. Consumer Satisfaction was measured and confirmed to be a consequence of Brand Experience in the original model of Brakus, Schmitt and Zarantonello (2009); Moreover, the outcome has been identified in following studies, showing evidence that consumers receiving positive and developed Brand Experiences become more satisfied with the brand (Nysveen et al., 2013; Khan and Rahman, 2015b; Khan and Fatma, 2017).

Brand Attitude and Brand Personality constructs, identified as consequences of Brand Experience, have been confirmed in multiple types of researches (Brakus et al., 2009; Nysveen et al., 2013; Roswinanto and Strutton, 2014; Khan and Fatma, 2017).

Brand attitude is defined as “a relatively enduring, unidimensional summary evaluation of the brand that presumably energizes behavior” (Spears and Singh, 2004) and is highly related both to the cognitive and emotional sphere of an individual, through the processing of a stimulus which generates an evaluation towards the source it (Roswinanto and Strutton, 2014). It was confirmed that positive Brand Experience enhances a favourable judgement of consumers and their attitude towards the brand. (Roswinanto and Strutton, 2014; Khan and Fatma, 2017).

Brand personality construct was identified as an outcome of Brand Experience from the initial model developed by Brakus, Schmitt and Zarantonello (2009). Brand personality has been identified as “the set of human characteristics associated with a brand” (Aaker, 1997, p.347)

and the hypothesis formulated within the initial development of Brand Experience model (Brakus et al., 2009) stressed on the input role which can be played by Brand Experience within the associations' creation process of consumers towards the brand. Nysveen et al. (2013) not only confirmed the assumption that Brand Experience leads to brand personality associations development, but also highlighted how all dimensions of the model is able to provide a positive effect on brand personalities proposed by Aaker (1997): sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication, and ruggedness.

Brand equity is a term that has been defined in multiple ways in the last decades, Aaker (1991, p.18) summarized the brand equity as "set of assets such as name awareness, loyal customers, perceived quality and associations that are linked to the brand and add (or subtract) value to the product or service being offered". Evaluation of the direct impact of Brand Experience on brand equity has been the focus of few researches. Lin's (2015) study over six airlines showed how the different dimensions of Brand Experience construct directly affected brand equity. Hepola, Karjaluoto and Hintikka (2017) demonstrated the indirect effect of sensory Brand Experience, influencing consumer brand engagement and the direct effect on brand equity. Another evaluation of the influence of sensory Brand Experience has been done within the banking sector by Iglesias, Markovic and Rialp (2019), putting evidence on how it is necessary to create customer satisfaction and commitment with the brand in order to turn sensory Brand Experience into brand equity.

The current paragraph summarized and discussed the most important, measured and confirmed Brand Experience outcomes in recent years. The summary was based on a personal literature review regarding the most prominent and influent papers found in academic journals. It is possible to observe and understand why the study of Brand Experience construct has been identified as a key academic construct in branding and marketing fields. It has been proved how strong experiences of a brand, which are perceived as pleasurable and positive by consumers, are of itself predictive of positive brand outcomes (Schmitt et al., 2015). Brand Experience is able to create and enhance the consumer-brand relationship, it influences consumer attitude and can provide an understanding on consumer behaviors. Consumers, thanks to the strong emotional bond created with the brand resulting from being subject to a specific experience, can directly and indirectly add additional value to the brand himself. As Phillips and McQuarrie (2010, p.370) stated "the brand experience literature indicates that

positively valanced evaluative judgments are not required to achieve positive outcomes for the brand. Intensity of experience provides an alternative route”.

1.9 -Online Brand Experience

Digital revolution provided a drastic change in marketing. Consumers are now more than ever “aware subjects” thanks to the huge flow of information which is easily accessible through many different instruments such as computers, telephones, tablets, smart TVs and even gaming consoles. The main consequence of this change is the reduction of sensibility towards marketing operations generated from the companies.

In a dynamic environment like the digital one, consumption behavior saw a disruptive change; it has been defined the shift from the classical funnel to the conceptualization of the so-called consumer decision journey (Court et al., 2009).

The traditional funnel was used to divide the consumption pattern into different phases, but it emerged that failed to capture all touchpoints and key buying factors for consumers. Nowadays consumers not only evaluate with higher attention the set of brands (given the amount of data available which allow them to collect more information), but the loyalty towards the brands is significantly reduced, nowadays brands which are within the initial consideration set are in fact threatened by competitors with a low level of brand awareness that can constantly insert themselves in the middle of the evaluation during the purchasing process.

It is therefore necessary for brands to engage consumers and unleash an interaction that can enhance a positive experience with the brand. As Ha and Perks (2005, p.440) stated: “customers expect websites to offer them not just a message, but also a positive experience”. Online environment (and social networks specifically) allows consumers to reach a further level of interaction not only between them and the brand, but also in between them. The consequence of this higher degree of interaction, if leveraged by the company, can determine the development of user-generated content which has great value for the company since it is spontaneous and it is thus seen by other users has more trustable.

To manage the community following the brand, objective of the company should focus on generating high level content (hub and hero contents as defined by Google), in order to give

authority to the brand and keep users engaged. Google describe hub content as the basic content scheduled in order to provide a day to day interaction with the brand, it keeps the interest of the audience regularly and does not require huge effort in its development, while hero content refer to disruptive content which becomes memorable for a long period of time, providing continuous flow of interaction also enhancing brand image and brand awareness (<https://www.thinkwithgoogle.com/marketing-strategies/video/schedule-your-content/>).

As summarized by Petit et al. (2019), the progress made by technology allow a company-user interaction where consumers are fully embodied in the digital environment, generating positive online experiences through perfected image, video and sound inputs and sensory interfaces such as virtual and augmented reality.

Brakus, Schmitt and Zarantonello (2009) described the Brand Experience model in the offline setting, without focusing on the impact of digital and mobile settings in evoking experience dimensions (Schmitt et al., 2015).

Morgan-Thomas and Veloutsou (2013) developed an integrative model of Online brand Experience in order to provide a better understanding on the role of experience with online brands. They defined Online Brand Experience as “the individual's internal subjective response to the contact with an online brand” (Morgan-Thomas & Veloutsou, 2013, p.6), being thus in line with the model developed by Brakus, Schmitt and Zarantonello (2009); Moreover, the scholars identified as antecedents of Online Brand Experience the perceived usefulness of the brand and brand trust, but more importantly highlighted key outcomes such as brand relationship, which is generated from the over time positive interaction between the consumer and the online brand (Morgan-Thomas & Veloutsou, 2013).

Relationship is also evaluated as an outcome in the study of Yoon and Youn (2016), where Brand Experience is identified as having a mediating role when accounted for the effects of perceived interactivity of a website on relationship quality with the brand.

In an ever-changing environment such as the digital one, generating emotive Brand Experience results in a key weapon for companies who wants to keep the attention of consumers and create connections that go over the classic functional benefits of the brand.

Chapter 2. *The Food and Beverage Market: Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow*

2.1 – Introduction to the chapter

The field in which the construct of Brand Experience will be analysed is the Italian Food and Beverage market.

For that reason it appears necessary to provide an exhaustive understanding of the main characteristics of the market, through a research on the actual trends of growth it will be highlighted its performance and the impact generated by the virus COVID-19.

Once a complete picture on the status of the Food and Beverage market is developed, the focus will shift on the definition of the main drivers of consumption for consumers, first by summarizing them in different topics and then providing a more focused analysis, allowing to comprehend the elements that can positively or negatively impact the diet choices of a person.

The last part of the chapter will specifically regard the Osservatorio Immagino (2020) analysis on the Italian trends of consumption, providing a deep understanding, based on sell-out data, on what are the current preferences of the Italian consumers how are they evolving and what are the possible alimentation trends of the next years.

The result will be an interesting outcome on what are the trends of consumption, the ingredients and nutritional values that guide Italians nowadays, and relative reactions of companies in the implementations of products with the specific recipes requested, through a correlated analysis on the claims used on the products.

2.2 - The Food and Beverage Italian sector snapshot

The Food and Beverage sector has always been solid and with low variances through the years. People can change their behaviour, habits and follow different trends while choosing foods or beverages, but it is possible to state that the consumption levels per person will not have drastic changes among the years.

Nowadays, taking in analysis the Italian sector of Food and Beverage, it has been calculated that it reached 200 billion euro of turnover in 2019 with an incidence of 2,2% of the PIL (The European House – Ambrosetti, 2020), an absolute record with respect to previous years that shows a positive predisposition of consumers towards the destination of their expenditure budget on food and beverage goods. There can be different reasons for this positive trend, starting from a rooted association between Italian food and excellence that has ancient and historical origins, which support and explain the 44,6 billions euro of turnover thanks to exportations, but also the presence of the highest number of DOP, IGP and STG certifications in the world, with 862 products on a total of 3.387 in the whole Europe (The European House – Ambrosetti, 2020).

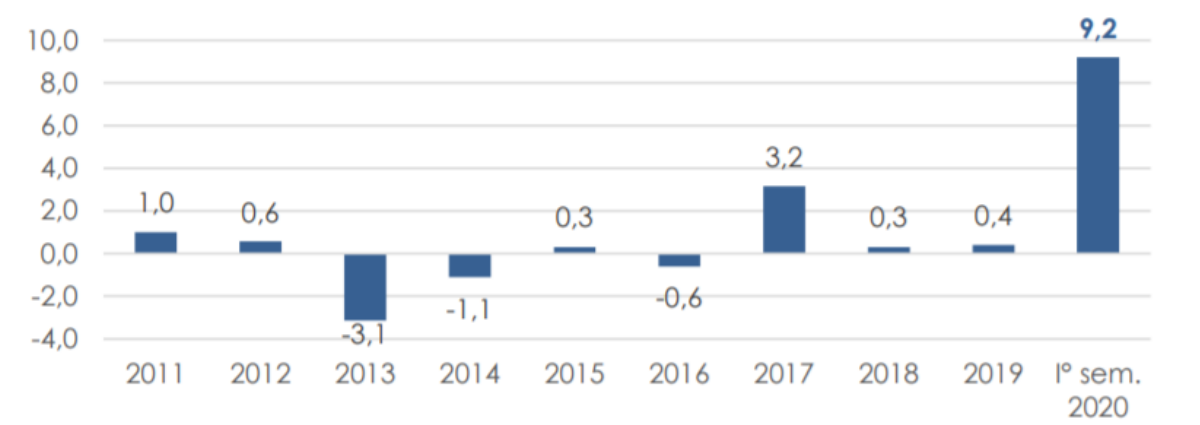
If we want to provide a complete picture of the actual situation of the sector, we must consider 2020 and the consequences of COVID-19. The global pandemic started to be under the spotlight from February 2020 and resulted in a global crisis which forced millions of people into quarantine, in order to avoid contacts and spread of the virus.

The connected result of this obliged quarantine was the reduction of expenditure on many different sectors due to decreases of income from families (job loss, redundancy fund), while it has been observed an exploit of domestic expenditure in the Food and Beverage sector (Figure 2.1). The first month after the quarantine a general anxiety of remaining with shelves of supermarkets empty made consumers race to collect as much food as possible in order to avoid the risk of being without it, generating a +18% on annual basis of domestic expenditures in the month of March, still record of the year (Ismea, 2020).

The following months of the first semester saw high percentage increases in domestic expenditure (+11% and +14% for April and May) while getting more stable after the end of quarantine during summer.

While stated during the introduction that the Food and Beverage sector is generally stable with reference to domestic expenditure, it is also possible to see how unique events can drastically change the trends also for a solid sector as this one.

Figure 2.1: Percentage variation of domestic expenditure of Food and Beverage products on annual basis



Source: Ismea-Nielsen, 2020

As previously described, the increase in domestic expenditure was connected to the forced quarantine and fear of remaining without food. The biggest role of this increase is certainly related to consumers packaged goods with a +11%, and a lower increase for fresh food with a +4% (Ismea, 2020).

The higher consumption of consumers packaged food is not only related to the previously explained reasons, but also to natural consequence of a reduction in expenditure in open markets and especially restaurants, which had to adapt to the new scenario and adjust the offer, increasing the home delivery services. It is possible to see in fact an increase in digital food delivery, which is now 20-25% of the total delivery market, while it was 19% in 2019 (JustEat, 2020).

Figure 2.2: Domestic expenditure: Packaged vs Fresh goods

	Var.% spesa I° semestre 2020 vs I° semestre 2019	Quote		Var.% spesa I° semestre 2020 vs I° semestre 2019	
		Totale su agroalimentare	di cui EAN	Prodotti EAN	Prodotti No EAN
	totale				
Totale agroalimentare	9,2	100,0	70,5	11,1	4,7
Generi alimentari	9,4	89,3	67,2	11,8	4,7
Bevande analcoliche e alcoliche	7,4	10,7	98,3	7,4	8,7

Source: Ismea-Nielsen, 2020

It is thus possible to understand a potential growth for Food and Beverage companies nowadays, facing a positive consumption predisposition due to the events that still nowadays are going on. In a healthy sector, which is getting bigger among the years, there are opportunities not only for new potential companies to enter, but also for consolidated companies and brands to ensure their leading position while still facing the challenge of being valuable choices over time for a consumer which is now, more than ever, open to new consuming trends and alternatives, how it will be seen in the next paragraphs.

2.3 - A historical view of food consumption

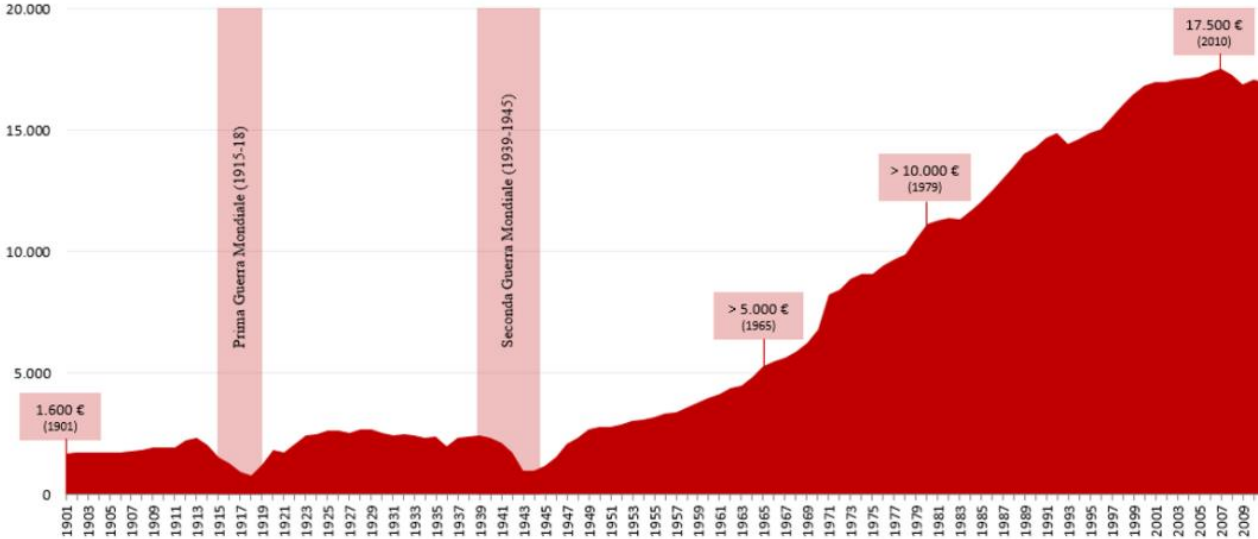
Food consumption and eating habits have been shifting continuously through the years, being the representative of different changes that happened in history such as: social, economic, demographical and technological.

Taking into consideration Italy and making an overview of the trends in food consumption from early 1900s many evidences can be assessed.

The last century can be divided into two main periods, before and after the Second World War. The first half of the century was mainly affected by the two World Wars and the economic crisis which happened in between them, with huge negative consequences on economic development, demographic growth and shortage of food. It has been estimated that during the first half of the century the individual per capita consumes on food was around

1600€ per year, around 1/10 of today’s expense (figure 2.3); Moreover, due to the low level of income, during that years the food consumption constituted 60% of the total expenditure per person, which was destined for the essential food of the Mediterranean diet: pasta, rice, fruits, vegetables potatoes and legumes (Coop, 2016).

Figure 2.3: Per capita consumes (values expressed in constant euros, year of reference: 2015)



Source: <https://www.italiani.coop/speciale-italiano-del-secolo/>

The trend started to change after the Second World War which allowed a gradual demographical development, also thanks to the so called “economic boom” which refers to the huge economic development that Italy had during the ‘50s and ‘60s. With the increased income and food availability Italians started to increase the total expense for it, while gradually reducing the percentage expenditure in relation to the total income, shifting the consumes on leisure goods (figure 2.4).

Figure 2.4: Historical composition of consumption per category (percentage)

Periodo	Alimentari, Bevande e Tabacchi	Vestitario e calzature	Abitazione	Energia elettrica, Gas e Combustibili	Mobili, Arredamento	Salute e Sanità	Trasporti e comunicazioni	Altro*	Totale
1901-1910	66,1	9,9	8,1	1,0	4,4	2,2	1,8	6,6	100,0
1911-1920	68,1	12,5	5,0	1,1	4,0	1,8	1,6	6,0	100,0
1921-30	64,6	13,3	5,6	1,4	4,1	1,9	2,7	6,4	100,0
1931-40	57,1	11,3	10,1	2,1	4,8	2,9	3,9	7,7	100,0
1941-50	66,2	11,5	3,5	1,8	5,0	3,4	2,9	5,8	100,0
1951-60	50,0	10,7	8,1	3,2	6,1	5,4	6,1	10,4	100,0
1961-1970	46,3	9,3	9,2	3,1	6,3	6,1	8,1	11,5	100,0
1971-1980	33,6	9,7	10,2	3,4	7,8	1,6	12,0	21,9	100,0
1981-1990	24,9	10,1	11,2	4,0	8,8	2,1	14,0	24,8	100,0
1991-2000	19,2	9,2	14,3	3,7	8,7	3,2	15,0	26,7	100,0
2001-2010	17,4	8,1	16,9	3,6	7,6	3,2	16,0	27,3	100,0
2011-2015	17,0	7,4	19,4	3,9	6,8	3,4	15,0	27,3	100,0

* comprende spese per il tempo libero, istruzione, cultura, alberghi e ristorazione, altri beni e servizi

Source: <https://www.italiani.coop/speciale-italiano-del-secolo/>

While it would appear as the opposite, it is really important to understand that income is not the only variable playing the game of changing the food consumption trends.

De Vries (1994, p. 265) explained the theory of “Industrious Revolution”, describing two of them, one from 1750 to the 1900 and the other after 1960s. The concept refer to household economy and its effects, in particular stating on the second Industrious Revolution that: “it occurs in an environment of stagnant or declined individual real wages and salaries; it is characterized by a rise in demand for market for market-supplied goods that minimize the addiction of domestic “value added” (chiefly time) before ultimate consumption; demand has shifted form family-consumed durables towards individualized consumption”.

The concept of industrious revolution can be associated to a huge shift in eating habits happened during the first decades after the Second World War, thanks to the technological development had in that period, which granted the introduction of new items that drastically changed the eating habits of people, such as the fridge, freezer and microwave. The consequence of the introduction of such technological items allowed the emergence of packaged foods, which had a huge success also to the cultural changes which made people shift from spending their time on cooking to spend their time on leisure and then eat food with low effort preparation effort.

In the last decades it has been possible to observe the so-called trend of “hyper-consumption” which has it’s roots in the capitalistic approach of western countries, even more emphasized

by the fall of Berlin's wall in 1989 and the by globalization. Consumerism refer, as described by Passini (2013, p. 370): "to economic policies that place an emphasis on consumption and to the belief that free choice by consumers should dictate a society's economic structure", within an economic perspective.

As supported by Bauman (2008), people live in continuous condition of lack of satisfaction, trying to fill it with non-necessary goods that reply to a request of new and unprecedented needs. This new form of consumption which was born in that time, was thus characterized by the dominance of excess, where consumers became less conscious and much more vulnerable to the stimuli provided by producers. Different types of new eating habits started to change, in particular from 2000s new trends and tasting changes can be observed, as it will be further described in the next paragraph.

It is possible to observe and confirm that changes in eating habits and food consumption are thus not just related to the economical availability which consumers have but also to social trends, demographical changes and standard of technology, affecting consumers behavior and choices. It will be showed a summary of which are the drivers guiding food purchase and consumption , based on a literature review of papers that both analyse the main drivers of consumption for food, and then the most relevant trends that are emerging nowadays, with a specific focus on Italy thanks to Osservatorio Immagino (2020), a report developed by GS1 based on Nielsen data on the volumes of food bought for each category, allowing the emergence of differences between previous years.

2.4 - Focus on food consumption drivers

Kearney (2010) in his research paper explained and discussed the food drivers and projected trends of food consumption to 2050 both globally and for different regions.

While it will not be taken into consideration the trends found by the scholar, it results of much interest the analysed drives. It must be stressed that Kearney (2010) did not focus an all the drivers found, but just on the ones related to the nutrition transition, topic of his paper. The seven drivers further analysed by the scholar were:

- Income
- Urbanization
- Trade Liberalization
- Transnational food corporations
- Retailing
- Food industry marketing
- Consumer attitudes and behaviour

Income has been found to be a specific driver in food consumption analysing regions and country with different economic development. In developed countries it has been analysed that a rising in incomes reflect an increase in high fat diets, taking into example countries such as Mexico, Brazil and China which saw a shift in animal-based foods and processed foods; in China the average expenditure for meat increase by 30% between 1978 and 1997 while poverty declined by 20% to 6% (Kearney, 2010).

In developed countries such as UK and USA, the effect of increased income can be considered to have a good effect in food consumption, allowing diets that have beneficial effects to healthcare, decreasing morbidity and mortality.

A shift in food consumption between low, middle and high income has been also evaluated by Traill et al. (2014), asserting a transition to processed food and away from home consumption moving from low to middle income, while highlighting a shift in demand for luxury and healthier foods for high level income, reducing the consumption of meat and fats.

A common point can be derived regarding how income guide food consumption: people with higher income are generally well educated and can adopt a healthy lifestyle because they can sustain the higher expense related to such foods, in contrast less educated people with lower income have fewer food choices, limiting their access to nutritional education even if they would be willing to eat more healthier foods (Kearney, 2010).

Another defined driver of food consumption is urbanization, which was a consolidated phenomenon in developed countries but that is striking almost all the globe nowadays. People leave rural areas and move to the cities which become bigger as time goes on, or the rural areas themselves start a process of urbanization.

In relation to food consumption, consequences of the urbanization are generally the increase in consumption of food high in salt, sugar and fat (Kearney, 2010). The United Nations

Environment Programme (2012) used the term “nutrition transition” to describe the phenomenon by which even for low income people it is seen an increase in nutrition-dense food consume thanks to the greater availability granted by the urbanization. In urbanized areas food is easily accessible and people have many alternatives of choice, which are also leveraged by marketing and communication actions. Thanks to that people living in an urbanized area are more vulnerable to action from companies and easy to drive in buying specific categories of products.

A phenomenon representative of urbanization is fast food consumption, which does not provide a correct nutrition since they generally contain a high level of fat and salt; fast food became popular for the easy access to it and the relative low price, starting with the hamburgers, now represent a wider category of food, from pizza to tacos and fried chicken (Kearney, 2010).

Trade liberalization is considered to affect food consumption through the decrease of barriers and increase in foreign investments. Food supply has changed during years, and now more than ever it is possible to observe a huge availability at low prices of unhealthy foods, rich in calories and fat while being nutrient poor, increasing the desirability for consumers, moreover thanks to the increased number of supermarkets and multinational manufacturers consumers have a higher number of alternatives for products, which were one unavailable (Kearney, 2010; ; Traill et al., 2014).

As previously explained transnational food corporations are considered driver of food consumption since are provider processed foods and are connected to fast food. Moreover, it is observed how companies are also creating processed version of traditional dishes of specific regions, transforming them in high-calories versions easily available and with low prices, especially in fast food (Kearney, 2010).

How retailing drive food consumption is easily understandable. The more developed is the retailing system the more food accessibility there is for consumers, in terms of food alternatives, prices and effort to get it. Supermarkets are now spreading in developing countries as well, and are shaping in order to fit also in rural areas, granting access to a higher percentage of consumers that are now able to buy products which were previously unavailable, it is the example of safe milk in Brazil which became available for the poor thanks to supermarkets (Kearney, 2010).

Food marketing has had a substantial influence in the way food consumption changed. As stated by Willet (2002), TV advertising is identified to be the most impactful single factor in children obesity in USA, supporting this theory it is possible to observe the effect that marketing, together with government subsidies, had a huge effect in the shift between beverage consumption. In 1945 in fact Americans drank more than four times milk than carbonated soft drinks, while thanks to aggressive marketing campaigns and subsidies after 50 years the consumption trend shifted to carbonated soft drinks, being drank two and half times more than milk (Kearney, 2010).

Also consumer attitudes and behaviors play a relevant role in shaping and shifting the food consumption trends.

While nowadays it is emerging a more sustainable food consumption pattern, thanks to the increasing number of information available for consumers such as production processes, traceability and type of ingredients used, it must be considered that food consumption is also a social activity, and people do not always eat or desire to eat just what they need to, but these factors are influenced by the environment in which they are embedded, leading food consumption to be representative of social status (Kearney, 2010).

2.5 - Food consumption trends in Italy

In order to define what are the food trends that are taking place in Italy at the moment, one of the best instruments which is able to take an effective snapshot of consumption behavior is the analysis of the Osservatorio Immagino Nielsen GS1 Italy (2020).

GS1 is a global organization that offers different ranges of product and services aimed at improving efficiency and visibility of supply and demand chains, while Nielsen Holdings is a measurement and data analytics company that provides view of both consumers and markets worldwide.

Within the report Osservatorio Immagino (2020) it is possible to observe the goods sold data, especially of FMCG (fast moving consumer goods) industry, collected through retail measurement service, consumer panel and TV-internet panel mixing with the analysis of different variables such as nutritional labels, claims and certification of the products, allowing a broad picture of what are the categories leading the trends or losing ground.

An interesting statistical product developed by Osservatorio Immagino (2020) is the so-called “Metaprodotto”, which is used to summarise in a nutritional terms the basket of food and beverage products bought by Italians in hypermarkets and supermarkets through elaboration of nutritional labels of more than 67.660 products and thus highlighting the changes in diets and food consumption trends.

As it is possible to see in figure 2.5, 2019 highlights the rising of proteins and fibers, correlated to the fall of carbohydrates and sugar.

Figure 2.5: Metaprodotto Immagino

METAPRODOTTO IMMAGINO	VALORI MEDI	TREND % VALORI MEDI 2019 VS 2018	TREND % VALORI MEDI 2018 VS 2017
Energia (kcal)	180,8	-0,5	-0,1
Proteine (g)	6,4	1,5	0,4
Carboidrati (g)	20,2	-2,1	-0,1
di cui zuccheri totali (g)	8,0	-3,0	-1,6
Grassi (g)	8,7	0,6	0,1
di cui grassi saturi (g)	2,9	0,3	0,0
Fibre (g)	2,0	0,3	2,4

Source: Osservatorio Immagino (2020)

While carbohydrates are still at the centre of the Italian diet, it is possible to observe a decreasing trend from previous years, with a -2,1% to 2018 and a -1,6% between 2018 and 2017. In particular the decrease is enhanced to the consistent fall regarding sugar, due to a lower rate of purchase not only of sugar as product, but also of ice creams, fruit juices and carbonated soft drinks (Osservatorio Immagino, 2020). As it will be further seen later it is evident how the decrease in sugar consumption is becoming a certified reality since it is increasing the number of companies adapting their offer to more sugar free products.

As previously stated, proteins are becoming more important within the diet of Italians, being the third component of the Metaprodotto, with a positive +1,5% to previous year.

This increase is due to a higher preference for food products that were seen as tasty but not enough healthy, now gaining more trust from consumers; It is the example of parmesan, cold cuts or dried fruit (Osservatorio Immagino, 2020).

While the Metaprodotto has been used to take a snapshot of the actual composition in terms of nutritional factor for the general Italian diet, it will be now further discussed the presence and rise of different food trends:

- “free from”
- Healthy lifestyle
- Beneficial ingredients
- Rich in

The “free from” category include food and beverage products which claim on their labels the total absence or a lower presence of some ingredients, of which the most common are “senza zucchero”, “poche calorie”, “senza olio di palma”, “senza OGM” and “senza conservanti”.

In 2019 the total of food products being part of this category generated 6,8 billions of euro of sell-out, with an impact of 26,6% on the total food market, with an increase of the number of such products being offered in the market, with a +1,4% to 2018 and a total of 13.153 products on the shelves (Osservatorio Immagino 2020).

As it is showed by figure 2.6 not all the claims have registered a positive trend, in particular is the case of “senza conservanti” and “senza coloranti”, while still being some of the most common claims on pack.

Figure 2.6: “Free from”category snapshot

	% PRODOTTI	% VENDITE IN VALORE	TREND % VENDITE IN VALORE 2019 vs 2018	TREND % VENDITE IN VALORE 2018 vs 2017
Senza conservanti	6,1	10,2	-2,8	-4,0
Senza olio di palma	3,9	7,1	1,6	3,8
Pochi grassi	4,1	6,0	-0,8	-1,5
Senza coloranti	2,9	3,7	-1,2	-5,8
Pochi zuccheri	2,8	3,2	7,6	5,1
Senza additivi	1,7	2,2	2,7	3,6
Senza glutammato	0,9	1,5	4,9	4,8
Senza zuccheri aggiunti	1,6	1,5	9,1	5,4
Senza OGM	1,4	1,4	-4,0	1,6

Source: Osservatorio Immagino (2020)

Two more dynamic claims which have a positive trend refer to the “Senza zuccheri aggiunti” and “Pochi Zuccheri” with a +9,1% and +7,6% in sell-out to previous year, registering an increase in the total number of products adopting them since, in particular fruit juices, jams and yogurt (Osservatorio Immagino, 2020).

The healthy lifestyle category refers to food and beverage products which claims to be suitable for specific lifestyles that are closer to the concept of healthiness and sustainability such as “Bio”, “Vegetariano”, “Vegano”; The total number of products included in the category are 11.307 and constitutes the 10% of the food market in value with 2.959 million of euro of sales with a positive trend of 3,9% to 2018 (Osservatorio Immagino, 2020).

The healthy lifestyle trend is one of the most important and consistent of recent years and, as it is possible to observe in figure 2.7, are still having margin of growth nowadays, in particular with reference to Veg and Bio products.

Figure 2.7: Healthy lifestyle category

	% PRODOTTI	% VENDITE IN VALORE	TREND % VENDITE IN VALORE 2019 vs 2018	TREND % VENDITE IN VALORE 2018 vs 2017	PRESSIONE PROMO
Bio	9,5	3,8	2,1	6,4	20,3
Veg	5,1	5,3	4,5	5,8	33,3
Kosher	1,7	2,1	2,0	3,9	43,5
Halal	0,5	0,5	2,0	29,0	35,0

Source: Osservatorio Immagino (2020)

Bio products represent the 9,5% of the total food products, and while the increasing trend in sell-out is lower than previous years (+2,1% vs 6,4%) the offer still get wider (Osservatorio Immagino, 2020).

People nowadays are becoming more aware and sensible towards the production processes, the environmental, social and economic impact of each product they consume, closely relating on their purchasing choices. They thus buy Bio products not only because they are perceived as healthier, but also for the limited impact provided especially to the environment and workers.

The second main player of the category is Veg, which include both Vegan and Vegetarian products.

Veg is the segment which had the highest impact in sales, representing the 5,3% of the total of food products sold (Osservatorio Immagino, 2020).

Vegan products are more spread in distribution than Vegetarian ones with around 3.000 products, and are the one providing a higher trend in products offering with a +5,1%, however, it must be observed how Vegetarian products have a higher impact than Vegan on the total of food products sold in 2019 (Osservatorio Immagino, 2020).

A strong trend which became present in recent years refer to the rising attention and appreciation of consumers to products which have particular good properties for the human body, it is the category of the so-called beneficial products.

This segment still has a low impact to the market representing just the 5,1% of the total sell-out with 1.301 million euro, and even if the positive trend is not much high (just +2,7% to 2018), there are some interesting products and ingredients which are becoming viral, as it is possible to observe in figure 2.8 (Osservatorio Immagino, 2020).

Figure 2.8: Beneficial products

	% PRODOTTI	% VENDITE IN VALORE	TREND % VENDITE IN VALORE 2019 vs 2018	TREND % VENDITE IN VALORE 2018 vs 2017	PRESSIONE PROMO
Superfruit	3,1	2,6	5,3		31,2
Mandorla	1,5	1,3	6,7	7,7	32,1
Mirtillo	1,0	0,8	4,6	1,3	30,8
Cocco	0,5	0,3	3,3	9,7	28,9
Acqua di cocco	0,0	0,0	7,4		27,3
Avocado	0,0	0,0	92,9	121,0	12,7
Supercereali/ Farine	2,2	1,0	-4,5		24,2
Avena	0,6	0,7	7,2	10,1	31,1
Farro	1,2	0,6	-1,4	2,3	24,8
Quinoa	0,6	0,2	-0,4	6,0	19,2
Kamut	0,3	0,1	-12,6	-16,3	17,3
Farina di riso	0,2	0,2	-1,3	-0,8	34,7

Source: Osservatorio Immagino, 2020

Osservatorio Immagino started in 2016 the analysis of the ingredients that were perceived as synonymous of wellness, care of the body and healthiness, identifying 13 ingredients; in just four years the number increased to 26, evidence of the importance of the trend(Osservatorio Immagino, 2020).

It is possible to observe different products with negative trends, such as kamut or spelt, evidencing a decrease in predisposition to buy the super grains, with the exception of oat with a +7,1% of sell-out, being very popular nowadays as main ingredient of the “healthy breakfast” as puddings and breakfast bowls (Osservatorio Immagino, 2020).

At the meantime there are specific products that are registering a huge boost and are now becoming viral, it is the case of the avocado with a +92,9% to 2018 becoming a trendy ingredient, used for breakfast or light break (Osservatorio Immagino, 2020).

2019 has also been the year of seeds, which saw the total offer of products increase by 17,7% supporting the +28,5% register at sell-out, performing positively both as whole products and ingredients for products that are shaping their offer in order to include them, an exhaustive example are crackers, which registered a +161% in sell-out thanks to the implementation of seeds (Osservatorio Immagino, 2020).

The last category that will be examined is the Rich in. This segment represents a wide range of products which claim a higher presence of specific components such as “con vitamine”, “omega 3”, “ricca di fibre” or “integrale”.

The segment has now an incidence of 11,9% the total sell-out of food products, with a positive trend of 2,4% to 2018, moreover it is getting more attention to companies that are continuously increasing the offer in order to include such claims in their products (Osservatorio Immagino, 2020).

As it is possible to observe in figure 2.9, the most important claim is fibre, which increased the already positive performance of 2018, with a registered +6,3% of sell-out but in general all the components of the segment reacted positively, sign of an increased an established predisposition from consumers to buy products granting additional nutritional values (Osservatorio Immagino, 2020).

Figure 2.9: Rich In products

	% PRODOTTI	% VENDITE IN VALORE	TREND % VENDITE IN VALORE 2019 vs 2018	TREND % VENDITE IN VALORE 2018 vs 2017	PRESSIONE PROMO
Fibre	4,5	3,6	6,3	5,8	27,6
Vitamine	2,7	3,1	-1,1	-2,5	27,8
Integrale	2,5	2,7	4,3	7,7	31,5
Calcio	1,0	1,9	-2,8	-2,5	33,2
Fermenti lattici	0,6	1,2	3,8		37,3
Omega 3	0,7	1,0	2,4	1,9	34,4
Ferro	0,6	0,5	-11,5	1,9	26,4
Potassio	2,9	3,1	5,7		32,9
Proteine	0,3	0,2	7,4		20,9

Source: Osservatorio Immagino, 2020

Though this exhaustive analysis it was possible to let emerge the main consumption preference of Italians, with focus on not only the products, but also to their attributes, such as the ingredient list and the nutritional values provided.

Thanks to the confrontation of data to the previous years a comprehensive picture of how consumption will evolve.

It must also be stressed the importance of the data that refers to sell-out, which provide high quality information since relate directly to the buying behavior of the consumers.

Chapter 3: An example of brand experience development: The Campari Case Study

3.1 - The Company

Campari is the 6th biggest company in the premium spirits industry, reaching a total of net sales of 1.842,5€ million in FY 2019 (Campari Group Corporate Presentation, 2020).

The Italian company was born in thanks to the invention of Gaspare Campari of the iconic red bitter Campari in 1860, but only in 1904 the first plant opened in Sesto San Giovanni, quickly gaining success thanks to its flagship product, which started the new trend of the aperitif, also thanks to the opening of the iconic “Camparino” bar in Milan in 1915.

After years of success through organic growth, In 1995 the company moved its first steps into the external growth pattern, starting a series of target acquisitions during the subsequent years; nowadays the company owns more than 50 brands such as Aperol, Grand Marnier, Wild Turkey and Crodino, differentiating its brand portfolio and being present in different segments of the premium spirits industry (Campari Group Corporate Presentation, 2020). The group now counts 22 production plants and a capillary presence on 190 markets worldwide with a complete product and brand offer (<https://www.camparigroup.com/>).

The company is right now pursuing a corporate strategy of growth divided in organic and external, which allowed to almost double the total net sales during last decade, specifically: Organic growth strategy refers to the leverage of the global priorities for 6 of the most important brands of the company portfolio: Campari, Grand Marnier, Aperol, Appleton Estate, Wild Turkey and SKYY, as well as the regional priorities for more local brands.

With reference to these priorities, focus of the company is to develop a strong brand building, leveraging on the history that each of the brands own yet maintaining a degree of innovation and periodical renewals (Campari Group Corporate Presentation, 2020).

Figure 3.1: Campari's brands



Source: Campari Group Corporate Presentation, 2020

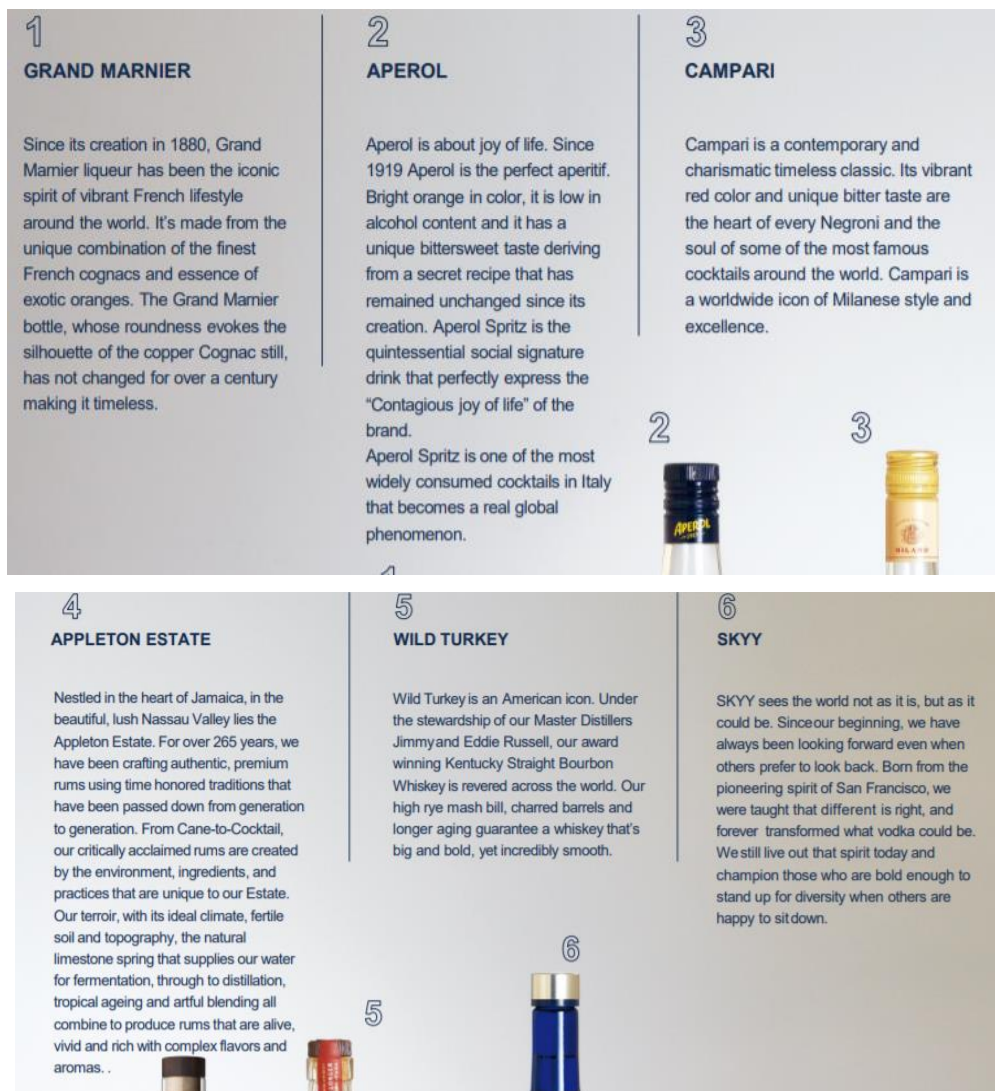
External growth's strategy focus on strategic acquisitions for the corporate, not only in order to differentiate the brands portfolio and be present in all the premium spirits segments, but also analysing the geographical opportunities with reference to Campari's distribution. Campari looks for acquisitions in markets where it already controls directly the distribution, but also evaluate local brands where the company does not have the distribution platform, in order to gain a strategical advantage (Campari Group Corporate Presentation, 2020).

As previously said while the brands portfolio of the group is big, the group gives focus on 6 global priorities for some of the most important brand which owns.

The group wants to leverage on the assets that each one of the brands brings with him, as it is possible to observe in Figure 3.2. It is essential to observe how the group during the years acquired different brands for different categories but with a common line: the heritage. Each one of these brands in fact leverage on its historical asset and the expertise that comes from it: Brand Heritage has been used to decline as well another common point in the brands strategies of the Company, the association of drinking with lifestyle, as it will be specifically observed with Campari brand focus; it is the case of Grand Marnier which represent the vibrant French lifestyle around the world or SKYY vodka being synonym of elegance, refinement and style.

In conclusion not only all the brands of the group portfolio have a well defined brand management behind them, as it is possible to see in the picture where in just few words people can easily understand the brand positioning and its essence, but also the experience concept is present for each one of the brands, pointing out how much it is important for the group the construction of strong bounds with its customers, or even with a more wider perspective, with its stakeholders.

Figure 3.2: Campari's global priorities



Source: Campari Group Corporate Presentation, 2020

3.2 - Campari Brand Analysis

In the sequent paragraph it will be examined Campari brand, firstly by providing an exhaustive description of its history and then by providing an understanding of its Brand Positioning, Identity and Architecture, in order to have a complete understanding of its Brand Experience strategy.

Campari was born in 1860 by Gaspere Campari and had its first plant in 1904, but is from 1915 that the brand quickly became a symbol of Milan, thanks to the opening in the city centre "Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II" of the famous Camparino Bar, still open nowadays

(<https://www.campari.com/it/inside-campari/the-history>). The red bitter saw the birth of two of the most famous drinks in the history, the Americano and Negroni, which in the 1920s have been officially listed by IBA (International Bartender Association) as part of the “unforgettable” drinks.

While the product was becoming an icon as main ingredient of famous drinks, the brand started its bound to the world of art, which will part of the Campari brand essence though the years, thanks to partnerships with famous artists, starting from Leonetto Cappiello and the iconic “Lo Spiritello” as shown in figure 3.3.

Figure 3.3: “Lo Spiritello” by Leonetto Cappiello



Source: <http://www.campari.com/inside-campari/campari-gallery%23the-art>

During the years numbers of manifests and advertisements designed by artists reached a huge success, which are now part of the collection within the Campari Gallery, furthermore with the rise of cinema and tv the brand started to collaborate with some of the best directors of the world to create unforgettable spots, Campari in fact was on of the few brands to collaborate with Federico Fellini for a tv commercial, called “Che bel paesaggio”. It is

interesting to analyse the spot; the protagonists are a girl and a boy in a train, the girl is annoyed and through a remote controller tries to change the landscape that she sees. While changing landscape to different famous locations (Egypt's pyramids , Grand Canyon) still annoyed, the other person in the train takes the remote controller and switches the landscape to Pisa, where near the famous tower the iconic bottle of Campari takes place, as a piece of art, highlighting the association of the brand to this world.

Thanks to the association to art and style of the brand and the use of the product for high classes aperitifs and events in Milan, Campari as a brand became the symbol of style, elegance and high social status.

In 1990s the Brand introduced its iconic payoff "Red Passion" which is still nowadays used, the payoff was part of a new brand positioning and advertisement campaign which focused on 4 values: Passion, Cosmopolitan Approach, Uniqueness, Prestige; during the years those values and the positioning saw some changes, as now the "Red Passion" is identified by 3 keywords: Passion, Instinct and Creativity (<http://www.campari.com/it>).

Figure 3.4: Campari Red Passion's visual



Source: <http://www.campari.com/it>

It is now necessary a further focus on Campari's Brand Positioning, in order to provide an understanding of how the brand is perceived in customer's minds. Brand positioning has been defined as "the act of designing the company's offering and image to occupy a distinctive place in the mind of the target market. The end result of positioning is the successful creation of a

customer-focused value proposition, a cogent reason why the target market should buy the product” (Kotler, 2003, p. 308).

Through Brand Positioning definition it is possible to highlight the PoPs and PoDs (point of parity and points of difference), so what are the functional/emotional benefits that the brand can provide to the consumers compared to the competition in order to be a concrete offering in the marketing and what are the elements that differentiate the brand to the others.

It is absolutely clear that Campari is perceived as a brand full of history, which leverage on its artistic and historical heritage on different elements of its marketing mix, from the secret recipe of the bitter which is still unchanged from over 100 years, moving the packaging of its iconic bottle which saw little to no changes during the years, to the communication that focus on artistic and stylish associations. Campari is also recognized as the ambassador of mixology, being present on various different drinks recipes officially recognised by IBA.

Campari is thus perceived as a traditional/vintage brand, trustable and expert thanks to its history and fascinating thanks to its close relation to the art, cinema and mixology fields, it is an icon of style and elegance, the typical Italian one.

Figure 3.5: Italian actress at the 77th edition of the Venice Film Festival

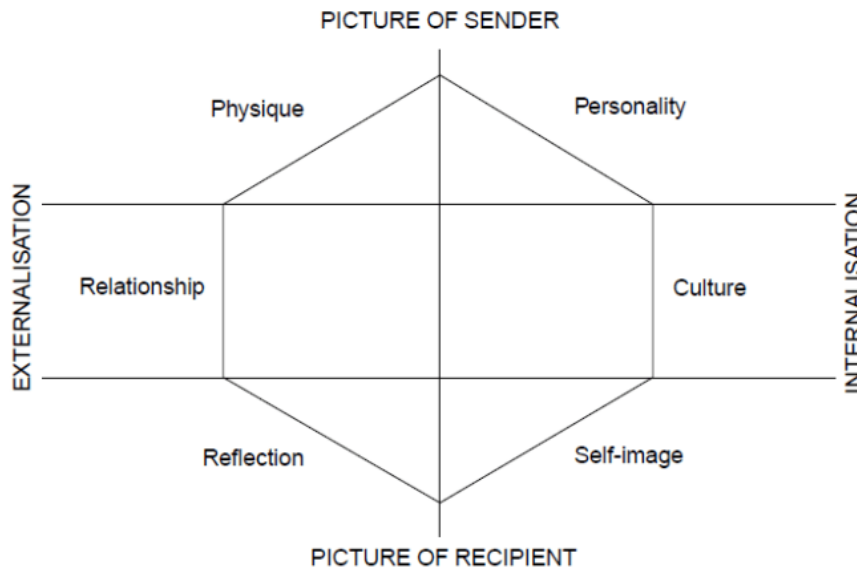


Source: <https://www.instagram.com/campari.it/>

For an effective Brand Positioning it is necessary that managers define what is the identity of the brand. Thus Brand Identity is the starting point in brand management and refers to the internal definition of the set of features and associations that the company aspire to achieve for the Brand, so it can be perceived as the internal perspective of the management (Black &

Veloutsou, 2017). While different studies on Brand Identity have been working on the models to perfectly define the dimensions on the field, I will use the Brand Identity Prism model developed by Kapferer (2004), showed in figure 3.6.

Figure 3.6: Brand Identity Prism



Source: J. N. Kapferer, 2004

In his six facets prism Kapferer defined the six variables that characterize the Brand Identity construct: Physique, Personality, Relation, Culture, Relation, Reflection, Self-image.

The variables are divided based on two set of dimensions: Internalisation/Externalisation and Picture of sender/Picture of receiver. The first dimension focus on the variables that are perceived by customers and the intrinsic aspects developed by the brand, while sender/receiver picture address the variables able to represent brand (sender) and the customer (receiver).

Through the development of the Brand Identity it is possible for the company to define the characteristics and meanings that wants to deliver to consumers, and it is thus important to observe if the Brand Experience of Campari is in consistent with its Brand Identity.

Campari's physique dimension mainly relates to the iconic logo and the red colour, perfectly represented by the flagship product bitter Campari.

The personality of Campari is associated to elegance, high class spirit and expertise, which could be represented by an artist or a professional bartender.

The relationship dimension, and so how the brand relate with its customers, is a focal point of the Brand Identity Prism for Campari, which organized or is sponsor of hundred of events, being the bounding element of them, since its products are used while interacts between each other.

Campari's culture is deeply rooted in the country of origin and history; the typical Italian style and elegance, and the passion for the arts are guidelines for the brand.

Self-image dimension relates to how a consumer perceive himself while consuming the brand, Campari's customers perceive themselves as experts of the field and trendy in style.

With reference to reflection dimension, Campari reflect its audience as mid-age professionals, intellectuals and socially engaged.

In order to have a complete picture of a brand, the observation of its Brand Architecture is crucial, to understand in which categories and how it competes in the market. Brand Architecture is defined as "an organizing structure of the brand portfolio that specifies brand roles and the nature of relationships between brands." (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 200, p. 8).

As the Brand Architecture of the company has been partially showed previously, we will focus on the offer of Campari brand.

Campari Company does not have a brand strategy focused on creation and development of sub brand or endorsed brand ranges, rather we observe the decision of having corporate brand (Campari) which is also a family brand, and other different family brands that are differentiated by category/segments in which operates.

As said, Campari is both the corporate and a family brand, and is the only brand having a sub brand, which is Campari Soda (figure3.7).

Figure 3.7: Campari and Campari Soda



Source: <https://www.camparigroup.com/it/pages/brands>

Campari Soda was born in 1932 and is a brand with a different and well defined positioning than Campari.

It is possible to observe the common features with its family brand, as the red colour (highlighted also in the cap), the minimal style but still elegant bottle with his vintage touch which brings back to the years and most of all some of the product intrinsic features. Still the brand owns a different positioning thanks to its unique selling proposition of being a premium ready to drink aperitif.

The common trait of the heritage with its family brand, using it as a “certificate” of quality, in a segment of the aperitif drinking which is dominated by the distrust of consumers in ready to drink product, favouring the bar cocktails.

With an overview on the brand Campari, observing the positioning, identity and architecture, it is now possible to provide a complete picture and understanding on which elements did the brand leveraged for the development of Brand Experience.

3.3 - Campari Brand Experience

It is now time to discuss about the different tactics used by the Campari to develop Brand Experience.

Campari mainly focused on two of the three antecedents observed while analysing the construct of Brand Experience, which are the Event Marketing and Marketing Communication. A perfect example of creating Brand Experience through communication is the Campari Gallery, opened in 2010 in Milan, in the headquarter of the company.

Inside the Campari Gallery it is possible to live a full experience diving into the Campari world, perfectly assimilating the values of the brand and its essence; thanks to the iconic style and elements that make up the environment you can shift in a different world, the world of Campari, and feel part of it, moreover to further evidence the experiential trait that Campari Gallery has, it must be highlighted the possibility to enter not only through the classical in person tour, but also through device, allowing an experience without spatial borders.

Within the gallery you can have a tour and discover the history of the brand, which is described through pieces of stories and pictures from the main protagonists of the history of Campari.

But its not just about describing the history of the brand that allows the creation of Brand Experience for visitors, it is the whole set of elements that let each person to feel the essence of the brand, perceiving in first person the identity of the brand, in particular creating brand personality associations; the Campari Gallery in fact focuses on showing to visitors the bound that the brand has with the world of art, design and cinema.

The multiple and different cooperations with artists are visible during the tour, observing the works of Marcello Dudovich, Leonetto Cappiello and Fortunato Depero associating the brand with the world of art, inserting design branded elements created by international designer such as Matteo Thun and Dodo Arslan for the brand-design association, or the clips of immortal director such as Federico Fellini and Paolo Sorrentino to associate with the world of cinema (<https://www.campari.com/it/inside-campari/campari-gallery>).

Figure 3.8: Campari Gallery



Source: <https://www.campari.com/it/inside-campari/campari-gallery>

Through Campari Gallery the brand can achieve different objectives, further than the previously cited Brand Personality associations, clearly the Brand Awareness and Brand Image will benefit, it is possible to generate WoM and, I would say, even Brand Attitude, through the development of the a relatively enduring, unidimensional summary evaluation cited by Spears and Singh (2004).

As we saw in the first chapter, it is possible to have different outcomes, depending on the type of experience people are exposed to, and this is possible to observe in Campari's case, where thanks to other kind of experiences has set different objectives and outcomes to reach.

As previously said during the analysis of the brand, Campari is clearly bounded to the world of mixology, we could even say that it is a main representative of this world.

To further highlight it in 2012 the Campari Academy was born in Milan, a place where it is possible for professional and amatorial bartenders to follow different courses of mixology in a glamour and historical house with the same style of the Campari Gallery (<https://campariacademy.it/master-of-excellence/>).

People are not only dived into the world of Campari thanks to the design of the house, but of course the main part is related to the courses which offer. It is possible to follow the courses of the best mixologist of the world, which grant to fix in the mind of students the association to the excellence that Campari has, thus improving not only the Brand Image, but also developing Brand Trust.

Since the students following the courses of the academy are mainly professionals and Campari provides high level lessons that helps them to become great bartenders, it is clear that the objective of the brand is not only to reach the already cited outcomes but also to raise its ambassadors, being the first promoters of Campari within one of the ground in which is competing the brand, the out of home. The example supporting the thesis is the Campari Academy Competition, which see different bartenders from all over Italy compete in order to become Campari bartender of the year, the competition is thus the perfect summary of both the Campari's excellence and passion.

The next and final way used by Campari to generate Brand Experience refers to one of the antecedents of the construct saw in the first chapter, Event Marketing.

Campari is a brand which has a long tradition on creating branded events or being main partner of external events, such as the Venice Film Festival.

With reference to its branded events there are different interesting points to highlight in order to understand how the Brand Experience is developed.

Among the years Campari promoted different types of events like the Campari Fashion Avenue in 2016 which saw the collaboration of Campari with the best fashion boutiques in Milan streets. In occasion of the Expo2015 Campari promoted the event called Campari Red Touch, where the Navigli of Milan have been coloured by the red of the brand and its barman were creating cocktails to emphasize the connection between Milan and the aperitif, and thus Campari with Milan. Probably the most famous event is the Campari Red Diaries, which was born in 2017 to substitute the Campari Calendar.

The project Campari Red Diaries was born in 2017 to celebrate the cocktails as vehicles of expressions for bartenders, providing a storytelling with twelve different short clips for twelve cocktails, with the release of a short movie of 12 minutes directed by Paolo Sorrentino called “Killer in red” (<http://www.multivu.com/players/uk/8025351-campari-red-diaries-2017-killer-in-red/>) . Each year a different theme takes place for the Campari Red Diaries, and each edition starts with the premiere opened by its famous Campari red carpet, an event that promote the bound between Campari and the world of cinema, making feel as well the identity traits and positioning of the brand, like the elegance and passion.

Figure 3.9: Campari Red Diaries 2017: Killer in red



Source: <http://www.multivu.com/players/uk/8025351-campari-red-diaries-2017-killer-in-red/>

All the events are dominated by the colour guide of the brand, sense the flavours of its cocktails, listen the music in the background and see the shows promoted by Campari, for a complete sensorial experience. This allow the visitors to feel the essence of the brand depending on the type of event, such as the Italian fashion style of the Campari Fashion Avenue, or the elegance of Campari Red Diaries.

Moreover, it must be highlighted what is a central element which dominates the social aspect which is central while creating an event, the cocktails. In each event it is possible to taste the creation of Campari’s bartenders, which become identification elements while interacting.

We saw how Brand Experience is generated by Campari, and how it leveraged to its brand identity and positioning, for a perfect coherence that allows consumers to experience in a holistic way the Brand, and not just its products.

With reference to the dimensions of the construct developed by Brakus, Schmitt and Zarantonello (2009) it is possible to observe how experience has been generated and what have been the stimuli on which Campari leveraged.

From the 5 dimensions (Sensory, Affective, Intellectual, Behavioral and Relational) It is possible to state that all of them have been included in the set of stimuli provided by Campari, with a focus on Sensory, Affective and Relational dimensions; it is evident how Campari tried to create experience by connecting the brand to the five sense for all the activities promoted, focusing on the sensorial dimension of experience (Figure 3.10).

Figure 3.10: Dimensions of experience leveraged by Campari

Tactics	Dimensions affected
Campari Gallery	Affective, Sensory
Campari Academy	Behavioral, Intellectual, Relational, Sensory
Event Marketing	Relational, Sensory, Behavioral

Source: Personal Elaboration

The affective dimension is particular evident analysing Campari Gallery, which offers an experience that leverages on the creation of feelings which comes both from the artistic elements and the stories of the past. Relational dimension of experience is clearly related to the Event Marketing promoted by Campari, which brings both its products and brand as the bounding element of the entire event, allowing the development of relations.

The benefits granted by creation and development of Brand Experience for Campari can be observed among the examples offered, which perfectly represent the antecedent of the construct analysed in Chapter 1, with a specific focus on Marketing Communication and Event Marketing.

Thanks to the development of Brand Experience we can state that Campari generally benefit of an increased Brand Awareness, and a more positive Brand Image for all the activity pursued that generated Brand Experience, but also specific ones depending on how they decided to develop it, such as Brand Trust and Loyalty, definition of Brand Personality associations and WoM, perfectly aligning to the model of Khan and Fatma (2017). All that benefits for the brand can be summarized in a Brand Equity development, with further competitive advantages for Campari.

Chapter 4: How Marketing professionals perceive Brand Experience? A qualitative research on their points of view.

4.1 - Introduction to the chapter

After the literature analysis about the construct of Brand Experience developed by Brakus, Schmitt and Zarantonello (2009), the observation of the actual structure of the Food and Beverage sector in Italy and the identification of trends and drivers of consumption, it is now possible to move ahead, defining the research question and method of analysis.

During this chapter it will be described what I aim to highlight and understand, through a qualitative research method based on semi-structured interviews that will question marketing professionals, covering different roles, to explain their own personal view about the construct, its effectiveness, the way of promoting it and the relationship with the Food and Beverage market.

The interviews will be then the basis for the analysis, where, through a confrontational method (Biraghi & Gambetti, 2017), I will highlight the common themes provided by the respondents and summarize them in order to further discuss the construct and provide my final takeout during the last chapter.

4.2 - Research question and methodology

While Customers-Brand Experience in marketing literature has been a topic of interest from long time ago and scholars acknowledged the importance of the concept of experience, just a limited number of researches attempted to provide a depth understanding of the concept from a theoretical perspective (Amoroso, 2019).

The construct of Brand Experience is relatively new since it was born in 2009 by Brakus, Schmitt and Zarantonello, for that reason in literature it is not present a wide range of

researches that evaluate the effectiveness of Brand Experience to grant the different outcomes defined by scholars. Mostly the focus of researches during the years has been the identification and validation of the dimensions of the construct, its scale and the antecedent and outcomes that are related to it (Andreini et al., 2019).

It must also be highlighted a big gap in the literature for the Brand Experience construct, which refers to the low interest made by scholars to highlight the relationship between the brand and the experience (Amoroso, 2019).

For that reasons with the following qualitative research analysis I want to attempt to offer a further takeout on the construct, providing an understanding on the effectiveness of the model of Brand Experience developed by Brakus, Schmitt and Zarantonello (2009), with the further development and integration to the initial model the dimensions, antecedents and outcomes by scholars in the following years, as described during chapter 1, in a specific market such as the Food and Beverage one.

What I propose to analyse and describe refers to how the construct of Brand Experience can positively affect a brand, being part of the strategic management of it, in order to create equity.

Moreover, I want to do so embedding the construct in the Italian Food and Beverage market, focusing thus in a specific environment of which we saw trends and drivers.

The reason why I selected the Food and Beverage market as the ground of the analysis is mainly related to the characteristics of the products and their consumption, which are particularly congenial to the concept of experience.

Foods and beverages are products extremely sensorial since they involve all the five senses before, during and after their consumption, reaching its highest point in the famous Michelin star restaurants where consumers can live a holistic experience that is not just limited to the action of eating a meal.

Foods and beverages also have a strong bond to the affective dimension, providing feelings and emotions that do not just encompass the moment of eating or drinking, but go way beyond that. A drink can provide a sense of masculinity if it has a strong flavour, or it can make feel in a different geographical place, like a Caribbean island if it has a strong exotic flavour. But most of all, foods and beverages can bring up to the mind old memories, with all the feelings related to them, taking as example the immortal scene of the madeleine described by

Proust (1913) in his book *“Du côté de chez Swann”*, where the protagonist, while eating a madeleine started to remember his childhood in a long flashback.

Thus, as observed, it is clear the connection that foods and beverages have with the concept of experience in a holistic way, and for that reason my decision to analyse the Brand Experience construct on this market.

What I aimed to analyse and evaluate is not only the degree of effectiveness of the construct to impact and influence Brand Equity but take a wider picture of the practical application that the construct can have in a specific market.

The areas that I desired to investigate through the research are many: from the understanding of the difficulty degree of creating and providing experiences to consumers and the elements which grants a positive or negative Brand Experience, to the exploration of the possible KPI useful to measure Brand Experience, or the evaluation of the construct as a tactic or strategic asset to implement during the brand management.

The research analysis took a qualitative approach, in order to provide the necessary broad understanding of the construct embedded in the Food and Beverage market.

In order to provide data validity, the research was based on semi-structured interviews to marketing professionals that were compared to each other so as to achieve the definition of common themes and takeout, that would have been then highlighted and further discussed (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009).

In order provide significant data to analyse and grant different perspectives the Interviews are specifically submitted to professionals a pluriannual experience (> 7 years) in the field on marketing/brand management covering different positions like Brand Manager, Shopper Marketing and Marketing Manager; furthermore the interviewees are working in some of the fast moving consumers good leaders in their market in Italy, with companies that have a wide brand portfolio and have been active in their markets of competence. (Table 4.1).

Table 4.1: Respondents details

Company	Position
Bauli S.p.A.	Marketing Manager
Montenegro S.r.l.	Sr. Brand Manager
Morato Pane S.p.A.	Marketing Manager
Nestlé Italiana S.p.A.	Brand Manager
Pastificio Rana S.p.A.	Brand Manager
Zuegg S.p.A.	Brand Manager

Source: Personal Elaboration

The selection of semi-structured interviews as research method came from the evaluation of being an exhaustive and fitting method since the interviewees were experienced professionals to whom it was possible to cover a wide range of topics while still maintaining a high level of knowledge, providing useful information that would have not only been limited to their company but to the whole market in which are currently operating (Kvale, 2006; Thuesen, 2011).

The result was a series of interviews where I let the flow of the dialog go on, without being fixed on the question, being able to deepen the most interesting and useful concepts provided by the respondents, collecting high quality information.

In order to grant a wider analysis, the respondents were asked to answer the main questions, but also to support their perspective with practical cases within the sector, without limiting to their personal working path and the activities done in their companies, allowing to gather different examples and understand how experience is treated based on which category the company is present on.

After the interviews, a second step of transcription and cleaning allowed the analysis of the texts, which was done in order to identify the recurrent themes, patterns or interesting points to discuss, highlighting the different points of view of the respondents on the Brand Experience concept and their perspectives on its effectiveness within the Food and Beverage market.

4.3 - Findings

Through the interviews many uniform comments emerged, but also interesting discrepancies of the point of view of respondents were identified.

During the different conversations had with the marketing professionals, a clear uniformity on the evaluation of the construct of Brand Experience appeared.

All the respondents firmly sustained the importance for a company to create and develop Brand Experience, especially in relation to the Food and Beverage market, that has been described to be particularly fitting to Brand Experience for many reasons.

However, it emerges a general difficulty on providing an exhaustive explanation on the construct per se, with some respondents slightly overlapping the concept of brand experience with customer experience while discussing.

If also the way of developing Brand Experience is relatively perceived with the same perspective from all of the respondents, it must be highlighted also a general difference on the visions related to the objectives and related KPI (Key Performance Indicators) that a company/brand should use.

One of the most evident elements identified during the interviews has been a general and continued predisposition on evaluate the experience has more related to the concepts of emotions, sensory and feelings; the interesting thing is that the other dimensions of experience not specifically identified by the respondents were present in the examples on brand experience provided by them.

The picture provided by marketing professionals then encompass the brand experience as a strategical and essential asset for the company, with a clear vision on the positive consequences that can provide on the brand, that has a more or less clear way of development and that answer to specific needs of the company.

The same picture encompass also a lack of uniformity on the stimuli that a brand can provide and the kind of experiences that a consumer can have, being stuck on the vision of a sensorial/emotional dimension, providing evidence on a complete and wide understanding of the different elements that are part of an experience.

A further focus on the analysis relates to the perspectives related to 4 main themes emerged from the marketing professionals: Brand Experience perspectives; Brand Experience

relationship with the Food and Beverage market; how to develop Brand Experience; challenges, obstacles and amplifiers of Brand Experience.

4.3.1 - Brand Experience perspectives

The construct of brand experience was always defined by marketing professionals as a necessity nowadays for brands that wants to emerge, especially in a competitive environment such as the one related to foods and beverages. Brand Experience is generally evaluated as a way of differentiation to competitors, provide a close bound with consumers and then leverage on that specific bounds on order to reach the final objective, which is the sale. It is clear that the objective of the Brand Experience, as Amaro Montenegro Sr. Brand Manager described, is to “let the consumers live your brand, interact with it, become loyal and then your first ambassadors, generating value not only for the brand but also increasing the sales”. Zuegg Brand Manager identified Brand Experience as an important strategic asset, that becomes necessary if a brand wants to last over time and create loyalty with the modern consumers, that now more than ever go beyond the traditional request of just a product, but want a more holistic interaction with the brand. It becomes necessary because focusing on just the classic marketing levers such as product and price the brands will face the disruptive competition of the private labels.

In relation to the interaction between brand and consumers cited by Zuegg Brand Manager, it appears clear that the keyword behind Brand Experience is coherence.

From all the views provided by marketing professionals, Brand Experience is perceived to be successful only when it's able to be coherent with the brand identity, the values and its essence. As Bauli Marketing Manager highlighted in fact, it is necessary to be consistent between the different set of activities done in order to develop Brand Experience, which can be the communication, the right selection of the influencers and the events in which the brand is present directly or indirectly, and the brand assets. An interesting point of view is provided by Morato Pane Marketing Manager, which evaluated the possible risk of an unsuccessful brand experience in relation to the changes over time that the brand obviously can have. When the brand experience is not able to change contextually to the new brand identity and anchor on the old characteristics it creates a dissonance perceived by consumers.

While discussing with the interviewees the perception of the strategic nature of Brand Experience is unanimous. Development of Brand Experience is intended to provide effects on the long run for the business, that should not focus on the immediate generation of conversion, as stated by Morato Pane Marketing Manager. Obviously the main objective of a brand strategy is to bring the consumers at the final stages of the funnel, but in order to do so it is essential to improve the brand equity, and the Brand Experience is identified as a way on doing it in the long run.

While motivating the reason why Brand Experience should be considered a strategic asset, the interviewees described thus the objectives that a brand should have while planning it. A prevalence of respondents stated that the objectives of the strategy should be the increasing in brand awareness, brand loyalty and word of mouth generation. As Nestlé Brand Manager, Rana Brand Manager and Zuegg Marketing Manager support, the brand should focus as well on a long run relationship with the consumers, so a sort of brand love that is based on repeated and deep interaction with consumers, through generation of experience.

But if the Brand Experience is a strategic asset, it must be stressed how marketing professionals also states that its development is based on tactical activities, that will be further focused later.

It is of much interest to describe the perspectives that the interviewees had in relation to the experience concept. All the respondents received the definition of Brand Experience developed by Brakus, Shmitt and Zarantonello (2009) and all the dimensions related to it, but while discussing an evident predisposition on correlating the experience with the sensorial and emotional dimensions.

Some of them explained this prevalence on the sensorial and emotional aspect based on the market in which the brand works, so a close relationship between emotional/sensorial aspects and foods and beverages product/brands.

But it must be highlighted also how some of the respondents did not focus at all on the cognitive and behavioral dimensions during their explanation of the answers provided, while describing examples in which there is a clear evidence of them, it is the case of Amaro Montenegro Sr. Brand Manager which brought the example of the event “Eroi Veri”, in which the participants lived different kinds of experiences, where the cognitive and behavioral dimension were at the centre, such as searching in a labyrinth the aromatic herbs that were

part of the product, or climbing a wall, which related to the adventurous spirit of the campaign and the brand.

4.3.2 - Brand Experience relationship with the Food and Beverage market

The interviewees were asked to discuss about the construct of Brand Experience per se and then focusing on the relationship it has with a specific market, the Food and Beverage, for that reason all the interviewees are currently working for prestigious leading companies in the market.

Once talking about the market, the characteristics that it has and how Brand Experience relate to it, a unanimous perspective emerged.

The Food and Beverage market has been evaluated as perfectly fitting with the Brand Experience, mainly due to the products that are offered in the categories, which have a close relationship with the sensorial and emotional dimensions of experience.

As Rana Brand Manager described, food is naturally a sensorial product because of its interaction with almost all the senses not only in the moment of consumption, moreover interesting elements provided by foods and beverages relate to the fact that it is possible to build an emotional storytelling for consumers leveraging on the description of the production, the values and the people behind the product.

A further element to be considered refers to the country in which the analysis is made, Italy, and the characteristics that Food and Beverage market has in that specific country.

Food is historically and culturally an element part of the national tradition, with a predominance of consumers anchoring on specific characteristics of the product and brand, for example the provenience of the ingredients that must be national/regional, or the request of traditional recipes that are part of the cultural identity of the country.

As Bauli Marketing Manager identified in fact, it must be taken into consideration the high emotional and affective level that consumers have with those two categories while developing Brand Experience, and carefully select the right type relation that a brand wants to create with a conservative consumer like the Italian one, as defined by Morato Pane Marketing Manager.

4.3.3 - How to develop Brand Experience

It is probably when the argument of discussion shifted to the modality of generation of Brand Experience that divergence of perspectives among interviewees emerged.

Generally all of the marketing professionals, based on the precedent evaluation of the construct as a strategical asset, firstly did not focus on the antecedents of Brand Experience presented by scholars: Event Marketing, Marketing Communication and Brand Cues (Khan & Fatma, 2017).

The three antecedents have been perceived as more tactical methods of obtaining Brand Experience but describe the necessity to start the strategy way before the implementation of that tactics.

This perspective is of much importance because it brings to light, differently from the literature's structure of the construct of Brand Experience, a wider picture. The antecedents identified by scholars are just the final part of the iceberg, as described by Morato Pane Marketing Manager, but it is necessary to understand that the development of the construct of Brand Experience should have deep roots with the overall branding strategy. And if it seems a trivial statement it must be highlighted how most of the marketing professionals identified as an obstacle and risk the dissonance between those elements, being a frequent error that happens in companies.

It is through a clear understanding of the actual branding strategy, the identity, position and desired objectives that it wants to achieve that a Brand Experience can start to be processed. In relation to the creation and development of a Brand Experience strategy, some of the marketing professionals stressed the importance of the analysis on the consumers, identified as a key step in order to provide the best fitting activities for its target, as pointed out by Bauli Marketing Manager, which gave a clear customer centred perspective and identified the big data as main opportunity to provide a customized Brand Experience. But is also supported by all the other interviewees, which consider the analysis of the consumer fundamental in order to develop a coherent Brand Experience, based on the preferences, necessities and expectations of the consumers.

It is when the respondents had to describe the actions that a brand should pursue that differences emerged. Bauli Marketing Manager, with his customer centred view talked about customization and communication, with a specific focus on the opportunity provided by digital

nowadays. Amaro Montenegro Sr. Brand Manager as well highlighted the communication as an element on which leverage, but his focus was more related to the Event Marketing, motivating it with the predominant social characteristic of the product and brand that manage, a spirit.

A totally divergent and more pragmatic point of view is instead provided by Morato Pane Marketing Manager, which focus on the portfolio strategy, perceiving it as essential to provide Brand Experience, thinking that the key is the coherence between the effort made by the Brand Experience to talk to its consumers and the product offering.

And while marketing professional defined necessary the definition of precise KPI to measure the effectiveness of the Brand Experience strategy focusing on long run measures which refer to brand awareness and loyalty, a common method pointed out refers to the measurement of the single tactics pursued. So, if a brand wants to develop Brand Experience through Marketing Communication, both online or offline, the KPI can be the reach or the spontaneous impressions and interaction with the brand.

4.3.4 - Challenges, obstacles and amplifiers of Brand Experience

Once provided evidences of the perspective, interaction with the Food and Beverage market and process of development of the construct, the last theme observed focused on the challenges of Brand Experience, and the presence of elements able to block or amplify it.

Based on the previous evaluation of the analysis of consumers as first step in developing Brand Experience, interviewees identified as main challenge the lecture of data in order to respond properly with specific activities.

It must be highlighted that this challenge can be thus viewed as an opportunity but also a risk for the company/brand.

An interesting point is pointed out by Morato Pane Marketing Manager, which explained how a sales driven logic can be a main block in development of Brand Experience, with a push approach that could be focused on promotions, with consequent damage of the brand as stated by Bauli Marketing Manager, bringing back the necessity of identify the concept of Brand Experience as a strategic asset for the brand.

A different perspective is provided by Amaro Montenegro Sr. Brand Manager, which took the consumers point of view and identified as main risk while developing Brand Experience, the misunderstanding about consumers attention level and will of deeply approach the activities provided by the brand.

What is necessary is to be relevant in all the touchpoints, creating and distributing the right content, that must be engaging, easy to understanding and unique, in complete coherence with the brand strategy of the brand; in that way there is the possibility to amplify the effectiveness of the Brand Experience.

4.3.5 - Cases of Brand Experience

At the end of each interview the marketing professionals were asked to provide examples of Brand Experience, both coming from their companies or not.

Different Brand Experience activities focusing on many dimensions of experience emerged, providing a complete picture of what professionals perceive as an effective Brand Experience. I will thus summarize different Brand Experience cases, that focus on: product; events; flagship store and offline communication; integrated set of activities.

Starting from a product related Brand Experience it is of much interest the case of the Christmas limited pack of Amaro Montenegro.

For the case of Amaro Montenegro the experience of the brand does not even concern the consumption moment, but step over it. Through a set of interactive icons over the pack it is possible, using a qr code scanner, to scan them and literally enter within the world of the brand using the augmented reality tool (Figure 4.1).

Each icon brings the consumer to different pages that give different kinds of content. Scanning the glasses on pack it is possible to enter in a page where different cocktails recipes are listed, with all the instruction of preparation, obviously it is also possible to learn about the company, the production processes or the history, through a short movie of five minutes. It is thus possible to state that the consumer dive into the world of the brand, learn more about its values, its identity and essence, with an experience that touch different kinds of dimensions, emotional, feeling and cognitive.

Figure 4.1: Amaro Montenegro Christmas limited pack.



Source: Amaro Montenegro Sr. Brand Manager

With this case it is possible to fully understand how much the Brand Experience is holistic, and not just limiting to the functional dimensions, even talking directly about the product.

A second case of Brand Experience that it is useful to further describe has been provided again by the Sr. Brand Manager of Amaro Montenegro. The campaign is called "The Vero Bartender" and has as target the bartenders.

The campaign is going on from 2016 and see Amaro Montenegro develops a series of masterclass for all the bartenders in the whole Italy and in parallel a challenge on creating a cocktail based on a yearly theme. The best bartenders go to Bologna, in the headquarter of the company, for the finals. During the finals it is possible to discover more about the company, through a visit in the production areas, moreover they have also the possibility to follow a lesson from the master herbalist of Amaro Montenegro, which describe the story of the company and the product, making the visitors interact directly with the main ingredients of Amaro Montenegro: the herbs. The visitors can have a complete sensorial experience, touching, smelling and re-creating the product. In order to make the experience even wider the bartenders visit also the areas around Bologna, amplifying the connection between the

brand and the territory. The finals then end with the final night where bartender re-create their cocktails, in a complete branded event.

Here the clear objective is to create the brand ambassadors in the trade category, with a complete and holistic experience, that starts and end with branded events, but has in the middle a series of activities that provide different kinds of dimensional experiences.

The next case will be representative of many similar examples provided by marketing professionals, showing a sort of alignment on this kind of activity.

Rana Brand Manager brought the example of La famiglia Rana Grocer campaign, which took place in London for 5 weeks. La famiglia Rana Grocer was an interactive environment in which consumers could find a mix between grocery, workshop and creativity places.

Within the grocery it was possible see the product sold in the market, but even touch with hands the raw ingredients, do workshops and interact with chefs, learning more about the secrets behind pasta (Figure 4.2).

Figure 4.2: La famiglia Rana Grocer



Source: <https://www.shimejicreatives.com/brand-stories/2018/12/19/brand-experience-la-famiglia-rana-grocer>

The campaign was perfectly coherent with the positioning and image of the brand, which is the master and elite of the pasta.

Through La famiglia Rana Grocer campaign consumers had the opportunity to experience at the sensorial, emotional and behavioral levels, creating a strong relationship with the brand due to the close interaction with it. It must in fact be considered that due to the closed environment, the number of visitors was limited, favouring the bond connection between consumer and brand.

The last case that can be reported refers to Nespresso flagship stores.

The stores are designed with the distinctive elements of the brand, an environment essential and minimal, which is dominated by the black, the colour guide of the brand.

The results is a store where it is possible to enter within the brand, “perceive the refinement” as stated by Zuegg Brand Manager, even if you do not directly buy or taste the product.

The senses are stimulated by the smell of fresh coffee, or even more the taste of the coffee which is offered as trials to consumers.

The store is thus perfectly coherent with the brand assets and with the target of consumers, that research in a coffee brand a personality to which associate while the experience offered is mainly sensorial and affective, affecting senses and feelings.

4.4 - Conclusions

The proposed research analysis had the objective of bringing to light the construct of Brand Experience from a different perspective than the one based on literature.

The reason behind this objective comes from the necessity of providing a complete picture of a construct which has been defined just twelve years ago but is quickly gained importance not only among scholars, but also among marketing professionals (Brakus et al., 2009; Andreini et al., 2019).

Thanks to the qualitative research based on semi-structured interviews to marketing professionals operating in the Food and Beverage market, I was able to highlight four main themes, which have been identified based on the frequency by which respondents talked about them. The four themes reported were defined as:

1. Brand Experience perspectives.
2. Brand Experience relationship with the Food and Beverage market.
3. How to develop Brand Experience.
4. Challenges, obstacles and amplifiers of Brand Experience.

The overall perspective on the construct offered by respondents is completely favourable to its development, pushed by the necessity of the brands to emerge in markets that year after year are getting more competitive.

During the research it has been possible to understand that Brand Experience was evaluated as an important construct for the benefits of which the brand can grant, mainly defined as increase Brand Awareness, better Brand Image and then improved Brand Equity. Furthermore marketing professionals defined the differentiation from competition, increase of the fidelity of consumers and increase in the conversion rate as reasons why Brand Experience is an essential asset for a brand which want to be competitive leveraging on not only the functional benefits of its offer, but also granting an emotional bond to the consumer.

On this regard, experiences were defined as the way of pursuing that objective, Brand Experience was in fact evaluated as able to create a relationship with the consumers through activities able to generate and experience for the consumer.

A specific point emerged from respondent's perspectives: the brand which wants to create Brand Experience must carefully evaluate the set of experience that wants to be delivered to

its consumers. The experience must be unique and meaningful, the stronger it is the experience, the stronger it is the bond created between the brand and consumers. For that reasons different cases of Brand Experience provided by marketing professionals referred to activities that included a limited number of consumers involved like La famiglia Rana Grocer case, or if the number was higher, strong experience to live as in the case of “Eroi Veri” described by Amaro Montenegro Sr. Brand Manager.

The research highlighted the perspective of Brand Experience intended as a strategical asset for a brand, focusing thus not on the antecedents emerged during the literature analysis, but rather pointing out how much important is to develop Brand Experience in order to bring value to the brand. Marketing professionals emphasized how the strategical approach should start from an exhaustive analysis of the internal and external environment of the brand, define the objectives and consequently shape the tactics through which create value.

All the different tactics evaluated from the scholars in the literature of the construct can be pursued in order to develop Brand Experience, but the main point highlighted by respondents was related to the development of a Brand Experience which is coherent with the overall branding strategy of the brand and the target, avoiding the risk of creating tactics not fitting the interests of the consumers or not in line with the identity and personality of the brand.

The necessity of a consistent Brand Experience on the actual assets of a brand as pointed out by marketing professionals let understand that Brand Experience provides a strong outcome in brand personality associations, that must be carefully evaluated while developing it.

Brand Experience has been also confirmed through the research to be specifically fitting with the market of Food and Beverage for the characteristics that it has, mainly related to the product consumption that stimulates the sense, and the cultural bond that Italy has with that market.

The measurement of the Brand Experience has been defined heterogeneously by marketing professionals, but it is possible to identify two different measurements: the ones based on the evaluation of the strategy and more inherent to the brand (brand awareness, brand love, brand image) and the measurements related to the tactics pursued, that thus can be different based on the type of tactics.

It can be summarized then that through the interviews the main perspective highlighted by marketing professional regarding the construct of Brand Experience refers to what is considered as a considerably strategic asset for a brand, which allows to gain equity mainly

through creation of relationship with consumers and must be developed with a long run view, emphasizing thus on a strategic plan that starts from an internal analysis of the brand asset and is declined using different set of tactics to specific target of consumers, highlighting thus the coherence that Brand Experience must have both to the assets of the brand and with the activities proposed to consumers, that must be fitting for the target defined.

Conclusions

In recent years the competitive environment, for all the markets but here focusing on the Food and Beverage one, saw a drastic increase of players involved.

Due to the similar functional products features provided by the different brands, consumers are more willing to switch their brand choices as consequence of this huge increase. This trend is evident observing the success of private labels, highlighting how consumers, when do not identify specific attributes of the brands, drive their consumption choices based on price and similar elements, acting a sort of commodity transforming process of the category (Batra & Shina, 2000).

Objective for brands should be to provide something different at a higher level than just the functional one related to its product offering and rather create long-term relationship with consumers.

Different constructs on branding have been implemented during the years, highlighting the importance of building assets of the brand that could be implemented in order to gain equity, such as the Brand Personality, Brand Loyalty or Brand Trust, but it was just in 2009 that an important construct such as the Brand Experience was developed (Jacoby & Chestnut, 1978; Aaker, 1997; Delgado-Ballester et al., 2003).

It must be stressed also the actual resistance of consumers to the traditional marketing, as Vila-López and Rodríguez-Molina (2013, p. 712) stated: “Consumers have been saturated with advertising messages in conventional communication media and as a result, they have become hardened to advertising.”. The digital era provided also a subsequent change in consumption patterns, consumers have more information on which base their choices, confront brands and products, with the consequent necessity of receiving alternative stimuli, such as experience and engagement, from a brand that wants to emerge (Ha & Perks, 2005; Arya et al., 2019).

Due to the previous reasons a more innovative way to conceive brands is required, focusing on the brand-consumer relationship and creating a strong and long lasting bond, and since it is known that the consumer is not completely rational during the purchasing process, evaluating a wide set of elements at the moment of selection of the brand/product, the

importance of providing something more than the classical functional benefits that the majority of the brands have, delivering experiences becomes a strategic challenge of great importance (Amoroso, 2019).

For that reason the Brand Experience was developed by Brakus, Schmitt and Zarantonello (2009), with the objective of providing an understanding model that would highlight the dimensions of experience a consumer can perceive, emphasizing on the different responses that consumers can have and how that response impact the brand (Brakus et al., 2009).

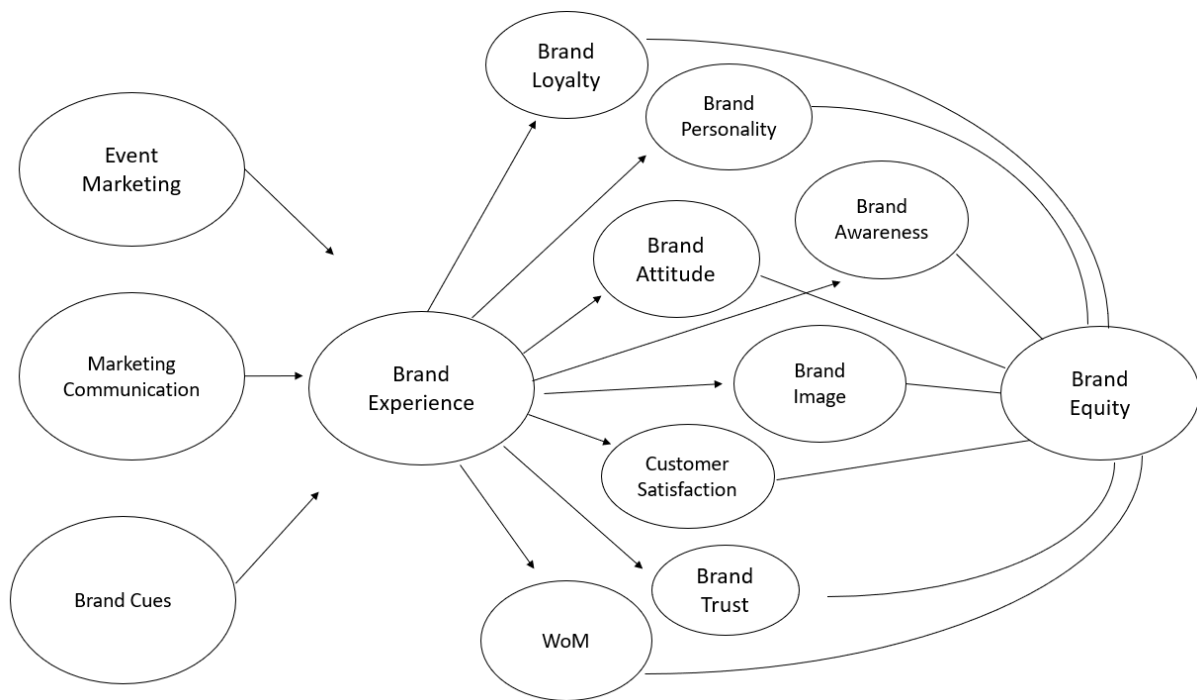
A good number of scholars further analysed the construct of Brand Experience and tried to integrate the model, with different antecedents and outcomes, or applied it to specific contexts.

To the starting four dimensions of Brand Experience provided by Brakus et al., (2009), Nysveen, Pedersen and Skard (2013) highlighted the importance of a fifth dimensions, relational, able to generate customer satisfaction and brand loyalty.

An exhaustive research on the antecedents and outcomes of Brand Experience was then provided by Khan and Fatma (2017), granting a deep understanding on the way Brand Experience can lead to development on the Brand Equity.

Based on the literature review, Figure 5.1 is the summary of the most discussed and approved concepts related to Brand Experience by literature, that have been integrated and incorporated in a unique model.

Figure 5.1: Brand Experience Model



Source: Personal elaboration.

As showed in figure 5.1 the final objective of Brand Experience is thus Brand Equity, as described from the initial model but also confirmed by different marketing professionals that have been interviewed.

The outcomes identified by Brand Experience are closely related to the bond able to create with the consumers, and thus Brand Loyalty, Brand Trust and Brand Attitude are clearly present, moreover it is impossible to not state that a positive Brand Experience would not impact also Brand Awareness and Brand Image, for almost all the activities pursued (Brakus et al., 2009; Khan & Fatma, 2017, Amoroso 2019, Andreini et al., 2020). The outcomes defined by literature were all confirmed during the research, highlighting the importance of Brand Experience in generating a relation with consumers through specific tactics that are able to create an emotional bond to the brand thanks to the experiences offered. The bond created to the consumers was evaluated to grant brand value in different forms such the increase of brand loyalty, love, awareness and image, the development of brand personality associations and an increased fidelity from consumers, that would turn in the long run in an growth of conversion rate, providing thus the final goal of a company, the increase of the sales.

Also the antecedents of Event Marketing, Marketing Communication and Brand Cues identified by Khan and Fatma (2017) have been confirmed through the research based on both secondary and primary data. Different examples, both from the case history of Campari to the

cases brought by marketing professionals interviewed, have been analysed, and all of them were based on the antecedents evaluated by literature, with a specific focus on Event Marketing and Marketing Communication.

It must be stressed that the cases furnished by marketing professionals have been evaluated as the tactics pursued by the brand in order to develop Brand Experience, but that must be based on a strategical plan that aim at creating value on the long run, and that has to be based on an exhaustive analysis of the internal asset of the brand and the target of consumers to which the Brand Experience wants to refer.

It is possible to state that Brand Experience is defined as a construct of great importance for a brand, especially in nowadays competitive environment and in relation to the Food and Beverage market.

Brands should step up from the competition and create a long-term relationship with consumers, generating value for them with engaging and unique activities that should make consumers live the brand and interact with it.

The antecedents defined by the literature are, as perfectly described by one of the interviewees, the visible part of the iceberg, the activities that trigger the experience. But it must be considered that the work on planning a strategical Brand Experience starts way before, with the deep analysis both on the brand and on potential targets.

The marketing professionals supported my evaluation of Food and Beverage market as particularly fitting to the Brand Experience and thus the selection of it as field on which evaluate the construct.

The Food and Beverage has resulted to be fitting for Brand Experience for two main reasons: the intrinsic characteristics of the foods and beverages products, which have a strong relation to the sensorial and affective dimensions of experience, and the Italian culture which has a strong bond with the world of foods and beverages, since it is part of the heritage of the country.

In conclusion, summarizing all the research, it is possible to state that the Brand Experience construct is useful for the brand because it allows to create the much needed bond with the consumer, through different set of activities that make him closer to the brand, with more ore less deep results, which go from the simple increase of the awareness of the brand, to the increased trust or understanding of personality traits.

It must be highlighted how Brand Experience can be effective only when it is developed using a pull strategy, that does not focus on sales driven actions and thus has the objective of creating value for the brand initially, with a generation of conversion in the long run.

While developing the strategy of Brand Experience is essential to start with an exhaustive analysis, which has to be internal and external. Internal through evaluation of the actual assets of the brand, its identity, personality, positioning and portfolio. The focus should then shift externally to the consumers, and be the analysis of data in order to perfectly identify the targets of the strategy and provide consequently coherent activities. On this regard what can be defined as the main opportunity for a brand that wants to develop a Brand Experience strategy refers to the analysis and understanding of the big data.

The last element that it is necessary to highlight refers to the dimensions of experience and the activities provided in order to create the stimuli.

While most of the marketing professionals have been pointing their attention on the sensorial and emotional dimensions, I would like to stress that it is possible to achieve effective Brand Experience activities focusing on more behavioral and cognitive dimensions of experience.

It is common to think about the experience concept focusing just on emotions, but also the case provided by the marketing professionals showed that different activities implementing more cognitive experience resulted as engaging and effective for the brands. What is surely is necessary for that type of experiences is the coherence from what the brand is and the specific activity.

Brand Experience is then confirmed as a strategical asset able to generate equity for the brand, allowing a closer relationship with the consumers that can have the possibility to live the brand and create an emotional bond with it. The competitive advantage for brands that are able to pursue an effective Brand Experience strategy has been highlighted, granting the brands to emerge in the competitive market in which they operate.

Appendix 1: Interviews transcription

I: Interviewer

R: Respondent

Interview N°1: Bauli Marketing Manager

I: Prima di iniziare ti devo chiedere se accetti che questa intervista venga registrata e poi trascritta, al fine di essere inserita in appendice della mia tesi.

R: Accetto.

I: Perfetto, allora direi di iniziare partendo dalla prima domanda, Quanto ritieni debba essere importante per un'azienda operante nel settore del Food and Beverage la creazione di Brand Experience? E se ritieni ci siano delle caratteristiche peculiari del settore che la possono più o meno valorizzare.

R: Sicuramente è un tema molto attuale e molto importante. Creare una brand experience appealing ed interessante per il consumatore sta diventando la sfida per le aziende, soprattutto nel Food and Beverage, e soprattutto si sta accelerando grazie alla digitalizzazione, perché permette alle aziende di conoscere sempre meglio il consumatore ed offrire esperienze e prodotti sempre più tagliati su misura, customizzati.

E per il tipo di marketing a cui sono abituato non si può prescindere dalla conoscenza del consumatore se si vuole competere con successo, nella doppia direzione, quindi sia nell'avere la capacità di penetrare il mercato ma anche per fidelizzare la customer base. Tutto passa dal mettere al centro il consumatore, e in questo senso la brand experience è il frutto di un pensiero che può essere strategico o anche tattico.

Per quanto riguarda il secondo aspetto riferito al nostro settore, secondo me ha caratteristiche peculiari che permettono una brand experience di successo, soprattutto perché nel nostro paese i consumatori hanno un legame emotivo molto forte con questi prodotti, il food and beverage sono due categorie che fanno parte della nostra cultura, quindi c'è già un legame affettivo ed emotivo massimo da parte di tutti noi.

I: Molto interessante questo connubio tra cultura e il legame emotivo.

R: è duplice secondo me, è un legame sulle categorie ma anche alcune aziende hanno saputo creare un legame emotivo molto forte con i propri consumatori, ad esempio Mulino Bianco e Ferrero.

I: Molto interessante, ed interessante anche il fatto che tu abbia utilizzato il termine customization, sicuramente può essere una leva da utilizzare per creare esperienza, ponendo

un pensiero customer centred che porta ad una co-creazione di valore, o anche solo di prodotto. E mi viene in mente parlando della tua azienda la nuova attività di customization che state portando avanti con il panettone ed avete implementato da poco. Secondo te questo è un elemento puramente tattico di creazione della brand experience, o è più strategico? E secondo te attraverso la tattica si può passare ad una visione più strategica?

R: Per quanto riguarda il panettone sinceramente non lo so nemmeno io, bisognerebbe aspettare per poi vedere quali risultati ci porta e se sarà un approccio tattico o strategico. Secondo me può funzionare ma deve essere una customizzazione non solo di prodotto ma anche riguardo la comunicazione. Bisogna avere diversi target da colpire ed avere diversi angoli di comunicazione per porsi con i consumatori.

I: Ad esempio quali angoli?

R: Ormai noi in azienda non targettizziamo più con la solita socio-demo, ma ci basiamo sul lifestyle, e quindi individuando i target con diversi lifestyle e interessi, comunicando in modo diverso.

Per quanto riguarda la domanda riguardo l'asset tattico o strategico, la brand experience deve diventare un asset strategico, volendo potrebbe entrare anche nella mission aziendale, visto che gli stakeholders sono diversi, la brand experience ha la capacità di coinvolgerne tanti, e a quel punto maggiore è capacità di veicolare brand experience dall'azienda maggiore saranno i risultati sui KPI di medio-lungo termine come brand awareness, brand image, brand loyalty. E la brand equity si basa su questi KPI. Se tu la fai tattica ovviamente si esaurisce nel medio termine e a quel punto bisogna farti supportare da altre leve tattiche che possono togliere valore al brand, mi riferisco ad esempio alle promozioni.

I: Ottimo, mi hai anticipato la domanda sui KPI. Tornando ora al concetto di brand experience, la letteratura ha identificato tre antecedenti, ovvero la comunicazione, l'event marketing e le brand cues. Ti chiedo se secondo te ci sono attività più o meno specifiche che portano allo sviluppo di brand experience in questo settore e con quali effetti.

R: Ma secondo me si utilizzano sicuramente tutti, con la comunicazione si può fare tanto ed è più semplice, ti puoi affidare a degli amplificatori come gli influencers, o ovviamente anche gli eventi proprietari o non, ovviamente per i proprietari è necessario avere un certo tipo di budget e quindi sono richiesti grossi investimenti. Ciò che è fondamentale è la coerenza, tra la comunicazione, l'evento o gli influencers e il tuo brand.

I: Perfetto, direi molto chiaro. Ti vorrei ora chiedere quali elementi possono amplificare o bloccare la creazione di brand experience.

R: Gli elementi che possono amplificare può essere il fatto di essere presenti in diversi touchpoints dove sono presenti i consumatori, e su questi touchpoint il brand deve essere interessante e suscitare emozioni, tradurre la propria brand awareness in brand loyalty, che è l'obiettivo che bisognerebbe porsi. Il blocco può essere insito al prodotto che può avere un

basso fit emozionale o una strategia di marketing che non sfrutta tutte le leve che offre il digital.

I: Quindi si potrebbe dire che il digital è la sfida più grande?

R: Direi piuttosto l'opportunità, forse la sfida è sapere leggere i big data che dà il digital e quindi interpretarli in modo da proporre ai consumatori le azioni più corrette.

I: Molto chiaro direi. Vorrei chiederti una ultima cosa prima di chiudere, ovvero se potessi farmi uno o più esempi di brand experience che ti vengono alla mente.

R: Mah... ti faccio due esempi che non riguardano l'azienda in cui lavoro. Mi è rimasta impressa la campagna di Ferrero, in cui invitava le nonne a visitare il forno di Balvano, perché era una attività di brand experience a tutto tondo. Invitare i tuoi consumatori/consumatrici a visitare lo stabilimento, le tue linee e fargli vedere dal vivo cosa succede nella tua azienda è una bella esperienza per il consumatore, e poi ovviamente da lì partiva l'amplificazione social e digital, e chi vedeva questa comunicazione potevano vivere in piccola parte le emozioni delle dirette interessate.

Il secondo esempio è Dolce Casa Cameo, io ho lavorato precedentemente in Cameo, e l'azienda ha creato a cento metri dallo stabilimento produttivo di Desenzano un luogo interattivo, costruito appositamente per ospitare i consumatori, dal bambino agli adulti. E le attività sono differenti in base al visitatore, ci sono mastri pasticceri che curano le visite in Dolce Casa, permettendo ai visitatori di creare le proprie torte, giocare o frequentare veri e propri corsi di cucina.

Interview N°2: Morato Pane Marketing Manager

I: Prima di iniziare ti devo chiedere se accetti che questa intervista venga registrata e poi trascritta, al fine di essere inserita in appendice della mia tesi.

R: Certamente puoi utilizzarla.

I: Ti vorrei chiedere come prima cosa, che cosa ne pensi del costrutto del brand experience, e quanto è importante, o può diventare importante nel settore del food and beverage.

R: Mah allora, per chi fa il nostro lavoro ovviamente non posso dirti che non è fondamentale e che non ha un ruolo chiave nel costruire quella che è una relazione con il consumatore e che passa attraverso la costruzione del posizionamento di marca. Ed è fondamentale in principal modo perché una leva che si scarica direttamente sul business, perché la marca è uno dei mezzi con il quale l'azienda va a sviluppare il business, che è il motivo per cui tutti quanti siamo qua, che è quello di generare conversion, quindi lavorare poi sulla loyalty. Sul food and beverage soprattutto l'aspetto esperenziale è assolutamente rilevante, perché rispetto ad

altre categorie di prodotto coinvolge gli aspetti più soggettivi e sensoriali, gusto, olfatto e soprattutto mi riferisco a un target particolarmente selettivo e conservatore come quello italiano. La creazione di una esperienza di consumo sia organolettica che di comunicazione è il punto chiave che ti va poi a costruire potenzialmente una esperienza di brand.

I: Nella tua spiegazione del punto ti sei focalizzata sulla esperienza di consumo. Credi dunque sia possibile ottenere una esperienza di brand solo tramite esperienza di consumo?

R: No è possibile avere una esperienza di brand anche senza una esperienza di consumo, ma è una “condicio sine qua non” per me. Cioè il prodotto, soprattutto in un’azienda del food and beverage, è uno degli aspetti che vanno a fondare la brand experience, non possono vivere slegati ma devono alimentarsi a vicenda.

I: Ho capito, molto interessante questo aspetto. E secondo te invece chi si occupa di brand management quali obiettivi dovrebbe porsi e quali indicatori dovrebbe utilizzare per la misurazione?

R: Sicuramente in fase pre ci sono molti tool, che soprattutto oggi in un contesto data driven dove l’informazione di base rispetto un contesto, un mercato, un consumatore e la tua marca, e rispetto a dove sei oggi, ovvero il punto zero, è molto impattante. Nel momento in cui io volessi iniziare a pianificare un percorso di brand experience partirei dal punto zero, capirei attraverso attività di brand check che ti vanno a misurare non solo la conoscenza della marca e la capacità di essere rilevante ma anche, attraverso un qualsiasi funnel, la capacità di fare conversion, cioè quanto la tua marca riesce a lavorare per trasformare la conoscenza in desiderio, scelta e acquisto.

In fase post vai a rimisurare le azioni sulle quali basi la strategia di brand experience.

I: Molto esaustiva ti ringrazio. Ora passiamo a come si possa sviluppare la brand experience. La letteratura ha identificato tre principali antecedenti che possono svilupparla, ovvero le brand cues, la comunicazione e l’event marketing. Ti chiedo se secondo te ci sono attività più o meno specifiche che portano allo sviluppo di brand experience in questo settore e con quali effetti.

R: Quello di cui tu stai parlando secondo me è la punta dell’iceberg, nel senso che tu quello che vedi fuori è la comunicazione, è tutta la parte di costruzione esperenziale che tu puoi fare nel brand, ma sotto la gran parte dell’iceberg è fatta di strategia, di pensiero e di obiettivi di business. Quindi sicuramente quello di cui stai parlando è la parte finale che scarica a terra una strategia che tu devi avere sulla marca.

Ci vuole prima una analisi specifica del target, individuare le aree di bisogno ed il tuo potenziale, cioè dove tu puoi andare a posizionarti per esprimere una brand experience unica. Un elemento fondamentale per la costruzione di brand experience nel settore food and beverage è la strategia di portfolio. Quindi un’esperienza di marca tu riesci a comunicarla anche attraverso la coerenza e costruzione di un’identità che si autodetermina anche attraverso quello che fai, nel senso che se tu hai l’obiettivo di costruire una marca che vuole

esprimere certi valori e parlare ad un certo target, e lo fa con prodotti e servizi che non sono coerenti con questo, il tuo lavoro di marca viene meno.

I: Grazie mille per la profondità del commento, hai fornito un sacco di informazioni. Ora ti chiedo se secondo te ci sono delle difficoltà che bloccano lo sviluppo di brand experience. Nel senso, io ho fatto un caso studio su Campari, e Campari ed esperienza a mio avviso risultano quasi sinonimi. Se penso ad un brand come Morato invece, l'appealing è differente. Come è possibile secondo te aggirare questo ostacolo, o come utilizzare al meglio gli elementi a disposizione per la creazione di brand experience?

R: Ti dirò una cosa molto poco poetica, con il budget. Partendo dal presupposto che tutte le marche hanno qualcosa da dire, con un proprio posizionamento, proprio portfolio ecc... ma è necessario fare investimenti.

Sorvolando questo concetto spiccio, è necessaria la cultura di marca, ovvero la capacità di saper comprendere quello che è il ruolo della marca e la sua valorizzazione. Per fare questo ci vuole un approccio meno sales driven e maggiormente strutturato di pensiero, abbandonando quindi una logica push.

Ci sono altri blocchi, come l'incapacità di sapere leggere i dati e il contesto nel quale si vive, come il contesto cambia anche la marca deve farlo, e di conseguenza anche la brand experience, sempre in coerenza con i propri pillars.

I: Ti chiedo come ultima domanda, uno o due esempi di brand experience.

R: Ti farei l'esempio di Mutti, semplicemente perché offrono un prodotto con un solo ingrediente, e riuscire a valorizzarlo sia in termini di comunicazione di prodotto ma comunicare in modo più alto, più valoriale è difficile. Sono riusciti a definire un posizionamento di marca molto chiaro, diciamo che sono riusciti a diventare i premium mainstream. Ho voluto fare un esempio di una azienda non multinazionale ma semplicemente perché loro hanno qualcosa in più, le risorse.

Interview N° 3: Montenegro Sr. Brand Manager

I: Come prima cosa ti ringrazio per aver accettato la mia richiesta, ti chiedo prima di iniziare se accetti che io possa registrare l'intervista per poi inserirla all'interno della tesi una volta trascritta.

R: Il piacere è mio Luca, facciamo una chiacchierata in merito, è un argomento interessante ed è stato spunto per poter ritornare a studiare concetti accademici. Accetto per la registrazione, concordiamo comunque che il trascritto mi venga girato per correggerlo o cancellare parti più delicate che potrei valutare non valga la pena far uscire.

I: Certo assolutamente. Dato che ritengo l'azienda in cui lavori stia facendo un lavoro proprio sull'aspetto esperienziale, io partirei dal chiederti quanto ritieni importante il concetto di

brand experience e che risultati state avendo ad oggi? Penso ad esempio alla campagna The Vero Bartender, questa gara che state portando avanti da cinque anni ormai, potremmo partire da qui.

R: Ottimo spunto Luca, te lo voglio inquadrare in maniera ampia The Vero Bartender. Sostanzialmente è il progetto sotto il quale ricadono tutte le attività che facciamo sul target dei bartender, ovvero su un target fatto dal trade. Perché il target dei bartender? Noi tradizionalmente abbiamo un target consumer, che è quello che ci acquista in GDO per il consumo casalingo, e c'è un target consumer che ci acquista nell'on trade per un consumo sul punto vendita. Ovviamente questo è il pillar storico sul quale si basa il business della nostra azienda.

Negli ultimi anni abbiamo valutato opportuno indirizzare le nostre strategie di marketing anche sul target bartender, questo perché negli ultimi anni, soprattutto in America, c'è un fenomeno che vede gli amari protagonisti nel mondo della miscelazione. Abbiamo quindi iniziato a ragionare su come portare questo fenomeno sul mercato italiano. Come strategia abbiamo deciso di andare innanzitutto sui bartender, perché sono i primi che devono accettare un nuovo ingrediente da utilizzare, per poi arrivare al consumatore finale.

Abbiamo quindi lanciato questa iniziativa divisa in due aree principali, una è un talent che va avanti da 5 anni e che coinvolge i bartender italiani nella ricerca in merito ad un tema annuale, e li coinvolgiamo in una experience che prima è singola, chiamando ogni bartender allo sviluppo di un'idea di un cocktail, in seguito l'experience diventa anche fisica, perché li coinvolgiamo in una selezione dove incontriamo fisicamente i partecipanti, che culmina poi nella finale dove avviene davvero la brand experience, finale in cui l'esperienza è molto più ampia e il coinvolgimento è molto più forte.

Questo coinvolgimento diventa ancora più forte nella finale internazionale, svolta sempre in Italia, perché comprende quella che noi chiamiamo residency, cioè una permanenza di 4-5 giorni in Italia, dove i bartender vengono buttati dalla testa ai piedi all'interno del mondo di Amaro Montenegro. Li portiamo nei nostri stabilimenti e mostriamo la produzione, parallelamente inoltre gli facciamo vivere altre esperienze, come ad esempio delle piccole masterclass dedicate solo ai finalisti da parte dei migliori bartender internazionali, non solo, gli offriamo la scoperta del territorio bolognese e italiano per poter far vivere loro una esperienza totale.

L'altra area di The Vero Bartender riguarda il tour di masterclass, con l'obiettivo di creare le base prima del lancio della competizione citata prima. Questa attività ci ha permesso di incontrare un numero elevatissimo di bartender, tra i 600 e 1000 all'anno, e soprattutto con una tipologia di esperienza immersiva. Nelle nostre masterclass non ci si limitava soltanto alla narrazione della storia, ma, tramite il nostro master herbalist, si racconta il mondo Montenegro attraverso una modalità molto più immersiva, infatti i partecipanti possono toccare con mano le erbe e lavorate, per un'elevata esperienza sensoriale. E poi c'è anche un aspetto di gaming, dove richiediamo ai partecipanti di provare a ricreare Amaro Montenegro tramite la combinazione degli estratti.

I: In merito a questo excursus molto dettagliato e per cui ti ringrazio, ti chiedo se vi siete posti degli obiettivi e quali KPI utilizzate per la misurazione?

R: Allora è ovvio che l'obiettivo per questa campagna era molto legato alla awareness, facendo capire ai bartender che Montenegro è un ingrediente valido e versatile per la miscelazione, proveniente da un trend di carattere internazionale.

A livello di KPI ci siamo basati su due indicatori, uno di carattere puramente numerico ovvero la reach, quanti bartender abbiamo incontrato in un anno. Sulle masterclass abbiamo guardato molto anche al livello dei singoli bartender, cercando di coinvolgere coloro che lavoravano nei locali top, per poi scendere nella massa della categoria.

I: Certo capisco, abbiamo parlato di The Vero Bartender che riguarda uno dei tre antecedenti proposti dalla letteratura sulla brand experience, ovvero l'event marketing, mentre le altre due sono la comunicazione e le brand cues. Volevo quindi chiedere se in merito alla creazione di brand experience ritieni importante le altre leve, ed inoltre chiederti se lo ritieni più un elemento tattico o strategico a lungo?

R: Parto dall'ultima domanda, io credo sia strategico quello che abbiamo fatto sul target trade. Questa attività di brand experience ha avuto un ruolo molto importante e si è abbinata ad una attività di trade, costruita dal nostro sales department in collaborazione con noi, per penetrare il canale e raggiunti risultati positivi. Per quanto riguarda le altre leve promuoviamo attività con i bartender tramite comunicazione social, abbiamo creato delle dirette con personaggi dell'azienda che interagivano con i bartender che negli anni sono diventati amici del brand.

I: Passando al lato consumer, partirei magari parlando dell'ultima edizione limitata del packaging che presentava un qr code che provvedeva a fare entrare all'interno del mondo Amaro Montenegro, senza limitarsi solo alla storia o attività.

R: Ottimo spunto Luca, questa è l'ultima attività fatta. Natale è un momento molto importante come momento e merita un investimento dedicato, infatti ogni anno dedichiamo packaging ad hoc, e quest'anno ne abbiamo realizzato uno con questo qr code, che portava ad una piattaforma dedicata tutta basata sulla realtà aumentata, succedeva poi che inquadrando con il qr code i singoli elementi del packaging si esplodeva ad elementi specifici.

Ad esempio inquadrando l'immagine dei bicchieri arrivavi a vedere una cocktail list di Montenegro con i tre cocktails principali suggeriti e ad un video di spiegazione del cocktail, tutto in realtà aumentata, oppure un'altra parte che riportava a tutto il processo produttivo Montenegro, un'altra il suo heritage sotto forma di vero e proprio cortometraggio. Questo più a livello tattico, mentre ti posso fare esempi più strategici interessanti a livello consumers, perché io ritengo che soprattutto in un settore come quello degli spirits la brand experience abbia un ruolo strategico, perché come ben sai negli spirits conta molto la componente di prodotto, di gusto... ma un ruolo più importante rispetto al food and beverage tradizionale lo ha tutto il vissuto marca, i valori del brand, il dna... perché quando bevi qualcosa, soprattutto nei contesti sociali stai sposando un'idea di brand, un vissuto e tutto il background dietro quel brand. E quindi quando bevi qualcosa hai bisogno di avere delle basi che ti portano a dire "si lo sento vicino al mio essere e modo di intendere la vita" e da sempre noi raccontiamo la

convivialità, il piacere di stare insieme senza troppi fronzoli, ma autentico di celebrare i piccoli momenti piacevoli della vita. Quel concetto di “Sapore Vero” è questo.

Abbiamo inoltre fatto tanti eventi, cercando sempre di realizzare degli ingaggi che coinvolgessero, creassero awareness del brand e per legare il consumatore al brand. Nel 2016 e 2017 abbiamo creato dei big events in cui andavamo a proporre la nostra drink strategy, i nostri cocktails, ma soprattutto andavamo a proporre delle vere e proprie esperienze in contesti particolari. In un caso abbiamo fatto un evento all’interno della più grande palestra di arrampicata d’Europa, e facevamo provare esperienze diverse al consumatore in base a delle aree tematiche, a quel tempo la campagna si chiamava Eroi Veri e raccontava coloro che fanno attività avventurose ma nella realtà e con finalità di volontariato. Basandosi su questa campagna abbiamo sviluppato le attività all’interno dell’evento, come l’arrampicata sulla parete, con la realtà virtuale immergiti nel mondo sottomarino, vivi l’esperienza sensoriale nel labirinto alla ricerca delle erbe e della bottiglia. Una esperienza immersiva che voleva ingaggiare, creare awareness e creare una forma di advocacy, questo perché nel momento in cui tu ti avvicini così tanto ad un brand, scopri i suoi valori, sei più disponibile a diventarne testimonial.

I: Come ultima domanda ti vorrei chiedere quali possono essere i blocchi e le trappole quando si va a sviluppare brand experience.

R: Credo che i rischi siano innanzitutto pensare e sviluppare l’idea in maniera autoreferenziale, non bisogna dare per scontato che il consumatore abbia un livello di attenzione e una voglia e necessita di approfondire ciò che gli stai proponendo, solo perché tu che ci sei dentro fino al collo, pensi che sia rilevante. Quindi il punto è la rilevanza, bisogna creare delle situazioni da inserire nei giusti contenuti e dare divertimento ed ingaggio con un minimo di approfondimento e contenuto. L’altra cosa è l’allineamento interno all’azienda che esterno, è fondamentale che quando vai ad offrire qualcosa ci sia un allineamento di intenti e di obiettivi.

Interview N°4: Pastificio Rana Brand Manager

I: Per prima cosa ti devo chiedere se sei disponibile a fare sì che questa intervista venga utilizzata ed inserita all’interno della mia tesi.

R: Certo Luca assolutamente.

I: Perfetto, allora direi di iniziare partendo dal concetto di brand experience, quanto ritieni debba essere importante per un’azienda svilupparlo? Ed in particolare facendo riferimento al settore del food and beverage, ci sono caratteristiche del settore che lo possono rendere più o meno importante?

R: Parto dal settore e dal ruolo che l’esperienza ha di conseguenza con esso. Bisogna considerare che il cibo di per sé è un prodotto sensoriale, e per questo la sua natura lo rende ideale al racconto e ad un marketing di tipo esperienziale. Si adatta sicuramente per sua natura ad essere raccontato, sia per quanto riguarda da dove e come viene fatto o con quali

ingredienti e il perché, fino alla tradizione e all'arte della sua preparazione e cottura. Un prodotto food non può che emozionare perché regala innanzitutto un'esperienza di gusto, ma anche una storia da cui nasce quel prodotto, fatta di valori e persone che lo hanno reso unico. Sta poi all'azienda sapere raccontare tutto questo, per conquistare i suoi consumatori e creare valore. E' essenziale per chi opera in questo settore creare una brand experience a 360 gradi, attraverso un pack accattivante, chiaro e parlante con cui vestire il proprio prodotto, attraverso un prodotto di qualità e inimitabile, creando community e interazione sui social, tramite eventi personalizzati.

I: Ti ringrazio per la risposta esaustiva. A quali obiettivi bisognerebbe puntare in fase di pianificazione della Brand Experience? Quali KPI possono essere maggiormente utili per misurare i risultati?

R: Ti direi come obiettivo principale la creazione di brand awareness, tramite l'esperienza si può infatti amplificare molto il bacino di utenti con potenziale di interazione e successivo avvicinamento al brand. Una conseguenza inoltre di quanto detto risiede nel puntare sull'aumentare i brand followers/lovers.

I KPI sono specifici e cambiano in relazione all'attività messa in atto per creare la brand experience, ad esempio, se è digital, sarà misurata con i KPI tipici di questo canale come i like, le impressions e tutte quelle a seguire.

I: Ed invece secondo te, quali elementi amplificare o bloccare la creazione e sviluppo della brand experience?

R: Allora partiamo dall'amplificare, direi che sicuramente la amplifica l'essere coerenti con i valori di marca, adottare un tono di voce chiaro ed in sinergia con la marca e creare inoltre una connessione, una relazione con i propri consumatori per generare un senso di appartenenza alla marca. Come blocco invece ti direi il lanciare messaggi sconnessi che non sono quindi coerenti con la marca, oppure usare stili di comunicazione obsoleti senza sfruttare il digital... o anche non avere la capacità di essere chiari in cosa comunicare.

I: Ho capito. Ma quindi ritieni la brand experience un asset tattico o più strategico?

R: Ritendo che la brand experience sia assolutamente un asset di livello strategico, e quindi con prospettiva sul lungo periodo... bisogna creare valore e porsi l'obiettivo di diventare un love brand. Che è poi quello che sta facendo Rana.

I: Ho capito chiaro. E invece quali ritieni siano le sfide più importanti quando si vuole andare a creare un'efficace brand experience?

R: Sicuramente quanto detto già prima. Inoltre è fondamentale conoscere i propri clienti. La fiducia nel brand e la relazione duratura con ciascun cliente si creano con la capacità di dare risposte e valore ai bisogni dei clienti stessi. Si punta sulla personalizzazione, l'interazione continua, la velocità o la semplicità di accesso. Per creare una customer experience convincente e poi una brand experience di successo è fondamentale seguire il consumatore in tutto il suo ciclo di esperienza, sia sui canali online che offline, facendo sì anche di interagire

contestualmente e monitorare costantemente il suo grado di soddisfazione prima, durante e dopo. Questa è la grande sfida perché non sempre è facile da decodificare e conoscere.

I: Mi sembra tutto chiaro. Per concludere ti chiedo un esempio di Brand Experience della tua azienda, so che Rana sta lavorando su questo.

R: Sicuramente ti cito Famiglia Rana Grocer's London. Un luogo fisico dove all'interno era possibile trovare più mondi, tutti ovviamente legati al brand Rana, per una immersione totale. I visitatori trovavano all'interno un negozio alimentare, ma anche un luogo ricreativo dove poter toccare con mano gli ingredienti artigianali. Erano inoltre presenti chef che davano consigli sull'utilizzo della pasta, in piena coerenza con l'immagine di brand forte di una expertise su quel punto di vista. Ulteriori dettagli li vedi in questo link.

<https://www.shimejcreatives.com/brand-stories/2018/12/19/brand-experience-la-famiglia-rana-grocer>.

Interview N°5: Zuegg Brand Manager

I: Grazie ancora per l'intervista, per prima cosa ti chiedo se posso inserire l'intervista all'interno della tesi per l'analisi.

R: Sì.

I: Bene, io direi di partire dal concetto di brand experience, come hai potuto vedere dalla definizione, e chiederti quanto secondo te è importante questo concetto, e la sua relazione con il settore food and beverage.

R: Credo innanzitutto che la brand experience diventi un asset sempre più importante e strategico, contando la competizione sempre più elevata sia da parte di aziende/brand sia di aziende/product label, e diventa quindi necessario per i brand che vogliono perdurare nel tempo e acquisire fidelizzazione di mettere in atto azioni distintive, e la brand experience è una delle principali, perché i consumatori moderni ricercano sempre più qualcosa che va oltre il prodotto stesso.

I: E quali credi siano gli obiettivi che il brand dovrebbe porsi? E come in caso misurarli?

R: Sicuramente bisogna far sì che i consumatori siano soddisfatti, e quindi pensare ad attività ad hoc in base alle loro esigenze, per fare questo è necessaria una fase di analisi del consumatore, individuare interessi e passioni in modo da creare attività che sia coerente con l'identità del brand, ma anche ingaggiante per il consumatore. Va inoltre fatto un ragionamento strategico di lungo periodo. Quando penso al concetto di esperienza penso allo sviluppo di una relazione che si instaura con il consumatore nel lungo periodo, sicuramente ci sono KPI che vanno oltre l'ingaggio del consumatore, è più difficile da misurare ma si possono

valutare tutte quelle attività, anche sui social, spontanee nei confronti del brand. Poi ci si va a misurare le singole attività che compongono la strategia di brand experience.

I: Riguardo alle attività di attivazione a cui hai fatto riferimento ti chiedo nello specifico quali secondo te sono gli elementi imprescindibili all'interno della stessa per rendere efficace lo sviluppo della brand experience.

R: Prima cosa, nella definizione della strategia di brand experience è necessario che l'azienda abbia chiara la propria brand identity. Seconda cosa è la conoscenza del consumatore, calarsi nei panni dello stesso, sia riguardo le aspettative verso il brand che come interessi personali, in modo da adeguarsi agli stessi. Bisogna inoltre sviluppare attività distintive ed interessanti per il consumatore, portandolo ad avvicinarsi al brand e facendolo quindi diventare una volta provata l'esperienza un ambassador.

I: Mi piacerebbe sapere ora se secondo te ci possono essere altri elementi che possono bloccare la brand experience.

R: Credo sia necessario fare leva su elementi emozionali, intangibili. Inoltre bisogna non stare troppo alti ed avvalersi di valori che non possiede intrinsecamente, solo perché sono temi comuni, cadendo dunque anche nel banale... mi viene l'esempio della sostenibilità, in molti ne parlano, ma quanti poi compiono azioni reali in merito? I consumatori lo sanno, ne vengono al corrente poi e si sentono presi in giro.

I: Direi tutto chiaro. Vorrei chiederti per chiudere un esempio di brand experience.

R: Allora ci ho pensato, e il primo brand a cui ho pensato è stato Nespresso. Secondo me sta lavorando bene perché nei suoi flagship store, ovviamente ha lavorato bene sul caffè, ma al suo interno ci sono elementi identificativi del brand, ti ritrovi il colore, l'odore, la possibilità di assaggiare il caffè... e soprattutto quando entri ti senti parte di un'élite. Si esce fuori dal mero consumo di caffè ma vivi una esperienza completa del brand, percependo la sua essenza basata sulla raffinatezza e l'esclusività, vivendola in prima persona. Io ci sono stata per fare acquisti per altre persone e non ho consumato la tazzina di caffè Nespresso, ma ho comunque vissuto in prima persona questo tipo di esperienza.

Interview N°6: Nestlé Brand Manger

I: Quanto ritieni debba essere importante per un'azienda operante nel settore del Food and Beverage la creazione di Brand Experience? Ritieni ci siano delle caratteristiche peculiari del settore che possono renderla più o meno importante?

R: La Brand Experience sta diventando un fattore critico di successo per tutte le aziende di marketing, soprattutto per quelle che operano nel FMCG, perché permette di lavorare su un

aspetto fondamentale del marketing: la loyalty al brand. Il consumatore può essere ingaggiato in molteplici maniere differenti, e la costruzione di una brand experience a 360° può rivelarsi un elemento chiave per il successo di un brand perché ad oggi è un elemento di differenziazione che aiuta a fidelizzare e a guidare la scelta dei nostri consumatori. Sicuramente è parte della strategia a lungo termine, ciò che è importante è che sia fondato su elementi reali e concreti della marca, e non aspetti illusori e lontani da quello che il prodotto può esprimere.

I: A quali obiettivi bisognerebbe puntare in fase di pianificazione della brand experience? E quali KPI possono essere maggiormente utili per misurare i risultati?

R: Uno degli elementi più rilevanti è sicuramente il funnel di acquisto del consumatore perché la brand experience lavora nella fase di purchase e di loyalty. Altri KPI misurabili sono la brand image di un prodotto dove marche capaci di costruire brand experience distintive avranno sicuramente riflessi rilevanti sull'immagine e il percepito di marca ed ovviamente la brand awareness.

I: Mi sembra tutto chiaro. E quali elementi possono fungere da amplificatore o blocco quando si tenta di creare e sviluppare la Brand Experience?

R: Il social è sicuramente il media più importante che permette di amplificare in senso positivo e negativo talvolta la brand experience. Un commento negativo condiviso su un social è in grado di creare un sentiment negativo che poi influirà su tutto il ciclo di vita di un brand. Conoscere il proprio brand e il contesto competitivo in cui opera permette di avere una efficace brand experience, bisogna essere consapevoli delle sfide, delle forze e delle debolezze e trasformarle in un'esperienza distintiva per il consumatore.

I: Come ultima domanda ti chiedo un esempio di brand experience?

R: Credo che Levissima sta facendo un ottimo lavoro nel mondo delle acque, associandosi al mondo delle sfide quotidiane, sta creando uno story telling interessante in questo ambito.

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