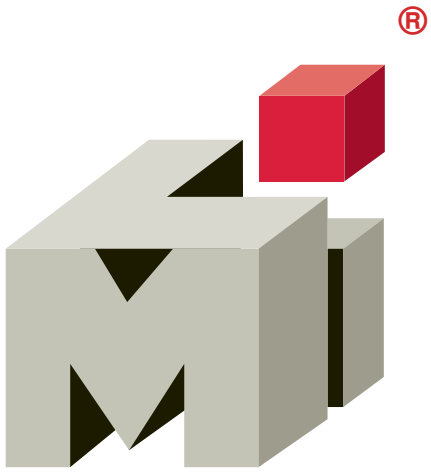

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Re-modeling the brand funnel to address changes in consumer behavior

State of the literature and future research needs

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SUMMARY

Christoph Burmann / Alexander Dierks

Re-modeling the brand funnel to address changes in consumer behavior

State of the literature and future research needs

Arbeitspapier Nr. 56 / Working paper no. 56

Type of working paper: Literature documentation on the continued applicability of the brand funnel model in light of changing consumer behavior.

Method: Literature-based analysis

Objective: Review of the impact of changes in consumer behavior on the brand funnel model and of the state of literature in re-modeling it.

Specification of further research needs to derive a contemporary alternative to the traditional brand funnel model.

Main findings:

- The brand funnel is an established representation of consumer behavior widely used by researchers and marketers.
- There is a persistent research call to investigate whether and to what extent the funnel model has future applicability in light of changing consumer behavior across the buying cycle.
- Previous research allows to synthesize a range of points of criticism, suggesting that a more nuanced model structure is required. So far, few attempts provide an operational alternative to the funnel model - they differ in conceptualization and operationalization, and frequently stem from practitioners.
- To advance this research field, it seems necessary to develop a holistic, theory-backed overview of propositions, assess the attempts to re-model the brand funnel against these, and derive a more nuanced model of the consumer decision process.
- A more nuanced brand funnel model can allow to differentiate more granular consumer sub-groups. Further research may assess whether these differ in behavior-relevant variables such as in specific brand image facets.

Target group: Practitioners, researchers, and students in the field of business management, especially in marketing and brand management

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List of abbreviations

AIDA	Attention-Interest-Desire-Action (hierarchy-of-effect framework introduced by LEWIS in 1898)
BRiC	brand relevance in category (as introduced by FISCHER ET AL., 2010)
CDJ	Consumer Decision Journey (as introduced by COURT ET AL., 2009)
cf	compare
CMO	chief marketing officer
EBF	Enhanced Brand Funnel (as introduced by PERREY ET AL., 2015)
e.g.	for example
esp.	especially
eWOM	electronic word-of-mouth
GfK	Gesellschaft für Konsumforschung
i.e.	that is to say/in other words
MOT	moment of truth
TBF	traditional brand funnel
WOM	word-of-mouth

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1. Introduction

"Understanding Customers and the Customer Experience: This priority reflects … how customers and consumer behavior have changed due to technology and other forces."[1]

"It's time to bury the marketing funnel."[2]

"The brand funnel is alive and kicking but what it consists of … must be considered in a different light."[3]

Consumer[4] purchase behavior is changing. This observation is underlying the research priority quoted above and a fact that is equally well acknowledged by academic researchers[5] and marketing managers.[6] In literature, the profound changes are often related to **two trends** in industry dynamics. First, a **proliferation of products** – and consequent consumer choices – can be observed.[7] On the back of trade liberalization,[8] global lower cost competition,[9] and an equalization of technological offerings,[10] this has led to a (perceived) product commoditization across many industries.[11] Marketing shifts from a product to a service dominant logic.[12] Second, the **emergence of the internet/web 2.0**[13] and the increasing prevalence of related technology and devices[14] have resulted in a structural shift

[1] MARKETING SCIENCE INSTITUTE (2014), p. 4. In its publication of research priorities 2014-2016 for the marketing faculty "Understanding Customers and the Customer Experience" is presented as a tier 1 priority.

[2] NOBLE (2010)

[3] GESELLSCHAFT FÜR KONSUMFORSCHUNG (2013), p. 2

[4] Marketing contrasts between **consumers** (i.e., private households) and **businesses** (i.e., organizations) and further differentiates whether an individual person or a group (family or committee) decide. See FOSCHT & SWOBODA (2011), p. 11. In this document, consumer refers to the individual, private decision-maker.

[5] See e.g., BALLANTYNE ET AL. (2006), p. 340; KUMAR (2015), pp. 4–5; YADAV & PAVLOU (2014), p. 20

[6] See e.g., BRESCIANI & EWING (2015), pp. 322–323; COURT ET AL. (2009), pp. 3–7; LECINSKI (2011), pp. 9–12

[7] See e.g., DAVCIK ET AL. (2014), p. 2; SARKAR & SINGH (2005), p. 83; VAN NIEROP ET AL. (2010), p. 63

[8] See SARKAR & SINGH (2005), p. 83

[9] See e.g., MATTHEWS ET AL. (2014), p. 26; BALLANTYNE ET AL. (2006), pp. 348–349

[10] See BOHMANN (2011). The author highlights that in many saturated markets this equalization of functional and technological aspects is aggravated by a similarity in advertising messages (pp. 3-5).

[11] See BRESCIANI & EWING (2015), p. 323; BOHMANN (2011), pp. 1–6; BURMANN ET AL. (2015), pp. 110–111; FREUNDT (2006), pp. 7–10 .

[12] See VARGO & LUSCH (2004), p. 1 for a seminal discussion of this change in "marketing logic"

[13] See JACOBS (2009) for a holistic discussion of the term web 2.0 (pp. 5-12)

[14] Here, technology refers, for example, to the steady expansion of broadband access. See KELLER (2009), p. 141. Relevant devices include personal computers or, more recently, smartphones and tablets.

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in marketing communication.[15] With increasing connectivity and interactivity as well as quasi-omnipresent availability of information,[16] the asymmetry of knowledge between firms and consumers has declined.[17] On the flipside, the wide landscape of new touch points and channels, which now complement traditional media (e.g., television, magazines, newspapers), make marketing ubiquitous.[18] Consequently, today's marketplace has considerably changed: it is more interactive, information transparent, and consumer-driven but also increasingly complex.[19] For marketing managers, this heightens the importance of intangible assets such as the brand,[20] of creating (emotional) customer experiences,[21] and of building long-term relationships with consumers.[22]

Both trends have deep implications on the potential **role of contemporary consumers**,[23] pinpointed as a consumer empowerment,[24] with various implications for purchase-related behavior. For example, given the omnipresence of information, consumers are perceived to be *"always on."*[25] While they may consume nearly everywhere and simultaneously

[15] In comparison to traditional mass (1-to-many) communication, the internet especially allows for many-to-many communication. See e.g., HOFFMAN & NOVAK (1997), p. 44

[16] Various researchers have addressed the benefits of the web in comparison to traditional communication. See e.g., the seminal works by HOFFMAN & NOVAK (1997), pp. 44–46 or PETERSON & MERINO (2003), pp. 99–101. More recently, LI (2011) with a literature review on the interactive web.

[17] See e.g., CHRISTODOULIDES (2009), p. 142; CHRISTODOULIDES ET AL. (2012), p. 54

[18] See e.g., JACOBS (2009), pp. 1–2. Internet may be understood as general term to reflect a wider, fragmented array of channels. In structuring these, SCHULTZ (2011) differentiates web search (e.g., via search engines as Google, Yahoo), the various, increasingly important forms of electronic word-of-mouth and social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter), and mobile communication (pp. 11-12).

[19] Beyond the above literature, see e.g., M'ZUNGU ET AL. (2010), p. 606; PAPADOPOULOS & SHAH (2013), p. 126; CHRISTODOULIDES (2007), pp. 292–293

[20] In line with BURMANN ET AL. (2015), a **brand** can be understood as a *"Bündel aus funktionalen und nichtfunktionalen Nutzen, deren Ausgestaltung sich aus Sicht der Zielgruppen der Marke nachhaltig gegenüber konkurrierenden Angeboten differenziert"* (p. 28). This is a broad definition that integrates a perspective on the internal causes (i.e., a company specifies the benefits a brand can offer) with a perspective on external effects (i.e., the perception of this brand and its benefits amongst stakeholders) of a brand. It extends beyond purely focusing on a brand as a name/symbol or on its external effect (without acknowledgment for the underlying, internal resources). See BURMANN ET AL. (2015), pp. 28–29 for a more detailed explanation.

[21] See e.g., BURMANN ET AL. (2010), pp. 5-6, 38-39; FREUNDT (2006); M'ZUNGU ET AL. (2010), pp. 606–607; POWERS ET AL. (2013), pp. 482, 484.

[22] See e.g., FOURNIER (1998); KUMAR (2015), p. 4; VARGO & LUSCH (2004), pp. 7, 11

[23] JACOBS (2009) reviews the implications of the web 2.0 on marketing communication. He notes: *"Im Mittelpunkt des Web 2.0 stehen deshalb die Nutzer und ihr verändertes Verhalten."* (p. 11)

[24] See e.g., KELLER (2013), p. 560; MORAN ET AL. (2014), p. 200; PAUWELS & VAN EWIJK (2013), p. 7

[25] POWERS ET AL. (2013), p. 480

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across devices,[26] this abundance of information makes creating awareness for a certain brand increasingly difficult.[27] When preparing the purchase of a certain product or service, consumers were, in the past, largely dependent on material provided by marketers ("pushed conversation"). Today's media environment provides them with increasing possibilities to externally search for, identify, and evaluate product-related data relevant to them at the time and place that they need it ("pull behavior").[28] DARLEY ET AL. explain: *"As technology changes, the way consumers seek information and make purchases is likely to change as well."*[29] However, researchers have also argued that the wide, complex range of choices and channels may lead to *"choice fatigue"*[30] and prompt consumers to simplify their decision processes.[31] Consumers' ability to exert influence post purchase has also heightened. For example, the connectivity and interactivity of the internet simplify the diffusion of word-of-mouth (WOM) beyond consumers' direct circle of acquaintances on platforms such as blogs, forums, or brand communities.[32] Consumers' motivation to engage in electronic WOM (eWOM) varies,[33] but the potential of eWOM to influence brand meaning and other consumers' purchase decisions has been widely acknowledged.[34] Clearly, the phenomenon's magnitude remains debatable. For example, in a recent cross-industry and cross-brand comparison, BUGHIN, highlights stark differences in the contribution level

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[26] POWERS ET AL. (2013), p. 480

[27] See COURT ET AL. (2009), p. 4; JACOBS (2009), p. 52. COURT ET AL. (2009) support the importance empirically. Those brands of which a consumer is aware when recognizing a purchase is triggered *"can be up to three times more likely to be purchased."* (p. 4)

[28] See e.g., BRUCE & SOLOMON (2013), p. 307; BUGHIN (2014), p. 356; PUNJ (2012), p. 791; SCHULTZ (2011), p. 12; SU (2008), pp. 109–110. COURT ET AL. (2009) argue that during this phase of active product search and evaluation, two thirds of touch points are pulled not pushed (p. 5). Note that this does not necessarily deteriorate search for information offline. MAITY & DASS (2014), pp. 42–43; MAITY ET AL. (2014), p. 250 highlighted recently that relevance of offline or online channels may depend on industry and product type under consideration as well as the fit between media richness and decision task.

[29] DARLEY ET AL. (2010), p. 110

[30] BALLANTYNE ET AL. (2006), p. 340; similarly, VAN NIEROP ET AL. (2010), p. 63

[31] See e.g., BALLANTYNE ET AL. (2006), p. 340; COURT ET AL. (2009), p. 4; VAN NIEROP ET AL. (2010), p. 63. All of these researchers suggest that consumers focus their pre-purchase efforts on a limited number of potential brand alternatives instead of searching for and evaluating "all" available brands. This view is grounded in consideration set theory, which is discussed in more depth in chapter 2.

[32] See e.g., HENNIG-THURAU ET AL. (2004), p. 39; JACOBS (2009), pp. 19–20

[33] See e.g., HENNIG-THURAU ET AL. (2004), pp. 47–49. Based on an empirical study among 2,000 internet users, the authors identify eight factors for providing eWOM including its social benefits, financial incentives, extraversion, and concern for others. See also JACOBS (2009), pp. 20–21; KING ET AL. (2014), pp. 171–172 for a review of the literature.

[34] See e.g., BRESCIANI & EWING (2015), p. 324; BRONNER & HOOG (2010), pp. 243–244; BUGHIN (2014), p. 357; KING ET AL. (2014), pp. 173–174.

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and purchase effect of digital consumer conversations. He asserts, *"for these [most social] categories, research shows that more than 10 per cent of consumers actively promote brands to others and more than 40 per cent of recent buyers have been influenced by those conversations."*[35] While even in such highly social industries the number of active contributors seems to be restricted, for some consumers the internet induces a transition from a rather passive (consuming) to a more active (participating) role.[36] Understanding consumers and influencing them with the right message at the right point in time has become more challenging.[37] In sum, these examples highlight that the above two trends may affect **consumer behavior across the entire buying cycle.**[38]

Against this background, a fundamental question for marketing researchers and managers alike is to what extent these changes call into question traditional models of consumer behavior? Focusing on the well-established linear **brand purchase funnel**, a holistic model of the consumer purchase decision process,[39] the introductory quotes allude to a discussion in which very different perspectives prevail.[40] A compelling answer requires deeper elaboration. Recently, the MARKETING SCIENCE INSTITUTE summarized this claim in detailing the above research priority: *"How do social media and digital technology change … the consumer path to purchase? What are the best ways to model the consumer decision journey? Are other models more appropriate than the decision funnel?"*[41] These essential questions form the working paper's starting point. Following this brief opening, the document is structured as follows. First, the brand funnel and underlying process-oriented models of consumer decision-making are introduced and key terms defined (Chapter 2). Then, the state of literature is reviewed. The focus is on previous research that

[35] BUGHIN (2014), p. 357. Among the categories in which consumer conversations matter the least are banking and (life) insurances. He finds the highest influence in industries such as telco or electronic products as well as automobiles. LECINSKI (2011) provides a comparable influence figure. He finds *"that 37% of shoppers find online sources to be an influential driver when making decisions"* (p. 33) and that the key online activities include blog reading and gathering online referrals.

[36] See e.g., BRESCIANI & EWING (2015), p. 324; JACOBS (2009), pp. 19–22

[37] See KELLER (2009), p. 141

[38] In line with FOSCHT & SWOBODA (2011), **buying cycle** may be understood as the entire consumer purchase process, spanning the pre-purchase, the purchase, and the post-purchase phase (p. 34).

[39] See chapter 2 for an introduction to the brand purchase funnel

[40] See chapter 3 for a discussion on the state of the literature

[41] MARKETING SCIENCE INSTITUTE (2014), p. 4

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describes contemporary alternatives of the purchase decision process (Chapter 3.1) and the application of these models to explain (differences in) drivers of consumer behavior across the process (Chapter 3.2). This allows to specify a two-fold research gap. Chapter 4 highlights resulting questions for further research and concludes this paper.

2. The brand funnel as a consumer decision process model: Overview and definitions

Understanding **consumer behavior**, particularly purchase decisions, is central to the marketing sciences.[42] In line with KARIMI ET AL., one may view a **purchase decision** as *"behavioural pattern of a consumer who determines and follows a decision process comprising various stages in order to reach a choice."*[43] Modeling this process is seen as a key activity in marketing research,[44] and **process-oriented models** of consumer purchase behavior serve as primary perspective for this paper.

The core assumption of such models is that the consumer purchase decision process can be subdivided into separable phases or stages.[45] In the most general form, one may break the process into a pre-purchase, purchase, and post-purchase stage.[46] Building on ideas from the comprehensive models (*"Grand Theory"*[47]) that emerged during the 1960s and 1970, many marketing textbooks today distinguish five stages: need recognition, information search, alternative evaluation, purchase, and post-purchase evaluation.[48] Over the

[42] See e.g., FOSCHT & SWOBODA (2011), p. 3; BALLANTYNE ET AL. (2006), p. 339. SOLOMON ET AL. (2013) refer to **consumer behavior** as *"the processes involved when individuals and groups select, purchase, use or dispose of products, services, ideas or experiences to satisfy needs and desires."* (p. 5). A similar definition is provided by BLACKWELL ET AL. (2006), p. 4

[43] KARIMI ET AL. (2015), p. 138. Similarly, see e.g., KROEBER-RIEL & GRÖPPEL-KLEIN (2013), p. 458

[44] See e.g., FOSCHT & SWOBODA (2011), pp. 32–34; HU ET AL. (2014), p. 300; SHAO ET AL. (2008), p. 798

[45] See e.g., PESCHER ET AL. (2014), p. 45; SHOCKER ET AL. (1991), pp. 181–182

[46] See FOSCHT & SWOBODA (2011), pp. 34–35. The authors refer to this as the buying cycle.

[47] SIMONSON ET AL. (2001), p. 251. In the early days of consumer behavior research, these researchers intended to capture all constructs relevant to explain consumer behavior in one comprehensive model. Amongst these is the renowned consumer decision process model originally presented by ENGEL ET AL. (1978), which describes key stages of the decision process.

[48] See e.g., KOTLER & KELLER (2012), pp. 188–195; LILIEN ET AL. (1992 [reprinted 2003]), pp. 25–28. Variations clearly exist. E.g., YADAV ET AL. (2013) re-group search and evaluation into a pre-purchase stage (p. 315).

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last decades, two research streams have provided distinct models of the consumer decision process.[49] The "hierarchy-of-effect" models from advertising research[50] and the choice set models from behavioral decision theory.[51] As a specific form of choice models, **sequential multistage process models** have emerged.[52] In comparison to simple (one-stage) choice models, they provide a detailed reflection of the consumer purchase decision. With the objective of assessing the implications of changing consumer behavior across the entire buying cycle, these models provide a fertile theoretical basis.[53] The main idea of sequential multistage models is to describe a *"stylized 'process' by which this individual arrives at a choice,"*[54] that is to split the consumer decision process into discrete stages and to evaluate the sets of relevant products or brands at each of them.[55] The models build on the assumption that a given consumer will, generally, not be aware of all universally available brands,[56] but has an awareness or retrieval set which he/she actually knows.[57] Many researchers, then, describe two further phases to arrive at choice. First, the awareness or retrieval set is reduced to the consideration set, often employing simple

[49] SIMONSON ET AL. (2001), pp. 255–258

[50] See e.g., LAVIDGE & STEINER (1961). The main objective of these models is to explain how advertising affects consumer decision making. The earliest of these models is the AIDA (Awareness → Interest → Desire → Action) funnel for advertising by Elias St. Elmo Lewis from 1898. See e.g., VAKRATSAS & AMBLER (1999) for a holistic review and discussion of different models in this stream.

[51] See e.g., SHAO ET AL. (2008), pp. 797–798. In line with SHAO ET AL. (2008), pp. 798–800, one may differentiate one-stage, two-stage, and multi-stage choice models. The latter are in focus, here.

[52] Cf. KARDES ET AL. (1993); SHOCKER ET AL. (1991); SPIGGLE & SEWALL (1987)

[53] Note that both hierarchy-of-effect and multistage choice set models are used as theoretical basis of specific linear funnel models. The two views differ in purpose and set-up. As will be discussed hereafter, multistage choice set literature is closest to the understanding here.

[54] SHOCKER ET AL. (1991), p. 182

[55] In line with DECROP (2010), a (choice) **set** may be understood *"as a generic term to refer to different types of sets containing product alternatives people have in mind when making a decision"* (p. 93-94). Note that despite using the word "product" in the definition, the authors refer to "product" and "brand" interchangeably. It is a volume-oriented term. The authors provide an overview of different set types (p. 96).

[56] The set of available brands has also been called the "universal set." See KARDES ET AL. (1993), p. 63

[57] See e.g., NARAYANA & MARKIN (1975), p. 1; SPIGGLE & SEWALL (1987), p. 103. The **awareness set** is, here, broadly viewed in terms of whether the consumer knows the brand. NARAYANA & MARKIN (1975) define it as *"the set of brands in a given product class of which the consumer is aware."* (p. 1). In the context of purely memory-based choice situations (i.e., that only make use of internally stored information), researchers operationalize the awareness set more narrowly as a **retrieval set**, which does explicitly only contain those brands accessible from memory (without any stimulating aid). KARDES ET AL. (1993) define the retrieval set as *"the subset of brands in the universal set that the consumer can access from memory."* (p. 63). This divide is reflected in brand literature, where KELLER (2013) defines **brand awareness** as *"customers' ability to recall and recognize the brand under different conditions."* (p. 108, highlighting added)

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decision heuristics.[58] This consideration set contains brands that are relevant (i.e., goal satisfying) in a purchase situation. Second, the remaining brands are evaluated more extensively to arrive at choice.[59] The focus of evaluation on these permits to reduce complexity and manage constraints in time or in processing of information.[60] In conclusion, a consumer is assumed to sequentially narrow down the set of relevant brands until he/she arrives at choice.[61] Figure 1 illustrates an established version of the sequential multistage process model.

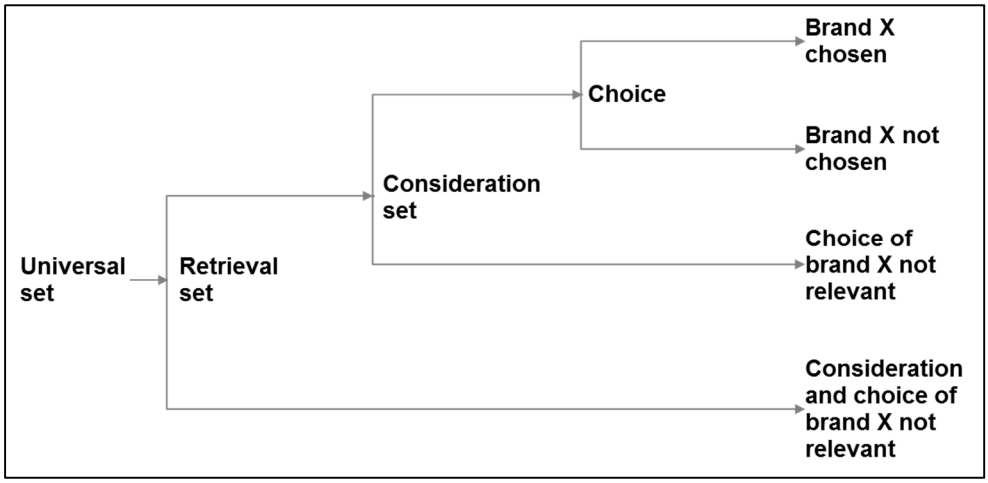

Figure 1: The sequential multistage process model
Source: Adapted from KARDES ET AL. (1993), p. 64.

Building on the sequential multistage process models, a number of management tools have been developed by consulting firms, agencies, and marketing researchers. The most renowned are the **brand purchase funnel** by MCKINSEY & COMPANY,[62] the **brand funnel/brand screen analysis** by BBDO,[63] and the **brand pipeline** by ICON ADDED VALUE.[64] The central idea of the brand purchase funnel is the same as in choice set models, namely

[58] SHOCKER ET AL. (1991) define the **consideration set** as a *"purposefully constructed [set that] … can be viewed as consisting of those goal-satisfying alternatives salient or accessible on a particular occasion."* (p. 183) This implies that choice is constrained to brands in the consideration set. See BALLANTYNE ET AL. (2006), p. 340

[59] See KARDES ET AL. (1993), p. 63; ROBERTS & LATTIN (1991), p. 429

[60] See HAUSER & WERNERFELT (1990), pp. 393–394; KARDES ET AL. (1993), p. 63; ROBERTS & LATTIN (1991), pp. 429–430

[61] See SPIGGLE & SEWALL (1987), p. 99

[62] See PERREY ET AL. (2015), pp. 130–133

[63] See JULLENS & SANDER (2002), pp. 25–28

[64] See ESCH (2010), p. 586; KRÜGER & STUMPF (2013), p. 33; SCHMIDT & VEST (2010), p. 248

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to *"[represent] the purchase process in … idealized stages."*[65] Given their robust yet simple set-up and a widely applicable survey-based design, *"many companies have implemented brand purchase funnel measurement as a permanent diagnostic tool."*[66] In contrast to the frequent observation that *"the big problem with management science models is that managers practically never use them,"*[67] this by itself supports the model's managerial relevance. Figure 2 describes MCKINSEY & COMPANY's brand purchase funnel.[68]

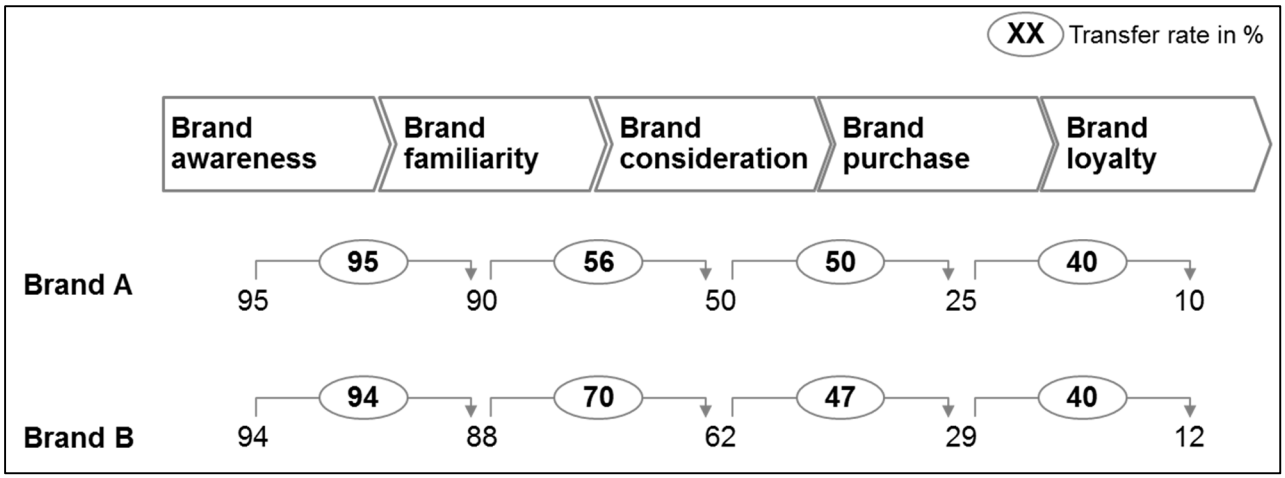

Figure 2: The linear brand purchase funnel
Source: Own illustration, based on the brand funnel model by PERREY ET AL. (2015), p. 133

This brand purchase funnel extends from "typical"[69] multistage choice models in two ways. First, it adds a psychographic familiarity stage, which basically allows to differentiate between mere awareness of a brand and having specific associations with this brand.[70] Second, it also covers the post-purchase phase represented in form of a loyalty stage. It, thereby, provides a holistic representation of the "*buying cycle,*"[71] which is crucial for its

[65] PERREY ET AL. (2015), p. 130. Similarly, ESCH (2010), p. 586; FREUNDT (2006), p. 209

[66] PERREY ET AL. (2015), p. 131. Similarly, GELBERT ET AL. (2003), pp. 50–60 or PERREY & SPILLECKE (2013), pp. 42–45 in the retail context. In the context of the automotive industry, BRIGGS ET AL. (2005) note that *"the purchase funnel … is a standard way that most automotive brands think about marketing."* (p. 85)

[67] LILIEN (2011), p. 196

[68] It is representative of other models as key stages are similar and differ primarily in wording. For example, BBDO's brand screen calls the "familiarity" and "consideration" stages "image" and "purchase preparedness" stages, and differentiates unaided and aided awareness. See JULLENS & SANDER (2002), p. 26

[69] E.g., KARDES ET AL. (1993), p. 64. See also Figure 1.

[70] PERREY ET AL. (2015) delineate awareness and familiarity based on whether a consumer knows a brand only by name or has a *"good knowledge of … offers"* (p. 131).

[71] FOSCHT & SWOBODA (2011), p. 35

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managerial usability.[72] Clearly, in practice the stylized process may be less rigid and the timing to pass stages may vary considerably, e.g. from a few seconds in the supermarket[73] to situations requiring higher involvement and resources.[74] Also, the stages may be tailored to the industry under consideration[75] or the approach of measurement.[76] The brand funnel model as described in Figure 2 can be viewed as a general representation of the consumer decision process used by both academia and management.[77]

By itself, the brand funnel is a **descriptive model.** It allows for both a consumer and a brand perspective and, fundamentally, provides volume-oriented information. It differentiates consumers based on the "level of relevance" of particular brands in their decision process ("consumer perspective").[78] In managerial applications, this information is often converted into a "brand perspective" that allows to assess the performance of each brand at various process stages in comparison to its competitors.[79] Reverting to Figure 2, for example, Brand A and Brand B have comparable performance at most funnel stage gates (e.g., 95% and 94% of consumers are aware of Brands A and B, respectively), but Brand A is significantly weaker in conversion from familiarity to consideration (transfer rate of 56% versus 70%, respectively). Consequently, Brand A should specifically target an increase in consideration. SPIGGLE AND SEWALL noted this analytical benefit early on: *"The*

[72] See SCHMIDT & VEST (2010), p. 248. The authors highlight that the objective of the brand funnel is to assess the performance of a brand along the entire consumer decision process.

[73] See KRÜGER & STUMPF (2013), p. 34

[74] See SHAO ET AL. (2008), pp. 797–798

[75] See FREUNDT (2006), pp. 213–218

[76] See WIESEL ET AL. (2011), p. 606

[77] As shown, different terms are used to describe this "*consumer decision process"* (e.g., YADAV ET AL. (2013), p. 311). For example, YADAV & PAVLOU (2014) refer to the *"shopping funnel"* (p. 28), PERREY ET AL. (2015) to the *"brand purchase funnel"* (p. 130), and the MARKETING SCIENCE INSTITUTE (2014) to the *"path to purchase",* the *"decision funnel,"* and the *"consumer decision journey"* (p. 4). In this paper, consumer decision process models are viewed specifically as models that differentiate stylized decision stages (e.g., awareness, consideration, purchase) and can describe sets of relevant brands at each of them. Traditional models are typically linear and stages build sequentially on each other. While their stages vary in part, the ultimate purpose is similar: to assess consumers' purchase behavior across the entire decision process. This authors focus on the neutral term **consumer decision process** and the term **brand (purchase) funnel model.** The brand purchase funnel described in Figure 2 is an established representation.

[78] Namely, one can specify whether a consumer is only aware of a particular brand, considers it for a particular purchase situation, actually purchases it, etc.

[79] See e.g., ESCH (2010), pp. 586–587; KRÜGER & STUMPF (2013), p. 33; See e.g., PERREY ET AL. (2015), pp. 130–137; SANDER ET AL. (2013), p. 7; SCHMIDT & VEST (2010), p. 248

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model is not intended as an explanatory model of consumer choice, but as an analytical tool that retailers can use to allocate resources to improve market share."[80] Justifying (brand-related) marketing spending is a topic of increasing relevance. However, despite top management's expectation to explain expenditures,[81] the most recent CMO SURVEY revealed that marketing analytics are currently only used in ~31% of projects (26.5% for branding activities).[82] Stronger employment of tools such as the brand funnel could help to fill this gap. Beyond the descriptive use, multistage models allow for a more granular analysis and **explanation of behavioral drivers** for each phase.[83] Previous research widely suggests that both drivers[84] and decision rules[85] may vary depending on the stage. A separate evaluation can, thus, yield additional insights. Modeling the entire process rather than purchase alone, ultimately, augments the ability to explain and predict choice.[86]

In summary, the different forms of brand funnel models employed by managers until today are largely supported by multistage, sequential choice models from behavioral decision

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[80] SPIGGLE & SEWALL (1987), p. 97. More recently, SHAO ET AL. (2008) argued that *"understanding the decision process is central to the effective deployment of marketing resources."* (p. 798)

[81] See e.g., BRIGGS ET AL. (2005), p. 82; GORDON & PERREY (2015), p. 31.

[82] See MOORMAN (2015), pp. 53, 57. CMO refers to chief marketing officer. Results are from the 14th CMO SURVEY which is conducted twice a year since 2008 and sponsored by DUKE UNIVERSITY's FUQUA SCHOOL OF BUSINESS, the AMERICAN MARKETING ASSOCIATION, and MCKINSEY & COMPANY. Sample size was n=255.

[83] See e.g., FOSCHT & SWOBODA (2011), pp. 34–35; ZAHAY ET AL. (2015); SHAO ET AL. (2008), pp. 797–798

[84] Some researchers focus on **brand/product or situational attributes** ("**what** is relevant for behavior"). For example, FREUNDT (2006) assesses the relevance of functional and symbolic brand image on stages consideration, purchase, and loyalty, and shows clear differences in their absolute and relative impact. MOE (2006) applies a two-stage choice model to internet clickstream data and finds that *"the product attributes evaluated in Stage 1 differ from those evaluated in Stage 2."* (p. 680) LÖFGREN ET AL. (2008) studied to what extent the relevance of aspects of the packaging differs between funnel stages. HUI ET AL. (2009) study a 3-stage model of grocery shopping (visit, shop, buy) and show that the relevance of situational factors differs for each stage. Other researchers focus on **the impact of communication channels or touch points** ("**where** to best interact with the consumer"). For example, AGGARWAL & SINGH (2013) assess the differential effect of blogs across three stages of decision making (screening, choice, contract), and find that volume of blog coverage is influential in the screening but not in the choice (p. 1105). In the context of the automotive industry, HU ET AL. (2014) provide evidence that the impact of advertising can be subdivided into its impact on generating information search and its impact on generating sales (p. 300). SRINIVASAN ET AL. (2015) investigate the influence of marketing mix elements on a staged path to purchase.

[85] Theory on multistage decision-making typically assumes that consumers use decision heuristics that are less-effortful to initially screen alternatives and form a consideration set and more-effortful rules to evaluate those alternatives in the consideration set and make final choice. See GENSCH (1987), p. 236

[86] See e.g., GENSCH (1987) showing that ability to forecast choice is improved with a two-stage model (consideration and choice) compared to a "choice only" model (p. 229-234). NEDUNGADI (1990) finds that choice can, additionally, be impacted by mere brand retrieval independent of the brand's evaluation (p. 273-274).

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theory. The linear, sequential funnel models, thus, have both a strong theoretical grounding and managerial application. Their role is dyadic: a) describing and assessing the entire consumer decision process and b) explaining (differences in) behavioral drivers separately for each process stage.

3. Re-modeling the brand funnel: State of the literature and research gap

In order for the above described models to be of relevance, a good representation of the consumer decision process is essential.[87] During the last years, this exact point – whether and to what extent traditional funnel models are (still) adequate in capturing the consumer decision process – has been questioned in light of changing consumer behavior. Chapter 3, therefore, elaborates on the state of the literature in re-modeling the brand funnel. Chapter 3.1 reviews previous research that conceptualizes a contemporary alternative to the linear model (see "descriptive role"). Building on this, Chapter 3.2 discusses attempts to apply such alternative models to better explain differences in behavioral drivers amongst the process stages. Here, a focus is laid on the particularly relevant driver brand image (see "explanatory role"). This allows to specify a two-fold research gap.

3.1 Re-modeling the contemporary brand funnel

The fundamental question, whether and to what extent the traditional brand funnel (TBF)[88] is still adequate, is **important to academia and management** alike. It has been discussed by marketers for some time[89] and, recently, made it to the top of the MARKETING SCIENCE INSTITUTE's research priorities.[90] Other researchers mirror the call. For example, in their research synthesis on marketing in computer-mediated environments, YADAV AND PAVLOU highlight the *"need to investigate the structure of consumers' shopping funnel."*[91]

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[87] Cf. SHOCKER ET AL. (1991) who, already at that time, argued that *"human decision making is still not well enough understood … to clarify the distinction between the process of decision-making and models used to represent that process."* (p. 182)

[88] To contrast to more modern approaches to modeling the consumer decision process, the term **traditional brand funnel** is used to reflect the linear, sequential funnel model introduced in chapter 2.

[89] See e.g., COURT ET AL. (2009), pp. 1–2; LECINSKI (2011), p. 24; NUNES ET AL. (2013), p. 48

[90] MARKETING SCIENCE INSTITUTE (2014): *"What are the best ways to model the consumer decision journey? Are other models more appropriate than the decision funnel?"* (p. 4)

[91] YADAV & PAVLOU (2014), p. 28. Similarly, HARDESTY & BEARDEN (2009), p. 241

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Acknowledging the general relevance, one can observe an increasing discussion on the topic in the literature. A consensus has not been reached. On the one hand, **advocates** highlight that while consumer behavior may change (e.g., with regard to information sources), the basic decision-making process (which underlies the funnel model) remains.[92] Also, whilst consumer behavior is changing, this does not affect all consumers[93] or industries[94] equally. For example, in industries characterized by a stable market environment and longer term, deliberate investments such as many B2B industries, the TBF may continue to be applicable.[95] Some claim that especially for the aforementioned purpose of brand performance measurement, the brand funnel continues to be a valid tool.[96] In addition to these arguments, abundant research continues to build on linear funnel models. For example, WIESEL ET AL. study the effect of marketing communication activities on stages of a linear (online and offline) funnel and on profit,[97] AGGARWAL AND SINGH identify the different impact of blogs across three linear stages of venture capitalist decision-making,[98] and LARSON ET AL. assess differences among electric vehicle consumer groups based on three stages of a linear purchase funnel.[99] On the contrary, a growing number of academic researchers[100] and marketing managers[101] have **opposed** that the TBF does not adequately capture today's "typical" consumer behavior. However, a) the **points of criticism** supporting this claim are varied and b) initial **approaches** to re-model the linear funnel differ widely in conceptual focus and model operationalization. The two aspects are now reviewed one after another.

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[92] See FINLAY (2011), p. 40; YADAV & PAVLOU (2014), p. 28

[93] MORAN ET AL. (2014) specify that *"'digital consumers' purchasing behaviors have outgrown traditional purchase decision-making models."* (p. 203)

[94] See PERREY ET AL. (2015), p. 138

[95] See PERREY ET AL. (2015), p. 147

[96] Especially for assessing brand strength versus competitors across various consumer process stages. See GESELLSCHAFT FÜR KONSUMFORSCHUNG (2013), p. 2; PERREY ET AL. (2015), p. 137

[97] See WIESEL ET AL. (2011), p. 605. The authors differentiate an online and an offline purchase funnel operationalized with the following stages: web visits → leads → quote requests → orders.

[98] See AGGARWAL & SINGH (2013), p. 1089. The 3 stages are screening, choice, and contract framework.

[99] See LARSON ET AL. (2014), pp. 300, 305. The 3 stages are awareness, familiarity, and knowledge.

[100] See SRINIVASAN ET AL. (2015), p. 1; ZAHAY ET AL. (2015), p. 365

[101] See e.g., COURT ET AL. (2009), pp. 1–2; FETHERSTONHAUGH (2011), p. 11; LECINSKI (2011), pp. 24, 56; NUNES ET AL. (2013), pp. 48–49

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3.1.1 Points of criticism that necessitate a re-modeling of the brand funnel

Over the last years, various points of critique on the TBF were brought forward pertaining to different phases of the buying cycle. First, multiple aspects address consumers' **choice behavior** (i.e., pre-purchase[102] to purchase). One claim is that today's "media overload" and the omnipresence of advertisement reduces consumers' conscious attention to media.[103] This has been argued to make awareness of brands, and subsequent inclusion in the mentally retrieved consideration set, more difficult.[104] Another critique brought forward is that today's consumers increasingly take different paths to purchase.[105] The internet provides various aids to research for and evaluate products. During this process, today's consumers might easily identify brands previously unknown and add these to their set.[106] In this regard, COURT ET AL. note, *"the number of brands under consideration during the active-evaluation phase may now actually expand rather than narrow."*[107] This contradicts an assumption of the typical linear brand funnel, in which the set of brands is sequentially narrowed down. Researchers have also highlighted that phases are moving closer together[108] and that consumers may go back and forth between phases.[109] In addition, scholars criticize that the linear funnel model does not differentiate purchase contexts. Broadly speaking, literature distinguishes between decisions that are cognitively dominated (i.e., conscious need recognition, information search and alternative evaluation) and decisions

[102] Here, this refers to all stages prior to purchase, i.e. awareness, familiarity, consideration (see Figure 2).

[103] See e.g., NORTHUP & MULLIGAN (2014), p. 66

[104] See EDELMAN (2010), p. 65

[105] See e.g., NUNES ET AL. (2013), p. 49

[106] See e.g., HÄUBL & TRIFTS (2000), pp. 6–7; LECINSKI (2011), p. 24; PAUWELS & VAN EWIJK (2013), p. 9. For example, general search engines (e.g., Google, Yahoo) or specific product/price comparison platforms (e.g., Amazon) may allow searching for and identifying a wide range of (unknown) product offerings.

[107] COURT ET AL. (2009), p. 4

[108] LECINSKI (2011) argues that consumers may pass the decision process faster, particularly due the possibility of gathering information on the mobile phone at any time (p. 55). From a provider's perspective, location-based advertisement, targeted and location-specific advertising delivered to consumers' smartphones at a potential purchase venue, allows moving the pre-purchase information closer to the purchasing act. (cf. WARWITZ (2015), p. 5; the author provides an insightful thesis on general and brand-related determinants of use intention of location-based advertising). In a business-to-business context, ZAHAY ET AL. (2015) argue that the process of passing the funnel *"has been rapidly accelerated by network systems through which the buyer identifies and negotiates choices on a buyer-initiated basis."* (p. 365)

[109] See PAUWELS & VAN EWIJK (2013), p. 25

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with lower cognitive steering (i.e., impulsive or habit decisions).[110] Sequential, multistage models are designed for the first group,[111] and their non-applicability to purchase situations under limited cognitive steering has been called out.[112] Moreover, it has been argued that the funnel is too transaction-centric.[113] It neglects longer-term consumer-firm relationships (e.g., repeated purchases over the consumer lifecycle),[114] and does not account for one consumer's influence on other consumers via WOM (such as a blog post or product review).[115] All points of critique advance our understanding regarding the needs to re-model the traditional funnel model. While the fundamental idea of modeling the purchase decision process in stylized stages may be maintained, the wide range of aspects suggests that a more differentiated view on consumers' behavior is required. In essence, this means that one sequential, linear path through the funnel is a too rigid description. Consistent herewith researchers have urged to provide *"a more nuanced structure of the 'shopping funnel'."*[116]

One may, however, also note **several shortcomings** from the above review. First, the **theoretical backing** of some of the above arguments has been criticized. For example, YADAV AND PAVLOU rightfully observe that the idea of adding brands at the consideration stage *"can be readily accommodated in existing theoretical accounts of how consideration sets are formed and updated."*[117] Similarly, COURT ET AL.'s idea of replacing the linear funnel by a loop-like representation that captures different loyalty levels and repeated purchase behavior[118] has been cited by other researchers.[119] In the original presentation, the

[110] See e.g., FOSCHT & SWOBODA (2011), pp. 169–170; KROEBER-RIEL & GRÖPPEL-KLEIN (2013), p. 460; MEFFERT ET AL. (2015), p. 99.

[111] See SPIGGLE & SEWALL (1987), p. 99 for an early account of this argument

[112] See e.g., MARTIN & MORICH (2011) who propose a conceptual model that differentiates decisions depending on the level of decision automaticity: between (primarily) conscious and unconscious (habit-based, automatic) decisions (pp. 484-486, 494-496). See YADAV ET AL. (2013) who highlight that *"impulse purchases may involve very little pre-purchase activities."* (p. 316). Impulsive behavior is esp. related to in-store retail (e.g., candies) and, more recently, to e-commerce. See e.g., BEATTY & FERRELL (1998), pp. 169–171; WELLS ET AL. (2011), p. 33

[113] See FETHERSTONHAUGH (2011), p. 11; KARIMI ET AL. (2015), p. 138

[114] See KARIMI ET AL. (2015), p. 138; NUNES ET AL. (2013), pp. 48–49; PERREY ET AL. (2015), p. 139; SRINIVASAN ET AL. (2015), p. 1

[115] See e.g., MORAN ET AL. (2014), p. 202; PAUWELS & VAN EWIJK (2013), p. 7.

[116] YADAV & PAVLOU (2014), p. 28. The accentuation has been added.

[117] YADAV & PAVLOU (2014), p. 28

[118] See COURT ET AL. (2009), pp. 3, 6-7

[119] See YADAV ET AL. (2013), p. 315

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authors have not provided any theoretical basis for their arguments. Moreover, one should caution the **delimitation** of some of the factors. Particularly, the proposition to introduce a post-purchase "loop" to the funnel has been related to two different mechanism. As PAUWELS AND VAN EWIJK note, *"a loyalty loop can shortcut the purchase path for a repeat customer … but also feed the purchase path for another (prospective) customer, influenced by the word-of-mouth narrative."*[120] Generally, the emphasis of completely new behavior in the marketplace[121] may be exaggerated and a consequence of the many managerial contributions over the last years.[122] While this does not falsify the points of critique, bridging between such practitioner claims and the academic literature merits further attention. Finally, the above observations present a fragmented collection from a wide range of academic and practitioner contributions. To the knowledge of the authors, a **holistic list of propositions** for modeling a "contemporary" alternative consumer purchase decision process has not been presented. Such a list is, however, indispensable to consciously answer the question whether *"other models [are] more appropriate than the decision funnel?"*[123] In conclusion, it seems necessary to derive one structured, theory-supported, holistic overview of such propositions. This specifies the first research need.

3.1.2 Previous approaches to re-model the brand funnel

A complementary literature review was conducted to identify purchase-related consumer decision process models that provide an operational alternative to the TBF. In order to ensure a wide, high quality literature coverage, it focused on internationally renowned, peer-reviewed journals identified across academic search platforms (EBSCO's Business Source Complete, EconLit and SocINDEX, Elsevier's ScienceDirect, JSTOR, WISO) as well as practitioner-oriented publications (Marketing Science Institute, Harvard Business Review, McKinsey Quarterly, Marke41). A variety of relevant search terms was employed.[124] The focus was on publications since 2009, when COURT ET AL. presented the

[120] PAUWELS & VAN EWIJK (2013), p. 7

[121] See e.g., EDELMAN (2010), p. 64

[122] See e.g., YADAV & PAVLOU (2014), p. 28.

[123] MARKETING SCIENCE INSTITUTE (2014), p. 4

[124] The review was conducted in October 2015. Search terms include "brand funnel", "purchase funnel", "shopping funnel", "consumer boulevard", "decision journey" in combination with consumer, as well as "funnel" and "consumer decision process" in combination with the word "multistage" or major stage labels

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Consumer Decision Journey.[125] Three criteria were used to filter contributions that provided a distinct model at all. Given the topic's breadth, models were, first, selected based on their **research focus**. Multistage models with a "non-purchase" focus[126] or that view the decision journey as a series of touch points[127] were excluded. Second, models were screened for the **intention** to provide a generally applicable alternative to the traditional funnel model introduced in Chapter 2.[128] The possibility of **model implementation** constitutes the third criterion. While one can identify various publications, few provide operationalized alternatives to the TBF. Discussion frameworks[129] or purely conceptual approaches (i.e., no [publicly accessible] operationalization at all) [130] were excluded from a detailed review. **Five models** were identified that meet the three criteria. They not only conceptually discuss requirements to re-model the TBF but also operationalize a model to some extent, most of which from practitioners. These are the *Consumer Decision Journey*

("consideration", "purchase", and "loyalty"). To ensure further breadth, Google Scholar was employed and forward-backward search was conducted for each relevant model identified.

[125] Cf. COURT ET AL. (2009) Note that this model is discussed in previous, related literature reviews. See e.g., HARDESTY & BEARDEN (2009), p. 241; YADAV & PAVLOU (2014), p. 28. In these, no other *"non-traditional alternative decision process"* (see HARDESTY & BEARDEN (2009), p. 241) is highlighted.

[126] Cf. e.g., HOBAN & BUCKLIN (2015) (website visits, funnel only used to segment consumers), HU ET AL. (2014) (divide advertising impact on two funnel stages), NAIK & PETERS (2009) (marketing communication), PESCHER ET AL. (2014) (three-staged model of consumer referral behavior). ANDREWS & CURRIM (2009) view the multistage purchase decision differently than described here, namely as a set of three decisions (whether, what, and how much to purchase) (p. 198).

[127] Cf. e.g., ANDERL ET AL. (2014); HUI ET AL. (2009); LI & KANNAN (2014). Authors such as ANDERL ET AL. (2014) view the (online) customer journey *"of an individual customer as including all touch points over all online marketing channels preceding a potential purchase decision that lead to a visit of an advertiser's website."* (p. 3)

[128] This excludes such models that refine the decision logic within a two-stage framework (screening and choice), cf. e.g., CHING ET AL. (2009) (price consideration model of brand choice), GE ET AL. (2012) (two-stage model of screening and choice with delayed information at choice stage), REZAEI ET AL. (2014). It also excludes research using a "traditional" two- or multistage logic in a specific context, cf. AGGARWAL & SINGH (2013) (three linear stages to explain the influence of blogs on venture capital decision making), WIESEL ET AL. (2011) (linear funnel model based on a sequence of web visits -> leads -> quote requests -> orders that may not work in e.g., a consumer goods setting). Other researchers diverge from a linear logic but focus on a specific context only, cf. SRINIVASAN ET AL. (2015) (only customers online activity).

[129] Cf. GREWAL ET AL. (2013) ("retailing in a connected world", p. 263), KARIMI ET AL. (2015) ("consumer purchase decision-making framework, p. 138), YADAV ET AL. (2013) (social commerce contingency framework, p. 315)

[130] Cf. FETHERSTONHAUGH (2011) ("Customer Journey", p. 11); FULGONI (2015) ("Flight Map", p. 378); MARTIN & MORICH (2011) ("The Martin-Morich model of consumer behavior", p. 494); NUNES ET AL. (2013) ("Accenture's Nonstop Customer Experience Model", p. 49); ZAHAY ET AL. (2015) ("The buyer engagement process", p. 366). In a recent article, BONCHECK & FRANCE (2014) speak of a *"Customer Engagement Journey"* as an alternative to the *"Customer Decision Journey"* by COURT ET AL. (2009). No detailed information on this model could be identified on any of the academic search platforms or a general web search.

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(CDJ),[131] the *Moments of Truth (MOT) model*,[132] *DecisionVue 360,*[133] the *Consumer Boulevard*,[134] and the *Enhanced Brand Funnel (EBF)*.[135] Even though all partly reflect the points of criticism discussed above and show similarities,[136] an initial comparison highlights stark differences both in the extent of **conceptualizing** a contemporary alternative to the TBF as well as their **operationalization**.

First, with regard to the **conceptual differences** one can note that the starting points into the **pre-purchase stage** differ. In contrast to the traditional models presented in Chapter 2, both CDJ[137] as well as the MOT model[138] have a narrower set-up and start with a behavior-related consideration stage. They, thereby, omit perceptual brand awareness from the model. This seems remarkable, given the central role attributed to this psychographic construct as precedent to the formation of consideration sets[139] and as fundamental part of consumers' brand knowledge and brand equity.[140] In presenting the Consumer Boulevard model, PAUWELS AND VAN EWIJK also provide recent evidence that sales elasticity of awareness exceeds other metrics including consideration.[141] Second, while most models address the increasing emphasis on relational marketing[142] and reduce the focus on one **singular transaction**, they put different accents. EBF as well as CDJ expand the loyalty

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131 See COURT ET AL. (2009); EDELMAN (2010)

132 See LECINSKI (2011); MORAN ET AL. (2014)

133 See VORWERCK (2012)

134 See PAUWELS & VAN EWIJK (2013)

135 See PERREY ET AL. (2015)

136 For example, the idea of brand addition is shared across the approaches. For COURT ET AL. (2009) this is a fundamental part of the "active evaluation" phase (pp. 4-5), LECINSKI (2011) acknowledges the possibility of widening choice alternatives during the "Zero Moment of Truth" (p. 24), and PERREY ET AL. (2015) refer to this as the "direct entry" of brands into consideration (p. 139-140).

137 While COURT ET AL. (2009) acknowledge the importance of brand awareness, the CDJ starts with an initial consideration stage after decision to purchase has been made (p. 4).

138 The MOT model starts with the *"Zero Moment of Truth,"* defined as *"that moment when you grab your laptop, mobile phone or some other wired device and start learning about a product or service … you're thinking about trying or buying."* LECINSKI (2011), p. 10

139 See e.g., KARDES ET AL. (1993), p. 72; SHOCKER ET AL. (1991), pp. 183–184

140 See e.g., AAKER (1991), pp. 15-16, 19. Here, **brand equity** refers to the *"the differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to the marketing of the brand."* KELLER (1993), p. 1. This is a behavior-oriented interpretation of brand equity, which is also called customer-based brand equity See e.g., BURMANN & JOST-BENZ (2005), pp. 10–32; CHRISTODOULIDES & CHERNATONY (2010) for comprehensive reviews of the different brand equity conceptualizations.

141 PAUWELS & VAN EWIJK (2013), pp. 21, 38

142 See e.g., ACHROL & KOTLER (2012), p. 35; VARGO & LUSCH (2004)

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stage[143] by a behavioral component that assesses repeated purchase actions in order to better differentiate consumers in various parts of the consumer lifecycle and with different degrees of loyalty.[144] The MOT model, in comparison, describes a post-purchase loop from one consumer's sharing of experience to another consumer's pre-purchase search.[145] The Consumer Boulevard model discusses both facets. While influence on other consumers is assessed via online behavior metrics (positive and negative social media conversations), measurement of a particular consumer's loyalty is confined to attitudinal metrics.[146] Finally, the above critique regarding better applicability of the TBF to various **purchase decision types**[147] is not addressed in any of these approaches. Given the conceptual differences and in comparison to the identified points of critique, one may, therefore, question the "completeness" of single models.

Second, one can observe differences in aspects of each model's **operationalization**, including scope of application, efficiency of use, and interpretability of results. Such an evaluation is crucial to ensure managerial usability.[148] For example, while several models rely on (individual-level) survey-based market research,[149] the Consumer Boulevard model combines survey and online behavior metrics gathered across multiple sources.[150] Although online behavior data has clear benefits (e.g., lower information bias given passive observations), the authors themselves note the consequent limitations in model applicability (e.g., not all consumers and not all industries allow for measurement of online traces).[151] Moreover, combining different proprietary and third-party data sources may reduce the ease of use vis-à-vis a single source survey-design. Finally, the models differ in

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[143] In brand funnel models, loyalty is typically operationalized as a forward looking, stated intention or commitment (to buy again, to recommend, …) See e.g., PERREY ET AL. (2015), pp. 140). This is a proxy for **attitudinal loyalty.** Explicit behavior (**behavioral loyalty)** is not assessed.

[144] See PERREY ET AL. (2015), pp. 138–139; COURT ET AL. (2009), pp. 6–7. COURT ET AL. (2009) refer to a *"loyalty loop."* While they do not define it specifically, it is suggested that consumers in the loyalty loop do not conduct an active evaluation of various brands in the consideration set anymore. They shortcut the path to purchase because they stick with their previous choice (pp. 3, 6-7).

[145] See LECINSKI (2011), p. 17

[146] See PAUWELS & VAN EWIJK (2013), pp. 7, 16-17, 45

[147] See discussion in first part of chapter 3.1

[148] See e.g., ANDERL ET AL. (2014), pp. 7–10 in the context of attribution models; LILIEN (2011)

[149] See COURT ET AL. (2009), p. 4; LECINSKI (2011), pp. 61–68; PERREY ET AL. (2015), pp. 139–144

[150] See PAUWELS & VAN EWIJK (2013), pp. 16–17

[151] For example, MAITY & DASS (2014), pp. 34–35 showed recently that depending on the decision-making activity and moderated by media richness, consumers prefer e-commerce, m-commerce, and in-store

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their interpretation of results. While the CDJ takes a "consumer perspective" and primarily evaluates a consumer's set size at each stage,[152] EBF takes a "brand perspective" and calculates relative performance of competing brands at each stage.[153] The Consumer Boulevard intends to assess the explanatory and predictive power of different attitudinal and behavioral metrics on sales.[154] Taken together, there are clear differences in both conceptualization and operationalization which make an evaluation of these approaches to re-model the brand funnel difficult. This further supports the need for a holistic overview of "propositions" against which such approaches can be evaluated in a structured manner.

This chapter started by highlighting the research questions issued be the MARKETING SCIENCE INSTITUTE: *"What are the best ways to model the consumer decision journey? Are other models more appropriate than the decision funnel?"*[155] Concluding the literature review regarding a) points of criticism and b) initial approaches to re-model the TBF allows to specify the first research gap. Research, so far, advanced our understanding regarding areas in the brand funnel model that require change. A **holistic and theory-backed overview of "propositions,"** which may be used as basis for conceptualizing a modern funnel model, seems missing. This may also be a reason for the **different emphasis** – and "incompleteness" – placed by previous attempts to re-model the TBF in **both conceptualization and operationalization**. Therefore, while *"there is an emerging consensus that this [marketing funnel] model is losing its relevance,"*[156] the attempt to re-model it is still in its infancy. An accepted alternative is, to the authors' knowledge, not available. It is potentially also a consequence of these observations, that traditional funnel models remain pervasive.[157] From a practitioner's standpoint, ROGERS has strikingly summarized that we are *"traveling on the obscure path of a purchase, and the funnel is our handiest map."*[158] This

channels. Using this example, in-store channels cannot be assessed via online behavioral data.

[152] See COURT ET AL. (2009), p. 4. Similarly, the MOT model looks at consumer's behavior at each MOT (e.g., sources of information used at each MOT). See LECINSKI (2011), pp. 17–20

[153] See PERREY ET AL. (2015), pp. 141–146

[154] See PAUWELS & VAN EWIJK (2013), p. 4

[155] MARKETING SCIENCE INSTITUTE (2014), p. 4

[156] NUNES ET AL. (2013), p. 48

[157] Examples of continued employment of the TBF were highlighted in the first section of this chapter.

[158] ROGERS (2011)

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claim is consistent with the recent editorial observation in the Journal of Brand Management that *"compared with the beginnings of our discipline, within the last few years very few fresh frameworks have been provided that inform and guide managerial practice."*[159]

Building on the findings of this literature review, it, first, seems relevant to derive a set of propositions that specifies what "appropriate" actually means. Due to the overall objective of providing a revised alternative to the linear funnel model for both academia and management, it is deemed necessary to include conceptual propositions (i.e., "what needs to be different") as well as criteria to evaluate the models' quality of operationalization (i.e., "how can it be implemented").[160] In a second step, this set of propositions allows to evaluate the appropriateness of existing ways to re-model the funnel and helps to compare under which circumstances these are applicable. Referring to the broader brand management literature, this mirrors the recent claim to *"very clearly [demonstrate] under which conditions a specific approach can and should be implemented."*[161] Third, based on the set of propositions and an evaluation of existing attempts against these, the general research need can be addressed: to conceptualize and operationalize a *"more nuanced structure of the 'shopping funnel'."*[162] Such a more nuanced structure should allow to both more granularly describe consumer behavior and to segment consumer sub-groups according to these behavioral nuances. This "triad" constitutes the **first research focus**.

3.2 Application of a contemporary funnel model to brand image assessment

The literature review has, so far, focused on the "description" of a modern brand funnel model. As highlighted in Chapter 2, these multistage models can also have an **explanatory role.** They may be applied to assess differences in the relevance of specific factors amongst stages of the consumer decision process. In the past, many researchers contributed hereto focusing on differences in the relevance of touch points[163] (i.e., "where to best

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[159] BREXENDORF ET AL. (2014), p. 688

[160] The urge to contribute academic models with relevance for practicing managers has, recently, been highlighted by different researchers. See e.g., BREXENDORF ET AL. (2014); KUMAR (2015); LILIEN (2011). ANDERL ET AL. (2014), pp. 7–10 contribute such a set of criteria in the context of attribution modeling.

[161] WIEDMANN (2015), p. 755

[162] YADAV & PAVLOU (2014), p. 28. See also HARDESTY & BEARDEN (2009), p. 241

[163] In line with BAXENDALE ET AL. (2015) a **touch point** may be defined as *"an episode of direct or indirect contact with the brand."* (p. 236) Touch points range from firm-owned communication channels to contact

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interact with the consumer") and brand/product or situational attributes (i.e., "what is relevant for consumers' behavior").[164] Applying a contemporary consumer decision process model in this manner allows to assess whether the newly described, nuanced consumer groups also differ regarding the relevance of such factors.

Among the initial approaches to re-model the brand funnel introduced above, most focus on the touch point perspective. Identifying *"those moments, or touch points, when consumers are open to influence"*[165] is a fundamental objective of the CDJ. Similarly, LECINSKI provides empirical evidence on consumers' use of touch points at every MOT[166] and DecisionVue 360 evaluates the relative importance of information sources across funnel stages.[167] They, thereby, relate to a growing body of research investigating the effectiveness of touch points for consumer decision making,[168] which can support management regarding the allocation of marketing resources.[169] Whilst acknowledging the importance of and research on this perspective, research on the attributes that influence progression through stages of a contemporary, nuanced model is scarce. In this context, one behavioral driver is of specific interest to the authors: **brand image.** Brand image refers to the *"set of associations linked to the brand that consumers hold in memory."*[170] It is an attitudinal construct that may be understood as a multidimensional, composite picture of a brand in the mind of external stakeholders, especially consumers.[171] Relating brand image to a multistage funnel model, basically, allows to evaluate which brand image associations are

points with other stakeholders such as consumer to consumer WOM or third-party recommendations.

[164] See chapter 2 for examples in recent literature

[165] COURT ET AL. (2009), p. 1

[166] See LECINSKI (2011), pp. 18-20, 66-67

[167] See VORWERCK (2012), p. 36

[168] E.g., BRUYN & LILIEN (2008) study the impact of WOM on funnel stages awareness, interest, and final decision. NAIK & PETERS (2009) focus on the effectiveness of and synergies between online and offline media channels. WIESEL ET AL. (2011) investigate the impact of marketing activities (e.g., mail, flyer) on online and offline "funnel" stages. BAXENDALE ET AL. (2015) study the impact of different touch points on brand consideration. See BAXENDALE ET AL. (2015), pp. 235–236 for a comprehensive literature review.

[169] See e.g., BAXENDALE ET AL. (2015), p. 235

[170] KELLER (1993), p. 2. Similarly, BURMANN ET AL. (2015) define **brand image** as follows: *"Ein mehrdimensionales Einstellungskonstrukt …, welches das in der Psyche relevanter externer Zielgruppen fest verankerte, verdichtete und wertende Vorstellungsbild von einer Marke wiedergibt."* (p. 56).

[171] See e.g., BURMANN & SCHAEFER (2007), p. 136. The composite, global brand image can be differentiated into several facets ("partial images"), e.g., a functional/rationale versus an emotional/symbolic facet. For a holistic discussion see also BURMANN & STOLLE (2007).

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relevant at which stage of the decision process.[172] The rationale for this focus, the research need, and initial findings are outlined below.

The authors focus on brand image as behavioral driver for several **reasons**. First, a brand can be an important purchase driver. As such, the general existence of a brand is a relevant purchase criterion vis-à-vis other aspects such as price or ease of purchase. In a recent study, FISCHER ET AL. evaluated *"brand relevance in category"*[173] and empirically found that brands have relative importance for consumers' purchase decisions.[174] Basic marketing literature also supports that the image of a specific brand can strongly influence its purchase.[175] Building hereon, brands are crucial marketing assets.[176] The most recent brand study by PRICEWATERHOUSECOOPERS, for example, found that up to 50% of a company's value results from its brand(s).[177] In managing the brand asset, marketers intend to create and deliver a relevant and differentiated brand positioning that should lead to a clear perceptual brand image amongst consumers.[178] This is, however, increasingly challenging

[172] In the past, different researchers contributed hereto empirically. E.g., FREUNDT (2006) assesses the relevance of functional and symbolic brand image across 13 industries on stages consideration, purchase, and loyalty, and shows differences in absolute and relative impact depending on the stage (pp. 249-289). Similarly, HEYWOOD & KLIGER (2001) use the brand funnel to identify relevant brand image drivers in the grocery category (p. 70-71). MUELLER-OERLINGHAUS & SCHAEFER (2005) investigate relevant brand image drivers for recruiting potential employees across various study fields (p. 41-42). This is consistent with the aforementioned evidence that multistage models provide higher diagnostic information since influence of behavioral drivers may vary according to the process stage.

[173] FISCHER ET AL. (2010), pp. 824, 831-832. **Brand relevance in category** (BRiC) is defined *"as the extent to which the brand influences customer decision making relative to other decision criteria (e.g., purchase convenience, price)."* (p. 825). They study BRiC across 20 categories and 5 countries and find its highest relevance for medium-sized vehicles and cigarettes. Relevance is lowest for drugstores and paper tissues.

[174] See FISCHER ET AL. (2010), pp. 831–832; 835

[175] See e.g., MEFFERT ET AL. (2015), pp. 118–119. In line with KELLER (1993), p. 2 or SONNIER & AINSLIE (2011), p. 518, brand image is a key component of customer-based brand equity. The idea of a brand equity monitoring system, namely to use *"perceptual and motivational factors that can be modelled against consequential behavioural (e.g. purchase recency/frequency) measures."* CHRISTODOULIDES & CHERNATONY (2010), p. 61

[176] See e.g., CHRISTODOULIDES & CHERNATONY (2010), p. 44; DAVCIK ET AL. (2014), p. 6; KELLER (2013), p. 374

[177] See MENNINGER ET AL. (2012), p. 11. The original study was published by PRICEWATERHOUSECOOPERS and SATTLER in 1999, a second edition in 2005 (jointly with GFK MARKTFORSCHUNG and the MARKENVERBAND). Sample size was n=37.

[178] See BURMANN ET AL. (2015), pp. 111, 114. MEFFERT ET AL. (2015) define **brand positioning** as: *"… die Planung, Umsetzung, Kontrolle und Weiterentwicklung einer an den Idealvorstellungen der Nachfrager ausgerichteten, vom Wettbewerb differenzierten und von der eigenen Ressourcen und Kompetenzausstattung darstellbaren, markenidentitätskonformen Position im Wahrnehmungsraum relevanter Zielgruppen verstanden."* (p. 337).

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as consumers, themselves, gain influence in co-creating brand meaning.[179] JETBLUE AIRWAYS' former senior vice president of commercial MARTY ST. GEORGE claimed, *"your ability as a marketer to control your brand image is significantly less than it was 10 years ago because you're not the only one who owns the brand image; your customers own it, too.*"[180] Consequently, some argue that the creation of a superior brand image is *"the ultimate endeavor of marketing today."*[181]

As described above, a revised process model enables a more nuanced understanding of consumer behavior. This also permits to differentiate consumer sub-groups. Beyond evaluating whether membership in such a sub-group has an explanatory value per se, one can assess if brand image relevance differs among these sub-groups. Such insights can contribute to a prevalent **research call**. A few years ago, in their review of choice models, SHAO ET AL. noted: *"For marketers, the challenge is to understand the consumer decision process sufficiently to identify the attributes that are important for each decision wave within the process so they can survive to the choice set or be 'last alternative standing'."*[182] Various scholars have, since then, called for further insights into the creation of relevant brand images – generally[183] and in the specific context of the modern consumer decision process. Although in a B2B context, ZAHAY ET AL. ask which implications today's market environment has on the decision process and consumers' attitudes towards brands.[184] They urge further research to build *"an understanding of the customer decision process and the importance of branding at the different stages of that process."*[185] While most brand strategies focus on improving strengths in a particular brand image association, the above

[179] E.g., due to social media conversations. See e.g., BRESCIANI & EWING (2015), p. 324; BRUCE & SOLOMON (2013), p. 310; CHRISTODOULIDES (2007), p. 292. JACOBS (2009) summarizes that consumers increased communication about brands due to web 2.0 leads to a democratization of brand meaning (p. 70-73).

[180] ST. GEORGE (2012), p. 37

[181] SARKAR & SINGH (2005), p. 80

[182] SHAO ET AL. (2008), p. 809

[183] In a review on customer-based brand equity, DAVCIK ET AL. (2014) call for *"further insights into consumer-based sources of brand equity"* (p. 17). Generally, the MARKETING SCIENCE INSTITUTE (2014), asks for research on: *"How should customer perceptions of products and service value be measured?"* (p. 9)

[184] See ZAHAY ET AL. (2015), p. 368

[185] ZAHAY ET AL. (2015), pp. 359–360

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arguments support the call for better understanding the relevance of particular associations.[186] On a more operational level, practitioners BRESCIANI AND EWING highlight the necessity to adapt marketing communication specifically to each stage of consumers' decision process.[187] Interesting questions arise in relating this research need to the above literature review. For example, to what extent do relevant brand image facets differ between new and loyal repeat customers? Are there significant differences in relevant brand image facets between consumers that choose from their initial, mentally retrieved consideration set and those that identify new brands during external search and choose these? Generalizing from the examples, do the model revisions reveal significant differences in **brand image relevance among "new" sub-groups** – and, thus, improve explanatory power regarding consumer behavior?

Among the "modern approaches" discussed above, only PERREY ET AL. provide **initial insights** into these questions.[188] Using the EBF, they evaluate the relevant brand image facets for moving from the consideration to the purchase stage for three sub-groups: initial considerers (i.e., brands retrieved from awareness set as in the TBF), direct entrants (i.e., brands identified during search and added to the consideration set), and prior customers (i.e., brands purchased in previous occasions). Based on t-test analysis, the authors provide driver rankings for each of the three sub-groups, which suggest differences in relevant brand image facets.[189] An exemplary finding is that for choosing an energy provider the image of offering *"attractive, transparent tariffs"*[190] is highly relevant for the direct entrants sub-group but not for other consumer sub-groups. Whilst such insights provide initial support, they do not allow for overarching research conclusions. First, an industry comparison, which could add support to their findings, is impeded given the diverging operationalization

[186] Cf. ROSSITER (2014) who notes: *"Increasing the brand's perceived delivery on an important benefit … is nearly always the only strategy addressed in the marketing literature… But the other attitude-increase strategies are also worth exploring. ConAgra's Healthy Choice frozen dinners in the United States, for example, dramatized the importance of the 'heart-healthy' benefit."* (p. 538)

[187] BRESCIANI & EWING (2015), p. 327. Similarly, COMSCORE's FULGONI (2015) demands that *"analytical systems need to be able to … provide management with a deep and unified understanding of the drivers of consumer choice."* (p. 380)

[188] The DecisionVue 360 model (cf. VORWERCK (2012)) is, generally, suited to evaluate differences in brand image drivers but the author provides no direct insights into the above questions.

[189] See PERREY ET AL. (2015), pp. 178–182

[190] PERREY ET AL. (2015), p. 180

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of brand image.[191] Second, the authors focus on one funnel junction only (consideration to purchase). Finally, their assessment does not evaluate whether differences between the groups are (statistically) significant. This merits further assessment, and a more holistic evaluation can provide support for the initial findings.

In summary, the application of a revised consumer decision process model to the context of brand image assessment provides a **second research focus**. It can allow to advance our understanding of relevant brand image facets. Finding such differences would, additionally, provide support for a refined and more nuanced brand funnel model. From a managerial perspective, such insights can serve as (market-oriented) input both for strategic brand positioning and to operationally specify brand-related communication messages, which are key objectives of (external) brand management.[192] Clearly, the above review only supports the general research interest in understanding brand image relevance across stages of the contemporary consumer decision process. The particular research need and hypotheses depend on the conceptual specification of a modern consumer decision process model. Two arguments support this view. First, this permits a targeted review of the research need in the context of a particular refinement (that acknowledges past brand image research). Second, assessing brand image as driver for consumer behavior may not be relevant for all refinements of the funnel model. For example, referring to one of the factors discussed in Chapter 3.1, impulsive purchases are characterized by little pre-purchase evaluation.[193] An evaluation of pre-purchase drivers is, thus, less meaningful.

4. Conclusion and outlook on further research

This working paper started off with a brief introduction on the impact of changes in consumer behavior across the buying cycle. It resulted in the overall question whether these changes call into question the well-established linear **brand purchase funnel**. This question is of interest to academia and management alike. In spite of the brand funnel's theoretical basis and its wide employment by practitioners, its (continued) applicability has

[191] The authors use different sets of brand image attributes for their 3 focus industries automotive, energy, and candy bars. On the contrary, FREUNDT (2006), for example, evaluated the different relevance of 1 symbolic and 1 functional brand image construct across stages of the TBF. Given this consistent operationalization of brand image, he was able to draw comparisons across 13 industries.

[192] See e.g., BRESCIANI & EWING (2015), p. 327; BURMANN ET AL. (2015), pp. 110–113, 208-209

[193] See e.g., MEFFERT ET AL. (2015), p. 99; YADAV ET AL. (2013), p. 315

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been questioned during the last years. Whilst acknowledging the extreme views put forward by some, it is the authors' belief that a compelling answer requires further theory-backed elaboration. Guided by this understanding, Chapter 3 highlighted a **two-fold research gap** that is summarized in Table 1**.**

Research gap/focus	Overall research context	Specific research need
1: Re-modeling the contemporary brand funnel	▪ Research call from academia and management to investigate brand funnel structure and best way to model today's consumer decision process ▪ Literature review highlights – Wide range of "points of critique" on the traditional model spanning entire consumer buying cycle – Few approaches that, so far, operationalize a contemporary, alternative to the TBF with a comparable basic set logic. These differ widely in conceptualization and operationalization	▪ Derive holistic, theory-backed **set of propositions** that specifies requirements for contemporary model (conceptual., operational.) ▪ Evaluate appropriateness of **existing approaches to re-model the funnel** against these propositions ▪ Based on this: Conceptualize and operationalize **more nuanced model** of consumer decision process
2: Application of a contemporary funnel model to brand image assessment	▪ Multistage brand funnel model allows to assess differences in relevance of various factors amongst process stages ▪ Revised funnel model with more nuanced structure (= possibility to differentiate consumers) may allow to more granularly assess and explain behavior ▪ Literature review highlights – Previous re-modeling approaches focus mostly on differences in touch point relevance ("where") – research on behavioral drivers ("what") scarce – Research call to assess differences in relevance of brand image facets across contemporary consumer decision process (= focus on one specific, important behavioral driver) – PERREY ET AL. (2015) provide initial evidence on which future research can build	▪ Analyze if more nuanced model structure augments **ability to explain consumer behavior** across stages of consumer decision process – Either due to differences in **relevance of brand image facets** amongst nuanced consumer sub-groups – Or given significant influence of **"membership"** in a nuanced sub-group per se

Table 1: **Identified research gaps and resulting research needs**
Source: Own illustration

Based on the documentation of the literature, this working paper allowed to specify import research needs in the field of re-modeling the established brand purchase funnel. This elaboration lays the **foundation for a future dissertation** that combines the conceptual specification of a modern consumer decision process model with an empirical evaluation of its benefits. As such, the dissertation, first, aims to contribute to the revision of the brand funnel model. It may identify a holistic, structured, and theory-backed overview of "propositions" and evaluate previous re-modeling approaches against these. Based on this analysis, a more nuanced model of the consumer decision process vis-à-vis the TBF may be derived. In line with the discussion above, the authors view such a model as a stylized reflection of the consumer decision process that differentiates main stages, allows identifying sets of relevant brands at each stage, and is applicable across diverse contexts **(first**

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focus).[194] Investigating differences in brand image relevance across the consumer decision process allows to, additionally, contribute to the brand management literature and is supported by a clear research need **(second focus)**. Across both foci the intention is to bridge between scientific research and managerial application.[195] Specifically, a theory-backed, revised model should adopt the (managerial) benefits of traditional funnel models and continue to have broad applicability.[196] Pragmatic findings regarding the relevance of brand image facets should result in clear managerial implications. The consequent questions for further research may be summarized as follows:

1. *Which **requirements ("propositions")** should a "more nuanced structure"[197] of the brand funnel fulfill?*
2. *To what extent are **previous approaches** to re-model the brand funnel appropriate in fulfilling these propositions?*
3. *How should the stylized consumer decision process be **re-modeled** to provide a "more nuanced structure"[187] of the brand funnel and fulfill the propositions?*
4. *Does this revised model augment the explanatory power of behavioral drivers compared to a traditional funnel model? Specifically, are their differences in the relevance of **brand image** amongst the nuanced sub-groups created by this model?*

Questions 1-3 address the first research focus. Within the forthcoming dissertation, these may be answered conceptually based on a **literature-backed set of propositions** for a modern consumer decision process model. This approach seems most beneficial in order

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[194] In line with SHOCKER ET AL. (1991), it is acknowledged that the model will simplify human processes. The authors refer to this as a *"stylized view of individual consumer choice decision-making."* (p. 181). As discussed, it does explicitly not intend to provide a reflection of all touch points, (often the starting point of attribution modeling). This is emphasized given the dual application of the terms consumer decision process or journey (cf. ANDERL ET AL. (2014), p. 3) Also, this model focuses solely on purchase decisions. Finally, models that are only applicable in certain contexts or industries are not in scope. For example, WIESEL ET AL. (2011) operationalize a (linear) funnel structure based on a sequence of web visits -> leads -> quote requests -> orders that may not work in a consumer goods setting. See also chapters 2 and 3.1.2 regarding the understanding of consumer decision process models used here.

[195] See e.g., LILIEN (2011)

[196] Including the model's ease of use for management, the transparency, and the (relative) evaluation of brand performance across the entire consumer decision process. It should continue to be applicable in both the online and the offline context and for different industries, which has implications on the design and operationalization. See e.g., ESCH (2010), p. 587; REINECKE (2005), pp. 145–146.

[197] YADAV & PAVLOU (2014), p. 28

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to provide scientific rigor as compared to the practical contributions on the topic.[198] Question 4 requires a hypotheses-based, **empirical evaluation**. As argued before, the thesis may, initially, focus on specific propositions of the revised model. This is because an evaluation of brand image drivers may not be meaningful for all propositions and due to research pragmatic reasons. The empirical investigation can be based on the results of consumer surveys across different types of industries (e.g., purchase of a high involvement product or service such as automobile versus a lower involvement product or service such as an electricity contract). Such a cross-industry comparison may allow to evaluate and discuss the generalizability of the findings. Methodologically, binary regression analysis with interaction effects can allow to investigate the influence of brand image and membership in a novel "sub-group" of the more nuanced funnel on stages of the consumer decision process.[199] Comparing a model with interaction terms (i.e., membership in novel sub-group) with a traditional brand funnel can provide support for the managerial relevance of the proposed nuances. Based on the findings from the four questions, implications for theory and practice may, ultimately, be derived.

[198] See literature review in chapter 3.1

[199] Note that similar research endeavors made use of binary logistic regression. For example, FREUNDT (2006) uses logistic regression to study the impact of functional and symbolic brand image facets on stages of a linear brand funnel model (p. 266).

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