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Strategic brand management: Archetypes for managing brands through paradoxes☆

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ABSTRACT

Although brands are acknowledged as significant assets in a firm's value creation and differentiation process, branding literature often describes opposing perspectives and contradictory demands. This article develops a framework of three strategic brand management archetypes that provide new insights into the complexity and often paradoxical ambiguity of branding. By combining an empirical qualitative study with extant brand management and relational exchange theory, the authors suggests that firms create, reinforce, switch, or allow certain brand management archetypes to coexist to optimize specific effects and manage paradoxes. From a managerial perspective, the article suggests that understanding strategic brand management and related paradoxes is fundamental for organizations to achieve desired effects with their value creation.

1. Introduction

In line with the strategic perspective on value creation, a brand signifies the customer-experienced use value a firm co-creates with its environment (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). The use value, defined as the customer's "*interactive relativistic experience evaluation*," (Holbrook, 2006 p. 715), forms the basis of firm's superior competitive advantages and long-term survival (Grönroos, 2008; Hunt & Morgan, 1995; Priem, 2007; Rindova & Fombrun, 1999). In order to create a brand that signifies novel and appropriate use value, managers need to weigh multiple and often contradictory strategic options against each other (Lepak, Smith, & Taylor, 2007). For example, a firm needs to weigh competing on brand preference versus brand relevance (Aaker, 2012); achieving consistency versus inconsistency in marketing activities (Keller, 2000); and simplifying and controlling brand information versus engaging in a complex co-creation process of brand meaning-making (Allen, Fournier, & Miller, 2008; Berthon, Pitt, & Campbell, 2009; Payne, Storbacka, Frow, & Knox, 2009). Drawing on Lewis (2000), such paradoxical tensions are defined as interrelated elements that may seem logical in isolation, but become contradictory when treated simultaneously.

Previous research recognizes how managers' responses to paradoxical tensions may be detrimental to a firm's performance, growth, and profitability (Håkansson & Ford, 2002; Levinthal & March, 1993; Mouzas, 2006; Sheth & Sisodia, 2002). Following extant studies on how to manage paradoxes (Poole & Van de Ven, 1989; Smith & Lewis, 2011), managers can either chose to live with tensions and select among competing demands to optimize alignment between internal organizational elements and the external environment. Another strategic option is to find means of meeting or considering competing demands simultaneously, which, rather than eliminating a tension, signifies a constant motion across opposing demands to create a dynamic equilibrium (Smith & Lewis, 2011).

Extant research that focuses on sources underlying brands often points to contradictions between what diverse forms of brands do for consumers and firms in various situations (Allen et al., 2008; Pitt, Watson, Berthon, Wynn, & Zinkhan, 2006). However, the research seldom provides a foundation from which to identify the usefulness of specific strategic schemas or judgment policies that underlie various brand management forms in particular situations (Priem, 1994; Priem, Butler, & Li, 2013). In doing so, the research also neglects how the firms' self-selected value creation strategies may create various paradoxical tensions and how such tensions can be managed (cf. Le Breton-Miller & Miller, 2014; Smith & Lewis, 2011). Drawing upon an empirical study, the main purpose of this article is to develop a formal strategic brand management typology

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that enhances understanding of different forms of brands and the management of paradoxical tensions.

In the following section the authors review a set of theoretical frameworks that provide three different value creation perspectives on strategic brand management. This review is followed by a description of the adopted research procedure and research setting. The subsequent sections are built upon the perspectives identified in the theoretical review and describe how firms adopt diverse strategic brand management archetypes that emphasize various forms of use value based on the results of the empirical study. The final section discuss how firms' self-selection of various strategic brand management archetypes induce paradoxical tensions and affect firms' ability and options when managing such opposing environmental demands in their value creation.

2. Use value and strategic brand management

In line with the strategic value creation perspective, firms' strategic brand management is likely to differ depending on whether they aspire to create extrinsic and/or intrinsic use value types (Addis & Holbrook, 2001; Holbrook, 2006; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004; Priem, 2007). Extrinsic value creation focuses on customer-experienced utility or functionality of an offering's objective features as a means to some further end in relation to price and other sacrifices (Addis & Holbrook, 2001; Grönroos, 1997; Holbrook, 2006). Intrinsic value creation focuses on the customer-experienced subjective responses, which are appreciated for their experiential and/or symbolic/expressive sake and, thus, are seen as ends in themselves (cf. Addis & Holbrook, 2001; Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; Smith & Colgate, 2007). A third balanced form of value creation focuses on both objective features and subjective responses to create a unique combination of extrinsic and intrinsic value (Addis & Holbrook, 2001).

Viewing firms as social actors whose organizational identity reflects the firm's membership in self-defining categories that support constituents' actions on behalf of the firm aids in understanding differences between these three distinct types of strategic brand management (King & Whetten, 2008; Whetten, 2006). In line with this view, the firm self-selects organizational features or attributes based on its assessment of environmental norms and change and scarcity factors to create brands that signify a relevant and/or preferred use value in a certain context (Högström & Tronvoll, 2012; Rindova & Fombrun, 1999). The norms provide minimum performance standards defining what the firm must achieve to be considered a legitimate option, while ideal standards define how well a brand needs to perform to be rewarded with a good reputation (King & Whetten, 2008; Rindova & Fombrun, 1999).

Following this view, organizational identity is defined as the subset of the firm's self-selected organizational features and attributes that are experienced as central, enduring and distinguishing in defining who the firm is, what it does and how well it does as an organization (Albert & Whetten, 1985; King & Whetten, 2008). Thus, the firm's self-selected social identities, such as type of organization, governance, and offerings, provide the firm with the strategic schema or organizing logic that informs organizational actions. In other words, the strategic schema constitutes the foundation for shared perceptions, coordinated decision- and strategy-making, as well as interaction with stakeholders (King & Whetten, 2008; Messick, 1999; Nadkarni & Narayanan, 2007; Priem, 1994; Whetten, 2006). Although several strategic schemas can coexist within the firm as latent predispositions, at any given time, one strategic schema is likely to dominate the firm's behavior and determine what environmental norms managers deem salient (cf. Högström & Tronvoll, 2012; Kelley & Stahelski, 1970; Miller, 1993; Prahalad & Bettis, 1986).

Below, the review of brand management and relational exchange literature shows how the creation of various types of use value demand diverse strategic schemas, emphasizing brand knowledge, brand meaning, or flexibility.

3. Managing brand knowledge to create extrinsic value

Focus on extrinsic value is important when consumers evaluate and base purchase decisions on objective product or service features (Berthon, Holbrook, & Hulbert, 2003; Holbrook, 2006). The high weight on utility in relation to costs or sacrifices puts customers in a transactional mode, making their choices cognitive, instrumental, and goal-oriented (Addis & Holbrook, 2001; Grönroos, 1997; Strahilevitz & Myers, 1998). Accordingly, in these circumstances, the brand's ultimate function is to appeal to consumers' rational reasoning to enhance calculative forms of trust and commitment (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; Gustafsson, Johnson, & Roos, 2005; Williamson, 1993). The firm's branding efforts become directed toward the economic, functional, and emotional customer benefits its products or services offer (Allen et al., 2008; Batra & Ahtola, 1990). This focus creates a basis for a reasoned, preference-driven form of value creation based on performing objective features better, faster, or cheaper to create superior utilitarian value and reputation (Aaker, 2012; Achrol, 1991; Bazerman, Tenbrunsel, & Wade-Benzoni, 1998).

A firm's attention to products' or services' extrinsic value to create competitive advantages results in a focus on marketing productivity, defined as, "generating satisfied customers at low cost" (Sheth & Sisodia, 2002: 352). Such a strategic scheme corresponds to a calculative strategic schema that relies on short-term, rational decision-making guided by consequences for transactions and efficiency (Heide & Wathne, 2006; March, 1994; March & Olsen, 2004). This form of knowledge search, absorption, and combination to create superior extrinsic value signifies an exploitative type of learning aimed at generating proximate benefits, such as increased productivity, incremental innovations, and predictable costs (Benner & Tushman, 2003; Danneels, 2002). Thus, the organization seeks to develop, acquire, control, protect, and leverage its brand's objective features to create a superior and/or unique desired extrinsic value and capture financial value for shareholders (Madden, Fehle, & Fournier, 2006; Rust, Ambler, Carpenter, Kumar, & Srivastava, 2004).

Following this logic, the firm aspires to create, control, and maintain brand information to direct a shared knowledge that builds brand equity (Aaker, 1996; Keller, 2003; Park, Jaworski, & MacInnis, 1986). Specifically, firms are assumed to manage brand information with the intent to create and maintain a specific set of brand associations in target consumers' minds, defined as brand identity (Aaker, 1996). The resulting brand knowledge constitutes brand awareness, indicating brand recall and recognition, and brand image (Berthon et al., 2009; Keller, 1993). The brand image represents consumers' mental perceptions of a brand, including both evaluative and descriptive associations, such as attributes, benefits, and attitudes (Keller, 1993). In turn, brand equity is the differential effect brand knowledge has on consumers' response to the firm's branding, such as trust and commitment (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; Gustafsson et al., 2005; Keller, 1993; Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Ultimately, the firm's assessment of its brand image and performance standards guides its efforts to enhance competitive advantages (Hunt & Morgan, 1995; Kohli & Jaworski, 1990; Slater & Narver, 1995). In effect, the firm focuses on incremental innovations to create productivity gains and serve existing customers increasingly well.

The discussion above shows how firms adopting a calculative strategic scheme rely on tightly coupled product or service designs, and target relatively narrow customer segments (Sanchez, 1995; Weick, 1976). However, although this exploitative approach increases the firm's ability to fully utilize its physical and financial assets, the firm runs the risk that its knowledge and resource bases ultimately become obsolete (Benner & Tushman, 2003; Levinthal & March, 1993). Thus, the firm's path-dependent nature and focus on extrinsic value make its brand vulnerable to market dynamism and technological changes compared to more meaning- or flexibility-focused firms (cf. Le Breton-Miller & Miller, 2014).

3.1. Managing brand meaning to create intrinsic value

Intrinsic experiential and symbolic value becomes important when consumers emphasize subjective responses, that is, emotions, feelings, and meanings, over objective product or service features (Addis & Holbrook, 2001; Smith & Colgate, 2007). In this sense, intrinsic symbolic value can differentiate brands in markets where utilitarian functions are taken for granted (Tynan, McKechnie, & Chhuon, 2010). Example of such situations is when brands become focal points of relationships and communities in which consumers use and voluntarily promote strong brands to express and build their social identities (Belk, 1988; Escalas & Bettman, 2005; Holt, 2002; McAlexander, Schouten, & Koenig, 2002; Schouten, McAlexander, & Koenig, 2007).

In such circumstances, firms aspire to create appropriate and novel symbolic or experiential value to enhance affective forms of trust in and commitment to its brand (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; Gustafsson et al., 2005; Park, MacInnis, Priester, Eisingerich, & Iacobucci, 2010; Tynan et al., 2010). Consequently, the firm's production, distribution, design, innovations and offerings become subordinate means for facilitating subjective context-dependent brand experiences and meaning (Berthon et al., 2003; Grönroos, 2008; Pine & Gilmore, 1998; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004; Woodside, Sood, & Muniz, 2013). Accordingly, the firm acknowledges consumption as a holistic experience embedded in a wider social environment consisting of various communities with diverse socioeconomic structures (e.g., Allen et al., 2008).

Firms adopting such heuristic strategic schema base its decisions on what is appropriate to its identity, that is, the intended subjective response or brand meaning vis-à-vis its context (March, 1994; March & Olsen, 2004; Messick, 1999). In this regard, the firm views legitimacy as a key differentiation and economic growth source and, thus, a basis for success (Grewal & Dharwadkar, 2002; Handelman & Arnold, 1999; Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Zimmerman & Zeitz, 2002). Following such strategic schema, the firm bases its intrinsic value creation on broader sociocultural norms, myths, and meanings (Allen et al., 2008; Högström & Tronvoll, 2012; Holbrook, 2006; McCracken, 1986; Payne et al., 2009). Therefore, the firm's attention also becomes directed to any actor with a legitimate claim and/or power to influence its customers' brand experiences (Mitchell, Agle, & Wood, 1997).

The ultimate goal of the firm is to make consumers perceive the firm's actions as both novel and desirable (Suchman, 1995). The firm aspires to enact central, enduring, and distinguishing attributes that make consumers perceive fewer brands, or no other brands, relevant alternatives (Aaker, 2012; Johnson & Lehmann, 1997). Thus, a firm adopting a heuristic strategic schema seeks to legitimize a novel brand identity that constitutes a brand category of its own (cf. Zimmerman & Zeitz, 2002). If implemented successfully, the firm is rewarded with the ability to define normative performance standards that few or no other brands fulfill. In this sense, the firm seeks to break free from a performance-centered focus that pushes, and is pushed by, extant minimum and ideal performance standards in a battle for existing customers' preference.

However, an organization relying on this strategic scheme faces a paradox in the uncertain relevance of its efforts and unknown potential to affect what defines value in its social context (Högström & Tronvoll, 2012). Firms that attempt to delegitimize competitors simultaneously risk irrelevancy if they fail to demonstrate that the efforts are desirable and consistent with their pre-existing brand meanings (cf. King & Whetten, 2008; Le Breton-Miller & Miller, 2014). Therefore, a firm adopting a heuristic strategic schema is likely to rely on incremental changes and innovations not to blur the meaning of their brand (Keller, 2000). Consequently, to create more radical forms of novel and appropriate value firms need to adopt a more dynamic strategic schema.

3.2. Managing brand flexibility

Whether or not a brand will deviate from, create, or comply with institutionalized categories depends on how firms make do with available resources and exchange partners (cf. Baker & Nelson, 2005; Lévi-Strauss, 1967; Priem et al., 2013). The two management forms described above imply that the firm accepts inherent paradoxes and makes clear either-or choices to optimize certain economic effects (Poole & Van de Ven, 1989). However, firms that seek to resolve or balance contradictory demands need to adopt a more dynamic strategic scheme (Smith & Lewis, 2011). Such balancing implies a more product- and service-independent, loosely coupled, form of value creation that aims for both relevance and preference wider markets and communities (cf. Weick, 1976; Weick, 1995).

A firm selecting this strategy constantly seeks to balance sources of extrinsic and intrinsic value creation, allowing the brand to host a wider variety of products or services in broader market environments. Thus, the firm aims to increase its strategic flexibility, defined as the ability to respond quickly or proactively to changing environmental conditions to develop and/or maintain a competitive advantage (Grewal & Tansuhaj, 2001; Nadkarni & Narayanan, 2007; Sanchez, 1995). Flexible firms systematically reorganize, adapt, renew, reconfigure, and integrate internal and external resources and competencies based on make market-oriented decisions to explore latent needs in the market environment (Priem et al., 2013; Slater & Narver, 1998). Accordingly, a firm that adopts a dynamic strategic schema is likely to focus on a wide environment and seek loosely coupled structures of exchange relationships and activities in order to create radically novel and desirable combinations of extrinsic and intrinsic use value (cf. Lepak et al., 2007; Sanchez, 1995).

Ultimately, brand uniqueness increases the firm's ability to define new brand categories with certain exclusive must-haves that make potential competitors irrelevant and unable to compete (Aaker, 2012; Högström, Rosner, & Gustafsson, 2010; Kano, Seraku, Takahashi, & Tsuji, 1984). However, the firm's constant renewal of its knowledge, skills, and material base may also prevent the firm from gaining legitimacy and full return of its investments compared to more exploitative approaches (Kang, Morris and Snell, 2007).

3.3. Research procedure

The methodology is structured according to an iterative grounded theory approach and worked with multiple case studies to create a holistic comprehension of strategic brand management and to extend existing theory (Bonoma, 1985; Eisenhardt, 1989; Orton, 1997; Stake, 1978; Yin, 2009). The iterative process consisted of two running exchanges: the first between literature review and (empirical) data analysis, and the second between data analysis and data collection (Burawoy, 1991). Fig. 1 shows an overview of the research procedure.

The first running exchange represents the interplay of literature review and analysis of empirical data that occurs in conjunction (Danneels, 2003). In this exchange, data analysis guides the literature review, which, in turn, provides frameworks to further aid in interpreting the empirical data. The researchers identified enactment (e.g., Weick, 1979), strategic schemas (e.g., Nadkarni & Narayanan, 2007; Priem, 1994), and the experiential- versus information-based branding theories presented above (e.g., Allen et al., 2008) as suitable perspectives to frame strategic brand management. Accordingly, the researchers developed a tentative theory regarding how firms enact certain brands and manage paradoxes that played a guiding and sensitizing role in the second running exchange (Strauss, 1987; Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Yin, 2009).

Specifically, the tentative theory guided context selection and provided phenomena for investigation, topics, and directions for data collection in the second running exchange. The collected data were coded and memos were written to generate substantive theoretical understanding (Silverman, 1970), which stimulated and directed further literature studies. Accordingly, the study refined, specified, qualified, re-assessed, and confirmed concepts and theories in a continuous interplay between literature review, data analysis, and data collection (Vaughan, 1992). This alternation of deductive and inductive theorizing

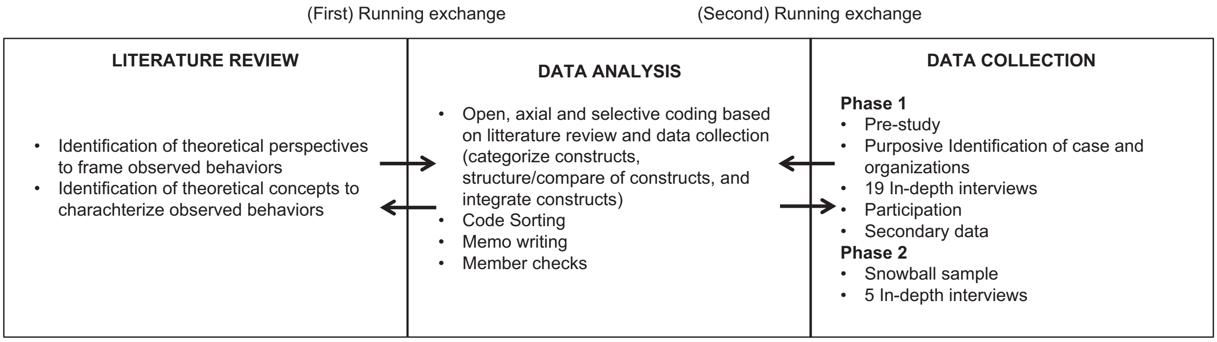

Fig. 1. Overview of the research procedure.

continued to a point of theoretical saturation (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), allowing the authors to construct the formal strategic brand management typology.

3.4. Data sources and data collection

This study is divided into two main data collection phases. Following the procedures of the iterative grounded theory process (outlined in Fig. 1), data collection, including sampling and interview guides, evolved with changes in theoretical understanding.

The main data source in the first phase was a study of firms co-producing materials for various branding, marketing, and media production purposes in a Norwegian winter destination. This study comprised a potential sample of 32 respondents representing 13 different firms and 12 professional athletes in boardsports apparel, sports agency, boardsports equipment, media, and tourism (ski resort) industries. The researchers conducted a pre-study to check the appropriateness of the particular research context and the informants. This pre-study included an open-answer e-mail survey and access to e-mail correspondence from the co-production planning. The pre-study showed that the context included cases that are representative of different strategic brand management archetypes. The context provides cases that enable comparison to clarify if findings are transferable between different cases (Eisenhardt, 1991). Accordingly, the researchers deemed this context a strong base for building strategic brand management theories (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Yin, 2009).

The researchers used a theoretical sampling procedure and selected 16 cases (entities with brands) based on their potential to contribute to the developing theory (Eisenhardt, 1989; Maxwell, 1998; Patton, 1990). Nine firms and seven athletes were chosen for deeper study, based on brand management diversity and various roles and objectives for participating in the co-production (see case descriptions in Table 1).

These cases include Norway's largest winter destination (Case No. 3); a market-leading multi-national US boardsports apparel company (Case No. 1); a US boardsports equipment manufacturer that held the second-largest market share in its specific European market (Case No. 2); a sports management firm (Case No. 4); small media companies (Cases No. 5–9); and athletes (Cases No. 10–16). The firms promised to provide particularly good cases to explore strategic brand management from multiple perspectives. For example, the apparel company's context-dependent nature and reliance on sponsoring promised insights concerning experience- and meaning-driven brand management (Cliffe & Motion, 2005). By contrast, ski resorts' resource-based nature and view on capacity utilization and services/products as key value drivers promised insight into efficiency-driven product brand management (Flagestad & Hope, 2001). Further, the equipment brand's dependence on both meaning and utility promised insight into dynamic brand management.

The case selection resulted in 19 in-depth interviews with knowledgeable informants with different strategic brand management approaches (see Table 1) (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). Twelve informants were managers involved in the firms' decision- and strategy-making activities, while the other seven informants were athletes representing meaning-laden human brands (e.g., Thomson, 2006). The interviews focused on the firms' strategic identity, intents, objectives, value proposition, value-creation activities, value capturing, view on the surrounding network, and types of exchange relationships (strong vs. weak). All interviews, which lasted between 30 and 75 minutes, were recorded on film and subsequently transcribed. The interview guide helped provide insights about the various firms' strategic brand management, including how the firms manage paradoxical tensions in their branding.

The second data collection phase extended the second running exchange to develop a more transferable and grounded formal theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This data collection subjected the findings from the first data collection to an external check in contexts different from those studied during the first phase (Gasson, 2003). Accordingly, substantive theory derived from the first data collection phase guided the second data collection phase.

The researchers relied on snowball sampling to find purposive cases and informants. This procedure generated five in-depth interviews with informants from five firms varying in size and operating in diverse markets. The informants ranged from a marketing manager of an apparel brand wholesaler (Case No. 18); to an informant involved in apparel brands, shopping mall brands, and media production (Case No. 19); to a manager of a consulting firm known for expertise in brand and event management (Case No. 20) (for a more comprehensive description of cases, see Table 1). By alternating between data analysis and data collection (second running exchange), these supplementary data generated enough theoretical saturation to develop a formal theory on strategic brand management archetypes and related paradoxes. (Lee, 1999; Strauss, 1987).

While the second data collection phase mainly consisted of in-depth interviews, the first phase also included two additional data sources. One source was video documentation of parts of the firms' production processes. The other source was secondary data in the form of e-mail correspondence, market research statistics, press articles, and material resulting from production and marketing activities. These additional data provided an external check and information that contextualized and facilitated coding and interpretation during the data analysis.

3.5. Data analysis

The data analysis is structured according to the iterative grounded theory approach described above and in Fig. 1 (Orton, 1997). The analysis included open, axial, selective modes of coding, memo writing, and model and typology development to extend existing theory (cf. Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Strauss, 1987; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Tentative theoretical memos were constructed with descriptions and explanations based on identified, structured, refined, and integrated categories and themes (Strauss, 1987; Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

The data analysis first focused on building detailed case descriptions (see Table 1). These descriptions underwent several member checks in order to test the findings' credibility (Hirschman, 1986). The authors also continually sorted, matched and contrasted the case descriptions, which led to a series of models, matrices, and typologies (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Throughout this comparative analysis, the authors subjected their interpretations and findings to a marketing agency and consultants. Findings were also presented at a creative and cultural industry seminar, where several marketing experts and businesspeople provided feedback. Informants and experts agreed with the substance and logic of the analysis, with most of the experts also commenting on the need for a strategic brand management framework that explains how paradoxical tensions can be understood and balanced.

In the data analysis, different strategic brand management types were identified that point toward the value creation, and brand information versus brand meaning perspectives in marketing and consumer research (e.g., Allen et al., 2008; Brodie, 2009). The data analysis showed how the studied cases' strategic brand management relied on various strategic schemes, including certain identities, and decision logics (March, 1994; March & Olsen, 2004; Messick, 1999; Nadkarni & Narayanan, 2007; Whetten, 2006). This finding shifted the authors' interest toward theories on strategic schemas, and relationship roles to frame the diverse forms from a strategic brand management perspective (Danneels, 2003; Heide & Wathne, 2006; Osborne, Stubbart, & Ramaprasad, 2001). Diverse strategic brand management archetypes were uncovered, depending on whether firms seek to create extrinsic and/or intrinsic value.

Consistent with the iterative approach (Orton, 1997), the subsequent presentation of empirical findings and discussion build on and extend the theoretical review. The next section presents the findings on how firms enact brands based on different strategic schemes (see Table 2), forming the basis of the identified strategic brand management archetypes. This section is followed by three separate sections, in which describes the theoretical premises of the strategic brand management archetypes, summarized in Table 3. This forms a basis for the subsequent discussion on how firms can manage strategic paradoxes in branding.

3.6. Managing the brand

The exemplary quotes in Table 2 point to the ways in which the different strategic brand management archetypes develop based on a firm's strategic schema. The quotes illustrate how the firm's *strategic schema* affect its *time horizon* and the width of its *enacted environment*, definable as the environment consciously selected, attended to, acted upon, and deemed important for the brand's performance (cf. Osborne et al., 2001; Smircich & Stubbart, 1985; Weick, 1979, 1995). The strategic schema limits firms' actions and interpretation of environmental cues, such as normative performance standards and stakeholders' brand experiences, to either narrow segments or the wider market environment. This selective attention determines whether the firm's *enacted system of activities and exchange relationships* are tightly or loosely coupled (cf. Danneels, 2003; Granovetter, 1973; Thompson, 1967; Weick, 1976). Recursively, the strategic schema is validated and evolves as the firm learns from its sense-making (Pondy & Mitroff, 1979; Weick, 1979). In this sense, the firm's strategic schema provides the foundation for enactment and sense-making, and determines whether the firm will seek to optimize efficiency, legitimacy, or flexibility.

Fig. 2 uses the identified conceptual dimensions – (a) strategic schema, (b) time horizon, (c) enacted system of activities and exchange relationships, and (d) enacted environment – to illustrate how the strategic brand management archetypes are limited to different *marketing process continuums* (in vivo code from respondent No. 1). Below, the authors present how marketing process continuums differs systematically between the archetypes (see Table 3 for a summary).

3.7. The calculative brand management archetype

The case descriptions in Table 1 illustrate how firms for which efficiency is the ultimate objective fit a description of a calculative archetype of strategic brand management (cf. Davis, Schoorman, & Donaldson, 1997; Grayson, 2007; Heide & Wathne, 2006). These firms generally adopt a relatively short time horizon and a strategic schema that relies on a utility-maximizing, incentive-driven consequential logic (e.g., Gibbons, 1999; March, 1994; Williamson, 1981). Following this strategic schema, the firms simplify brands into marks of offerings and reduce brand management complexity into function of optimizing information about offering benefits and maximizing brand awareness (cf. Keller, 1993; Park et al., 1986). Respondent No. 7 illustrates this basic premise as follows: “You can think of every kind of incentive […] whatever it comes to, the more exposure you get, one day or another you will cash in”. Similarly, Respondent No. 18 says: “We use all kinds of media channels to market our products and increase sales. We try to be as visible as possible and update our YouTube and Facebook channels two or three times a day […] and we try to place products on the right persons to make it as easy as possible for our products to leave the stores.”

The calculative principle of economizing on the brand's image and exposure is also apparent in managers' decisions and selection of actions and exchange relationships, as the comment by Respondent No. 5 illustrates: “From a marketing point of view, we like to be associated with solid brands that our customers perceive as positive […] partnerships are partly based on money, cash payments, but also cooperation when it comes to enhance our events and activities to increase benefits for our guests.” Another respondent (No. 4) in the same firm adds to this description of how calculative firms seek to maximize exposure, sales, improve offerings, and lower operational costs through partnerships: “[Our partners] that sell fast-moving consumer products […] allow us to communicate with customers where we usually cannot. We get inside gas stations, grocery stores, and so on in way that allows our brand to be seen. We benefit from that just as they benefit from us; they are seen here and sell their products here. Partners both buy themselves into existing events and others like to create their own here […] however, we decide how to manage and operate them.” These quotes also illustrate how firms adopting a calculative archetype seek control over brand information by creating a stable, integrated, and tightly coupled system of activities and exchange relationships. Another factor that is apparent in the case descriptions in Table 1 is how these firms narrow down their enacted environment and specialize on certain segments in order to decrease uncertainty (cf. Anderson & Paine, 1975; Danneels, 2003).

Table 3 summarizes the findings above and shows how calculative strategic brand management leads firms to narrow down their enacted environment to create and maintain a steady and predictable system. The findings also show how these firms narrow their range of actions and cognitions to actors that are explicitly involved in current market transactions. Consequently, these firms tend to optimize efficiency on behalf of flexibility and sociocultural aspects in their value creation, which aid in assessing the brand's legitimacy (e.g., Grewal & Dharwadkar, 2002; King & Whetten, 2008; Suchman, 1995).

3.8. The heuristic brand management archetype

In contrast to calculative firms, firms adopting a heuristic archetype consider legitimacy to be an eventual source of long-term success and survival (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Grewal & Dharwadkar, 2002; Meyer & Rowan, 1977). The present study shows how firms adopting a heuristic archetype have a longer time horizon than their calculative counterparts and seek to act appropriate with regard to contextual expectations, norms, and rules to build strong brands (March, 1994; Messick, 1999), as the following quote from Respondent No. 1 shows: “We aim to grow, but still remain true to our ideals. […] If we no longer

Table 1
Case descriptions.

Case	Entity/organization principal activity	Description of brand	Basis for strategy- and decision-making (strategic schema)	Nature of relationships and activities	View on environment	Subject	Subject title/ function	No. of interviews (subject no.)
Phase 1								
1	Market and develop boardsports and leisure apparel	Meaning-based and associated with a certain style (experience)	Long-term objectives. Identify actors with resources that complement/fit/support the brand meaning to create economic growth. Seek win-win situation and open-mindedness - perceive everyone as “winners”.	Incrementally improved close cooperative relationships. Governed with social or plural forms of contracting. Branding activities and partner interactions are network-based and tightly coupled to build overall brand meaning. Boundaries between firm and partners often appear blurred.	Boardsport community, connecting actors in several (core) consumer markets	1	Marketing manager/ marketing	(1) 1
2	Market and develop snowboard equipment and apparel	Utility-/meaning-based and associated with snowboarding	Varying time horizon. Identify actors with a brand image that overlaps and contributes to diversify the firm's intended brand meaning (symbolic synergies) and who contribute to economic and operational synergies (i.e., increase capabilities).	Relatively loosely coupled branding activities and interaction with partners. Govern relationships with plural (hard/soft) contracting forms.	Snowboarding industry and community. Wide focus on related mainstream sport and core snowboarding markets.	2 3	(2) Marketing manager/ Marketing (3) Marketing assistant/ Marketing	(2) 1 (3) 1
3	Operate and market ski resort	Utility-based and associated with services that facilitate consumers' (mainly families) ski/snowboard experiences	Short- to medium-term objectives. Seek to attract actors with strong brands and a similar business mindset to create positive associations and synergies that lower operation costs, and increase revenues (i.e., efficiency). Guests' consumption experiences should also benefit from the partnerships.	Relationships are commonly governed with hard forms of contracting and monitoring. Relationships have clear boundaries and weaken as contracts seize. Tightly coupled system of planned, company-controlled branding activities. All activities aim to sell lift tickets (create transactions).	Consumer market (families) and business partners that facilitate experience production. Families with children are the target segment.	4 5 6	(4) Partner and event manager/ Marketing (5) Web and media director/ Marketing (6) Product Manager/ Operations	(4) 2 (5) 1 (6) 1
4	Independent sports agency. Manage/advise client careers and broker client contracts.	Utility-based and service specific (broker contracts)	Short-term objectives. Incentive-driven search for “the best deal” or most benefits, i.e., search for and strive to attract partners that enhance utility maximization and profits to reach own goals.	Contractually governed and tightly bound relationships. Strict monitoring and boundaries. Changes are incentive-driven and relations last as long as they have profit potential. Activities are carefully planned and controlled.	Customers (snowboarding athletes) and mostly sport-specific sponsors' market.	7	Owner agent/ Brokerage and advisor	(7) 1
5	Produce media material and manage media productions	Utility-/Meaning-based and associated with marketing/ media services and project management	Varying time horizon. Seek partners and projects that increase both efficiency as well as reputation/legitimacy-enhancing capabilities. Seek activities that create synergies or win-win situations and enhance diversification.	Trust-based and contractual relationships to partners. Activities and interaction with partners are loosely coupled and loosely planned, as well as network-based.	Peers, industry members, models, athletes, clients, consumers, sports media and other media markets	8	Owner manager	(8) 2
6	Sports photography	Meaning-based and associated with a certain artistic styles (experience)	Long-term visions. Seek activities and relationships that enhance reputation and legitimacy, as this is believed to drive profits and other benefits.	Trust-based and semi-planned projects and interactions that are tightly coupled to the artistic work and style. Blurred boundaries toward environment and high dependence on network.	Snowboarding community, equipment and apparel manufacturers, media, athletes, peers, consumers, etc.	9	Owner manager	(9) 1
7	Sports photography and snowboard event arena construction and medical services	Utility-/Meaning-based associated with diverse services	Varying time horizon. Seek partners and projects that enhance production capabilities and reputation. Seek activities that increase skills and contribute to diversification – to create growth.	Relationships are governed with plural forms of contracts. Some are completely trust-based. Activities and interaction with partners is commonly loosely coupled and only vaguely planned.	Snowboarding community consisting of peers, models, athletes, clients, consumers, sports media and events overlapping into several (other) industries.	10	Owner manager	(10) 2
8	Sports video photography	Utility-based, associated with the product quality	Short-term objectives. (Incrementally) increase the product quality, and incentive-based relationships.	Activities are tightly coupled to production. Business relationships are governed with contracts and center around the production and exchange of media material for money. Relationships vary over time and are bound to projects (incentive structure – who pays)	B2B customers and production partners.	11	Owner manager	(11) 1

9	TV and internet media production	Utility-based and closely associated with specific services (film, sound, edit)	Short-term goals. Focus is on product and service quality (to customers). Incentive-sacrifice-based partner selection.	Activities are tightly coupled to media production. The business relationships are contractually governed and center on the production. Relationships vary over time and are project-based. Relationships seize as projects are finished (transaction-based)	Production partners and customer as well as audience/ consumers	12	Owner manager	(12) 1
10	Snowboarding athlete	Meaning-based human brand associated with a certain style and core snowboarder identity (experience)	Long-term vision. Seek activities and partners with similar values that help develop a unique style and way of doing things that contribute to growing as an athlete (including earnings). Seek to be an inspirational source (legitimacy-seeking) and give back to the community (own profits are secondary).	Give and take, partnerships are generally trust-based, affective, and extending outside the business activities. Relationships are only governed with hard contracts in a few certain cases. Activities are primarily centered on snowboarding – contests and marketing.	Snowboarding industry, market and community	13	Athlete	(13) 1
11	Snowboarding athlete	Meaning-based human brand associated with a certain riding style and “cool” lifestyle (experience)	Long-term vision. Seek partners and activities that enhance brand uniqueness and increase its status/legitimacy to grow as athlete (including earnings).	Reciprocal give and take. Tightly coupled and long-term (affective rather than calculative) relationships and activities centered on snowboarding contests and marketing for sponsors. Relationships are governed with social or plural forms of contracting.	Snowboarding industry (companies) and market (consumers)	14	Athlete	(14) 1
12	Snowboarding athlete	Meaning-based human brand associated with certain (humble) image	Long-term vision. Seek partners and activities to build a strong brand meaning and grow as a person and athlete. Ultimate goal to be a legitimate role model to help sponsors sell products, as this is believed to decide fate of career.	Activities are network-based and center on snowboarding. Relations are typically reciprocal informal/friendships, trust-based, and close (affective commitment).	Snowboarding industry (companies) and market (consumers)	15	Athlete	(15) 1
13	Snowboarding athlete	Meaning-based passionate core snowboarder - human brand	Long-term passion for the sport and to live the sport. Relations are based on friendship and activities are selected for the sake of snowboarding itself rather than to earn money from it.	Relationships are based on trust and commitment. Activities are guided by a passion for snowboarding. Both activities are network-based and tightly coupled to snowboarding.	Snowboarding community	16		(16) 1
14	Snowboarding athlete	Meaning-based true to snowboarding, friendly human brand	Long-term vision to be able to “live snowboarding” rather than make money from snowboarding (which is mainly seen as a necessity). Select partners and activities that fit and contribute to realize the vision and are deemed to share the same values.	Network-based and tightly coupled activities and relationships. Reciprocal (give and take) friendship-based relationship to sponsors. In general, partnerships are based on affective trust and commitment.	Snowboarding industry and market	17	Athlete	(17) 1
15	Snowboarding athlete	Meaning-based rebellious human brand	Medium- to long-term vision. Select partners and activities that fit the intended brand meaning or image. Seek partners based on their “perspective” and values.	Network-based activities and relationships. Co-operation is based on reciprocal friendship, trust and shared understanding of what is to be achieved.	Snowboarding industry and market	18	Athlete	(18) 1
16	Snowboarding athlete	Utility-based result-centered human brand	Short-term vision. Choose activities and partners to increase awareness and sell products for sponsors. Select partners mainly on incentives.	Relationships and activities are closely related to and focused on creating awareness and improving riding quality to increase earnings. Relationships are based on calculative commitment and exist as long as no one else offers more.	Snowboarding industry and snowboarding consumer market	19	Athlete	(19) 1
Phase 2								
17	Product/equipment manufacturing and services for ski resorts and arenas	Utility-based (quality focus) and associated with specific products and services	Short-term, efficiency-based objectives. Select partners and activities to increase brand awareness, sales and quality or decrease costs.	Relationships are generally incentive-driven and short term (transaction-based). Relationships last as long as profit potential exists. Partnerships and activities are tightly coupled to the products or services and seek to create a brand as a mark of quality.	Global ski resort and event market	20	Owner manager	(20) 1
18	Wholesaler of apparel brands	Utility-based and associated with category of brands and products	Short-term objectives. Relationships and activities based on intentions to increase image and awareness of products sales/transactions and cash flow.	Activities are tightly coupled and structured to increase sales/transactions, create awareness, and protect the image of the brands in the portfolio. Relationships generally last as long as they are profitable.	Traditional sports and extreme sports retail market	21	Sales and marketing director/Sales and marketing	(21) 1

(continued on next page)

Table 1 (*continued*)

Case	Entity/organization principal activity	Description of brand	Basis for strategy- and decision-making (strategic schema)	Nature of relationships and activities	View on environment	Subject	Subject title/ function	No. of interviews (subject no.)
19	Marketing consultancy and photo and film media production	Meaning-based/ authenticity and realism	Long-term. Seek partners and activities that support the creation of a unique, legitimate identity (meaning), rather than push in any direction. Offers are turned down if they do not fit the brand.	Tightly coupled/related activities and close trust-based relationships with a friendship character.	Fashion apparel and music industries	22	CEO and Art Director	(22)1
20	Marketing consultancy, event management and human brand (artists) agency firm	Utilitarian meaning- based, associated with diverse forms of "experience-based communication" and mar-keting	Varying time horizon. Seek partners and activities that increase capabilities to manage diverse and changing demands and survive and grow. Large focus on creating both economic win-win situations and engage in brand meaning-making for the involved parties.	Loosely coupled network of relationships and activities, governed by plural forms of contracting. Offer a wide variety of diverse services to various partners. Network constellations are created and scattered over time. Activities and relationships are aimed at creating and capturing new capabilities and opportunities.	Several diverse networks in different communities and industries. For example, artists, cultural communities and markets, concerts, festivals, media productions, corporate conferences and event markets, etc.	23	Owner manager	(23) 1
21	Entertainment and experience production and consultancies (e.g., events, concerts, shows, galas)	Utilitarian meaning-based, quality and uniqueness "competent" brand	Varying time horizon. Seek partners and activities to increase capabilities to meet changing demands and grow. Large focus on having a one-of-a-kind brand meaning and, at the same time, high-quality operations.	Loosely coupled network of activities and relationships built to enhance capabilities to manage diverse and changing customer demands. Plural form of trust and contracting.	Several diverse networks in different communities and industries. For example, tourism, show business and media industries.	24	Owner manager	(24) 1

Table 2
Findings on strategic brand management enactment.

Exemplary quotes	Interpretation
"Strategically, I am trying to put my company in the most visible place possible by doing the best work I can, that shows me and my company in the best light among the peers and the people who I feel are important. Basically, what I am offering my prospective and present clients is a job well done and hopefully an image that will promote their company; that is my goal. At the same time, it is obviously going to promote my company […] my goal is to give the people I work with a product that they can use to present their company in a better way than they have done in the past … that is what I am trying to sell. I am trying to sell the overall thing and not just the product" (Case No. 5, respondent No. 8) "We have a philosophy that we always try to fulfill, that is, we should offer a skiing experience that our guests should long for having again. That is the main goal every day. We are a family-oriented resort […] we like to have an offering for the smallest to the father and mother, who may want to ski in more advanced slopes." (Case No. 3, respondent No. 5) "Since we went public a few years ago, it has been all about meeting the numbers and achieving constant growth, but still in a sustainable way. In other words, we have aimed to grow, but remain true to our ideals, because […] if we no longer stay true to our ideals, we are just going to alienate some of our most loyal customers and partners." (Case No. 1, respondent No. 1)	The strategic schema determines the range and type of actions and the width of the environment that are enacted and made sense of.
"I capture and assess the competence and ideas of different people and tensions that are created. I save it in my 'hard drive' [consciousness] and use it in different ways to cope with future situations. I have been doing this for 25 years, after which time you become kind of like a skilled soccer player. You have the ability to place yourself in the right spot, and things you do, things that might have taken you a long time to achieve in the past, are achieved a lot faster today because you have the experience." (Case No. 20, respondent No. 23) "We cooperate with [partner brand name] because we have a product that we think, or that we know, is of importance to a lot of our guests […] the younger part of the family. [Partner brand name] is a solid brand in these environments. What we hope and know is that this cooperation gives us credibility and attention in the environments that [partner brand name] directs their efforts towards. Through that we hope that the cooperation can increase the knowledge about our ski resort so that more people like to come here to use our product. That is about it." (Case No. 3, respondent No. 5) "I do some research first so I know what clients expect and what they want […] I have to know that part before I give them a concrete suggestion of how I think that we can help them […] and self-confidence because you might not have the ability at that certain point in time, but you cannot not tell them about that, that is something you have to work out later." (Case No. 21, respondent No. 24) "Even if everything develops, stepping outside into a target audience that you do not feel as much at home in is a big step to take and a big challenge. […] You try to push the brand without making it folksy-folksy and rather keep it a bit rebelliously folksy, within the music world and aimed at a very interesting age group […] that is between 18 and 25 years-old maybe." (Case No. 19, respondent No. 22)	The sense-making of environmental cues are filtered through and influence the firm's strategic schema (which guides and limits strategic decisions, actions and exchange relationships)

stay true to our ideals we are just going to alienate some of our most loyal customers and partners. […] So, we aim for growth in the long term, without cutting corners or taking any shortcuts […] to maintain the longevity and legitimacy of the brand. […] We try to bring out the best in people and succeed together, rather than at the expense of someone else. We would rather achieve long-term, sustainable, mutual growth than maximization of profit overnight." Accordingly, the heuristic archetype relies on a rule-based logic of appropriateness similar to the friend or steward role in economic sociology theory (Davis et al., 1997; Grayson, 2007; Heide & Wathne, 2006; March, 1994; Montgomery, 1998). This logic has been shown to create strong social bonds based on affective commitment and trust (cf. Barney & Hansen, 1994; Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; Gustafsson et al., 2005; Uzzi, 1997), but also has a somewhat paradoxical relation to the calculative archetype's outcome-based logics.

The studied cases (see Tables 1 and 3) that follow this strategic schema focus their strategy-, decision-, and sense-making on the contextually derived brand experiences and intrinsic symbolic value or brand meaning (cf. Allen et al., 2008; Berthon et al., 2009; Brakus, Schmitt, & Zarantonello, 2009). Again, Respondent No. 1 highlights the importance of the brand's meaning: "Basically, we just sell cotton and we try to make you believe that […] we will make you more attractive than all the other brands out there. I would say that our brand genuinely combines innovative drive with the spirit to create something yourself, combined with a passion. Only people who can relate to that [meaning] will identify with us." The same respondent illustrates how products and services are separate from and subordinate the brand, viewing the brand as an experience from which actors derive meaning: "You know the advertising and the products are tangible, but at the same time it – the brand – is intangible. The sum of what we do, if you take a [brand name] ad or a [brand name] piece of garment, clothing, and you look at it from a distance, even without the logos, you can tell that it is [brand name]. We stand out and we do not take any shortcuts; we try to stay true to what we do. We are not trying to win everyone over; we are just trying to appeal to the audiences that share our values." The above findings illustrate how a heuristic archetype centers on the brand experience and the meaning of the brand, where the products merely become subordinate means to capture value from a relevant brand meaning.

A brand's superior role over offerings gives the firm a greater ability to offer a variety of products or services under the brand name. However, the quotes also illustrate how activities and exchange relationships are tightly coupled to facilitate a certain experience theme (cf. Pine & Gilmore, 1998; Woodside et al., 2013) and a relevant brand meaning that is co-created in a certain context (cf. Arnould & Thompson, 2005; Holt, 2002; McCracken, 1986). The brand's context-dependent nature inevitably narrows down and stabilizes both the firm's selection of activities and partners, and its view on the enacted environment to a certain community (Holt, 2002; Schouten et al., 2007). Respondent 1 again exemplifies this point: "When we select partners, it all comes down to

Table 3
Strategic brand management archetypes.

	Archetype		
	Calculative orientation	Heuristic orientation	Dynamic orientation
Strategic brand identity (strategic schema)	Brand knowledge about offering [a] (Extrinsic market value/utilitarian value)	Brand meaning and experiences [h] (Intrinsic meaning/symbolic value)	Brand capabilities [k] (Extrinsic utilitarian and intrinsic symbolic value)
Decision- and strategy-making logic (strategic schema)	Consequences [b] (Maximize awareness)	Appropriateness [b] (Match sociocultural meaning, expectations and norms)	Diversification [c,k] (Enhance capabilities)
Guiding objective	Efficiency [b,c,d,e] (Market Transactions)	Legitimacy [i,j] (Market Relations)	Flexibility [c,k] (Market Dynamism)
Time horizon	Short Term [d,f]	Long Term [d,f]	Varying
Enacted nature of activities and exchange relationships	Tightly coupled, clear, stable structure [c,d,e]	Tightly coupled, blurred, open structure [b,d,g,j]	Loosely coupled, adaptive, organic structure [c,g,l]
Enacted environment	Narrowed down to stabilize and reduce uncertainty [c,g]	Narrowed down to stabilize and reduce uncertainty [d,b]	Wide, take (pro-)action to reduce uncertainty [c]
Representative cases (see Table 1)	3, 4, 8, 9, 16–18	1, 6, 10–15, 19	2, 5, 7 20, 21
Representative literature	[a] see Keller (1993) [b] Montgomery (1998); Messick (1999); March and Olsen (2004); Heide and Wathne (2006) [c]Anderson and Paine (2007) [d] Davis et al. (1997) [e] Williamson (1981, 1993) [f] Mouzas (2006) [g] Danneels (2003); Porac et al. (1989); Salancik (1977); Thompson (1967)	[h] Allen et al. (2008); Berthon et al. (2009) [i] Suchman (1995); Mitchell et al. (1997); King and Whetten (2008) [j] Uzzi (1997); Handelman and Arnold (1999) [k] Sanchez (1995) [l] Granovetter (1973)	

the people factor, and the acknowledgment of [brand name] that [partner brand name] is a force to be reckoned with. One seeks to team up with partners that are complementary rather than competitive to one's cause. It sounds easy in theory, but it is always different in practice. Take the selection of media partners, for example: one always wants the broadest exposure possible, but not at any cost. There are magazines and contexts out there that we do *not* want to be seen in, as it would be derogatory to our legitimacy and market value." In this way, adopting a heuristic archetype narrows and stabilizes the firms' enactment of their environments and tightens their systems of activities and exchange relationships.

Altogether, the findings presented above show that a heuristic archetype aligns with social norms and optimizes legitimacy. However, in choosing this archetype, firms risk adopting an overly narrow and myopic view of the surrounding environment vis-à-vis value creation (Levitt, 1960). Accordingly, the present findings show that both calculative and heuristic archetypes risk ignoring market dynamism and the need to change to remain relevant (Aaker, 2012).

3.9. The dynamic brand management archetype

The brands in the present study that adopt a dynamic archetype view strategic flexibility as a key to creating and capturing value in markets with often latent and changing consumer preferences (Priem et al., 2013; Sanchez, 1995). These firms (see Tables 1 and 3) generally focus on enacting a brand that signifies relevant and unique value – that is, extrinsic and intrinsic value – in diverse market environments. Consequently, the firms follow a diversification rationale to cope with dynamic and sometimes paradoxical requirements (Anderson & Paine, 1975). Such a rationale relies on a varying time horizon and considers the nature of the brand's identity, the environments in which enacting the brand may be appropriate, and the consequences of such a strategy.

Instead of making an either-or decision, dynamic brands adopt this diversification rationale to develop brand capabilities that allow them to balance contradictory and diverse demands, as Respondent 2 illustrates: "Our company has been around for 21 years and has always been known as a core snowboarding company. […] At the same time, we have grown a lot over the years, so we are also dealing with the mass [mainstream sports] market. Therefore, it is kind of a hard balance that we try to achieve. It is always challenging to get the right balance in products to still be able to sell to the core market [the consumers who live snowboarding] and be seen as a core company. At the same time we need the numbers, so we need to be able to sell to a wider and larger audience." The constant balancing of the paradoxical needs that is apparent in the quote forces the firm to weigh what is appropriate behavior against the consequences of such behavior (March & Olsen, 2004). The respondent further explains how the firm engages in a continuous, step-by-step marketing experimentation process that diversifies its offerings in order to solve this dilemma. By allowing the firm to operate in all segments of the market, the respondent says: "We aim to offer the perfect snowboard for every kind and type of riders [consumers]. There are many different kinds of riders out there in terms of riding style and how good they are […] What we are trying to achieve is a huge diversified line of everything that is found on the market [all types of snowboards] […] to be able to offer something to everyone. […] Step by step, we also started to develop outerwear and then we started to develop […] apparel like hoodies, t-shirts, gloves, beanies, and now we put a lot of effort in bags. So, over the years we have grown into a full offering company for [all] snowboarders."

The final aspect in the above quote points to how the capabilities that allow the firm to operate in several markets increase as the system of exchange relationships and activities becomes more diversified (Anderson & Paine, 1975) and loosely coupled (Danneels, 2003; Granovetter, 1973; Orton & Weick, 1990; Thompson, 1967). Respondent No. 20 illustrates this linkage further, saying: "The company […] has an ability to deliver most things that are requested thanks to the fact that we are part of many different organic networks that are scattered and built up over and over again in different situations […] You could say that there is a network consisting of those that you work the most with right now, and then there are networks surrounding every project […] that may only exist during the particular project. […] This gives the company a wide [diverse] network of contacts through which we enhance our skills […] that can be used when we work with those partners [customers and suppliers] that the firm work a lot with, or in a new project."

Through the balancing act described above, the firms seek dynamic equilibrium, that is, move across opposing goals of efficiency and legitimacy to enact their brands (cf. Smith & Lewis, 2011). As these findings show, the tensions that the firm can cope with, without muddling the image or meaning of the brand, delimit the width of the enacted environment. Therefore, as the calculative and heuristic strategic brand management archetypes show, a firm that limits its enacted environment, and/or creates tighter couplings to certain partners, and activities, will decrease its flexibility to some extent (e.g., Danneels, 2003; Hamel & Prahalad, 1991; Thompson, 1967). However, being dynamic does not mean being unfocused, as in offering everything to everyone. Instead,

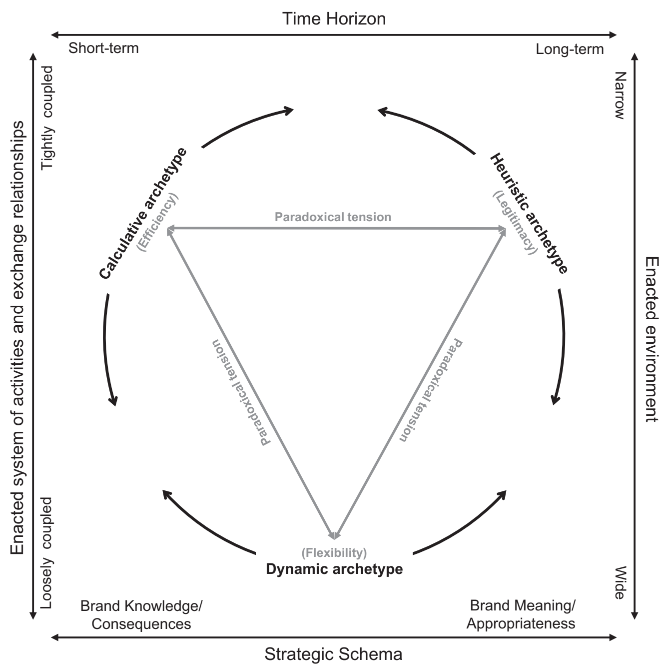

Fig. 2. The marketing process continuums of strategic brand management archetypes and related paradoxical tensions.

the dynamic archetype (summarized in Table 3) is only product- and context-independent, that is, loosely coupled and flexible, to an extent wherein the firm can stabilize the brand economically and sustain some proof of its uniqueness and identity. In other words, firms adopting a dynamic archetype constantly seek new ways of striking a balance between the continuity needed in exchange relationships and activities and the changes needed to sustain the brand's relevance (Aaker, 2012; Keller, 2000).

3.10. Discussion and implications

The present research shows how firms develop and refine and commit to calculative, heuristic, or dynamic strategic brand management archetypes through a self-reinforcing and path-dependent enactment and sense-making process in order to optimize a certain type of use value; see Table 2 (cf. Danneels, 2003; Osborne et al., 2001; Porac, Howard, & Baden-Fuller, 1989; Salancik, 1977). The findings demonstrate how the firm's strategic schema, including its shared identity and logic for strategy- and decision-making, differ across the three archetypes, see Table 3 (Heide & Wathne, 2006; Nadkarni & Narayanan, 2007; Prahalad & Bettis, 1986). Calculative brand management seeks to maximize brand awareness and manage brand information that signifies the extrinsic value of a product or service (e.g., Aaker, 2012; Keller, 1993; Rust et al., 2004). Heuristic brand management seeks legitimation for economic actions, rather than maximizing efficiency, in order to (co-) create novel and relevant brand experience themes and brand meaning in certain communities (e.g., Aaker, 2012; Allen et al., 2008; Fournier & Lee, 2009; Grewal & Dharwadkar, 2002; Holt, 2002; Schouten et al., 2007). In turn, dynamic brand management is used to increase firm flexibility through balancing extrinsic and intrinsic values to address latent and changing customer preferences in a wide market environment. In this sense, a firm adopts a strategic brand management archetype to optimize or maximize certain value creation effects. However, the present findings show that firms do this at the cost of other effects. Thus, the systematic differences between the archetypes provide a foundation for understanding how the firm handles paradoxical tensions in its strategic brand management.

Firms enacting one of these archetypes will inevitably face two value creation paradoxes that are directly related to the archetype, while a third paradox will play an indirect, but important role for the firm. The empirically derived model in Fig. 2 illustrates how the paradoxical tensions between efficiency and legitimacy that firms face vary as a function of its strategic schema and time horizon. In turn, paradoxical tensions related to flexibility vary as a function of what system of activities and exchange relationships and environment the firms enact. Accordingly, firms that adopt the calculative archetype may put their brand meaning's legitimacy and flexibility at risk (cf. Berthon et al., 2003). By contrast, firms that adopt a heuristic archetype become more dependent upon conforming to the norms of target segments (cf. Zimmerman & Zeitz, 2002). Thus, adopting a heuristic archetype may decrease the firm's efficiency and flexibility. To increase their flexibility, calculative and heuristic firms can loosen up their system of activities and relationships (e.g., Granovetter, 1973; Thompson, 1967). Although this loosening up may risk the firm's efficiency and legitimacy, the firm's ability to enact brand extensions and market expansion under the brand name is increased (Keller & Lehmann, 2006).

The above findings illustrate that a firm will face different risks and perceive different paradoxical tensions salient depending on the enacted strategic brand management archetype. Thus, when the firm adopts a certain archetype it simultaneously determines whether it accepts to live with or seeks to resolve one or more paradoxical tensions (cf. Poole & Van de Ven, 1989; Smith & Lewis, 2011). Another implication of the self-reinforcing nature of strategic brand management is that the firm risks becoming a captive of its archetype and exacerbates the associated paradoxical tensions (Le Breton-Miller & Miller, 2014; Lewis, 2000; Salancik, 1977). In other words, the more associated the firm becomes with a certain archetype, the higher the costs of adopting a different archetype.

To cope with this risk of captivity, firms can allow archetypes to coexist to create a dynamic equilibrium, that is, balance opposing demands in one of the following three ways (cf. Heide & Wathne, 2006; Smith & Lewis, 2011): First, as Fig. 2 illustrates, firms in static environments can allow a calculative and heuristic archetype to coexist to balance demands of efficiency and legitimacy. Such coexistence implies that the firm adopts a mid-range time horizon and seeks a close relation between brand meaning and product or services to provide a basis for both calculative and affective forms of customer trust and commitment (Berthon et al., 2003; Gustafsson et al., 2005). The resulting tightly coupled systems and a narrow focus on the market can help create a fine-grained production and customer understanding that allows the firm to specialize offerings and offer superior value (Achrol, 1991; Danneels, 2003; Jaworski & Kohli, 1993). However, a firm in this position also decreases its flexibility as its tightly coupled system and narrow view of the environment decrease its opportunity horizon (cf. Hamel & Prahalad, 1991; Slater & Narver, 1998). Therefore, a firm that adopts a calculative or heuristic archetype, or allows these archetypes to coexist, does so at the expense of flexibility, meaning that the firm faces a high risk of changing market demand that can be detrimental to its fate.

Second, firms can allow a calculative and dynamic archetype to coexist to different extents in order to balance paradoxical tensions between efficiency and flexibility. As Fig. 2 illustrates, such coexistence is likely to result in firms adopting a short-term focus on economic consequences and seeking to create a loosely coupled system. Therefore, the firms are also likely to switch partners and activities to renew their offerings as the incentive structure changes (cf. Williamson, 1981). Ultimately, the firm manages to market several product and service categories under the same brand name, while retaining some control over the brand due to its strong connection to the products' and/or services' extrinsic value (Berthon et al., 2003). Thus, the firms' strategic brand management is closely related to its offerings' functionality and aims to create calculative commitment and trust to the brand in a wide market environment (Gustafsson et al., 2005). However, risks are also associated with allowing calculative and dynamic archetypes to coexist, such as when poor quality in one product or service affects the preference for other related offerings and dilutes the trust and commitment to the brand (Gürhan-Canli & Maheswaran, 1998; Loken & Roedder John, 1993; Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Further, the constant striving to renew resources and product lines may prevent the firm from gaining full return on some of its products and marketing investments (Achrol, 1991; Levinthal & March, 1993). Yet another potential problem concerns the low focus on legitimacy and brand meaning needed to create strong long-term affective customer commitment and trust, which has previously been shown to result in higher levels of loyalty and willingness to pay (Park et al., 2010; Thomson, MacInnis, & Park, 2005). Thus, the firm's reliance on constant renewal of objective features and calculative commitment to create a state of efficiency and flexibility may result in a lack of affective isolating mechanisms that prevent customers from switching brands.

Third, firms can allow the heuristic and dynamic archetypes to coexist in order to reduce paradoxical tensions between legitimacy and flexibility. The strength of this approach lies in the firm's focus on creating a meaning-driven and product-independent brand to become a relevant category of its own and build strong relations to its environment (Aaker, 2012). For example, previous research has shown how such brands may become focal points of communities and form affective relationships with various stakeholders (Fournier & Lee, 2009; McAlexander et al., 2002; Pitt et al., 2006). These meaning-based affective relationships build on self-brand connections that result in more resilient and higher loyalty levels compared to traditional customer-satisfaction-centered management (Belk, 1988; Gustafsson et al., 2005; Park et al., 2010). Accordingly, the primary task for the firm is to create contexts and resources that facilitate relevant brand experiences and brand meanings that cultivate relationships (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004; Schouten et al., 2007). This highly co-creational nature of the brand's symbolic value means that stakeholders are active meaning-makers that help advertise and have a sense of ownership and identity with the brand (Allen et al., 2008; McAlexander et al., 2002; Pitt et al., 2006). Nonetheless, firms that adopt this approach will face efficiency-related paradoxes. For example, respondent No. 1 in this study expressed how an important part of brand meaning-making is engaging in anti-branding (that is, what the brand is not) in order to distance them from other brands and thrive on environmental tensions (Allen et al., 2008; Escalas & Bettman, 2005; Fournier & Lee, 2009). Consequently, firms that act inappropriately vis-à-vis increasing efficiency, for example, turning to the wrong markets to economize on the brand, risk alienating their core supporters. In this sense, the firm becomes tied to certain communities and may find that the opportunity cost of investing in other markets is higher than the resulting profit (Mouzas, 2006). Another risk is the potentially high marketing costs associated with an intense focus on legitimacy and brand meaning (Sheth & Sisodia, 2002). Consequently, the firm creates risks as the community gains control over the brand that, in part, means that the brand can only survive as long as its meaning in some sense is more relevant and legitimate than that of its competitors.

The above discussion shows that a brand can allow archetypes to coexist in different ways to resolve paradoxes. Such strategies may also enable switching archetypes and optimizing a different desired effect. This finding suggests that some levels and forms of dynamism may exist in very tightly coupled systems of activities and exchange relationships. For instance, the heuristic archetype can offer product and service variation under a certain theme (cf., Pine & Gilmore, 1998; Woodside et al., 2013), while the image of a calculative-orientated brand is less context-sensitive, allowing the firm to target various market segments. However, the coexisting of calculative and heuristic archetypes is not flexible in a dual sense of both context and offerings as this does not enhance the firm's brand extension or market expansion abilities. This fact underlines a key difference between being flexible or merely being dynamic in terms of meeting opposing demands of efficiency and legitimacy. Instead, dynamic archetype brands are likely to be more flexible and, thus, successful at creating advantages by balancing demands of efficiency and legitimacy in wider and more diverse market environments. On the other hand, firms that adopt more calculative and heuristic archetypes are likely to optimize a specific use value type and, thus, create a static equilibrium and sustainable advantages in narrower and more stable segments.

To conclude, this article presents a novel framework for studying and understanding strategic brand management and related paradoxes that may enhance firms' strategic decision-making. Paradoxes can be traced to the strategic brand management archetype the firm uses to create diverse types of use value and performance effects. The general implication of the findings is that firms enacting a certain archetype diminish and exacerbate certain paradoxes (e.g., Lewis, 2000). In other words, enacting a certain archetype is always associated with switching and opportunity costs vis-à-vis a different archetype. Accordingly, the framework provides an understanding of how firms can optimize certain effects and manage paradoxical relations between desired, but contradictory effects in their value creation. In other words, managers can use the framework to enhance their understanding of how paradoxes can be resolved (cf., Lewis, 2000; Poole & Van de Ven, 1989; Smith & Lewis, 2011).

3.11. Future research

The theoretical framework presented in this article provides an agenda for further strategic brand management archetype studies (cf., Woodside et al., 2013) on various performance measures. First, the linkages between the different strategic brand management archetypes need clarifying. This includes efforts to operationalize the archetypes into measurable constructs and test their effects on both firm performance measures and brand experiences. The first part of such an agenda includes increasing the understanding of how the different archetypes affect customers' brand experiences and influence their affective commitment and/or calculative commitment (e.g., Gustafsson et al., 2005). The second part deals with how the diverse nature of the archetypes may affect cash flow and profitability over time. Such research would contribute to an important research priority of accounting for how branding influences established performance constructs and leads to shareholder value (e.g., Madden et al., 2006; Rust et al., 2004).

A second issue deserving of future empirical investigation is the effect that a matching (as opposed to a mismatching) of strategic brand management archetypes between partnering firms in a supply chain has on firm performance and customer experiences (cf. Kumar, Heide, & Wathne, 2011). Related to such research is a deeper investigation of how firms combine archetypes to verify and test the proposed benefits and shortcomings of coexisting archetypes.

Finally, further insights into the implications of and actual process of switching from one brand archetype to another are needed. The present study has focused mainly on how archetype characteristics develop and reinforce themselves, and less on how firms can switch or question their dominant schemas. What triggers switching behavior and what are the risks and hurdles associated with such a process? What role does learning play for potential switching behavior (e.g., Baker & Sinkula, 1999)? Given that "*brands can migrate across the brand space over different pathways*" (Berthon et al., 2003 p. 53), a question also remains as to whether pathways are symmetric or asymmetric. In other words, do brands face different challenges depending on which pathway they follow? If so, what challenges will brands face when given different starting points, and what movement patterns are generally the most and least difficult to accomplish? One of the main implications of pursuing such a research agenda is that further investigation requires comparing several theoretical branding perspectives and views them as complementary rather than opposing. Thus, we argue that coordinating the pluralistic insights from various perspectives provides a richer understanding of branding than any one perspective provides by itself (e.g., Van de Ven & Poole, 2005).

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