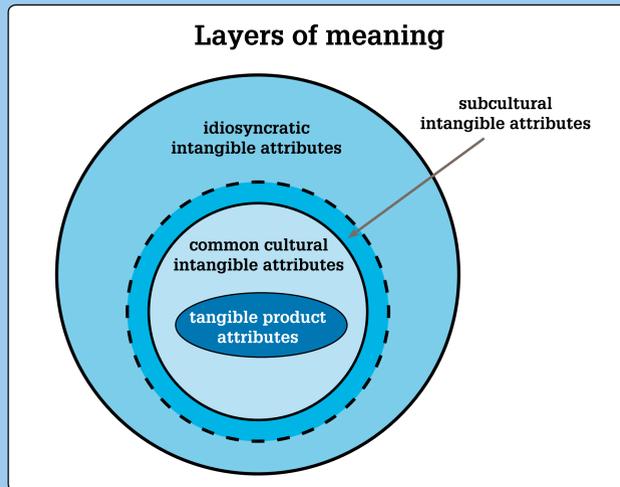


What Do We Know?



Source:

Hirschman, E. (1980a) "Attributes of Attributes and Layers of Meaning", *Advances in Consumer Research* Vol. 7 No.1, pp.7-12: Tangible, Palpable, Intangible, Attribute, Idiosyncratic, Subcultural and Cultural

Subsequent contributions relating to conceptual framework include:

- Hirschman, E., (1980b): *develops* Associations
- Hirschman, E., and Holbrook, M., (1982): Afferent and Efferent
- Park, C., Jaworski, B., and MacInnis, D., (1986): Functionality
- Hirschman, E., (1998): Direct Sensory, Idiosyncratic, Subcultural and Cultural
- Bhat, S., and Reddy, S., (1998): Functionality, Practical, Symbolic
- Franzen, G., and Bouwman, M., (2001): Functional and Symbolic, Brand Hierarchy
- Brown, S., Kozinets, R., and Sherry, J., (2003): Communal, Storytelling
- Escalas, J. E., and Bettman, J. R., (2005): Social Integration
- Hultén, B., (2011): Multi-sensory

Research opportunity

Previous focus on intangible idiosyncratic, multi-sensory, hedonic, and cultural meaning.

What of the tangible? Simple concept-driven processing of an individual sense? The functional?

Call for further research

"...what is the role of product performance and objective or tangible attributes vs. intangible image attributes?" Keller and Lehmann (2006, p.743)

"...we need to encourage further research that will further develop brand ambidexterity by considering which seemingly contrasting concepts might work together despite previous studies suggesting otherwise."

T.C Melewar and Bang Nguyen (2014, p.763)



Why local food?

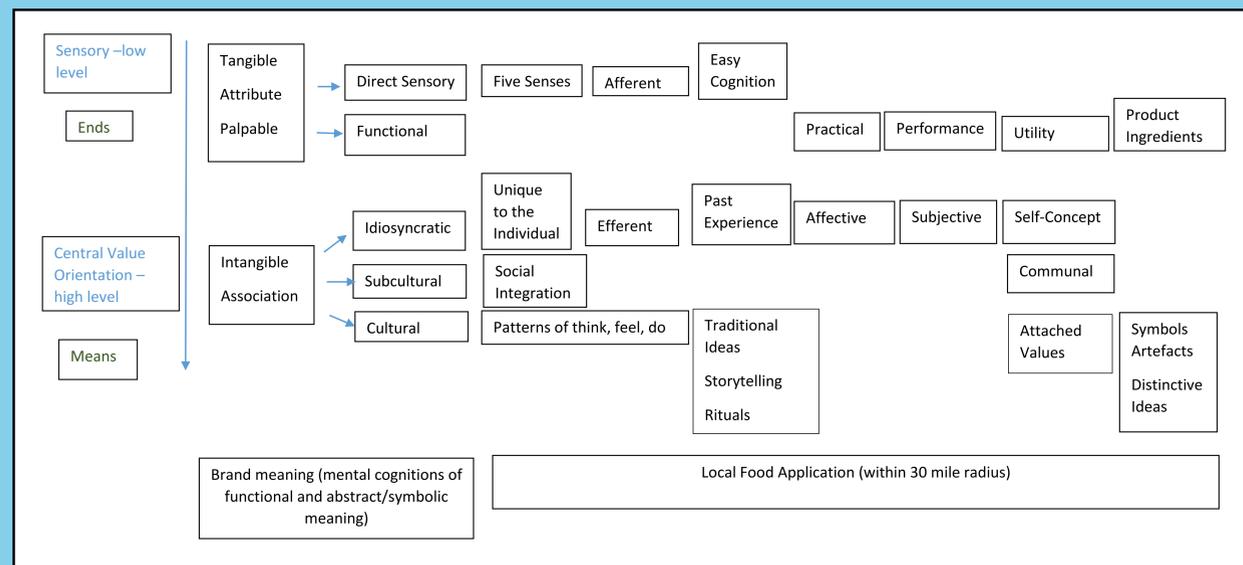
".....the domains of food and clothing are perhaps the most tangible, because we respond to them in a highly tactile and palpable manner" (Hirschman, 1980 p.30)

Food can be rich in both symbolic and functional associations and attributes.

There's been an increasing consumer preoccupation with local sourcing, food miles and a focus on health together with ethical concerns (Grobel, 2013). There has been an increasing demand for local and regional food (Defra, 2008).

"Local" is defined as within a 30 mile radius (FARMA, 2012) albeit this may be more of a general perception than a defined distance (Defra, 2008). A focus on local food brands around the vicinity of west Dorset as the county offers a diversity and breadth of local brands. The south-west of England has over half of all local food production with good access and there is a strong sense that local food is highly developed (Mintel, 2011).

Conceptual framework



What do we want to know?

Research Objectives

In relation to the brand meaning of local food brands:

1. To explore the contribution of direct sensory attributes.
2. To understand the contribution of functional attributes.
3. To gain insight as to how these tangible attributes combine with intangible associations to create brand meaning.
4. To gain an in-depth understanding of how these tangible attributes contribute towards any hierarchy of brand meaning.

How do we find out more?

Through consumer-focused ethnographic methods including accompanied shopping trips, kitchen visits and in-depth interviews (Elliott and Elliott, 2002; de Kervenoael *et al.*, 2014).

Data collected – examples of consumer conversations

Respondent: ...it just tastes better (laughs).

Interviewer: ...but in what way does it taste better?

Respondent: I don't know, I quite often get a cottage pie and.... it always tastes like the one Mum used to make. The meat feels, it tastes like meat rather than, I don't know, whatever, but it's really tasty anyway so.

Interviewer: what about the meat that is... different perhaps?

Respondent: I don't know it's just, a lot of the supermarket stuff it tends to be tasteless these days. Or they tend to put a lot of additives in it and I'd rather have it as natural as it can be I would say.

Data analysis uses Nvivo software.

Analytical strategy – Open coding from a priori or emergent theme.

Free coding.

Major themes, sub themes - hierarchy.

Cross coding.

Contribution

This study adds to the growing body of brand meaning literature by exploring the tangible attributes of local food brands together with their interplay with the intangible associations from a consumer perspective. This is the major contribution of the paper. This is one of very few interpretivist studies on tangible attributes using ethnographic methods in a highly topical category.