

Case Study

Design Application (A Case Study of Redefinition of Bacardi Rum Packaging)

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Abstract Perception of users towards any product is vital. There are many brands which sell same or similar things. Many times, the similar products by different brands are placed under the same roof, i.e. marts/ departmental stores. The quality of the products and the brands are crucial aspects in retaining the users (who repeatedly use the product). However, packaging plays a significant role in attracting the user's attention/ influencing their subconscious awareness. It acts as a tool to connect subconsciously with the users through emotions.

In this research work a hypothetical design project was undertaken to map the problems, aspirations of the users, studying user interface of Bacardi Black Rum packaging (bottle). Manufacturing cost of the existing packaging(bottle) is assessed and focus group discussion is done prior to developing concepts. The design philosophy was to redefine the packaging keeping in view that the packaging should have the language to reach out to the users and be larger than life/ iconic as well as enhance the user experience.

The effort and the outcome of the intervention is perceived as an opportunity to attract consumers to introspect the value for money by any brand. The users must feel that a brand is paying attention to their aspirations.

Keywords *User; Subconscious; User- Interface; Emotion; Design*

Introduction

The first question comes, how can design be defined? American sculptor Horatio Greenough was the first one to state "form follows function". More than a century later the American architect Frank Lloyd Wright stated "form and function are one". Both the statements have contributed to different school of thoughts. There are also liberal thinkers who try to identify balance between the statements contextually [1]. Design as an activity is also described as relating product with contextual situation/ ecosystem with the intent to give satisfaction [2].

Design activity is based upon various processes. The processes are not standardized and they tend to change contextually with the practitioner (belonging to different practices of design e.g., fashion

design, product design etc.), area of application, the product and very importantly the intention towards the change.

The research study in this paper is centred around packaging design. Conventionally packaging's role has always been utilitarian e.g., in the Egyptian civilization, along the banks of Nile, clay pots and pitchers added dynamics to packaging or storage especially for perishable items [3].

Over the years the role of packaging has been primarily functional, keeping the product content safe till it is consumed. It is purposefully designed keeping in view cost and practicality. So that it performs efficiently during distribution of merchandise across channels. Another vital factor was to be able to present the products in a fashion to attract prospective clients. In other words, it acted as a silent spokesperson doing campaigning of the product. Product display and interface is a vital aspect in today's consumerist society. It was important earlier as well going by the example that Jack Daniel launched its new square cross section whiskey bottle in 1895 to break away from conventionality [4]. In today's scenario packaging design may be viewed as [5]:

- A means of protecting the contents of a package as well as facilitate its distribution.
- A contributor to the cost of the end product
- A sales canvas on which to promote the product's attributes and benefits
- A part of the product experience itself

It is also noted that changing lifestyles in the society also affected packaging. Intention is largely towards providing enhanced user experience and thereby connecting with the users emotionally.

Packaging plan of alcoholic beverage does play a significant role towards the promotion of the respective brands. Nowadays massive attention is paid towards better user experience as well as augmented brand prominence. In the present scenario, the alcohol beverages manufacturers are committed towards providing packaging solutions intending towards gaining larger memory retention within the consumers. It eventually influences the consumer buying decisions [6]. Material mostly used are plastic, glass, metal and paper (paper mostly for secondary packaging).

Globally alcoholic beverages market is classified into following:

- a) North America
- b) Latin America
- c) Western Europe
- d) Eastern Europe
- e) Asia Pacific (excluding Japan)
- f) Japan
- g) Middle East and Africa

The consumption of premium alcoholic beverages is directly proportional to the economy of the region and the living standards of the people. It is a reason why North America and European Countries maintain dominance during forecast period therefore leading to the progress of alcoholic beverages packaging market. Asia Pacific Region is expected to grab market opportunities in especially India, China and ASEAN countries which are growing dramatically. Overall, it is anticipated that the global alcoholic beverages packaging market will register a hale and hearty growth in near future [7].

Bacardi with 160 years of establishment is one of the major spirits brand known globally. It is the top most selling rum band. The brand has a heritage of strength and resilience through seven generations [8, 9 &10]. Evolution of Bacardi rum packaging is mentioned in Fig: 1 and Fig: 2 below.



Fig:1 and Fig:2 Bacardi Packaging Evolution

Methods

A hypothetical packaging design project was undertaken upon the Bacardi dark rum bottle (net quantity 750 ml). The packaging bottle reflects essence of art deco with broad distinctive shoulders and standing tall reflecting pride.

Mapping of problem or aspiration of consumers

Two hundred and fifty-three (253) users across different socio-economic strata have been interviewed through video conferencing in groups applying participatory approach. 214 were males and 39 were females. The users are from following cities in India: New Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Shillong and Bhopal.

A number of questions were asked. Few of them were as follows:

1. What is the most preferred drink? Beer, Vodka, Rum, Whisky, Wine, Gin? Why?
2. Which is the favourite brand? Is there loyalty to the brand?
3. Does packaging of different types of liquor (in totality) acts as a factor to attract consumers?
4. Is there any problem sensed while handling the Bacardi rum bottle in different stages of its life?
5. Given a chance what changes would be preferred to have in the bottle?

The answers to the afore-mentioned questions are mentioned below.

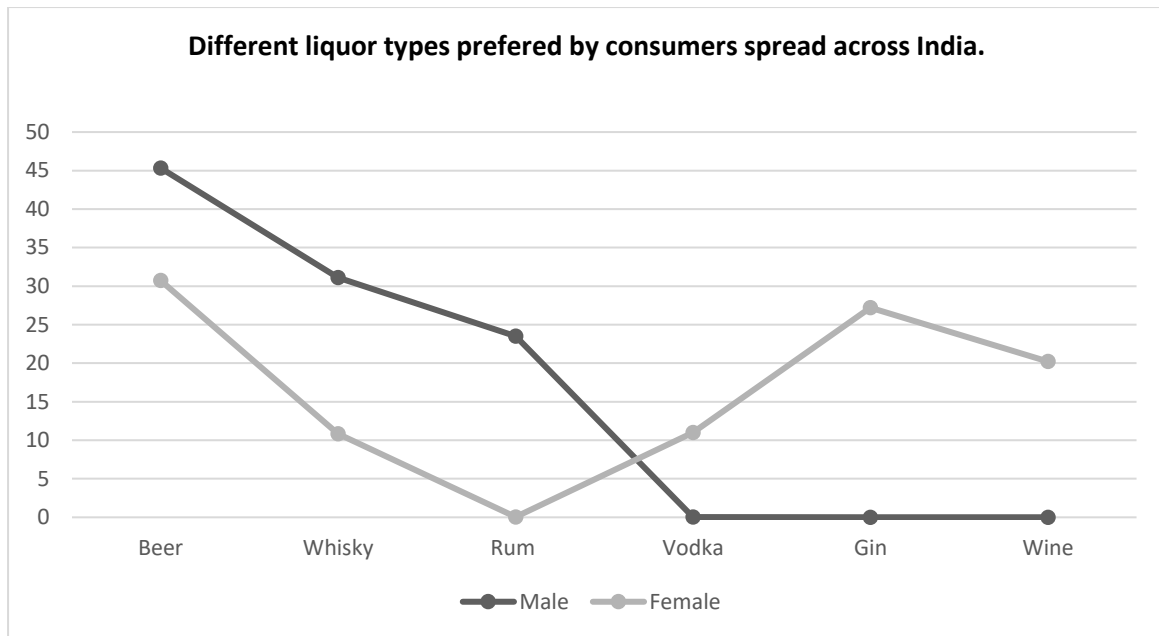


Fig: 3. Different liquor types preferred by consumers spread across India (numerical value in Y-axis is in percentage).

The reason cited by the consumers towards their preference are mentioned below:

- Less time taken to attain high (after consumption).
- Habits/etiquettes associated with a particular drink.
- The company associated while consumption.

When asked about the preferred brand and the consumers loyalty. The reaction received is very scattered. It varies with socio economic strata. However, in case of rum the preferred brands are Old Monk by Mohan Meakin and Bacardi. It was also established that Old Monk and Bacardi rum are competitors. To the question - does packaging of different types of liquor (in totality) acts as a factor to attract consumers? The response is yes across the sample size of 253 users.

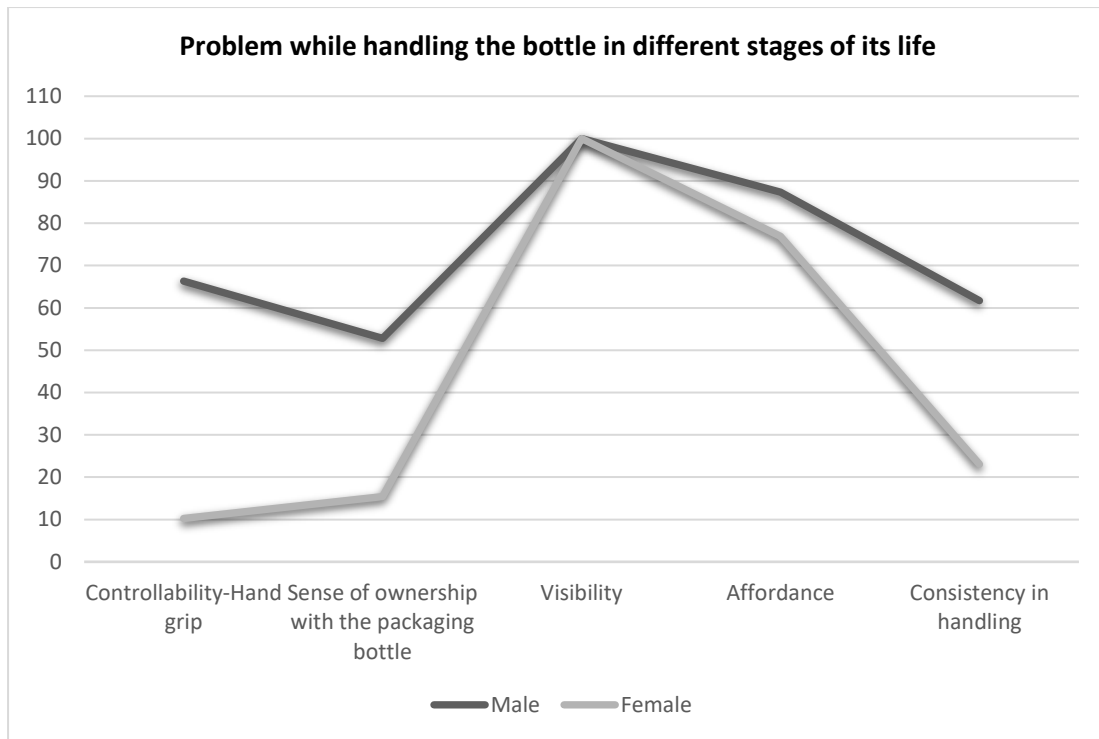


Fig: 4. Problem while handling the bottle in different stages of its life (numerical value in Y-axis is in percentage).

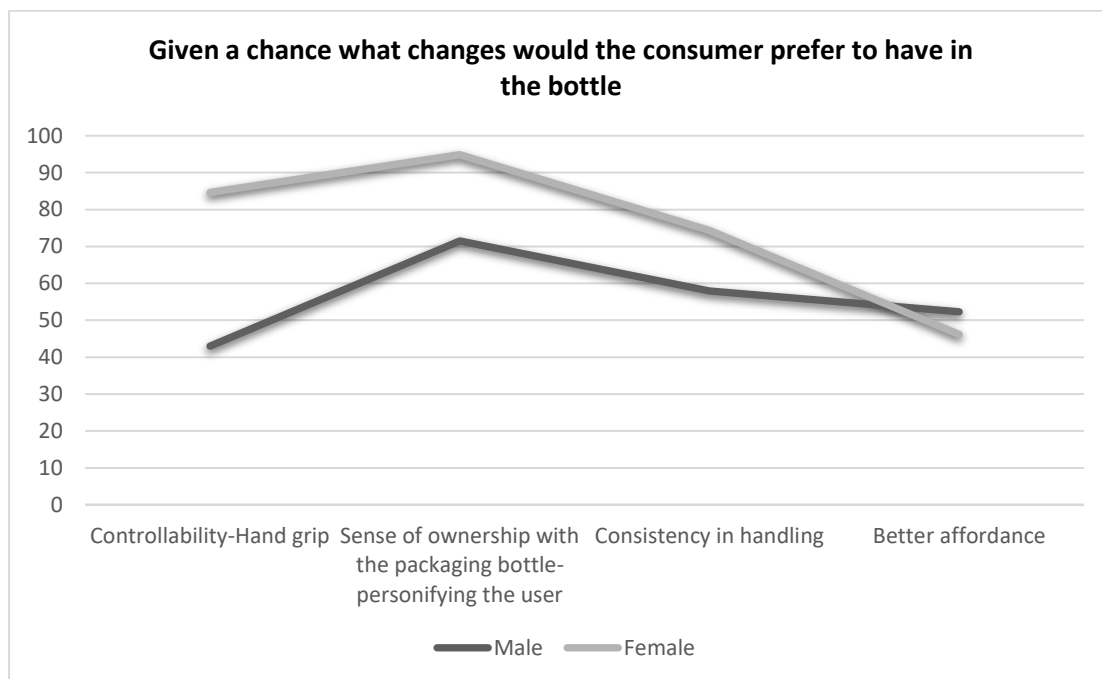


Fig: 5. Changes that the consumer would prefer/ aspire to have in the bottle (numerical value in Y-axis is in percentage).

Deductions: It was observed that for male consumers (larger consumer segment) Rum is the third most preferred alcoholic drink. Bacardi Rum and Old Monk by Mohan Meakin with its unique bottle are rivals/ tough competitors [11].



Fig: 6. Old Monk Packaging Bottle

(<https://www.exchange4media.com/advertising-news/how-old-monk-became-an-iconic-brand-2018>).

It is also established that the users lack sense of ownership with the packaging bottle of Bacardi rum. The clean art deco look doesn't connect with the users emotionally. The controllability factor in context to hand grip keeping in view the palm span in association with the affordance is also studied doing repeated role play. It is found that as the liquor content recedes in the bottle the hand grip area over the bottle also recedes approx. two inches down. The hand grip shifts with change in weight.

Manufacturing process and cost of the Packaging Bottle

For manufacturing soda-lime glass is used. It is recyclable. Bottles are made with the process of blow molding using compressed air into the mold. The tentative cost of a soda-lime glass bottle including the operation over the furnace wherein the temp is maintained at approx. 1500°C, overhead cost, labelling cost etc. is Rs 22.00/- (0.28 USD).

SWOT Analysis of Bacardi rum packaging

Strengths-

- Iconic Art Deco style structure.
- Glass is non- toxic. As a material it maintains the quality and retains the purity of the content inside.
- Soda-lime glass is recyclable.
- Branding is bold.

Weakness-

- Ergonomically difficult to grip/ pour at different stages of the life of the product.
- The structural form is not exclusive/ it doesn't have the richness.

Opportunities-

- Ownership pride.
- The experience should be such that it is retained in memory for relatively longer period.
- Better and instant affordance.

Threats-

- Competitor- Old Monk by Mohan Meakin is already existing and having a substantial market share with unique and iconic packaging bottle [12].
- Speculated new entries in the market may also further widen the market.

Focus group discussion

Focus group discussion was done with five people. The group included a bar tender, a psychologist (female), a marketing person and two designers (one of them being a female). The group members already had experienced having Bacardi rum. Focus group discussion/ Brainstorming was done on sense of ownership with the packaging bottle of Bacardi rum, controllability, and affordance associated. The outcome of the process is as follows:

- It should be majestic.
- User experience should be such that it feels regal.
- The product should have better and instant affordance.
- Controllability should be such that the product lets the user to be unconsciously confident.
- The experience should be such that it is retained in memory for relatively longer period.
- Sense of belonging amongst users with the packaging bottle. The bottle should have emotional connect.
- Retain art deco style. It is the brand's heritage.

Concept Development

Taking cue from the structure in Fig: 2. as well as focus group discussion the journey of concept development began. Few of the doodles are mentioned below in Fig: 7.

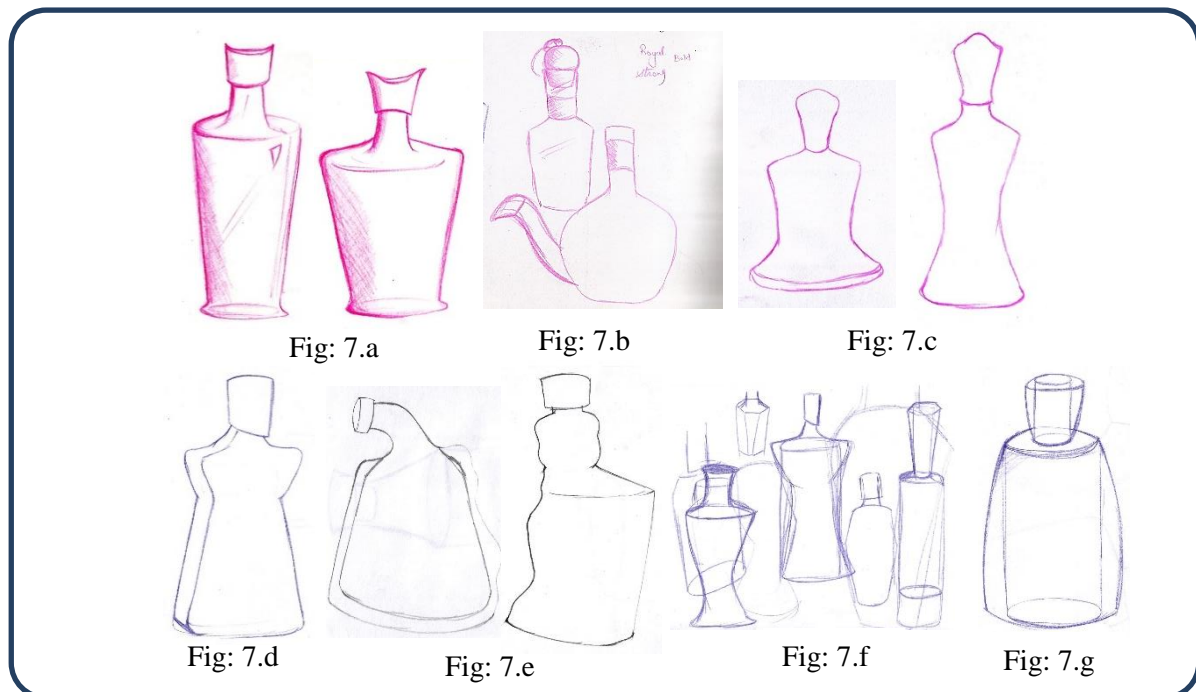


Fig: 7.a. to 7.g. Doodling of concepts of the structure of the bottle

Taking inspiration from a leaping lion (being majestic), form generation of a stylized monolithic form is done with the help of gesture drawing.

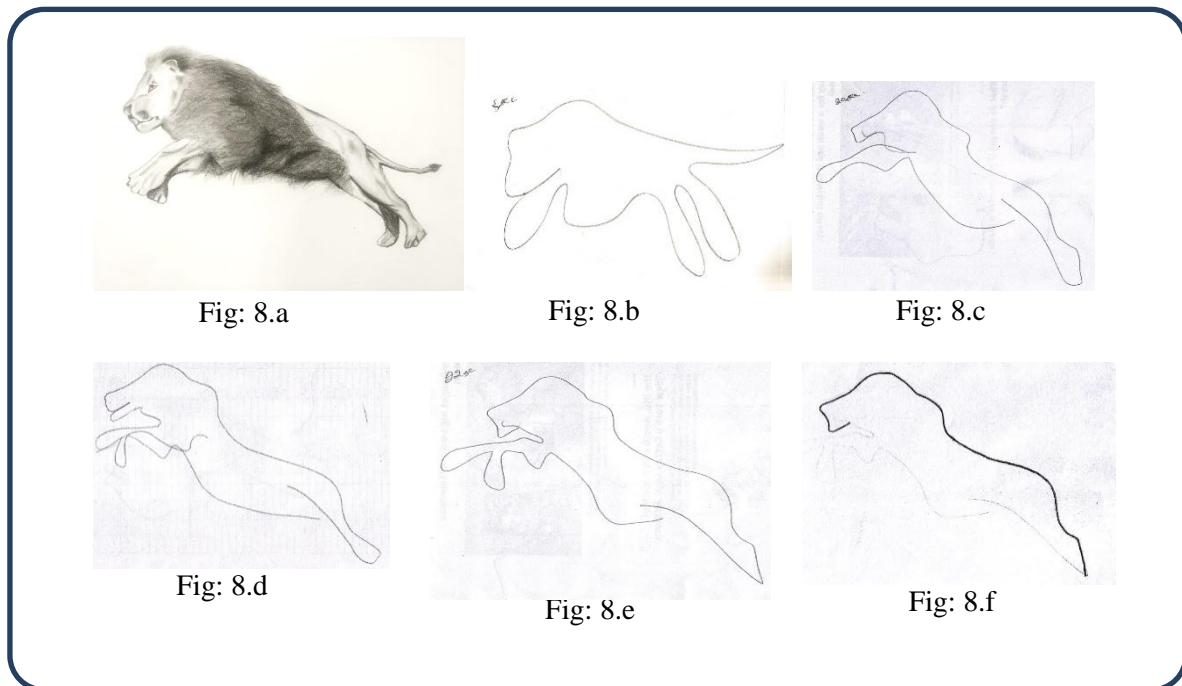


Fig: 8.a. to 8.f. Form generation using the process of Gesture Drawing

Taking reference from the contour line of Fig: 8.f, finally the concept is developed. It is depicted below in Fig: 9.c.

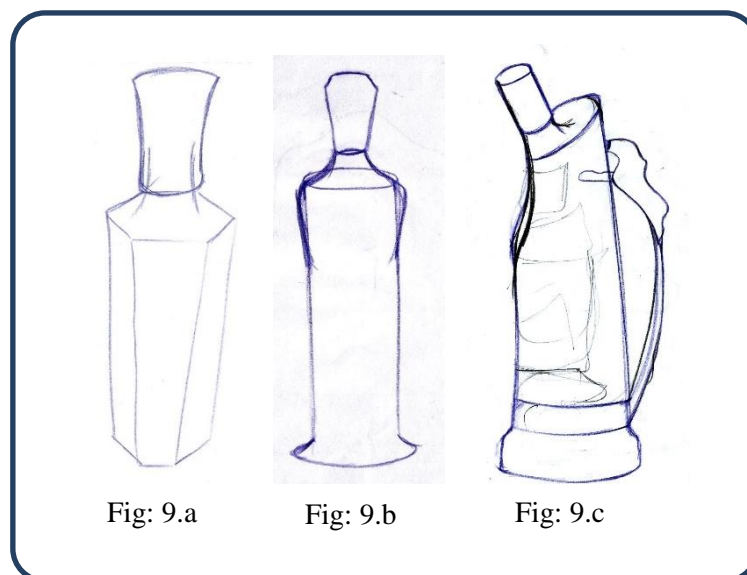


Fig: 9.a. to 9.b. Concepts of the bottle structure. Fig: 9.c. Proposed concept

Simple clean lines with streamlined look with stylized leaping lion (in golden) epitomises art deco. The curved line of the handle accentuates being opulent. Clean lines depict simplicity. The curved line reduces masculinity makes it look or little tilted towards unisex look. The tilted neck adds to proactive dynamism. The form also signifies self-worth/ self-esteem.

The CAD renders are depicted in Fig: 10.a to Fig 10.d (from different angles).



Fig: 10.a. to 10.d. CAD renders of the proposed concept (from different angles)

The proposed dimension of the bottle is 31 cm height, 9.3 cm base and 7.9 cm shoulder with a fifteen-degree tilt at the neck. The metal handle is proposed to be developed out of aluminium sheet (approx. 2 mm thickness) with the casted stylized lion insignia (length of the lion insignia – 2.5 cm) at the top acting as thumb rest. The handle is fixed at the bottom and at the top with industrial epoxy glue e.g., Araldite. At the base the partial circular ring will set in a groove within the glass bottle (so that the surface remains plane). At the top the front legs will be glued to the slightly grooved glass surface as if embedded. The handle will be anodized golden.

Evaluating the cost of Manufacturing of the proposed concept

The glass bottle cost will almost be the same i.e., is Rs 22.00/- (0.28 USD) as the present one including labelling cost. However, a new die would be required. The anodised aluminium handle fabrication cost will be approx. Rs 14.50/- (0.19 USD). Hence total cost would be approx. Rs 36.50/- (0.47 USD).

Re-evaluating the proposed concept

The concept was presented to the same afore-mentioned focus group to have feedback. The feedback is mentioned below:

- a. It is unique and surely help in branding and further promotion.
- b. It gives a rich feel.
- c. It has the potential to initiate a style while serving.
- d. Art deco style is retained.
- e. Regarding controllability- the users will be unconsciously confident. There will be no shift in grip.
- f. The affordance is enhanced.
- g. The cost of manufacturing of packaging will be enhanced by approx. 59%. The total cost being Rs 36.50/- (0.47 USD). However, it can be considered going by the fact that price of 750 ml Bacardi rum is approx. Rs 1200/- (15.43 USD). It is empowered to provide greater user experience.

The sketch is shared with one hundred and fifty-eight users. Out of which 31 were females. They have been interviewed previously through video conferencing in groups applying participatory approach to map the problems and aspirations. The users are from different cities as mentioned above. They were asked a few questions. The questions are as follows:

1. Satisfaction and engagement with the packaging bottle even after consumption of the content?
2. What emotive aspects of the bottle user can associate himself/ herself?
3. Is there any change in the affordance and controllability factors?
4. What are the areas to improve over the concept?

The answers to the afore-mentioned questions are mentioned below.

Most of the users mentioned that it would be difficult to discard the packaging bottle after consumption. The sense of ownership with the packaging bottle would be high in comparison to the existing one. There is a larger probability of users being engaged with the bottles in various ways because there is an ownership pride. With the existing bottle it is not there.

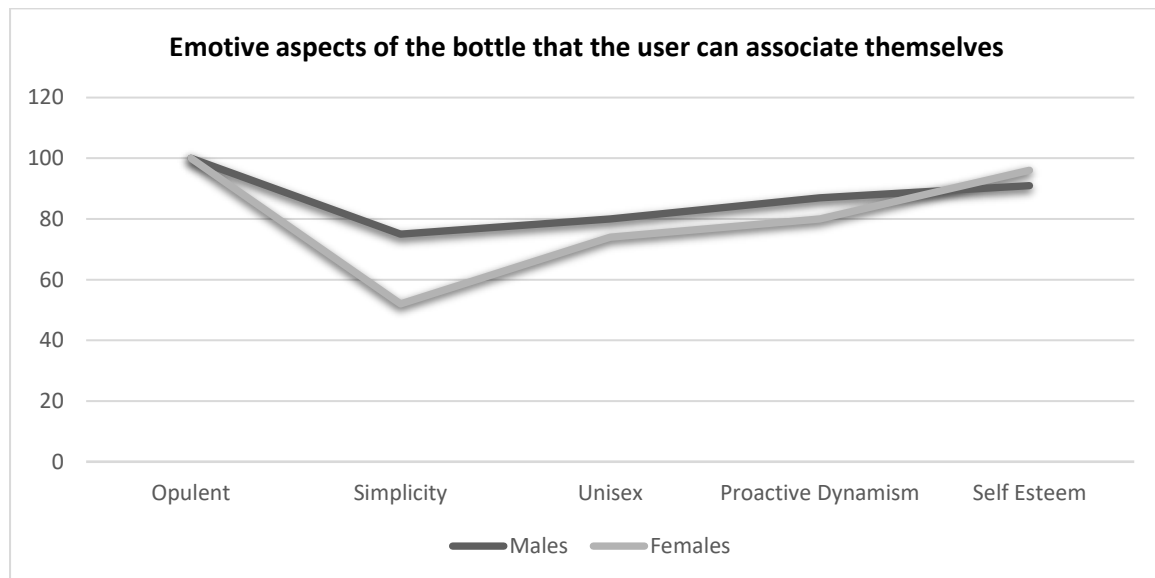


Fig: 11. Emotive aspects of the bottle that the user can associate themselves (numerical value in Y-axis is in percentage)

The users did mention that affordance and controllability factors have improved over the original bottle. The handle clearly communicates and it is visibly evident that there will be no shift in hand grip with the diminution of content in the bottle. The handle tends to provide unconscious confidence among users with different hand span size (especially females) while gripping.

When discussed regarding the areas to improve over the concept with the users a number of feedbacks are received. They are as follows:

- The controlled pour devise/ stopper should be designed with sensor to allow precisely 45ml, 60 ml and 90 ml pour.
- There may be a provision to empower users to enjoy different flavours e.g., coconut, lemon, pineapple etc.

Results

The brand is iconic. The design philosophy was to redefine the packaging keeping in view that the packaging should have the language to reach out to the users and be larger than life/ iconic as well as enhance the user experience.

The concept derived follows the brand's language of art deco. It is established with the feedback during focus group discussion and feedback from the users that the affordance and controllability is enhanced. It comes with an opulent feel and there is an ownership pride associated because of the structural concept.

The cost of manufacturing of the packaging will be enhanced by approx. 59%. But the concept will surely help the brand standing tall impacting perception of the users.

Conclusion

There are numerous brands with global presence. Many of them are iconic as well. They are existing and catering to user needs for several decades. It is required to understand that with time the user aspirations change. It is quite possible that the user may not articulate their aspiration. But if there is someone or some brand who address their aspirational factors, they get motivated and switch over. Many users switch, following their peers [13].

The strategy behind the design project was to avail this as an opportunity to attract consumers providing best in segment value for money. The users must feel that the brand is paying attention to their aspirations.

In certain industries there is a tendency to not be able to pay attention towards existing consumers and their aspirations during the extended sales cycles [13]. This kind of design application is recommended for every brand for self-introspection and avoid red ocean strategy. Intention should always be towards blue ocean strategy to excel in market [14].

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