CONSUMER BRAND RELATIONSHIPS

MEANING, MEASURING, MANAGING

Edited by
Marc Fetscherin,
& Tobias Heilmann

"What a superb contribution to the branding literature! This book provides a great blend of content, in which essential branding principles are cleverly woven together with cutting edge research and ideas from the frontiers of branding thought."

– John Cadogan, Professor of Marketing, Loughborough University, UK Editor-in-Chief, *International Marketing Review*

"This is a very thoughtful collection of leading-edge articles on the research of consumer-brand relationships, approaching the topic from multiple, complementary perspectives. The insights provided by this volume, make it essential reading for both scholar and practitioners interested in understanding how customers bond with brands."

– Adamantios Diamantopoulos, Professor and Chair of International Marketing, University of Vienna, Austria

"Big brands play a powerful role in driving consumers' purchases and investments, and even their self-esteem and social affiliations. They do so by eliciting powerful emotions like 'love' and 'passion' from their fans. *Consumer Brand Relationships* is a timely and thoughtful compilation of studies that will help readers understand the personal engagements that consumers develop with their favorite brands. It's a must read for managers interested in building and managing those brands, and thereby competing more effectively in our fast-evolving, brand-driven Reputation Economy."

– Charles Fombrun, Founder and Chairman of Reputation Institute, USA Professor Emeritus of Management, Stern School of Business, NYU, USA

"A fascinating, comprehensive, and up-to date account of factors determining feeling and thinking about brands."

– Klaus Jonas, Professor of Social and Business Psychology, University of Zurich, Switzerland

"Building brands is about building deep emotional long lasting relationships between consumers and their brands. This advanced book is much welcomed. It makes the 'consumer brand relationships' (CBR) field progress conceptually and methodologically with strong implications for managers."

– Jean-Noël Kapferer, world expert on branding, author of *The New Strategic Brand Management*, co-author of *The Luxury Strategy*, France

"This volume collects leading edge research from top-notch thought-leaders around the world, bringing together the latest thinking on brand

relationships. As such, it should be essential on the bookshelf of any manager who wishes to help their brands reach their potential, as well as every scholar who wishes to stay at the forefront of this dynamic and exciting field."

– Nick Lee, Professor of Sales and Management Science,
Loughborough University, UK Editor-in-Chief,
European Journal of Marketing

"The book *Consumer Brand Relationships: Meaning, Measuring, Managing* provides a comprehensive overview of latest research and findings in brand relationships. This book is a must-read for CMO's, marketing and branding managers who want to get a better understanding of establish brand relationships and how to measure and manage those."

– T.C. Melewar, Professor of Marketing and Strategy,
Middlesex University London, UK Emeritus Editor-in-Chief,
Journal of Brand Management

"Fetscherin und Heilmann smartly edited the latest research in Consumer–Brand Relationships theory and practice into a great tool book: This book is a must-read for managers, academics, researchers, and students alike as it provides the why, how to measure and what to do to build strong brand relationships. Read, learn and make your relationship with consumers the best!"

– Daniela Ott, Former COO Kering Luxury Division, France

"This book is a deep dive into consumer relations with their favorite brands to the extreme of assigning human love to them. Truly insightful on how subjects and objects mix, intermingle, and virtually coalesce in a process of meaning exchange."

– Jean-Claude Usunier, Professor Emeritus,
University of Lausanne, HEC, Switzerland

"The book *Consumer Brand Relationships* includes a collection of latest high quality and practical relevant research. A must read for all researching in the area of brand relationships."

– Cleopatra Veloutsou, Senior Lecturer of Marketing, University of
Glasgow, Scotland, UK Co-Editor in Chief, *Journal of Product and
Brand Management*

Consumer Brand Relationships

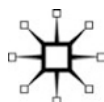## Meaning, Measuring, Managing

Edited by

Marc Fetscherin
Rollins College, USA

and

Tobias Heilmann
campaignfit Ltd., Switzerland

palgrave
macmillan

To my parents, Viviane and Rudolf, for their love, endless support, and encouragement
– Marc Fetscherin

To my wonderful family, Vivienne, Bela, Kolja, and Lou, and to my parents, Heinz and Heidemarie, for their tremendous support and love
– Tobias Heilmann

This page intentionally left blank

Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

Foreword

The identification, measurement, and management of consumer-brand relationships (CBRs) are central to the activity of building strong and enduring branded businesses. The current focus on CBR, as a key branding concept, is timely recognition of the fact that consumers are – and always have been – as much responsible for creating the equities of a brand as are the brand's owners and managers. The expanding digital and democratic forces in the economy have only made this fact more evident, and provide a new and powerful substrate for the formation and expression of CBR.

This book, with chapters from some of the foremost practitioners and academic thinkers in the discipline, provides the reader with a variety of studies in which the construct of brand love is most often the central type of relationship. In Part I, brand love is shown to derive from feelings of trust, identification, and emotional and behavioral commitment. Brand love leads to brand loyalty and to many forms of social brand activism such as brand advocacy and defense of the brand. These studies provide valuable additions to the considerable body of literature and practice relating to the measurement of brand love, and its relevance to building a strong consumer franchise, brand-pricing power, and the financial value of branded businesses.

In many cases brand love is – either explicitly or implicitly – modeled on human romantic love, but as the old Nat King Cole song reminds us, "Love is a many-splendored thing." Defining brand love only as an analogue of human romantic love risks ignoring other types of productive CBRs for which romantic love is not an appropriate model. Platonic love, self-love, or the type of nurturing love directed at a child are examples of the type of relationship of which both the antecedents and the outcomes are very different from those of romantic love. Completely outside of the realm of love there exist CBRs that derive from other basic needs, for example, security, self-actualization, and ludic needs, which can be just as motivating of desired consumer-brand behaviors as brand love.

In Part II, the authors focus on the connection between consumer characteristics – personality or membership in affinity groups – and the formation of brand relationships. These contributions serve as an

important reminder that CBRs do not exist in a vacuum. As Voorn, Hegner, and Pruyn point out, the connection between the product category and the type of brand relationship can be an important influence because of the level of risk that the consumer experiences in choosing the brand. Their study of the relationship between the "Big Five" personality characteristics and brand love is also instructive, and it would be valuable to extend this analysis to other types of brand relationship.

In Part III, S. Sreejesh and Subhadip Roy's argument for a grounded theory approach to CBR is a welcome contrast to the more empirically based approach using variations on the interpersonal relationships model. The development of an attitudinal and behavioral methodology for identifying and measuring CBR, which they advocate, has in fact been carried out by the writers of this Foreword, and forms the core of their consulting practice.

We would like to gratefully acknowledge the valuable contributions of the editors and chapter authors to increasing our knowledge of CBRs and providing a solid platform for further exploration of the topic. Importantly, the authors bring diverse backgrounds and perspectives to this joint endeavor, which will provide researchers and practitioners alike with a richer understanding and appreciation of the many fascinating dimensions of CBRs. Together, the chapters offer a stimulating and challenging treatment of the topic and will be a valuable addition to the knowledge of any brand scholar or marketing practitioner.

Edward Lebar and Max Blackston
Founding Partners
BlackBar Consulting
www.Blackbarconsulting.com

Acknowledgments

The editors of this book are particularly thankful to the institutional support provided by Rollins College (USA) and University of Zurich (Switzerland). We would also like to thank Virginia Thorp and Kiran Bolla from Palgrave Macmillan for their guidance and support.

This book contains mainly a collection of papers originally presented at the 3rd *International Consumer Brand Relationships Conference* (www.consumer-brand-relationships.org) held during September 26–28, 2013, at Rollins College, Florida (USA).

All the chapters were double-blind reviewed. We are very thankful for the time and effort the reviewers took to provide valuable comments in order to improve each chapter and the overall quality of this book.

Specifically, we would like to thank (in alphabetical order):
Abd Ghani Noor Hasmini, Universiti Utara Malaysia, Malaysia
Aggarwal Pankaj, University of Toronto, Canada
Ahuvia Aaron, University of Michigan-Dearborn, USA
Albert Noël, KEDGE Business School in Marseille, France
Aledin Samil A., University of Turku, Finland
Alves Brandão Euler, Stetik Group-Pro Brasil Propaganda, Brazil
Barker Ryan, BERA Brand Management, USA
Biraghi Silvia, LABCOM-Universita Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Italy
Blackston Max, BlackBar Consulting LLC, USA
Block Martin, Northwestern University, USA
Boulanger Michele, Rollins College, USA
Bowden-Everson Jana, Macquarie University, Australia
Carnevale Marina, Fordham University, USA
Carrero Juan Pablo, Universidad Catolica del Uruguay, Uruguay
Cayolla Ricardo, University of Aveiro, Portugal
Dagger Tracey, Monash University, Australia
Dalsace Frederique, HEC Paris, France
Damay Coralie, ISC Paris Business School, France
Francisco Maffezzolli Eliane Cristine, Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Paraná, Brazil
Gambetti Rossella, Universita Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Italy
Gollety Mathilde, Universite Pantheon-Assas, France
Gonçalves Filho Cid, Universidade Fumec, Brazil

xiv

Notes on Contributors

The contributors for this book are experts from all over the world such as Australia, Brazil, Canada, Finland, France, Germany, India, Netherlands, Switzerland, United Kingdom, and USA. Our experts reflect the internationalization and interdisciplinary nature of consumer brand relationships. They work in scientific disciplines such as Advertising, Branding, Psychology, Management, Marketing, and Communications.

Our academic experts work in the following organizations: Aix-Marseille University (France), Centro Universitário Una (Brazil), EDHEC Business School (France), Fumec University (Brazil), IBS Hyderabad (India), Indian Institute of Management Udaipur (India), ISC PARIS Business School (France), KEDGE Business School (France), Oxford Brookes University (United Kingdom), Otto-Friedrich-University (Germany), Pantheon Assas University (France), Rollins College (USA), University of Michigan-Dearborn (USA), University of Twente (Netherlands), University of Rouen (France), University of Paris Sud (France), Utrecht Business School (Netherlands), University of Western Australia (Perth, Australia), University of Zurich (Switzerland), Utrecht Business School (Netherlands).

Our expert practionners work in the following companies: BERA Brand Management (USA), BlackBar Consulting (USA), campaignfit Ltd. (Switzerland), Creative Cores Media Group Ltd. (UK), Souki – Research, Strategy and Marketing (Brazil), Lafarge SA (France), and Stetik Group (Brazil).

Editors

Marc Fetscherin is Associate Professor of International Business and Marketing at Rollins College, United States. Fetscherin is the founder and organizer of the International Consumer Brand Relationships (CBR) Conference which started in 2010 at Rollins College. In 2012 he co-edited the book *Consumer-Brand-Relationships: Theory and Practice* with a Foreword by Kevin Keller. This edited book contains a collection of the best papers originally presented at the 3rd CBR Conference held during September 26–28, 2013. For more information, please visit www.fetscherin.com.

Tobias Heilmann is CEO of campaignfit Ltd. (www.campaignfit.ch), Switzerland, a consulting company specialized in empirical brand and leadership consulting. Based on scientific tools, he and his team measures, tests, and predicts company brand, product/service brand, employer brand, CEO brand, and place brand, develops and implements strategies for companies and states. Furthermore, he is Assistant Professor in Social and Business Psychology at the University of Zurich, Switzerland. He received his PhD in Business Psychology from the University of Zurich, Switzerland. He also holds a master's in Organizational Psychology from the University of Tubingen, Germany.

Contributors

Aaron Ahuvia is Professor of Marketing at the University of Michigan-Dearborn College of Business. In 1993, he published the first major scientific study on consumers' love for products and brands, and since then he has become a widely recognized authority on brand love as well as on the relationship between income and happiness. His work has appeared in the *Journal of Marketing*, the *Journal of Consumer Research*, the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *American Psychologist*, and other journals. He has worked or taught in China, Denmark, Finland, Morocco, France, Germany, India, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Rwanda, Singapore, Slovakia, Switzerland, Netherlands, and Yemen. He has been quoted in *Time, The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal*, and has appeared on popular radio and television shows such as *The Oprah Winfrey Show*.

Noël Albert is a professor and a research scientist at KEDGE Business School in Marseille, France. He has also been a visiting scholar at the Crummer Graduate School of Business at Rollins College in Florida. His research focuses on consumer behavior and, more precisely, consumer-brand relationships, including consumers' love, affection, and passion for brands. His work has appeared in *Journal of Business Research*, *Journal of Brand Management*, *Management & Avenir*, *Innovations*, and *Marché & Organisation*.

Samil A. Aledin is an independent scholar and a research consultant. His primary areas of research encompass the consumer-brand relationships of teenagers, evolutionary aspects of consumer-brand relationships, and consumer-sport team relationships. Prior to his academic career, he worked as a marketing practitioner at fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) companies locally and internationally. In addition, he has been

consulted by the national media as an expert on teenage consumption, and he has served as a reviewer of articles and conference papers.

Ryan Barker is a managing partner of BERA Brand Management (BBM), working on a "soup to nuts" global platform to bridge the gap between marketing and finance. Prior to joining BERA Brand Management, he was EVP, Marketing & Decision Analytics at Vision Critical, the world's largest provider of Insight Community Software, where he created the BERA (Brand Equity Relationship Assessment) platform, which was later spun out to form BBM. He was Global Director of Brand Strategy at Young & Rubicam, where he provided Brand Consulting to Fortune 500 Chief Marketing Officers. Prior to joining Y&R, Ryan was in charge of the strategic marketing and implementation of a portal for a technology start-up company that creates interactive web-based multimedia for training applications. He has an MBA in International Management with a focus on global marketing/e-commerce from Thunderbird, The American Graduate School of International Management.

Max Blackston is a founding partner of BlackBar Consulting. He is a brand strategist, market researcher, and consumer psychologist with a long track record of innovation in the consumer sciences. He was one of the first in the field to successfully operationalize models of consumers' decision processes, and he first conceptualized a theory of consumer brand relationships more than 25 years ago. He has always worked in an operational business framework and has substantial experience in all of the marketing disciplines. He headed up international research companies in England and Italy, and was SVP Head of Planning and Research at Ogilvy & Mather, New York. In addition, he has been a consultant to BrandAsset Valuator at Y& R New York.

Euler Alves Brandão is the founder, partner, and current chairman of Stetik Group, a Brazilian company that brings together companies in the areas of advertising, web solutions, digital marketing, marketing research, and architecture and store design. One of the five largest independent communication groups in Brazil, and operating in South America from several offices in various cities, it has clients in different economic fields, from retail to banks, including consumer goods industries. He obtained a PhD in Business Administration in 2011. He has academic and professional experience in administration, with emphasis on merchandising and strategic management of companies, mainly in the following topics and areas: strategic management, strategic marketing, retail, and entrepreneurship.

Coralie Damay is Assistant Professor of Marketing at ISC PARIS Business School, France. Her main area of research is the behavior of young consumers. She studies relationships between children and prices, including the role of prices during buying processes, how children memorize prices, and how they evaluate products. Her research also deals with the role of brands and peer interactions in children's food choices and children's expectations toward stores. She has published one edited book, two book chapters, and journal articles. Her articles have appeared in *Harvard Business Review, Journal of Product and Brand Management, Recherche et Applications en Marketing, Young Consumers: Insight and Ideas for Responsible Marketers*, and others.

Pascale Ezan is Associate Professor of Marketing at the University of Rouen. Her research interests focus on understanding consumer behavior. This includes research on children and adolescents' consumption, particularly food choice behavior. She examines interpersonal dynamics and influence among peer groups in consumer situations. Her work has appeared in journals such as *Young Consumers, Recherche et Applications en Marketing*.

Cid Gonçalves Filho is Coordinator of the Doctorate and Master Program in Business Administration at Fumec University, Belo Horizonte, Brazil. He is also Pro-Rector of Research and Executive Programs. Cid is also Senior Researcher in Marketing and Consumer Behavior, and has a representative scientific background, with papers published in several refereed journals. Cid is also a partner of Dataconsumer (Marketing Research and Consultancy Firm), which works with representative firms and institutions in Brazil. He has a doctorate in Business Administration and a master's in Information Science. He is the author of four books, several book chapters, and has presented research papers at various conferences all around the world.

Mathilde Gollety is Professor of Marketing at Pantheon Assas University, Paris, France. She began her academic career as a PhD student at Dauphine University in Paris, and then became an assistant professor at the Sorbonne University, Paris, followed by a position as a full professor at Pantheon Assas University. She has coordinated one edited book, and written several book chapters and journal articles. Her articles have appeared in *Recherche et Applications en Marketing, Décisions Marketing,* and *Young Consumers*.

Sabrina Hegner is Assistant Professor of Marketing and Consumer Psychology at the University of Twente, Netherlands. Holding a master's

in Psychology from the University of Mannheim in Germany, as well as a master's in Business from the University of Western Sydney in Australia provided her with an interdisciplinary view on the marketing field. Having earned a PhD in Intercultural Brand Management at the University of Bremen in Germany, as well as lecturing, researching, and consulting in India, South Africa, Thailand, the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, and Belgium, she is particularly interested in the intercultural differences of consumer perceptions of brands.

Valérie Hémar-Nicolas is Assistant Professor of Business and Marketing at the University of Paris Sud. She graduated from EDHEC Business School in Lille and obtained a PhD in Management Sciences from the University of Pantheon-Sorbonne, Paris. She is a member of RITM (Réseaux Innovation Territoires et Mondialisation), and conducts research on children's consumer behavior, with expertise in branding, food consumption, and digital learning. She has been teaching innovation, consumer behavior, and marketing strategy in business schools and universities in France and the United States. She worked as a marketing manager in the publishing companies *Bayard* and *Le Parisien* for several years. She has published numerous peer-reviewed journal articles and book chapters, and has given presentations at international conferences.

Björn Ivens is Full Professor of Business Administration and Marketing at Otto-Friedrich-University, Bamberg, Germany. He is also a visiting professor at the University of Geneva, the Università della Svizzera Italiana, EM Lyon Graduate School of Business, and the Economic University of Vienna. His main fields of research are brand management, relationship management, price management, and marketing organization. He has published a variety of books, edited books, book chapters, and journal articles. His research articles have appeared in *Industrial Marketing Management, Journal of Business Research, European Journal of Marketing, International Journal of Electronic Commerce, Marketing Theory, Journal of Marketing Management*, and others.

Gachoucha Kretz is Associate Professor of Marketing at ISC PARIS Business School. After working several years as a senior consultant in finance, and then as a brand consultant for major cosmetic companies, she decided to shift careers and to follow her passion for fashion and luxury marketing. Her research interests cover social media branding, digital branding, fashion and luxury branding, and consumer rapport with luxury and fashion. Her favorite methods encompass qualitative inquiries and Netnography (2010).

Edward Lebar is a 40-year veteran of marketing and a founding partner of BlackBar Consulting. BlackBar Consulting's focus is on building consumer-brand relationships. Its analytic models and creativity stress building customer franchises, improved pricing power, and raising market valuation multiples. Its approach to consumer-brand relationships involves listening to and exploring both parts of the relationship: brand projections (brand experiences and attitudes) and consumer perceptions. The latest phase of BlackBar's work focuses on how the consumer-brand relationship impacts social brand behavior, including consumer-brand communication and nonpurchase behaviors. He is the author of *The Brand Bubble* (2008). Ed's experience includes working with clients such as P&G, Kraft, AOL & Time Warner, Kodak, Verizon, Microsoft, Yahoo!, NASDAQ, the *New York Times*, and the *Wall Street Journal*. He holds advanced degrees in economics from New York University and the University of Denver.

Alexander Leischnig is Assistant Professor of Marketing Intelligence at University of Bamberg, Germany. His research interests include branding, services management, and customer management. His research has appeared in *Journal of Business Research*, *Industrial Marketing Management*, *Schmalenbach Business Review*, and *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*. His most recent edited book is *Commodity Marketing*.

Bano Mansoor is a marketing and branding consultant at Creative Cores Media Group Ltd., London, United Kingdom. She holds an MBA and has worked with the branding, web design, and web development projects of several local and international brands. Her research interests include consumer behavior, branding, consumer-brand relationships, word-of-mouth communications, and brand love. She has coauthored papers presented at 3rd International Consumer Brand Relationship Colloquium 2013 (Winter Park, Florida, United States) and the 7th International ACBM Conference 2013 (Hong Kong).

Javed Mansoor is a doctoral candidate in the Faculty of Business at Oxford Brookes University, United Kingdom. He is also Creative Director at Creative Cores Media Group Ltd. His primary areas of research encompass consumer behavior, branding, consumer-brand relationships, word-of-mouth communication, and brand love. He has presented papers at conferences, including Consumer-Brand Relationships 2013 (Boston, United States), Academy of Marketing Conference 2013 (Cardiff, United Kingdom), EMAC 2013 (Istanbul, Turkey), 3rd International Consumer Brand Relationship Colloquium

2013 (Winter Park, Florida, United States), and 7th International ACBM Conference 2013 (Hong Kong).

Dwight Merunka is Professor of Marketing at Aix-Marseille University and at KEDGE Business School in Marseille, France. He previously held positions at Paris Dauphine University and at the University of Toulouse. He holds an MBA from École des Hautes Etudes Commerciales (HEC Paris) and a PhD from Aix-Marseille University. He spent two years at the University of Texas at Austin as a visiting research scholar and has taught in many countries in Europe, Africa, and Asia. His work has appeared in *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *Journal of Business Ethics*, *Journal of Business Research*, *Academy of Marketing Science Review*, *Journal of Forecasting*, *International Marketing Review*, *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, *Journal of Brand Management*, and *Recherche et Applications en Marketing*. Since 2001, he has organized the La Londe Conference in Consumer Behavior and Communications, and his research interests cover branding, consumer behavior, cross-cultural issues, and research methods.

Jeffrey Peacock is Partner of BERA Brand Management (BBM), actively entrenching a global platform that bridges the gap between marketing and finance by linking the economic contribution of consumer relationships to marketing program innovation and brand performance measurement. As a two-decade practitioner in the brand strategy and consumer insights disciplines, Jeff enjoys a rich track record consulting with Fortune 200 firms seeking to variously identify opportunity and pursue growth in unfamiliar geographies, among new constituents, and through untapped channels. With the benefit of five continents of direct consumer contact in sectors such as automotive, consumer packaged goods, financial services, and media entertainment and technology. Jeff's expertise has been brought to bear in executive roles in both global marketing services and insights organizations including Omnicom, WPP, Synovate and Ipsos. He holds particular interest in the creative application of data integration, visualization and so-called 'thick data' and remains an avid investor in startups that commercialize consumer data to enrich culturally-relevant moments. Jeff lives with his family in New York City and holds a BA in Philosophy with a concentration in language and logic from Canada's University of Western Ontario.

Ad Pruyn is Professor of Marketing Communication and Consumer Psychology at the Faculty of Behavioural Sciences, University of Twente, Netherlands. Areas of research interest include time and consumer behavior, the dynamics of social influence, persuasive technology in

environmental and product design, and employee identification. More specifically, he has (co-)published a variety of studies about customers' reactions to waiting and delay, social dilemmas in advertising, architecture and health, corporate image and corporate identification, and effective selling. He obtained his PhD in Experimental and Social Psychology at the University of Groningen in 1986. He pursued his career at the Rotterdam School of Management, where he worked as Associate Professor of Consumer Behaviour for 15 years. Articles have appeared in *Academy of Management Journal, International Journal of Research in Marketing, Journal of Consumer Psychology, Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, Journal of Advanced Nursing, Journal of Organizational Behavior, Journal of Environmental Psychology, Psychology and Marketing, Journal of Business Research,* and others. He is coauthor of *Sociale Psychologie voor Managers* [Social Psychology for Managers] (2001). As guest professor/ visiting scholar he has worked at the Shanghai University of Technology (PRC), the University of California in Los Angeles (United States), Universitas Indonesia (Jakarta), ESADE Business School Barcelona, Warsaw School of Economics, and the University of Innsbruck.

Philipp Rauschnabel is Assistant Professor of Marketing at University of Michigan-Dearborn, United States. He received his PhD in Marketing from the University of Bamberg, Germany. His research focuses on brands and new media. He also consults regularly with, and presents research findings at, various companies on these topics.

Sanjit Roy is Assistant Professor of Marketing, The University of Western Australia, Perth, Australia. His research interests include services marketing and consumer-brand relationships. He has guest edited a special issue on Relationship Marketing in India for *International Journal of Bank Marketing*. He has also coedited *Marketing Cases for Emerging Markets*. He has published in a wide range of journals including *European Journal of Marketing, Journal of Services Marketing, Journal of Brand Management, Journal of Global Marketing, Journal of Strategic Marketing, Managing Service Quality, International Journal of Bank Marketing*, and *Marketing Management Journal*. He was a visiting research scholar at Bentley University, United States.

Subhadip Roy is a faculty member in the Marketing Area at the Indian Institute of Management Udaipur, India. He received his master's in Business Management with specialization in marketing from the University of Calcutta and a PhD in Marketing from the ICFAI University Dehradun. He was also a visiting scholar at the University of Toledo, Ohio, United States, during 2006–2007. He has published in a number of journals, including *Journal of Brand Strategy, Journal of Customer Behavior*

and *International Journal of Sports Marketing and Sponsorship*. Case studies have been published in Ivey Case Collection and Emerald Emerging Markets Case Studies.

S. Sreejesh holds a PhD in Management from IBS Hyderabad, India. His areas of interest are marketing research, brand management, and multivariate data analysis. His work has appeared in *Journal of Product and Brand Management, Southern Business Review, Journal of Global Business Issues, International Journal of Management Studies, Journal of International Business and Economy, Economics Management and Financial Markets, The Romanian Economic Journal, International Management Review, International Journal of Information Technology and Project Management, Indian Journal of Corporate Governance*, and so forth. He has also published books in the areas of business research methods and mixed method.

Antonio Santos is Vice-President (Distribution) of the Lafarge SA Marketing Innovation Department, Paris, France. His executive career has been with companies such as Coca-Cola, British American Tobacco, Delta Air Lines, and the American Chamber of Commerce, working in the field of marketing and sales. He has a master's in Marketing from the Fumec University and an MBA from Ibmec, Brazil. He has been successfully combining scientific research with practical application in the companies at which he has worked for the past 16 years.

Gustavo Quiroga Souki is Professor of Marketing and Strategy in the Master's Program in Business Administration, Centro Universitário Una in Belo Horizonte, Brazil. He holds a PhD in Business Administration from the Federal University of Lavras, Brazil. He has published over 30 articles in academic journals and made numerous presentations at conferences. He is Director of Souki – Research, Strategy and Marketing, where he conducts research and consulting for public and private organizations.

Ronald Voorn is a PhD candidate at the Utrecht Business School in combination with the University of Twente, where he obtained an MSc in Marketing Communications. He lectures at the Utrecht Business School, teaching marketing, marketing communications, and consumer behavior. Prior to his academic career, he was responsible for global marketing management at Heineken. His research interests include consumer brand relationship formation and brand personality, as well as the dissemination of branded content and virality in social networks.

Brand Relationships Rule

Marc Fetscherin and Tobias Heilmann

Consumer Brand Relationships (CBR) or Brand Relationships focus on how consumers think and specifically feel about brands. A sound basis for the CBR field was established by Max Blackston's (1993) book chapter "Beyond Brand Personality: Building Brand Relationships," followed by Fajer and Schouten's (1995) article on "Breakdown and Dissolution of Person-Brand Relationships" and Fournier's (1998) seminal article on "Consumers and Their Brands: Developing Relationship Theory in Consumer Research." Today, "consumer brand relationships research is multi-disciplinary, multi-dimensional and multi-conceptual with a varieties of theories, concepts, and constructs borrowed from different fields" (Fetscherin and Heinrich, 2014, p. 367). A few books (MacInnis *et al.*, 2009; Fournier *et al.*, 2012) and hundreds of articles have been published about brand relationships in scholarly journals and disciplines such as psychology, management, marketing, and communications. This book provides an up-to-date contribution from academics and practitioners from various disciplines. We thank and congratulate chapter authors for their significant contributions to the CBR field.

The book contains mainly a collection of papers presented at the *3rd International Consumer Brand Relationships Conference*, held at Rollins College, Winter Park, Florida, from September 26–28, 2013. The three-day conference featured about 30 presentations from 60 authors from many countries. Each chapter went through a series of revision rounds. The editors appreciate the time and effort the reviewers dedicated to this book as well as the support provided by Liz Barlow, Virginia Thorp, and Kiran Bolla from Palgrave Macmillan.

1 Brand relationship Taxonomies

The following section is an excerpt (with minor changes) of the original article published by Fetscherin and Heinrich (2014, pp. 367–370).[1] The

authors present two taxonomies related to the classification of consumer brand relationship research as follows.

1.1 Brand connection matrix

"Inspired by the hierarchy of effects model (Lavidge and Steiner, 1961), the relationship investment model (Rusbult, 1980), Keller's (2001) customer-based brand equity model, as well as drawing from theories of interpersonal attraction and social exchange, one can classify the different brand relationship concepts into relationships based on functional connections, emotional connections, or a combination of both. Functional connections are achieved when only functional needs are met. Solely emotional connections result if only the emotional needs of consumers are met. This leads to a 2×2 matrix consisting of four quadrants, as illustrated in Figure 0.1 below.

1.1.1 Functionally invested brand connections

High functional but low emotional connected consumers are '*functionally' invested* in brands (see Figure 0.1, Quadrant 1). Hence, they are satisfied with the brand in terms of performance (i.e., functional connection), but they shop around (i.e., emotionally not connected). They are not as price sensitive as '*uninvested*' consumers (as they appreciate the brand in a functional way), but if there is a better deal in terms of value proposition (price vs. functionality), they might switch. In this case, consumers see the brands as a '*colleague*'.

Emotional Connection
(Feeling/Affective)

		Low	High
Functional Connection (Thinking/Cognitive)	*High*	(1) functionally invested	(2) fully invested
	Low	(3) uninvested	(4) emotionally invested

Figure 0.1   Brand connection matrix

Source: Fetscherin and Heinrich (2014), p. 368.

1.1.2   *Fully invested brand connections*

Consumers with high functional and high emotional connections to brands are those who are '*fully invested*' in brands (see Figure 0.1, Quadrant 2). In this relationship, consumers '*love*' their brand and positive outcomes can occur such as high brand loyalty, an extreme positive world of mouth like brand evangelism, or turning a blind eye after service failures. Consumers with such relationship investments with brands are more loyal, switch less likely to other brands, are willing to pay a price premium or are less price sensitive and have higher brand forgiveness (Donavan *et al*., 2012). In this case, consumers see the brands as '*family*' and/or part of themselves.

1.1.3   *Uninvested brand connections*

Low functional and low emotional connected consumers are '*uninvested*' in brands, and consumers see brands as '*acquaintance*' (see Figure 0.1, Quadrant 3). They exhibit no brand loyalty and they are mostly price sensitive, and brands are subject to the competitive environment. Price premiums are hardly possible. Those brands have a high risk of brand switching from consumers, and brands need either to fulfill consumers' function or emotional needs to deepen their connection to consumers.

1.1.4   *Emotionally invested brand connections*

Consumers with a low functional but high emotional connections to brands are those who are '*emotionally invested*' in brands (see Figure 0.1, Quadrant 3). They like the brands mostly for affective reasons even if the brand does not perform compared to what consumers need or want, or the brand performs less well than competitor brands. In this case, the brand does not have all the functions or features consumers are looking for or need. In some instances, the consumer can forgive these functional shortcomings, or the consumer is willing to have less functionality. In this case, the emotional needs compensate for the functional limitations. However, this '*emotional invested*' relationship might last only for a while, and brands need to address these functional shortcomings. Consumers see the brands as a 'friend', but this friendship can end up as either a committed relationship or a 'family' (top right quadrant), or transit to a relationship with low emotional connection if frustrations of functional limitation occur over time, or the relationship will even be terminated or 'divorced' (Sussan *et al*., 2012).

As the hierarchy of effects model suggests, only when the cognitive (thinking) and affective (feeling) needs are fulfilled do consumers buy the product (conative or behavior). One major criticism of the Lavidge

and Steiner (1961) model is it assumes to be 'hierarchical' and that consumers move from one to the other stage" (Fetscherin and Heinrich, 2014, pp. 367–370). The framework proposed by Fetscherin and Henrich (2014b) addresses this gap as there is no sequence required.

1.2 Brand feeling matrix

"This model focuses on the emotional (affective/feeling) dimension of the previous framework.

Inspired by Storbacka, Strandvik, and Grönroos (1994), one way to classify the different concepts of consumer brand relationships is to group them into the strengths of relationships (weak vs. strong) and the consumers' feeling toward the brand (negative vs. positive). This yields another 2×2 matrix (Figure 0.2). For illustrative purposes each quadrant provides example(s) with an appropriate brand construct. Please note that both dimensions represent a continuum from weak to strong and from negative (to neutral) to positive. The lines are for illustrative purposes only.

In Quadrant 1, consumers have a weak or loose but yet positive feeling toward a brand. Concepts such as brand satisfaction (Bloemer and Kasper, 1995) fall into this quadrant. Also brand satisfaction precedes brand trust and brand loyalty. It does not necessary lead to brand commitment. Many consumers can be satisfied with a product or service brand, but do not become committed to this brand emotionally. Concepts discussed in Quadrant 2 are those in which consumers have a strong and positive emotional feeling for a brand. Concepts such as brand love (Batra *et al.*, 2012) or brand passion (Bauer *et al.*, 2007) fall

		Strengths of Brand Relationship	
		Weak	*Strong*
Feelings Towards Brand	*Positive*	(1) Brand Satisfaction	(2) Brand Love Brand Passion
	Negative	(3) Brand Avoidance	(4) Brand Hate Brand Divorce

Figure 0.2   Brand feeling matrix

Source: Fetscherin and Heinrich (2014), p. 370.

into this quadrant. In Quadrant 3 are concepts that deal with negative but weak feelings consumers have for brands. Few studies assess those negative feelings. One such study is by Lee, Motion, and Conroy (2009) about anticonsumption and brand avoidance. Concepts discussed in Quadrant 4 are those in which consumers have a strong and negative feeling toward brands. Similar to the concepts discussed in Quadrant 3, very few studies in quadrant 4 assess the negative feelings consumers have for brands. Aron and Muniz's (2002) presentation on brand hate websites is one example as well as, more recently, Krishnamurthy and Kucuk's (2009) antibranding paper or Sussan *et al.*'s (2012) brand divorce paper" (Fetscherin and Heinrich, 2014, pp. 367–370).

The following section summarizes the 11 chapters in this book and applies the previously presented taxonomies to each one.

2 Part I: Love and Brand Relationships

Part I discusses the antecedents and consequences of brand love, including the relationships between brand trust and brand love, brand identification and brand love, brand love and brand commitment, brand love and word of mouth, brand defense, brand advocacy, and brand love life cycle or brand love over time.

The first chapter, by Noël Albert and Dwight Merunka, discusses the role of brand love in consumer brand relationships. The authors propose and test a model of brand love that includes both its antecedents and its consequences. The model is rooted in a causal approach and features established consumer brand relationship constructs (i.e., brand identification, brand trust, and brand commitment). They test the conceptual model and associated hypotheses with a sample of 1,505 consumers. Data were analyzed through partial least squares (PLS) structural equation modeling. The results demonstrate strong relationships between the two antecedents (brand trust and brand identification) and brand love, and between brand love and its consequences (brand commitment, positive word of mouth, and price premium). Through the causal approach and the proposed nomological model, the authors discriminate between brand love and three important relational constructs (brand trust, brand identification, and brand commitment) and establish the relationships among the constructs. Based on prior research, they compare the predictive ability of the different relational constructs and demonstrate the relevance of brand love for understanding consumer brand relationships. This chapter falls into Quadrant 2 in Figure 0.1 and Quadrant 2 in Figure 0.2.

Chapter 2, entitled "Will You Defend Your Loved Brand?" by Mansoor Javed, Sanjit Roy, and Bano Mansoor, investigates the different types of future word-of-mouth (WOM) behavioral intentions toward a loved brand in the case of negative past WOM. The authors develop a scale for brand defense as the strongest word-of-mouth outcome of brand love. Critical incident technique is used to develop the brand defense scale. An online survey was conducted among 128 UK residents. The scale suggests that brand love raises consumer brand trust and causes consumers to distrust the negative information, leading to a defensive behavior toward their loved brands. Brand love with its positive WOM outcomes followed by advocacy and brand defense can sideline the destructive impact of negative WOM. Therefore, managers, by employing adequate strategies to foster brand love, can reverse the advice patterns in the market. Looking at the two taxonomies presented previously, this chapter falls into Quadrants 2 or 4 in Figure 0.1 and Quadrant 2 in Figure 0.2.

Chapter 3, by Gachoucha Kretz, "Evolution of Luxury Brand Love Intensity Over Time," explores the love concept for luxury products and brands, and investigates how product love and brand love evolve over time. The study consists of 22 semistructured in-depth interviews in which the author explores the relationship between brand and product irreplaceability, commercial love anchors, and brand and product love longitudinal articulation. Like favorite possessions, brands can become irreplaceable for consumers. Both product/possession and brand irreplaceability underlie product and brand love. However, depending on the stage of the consumer brand relationship over time, brands will supersede products. The author argues that at the identification stage, iconic possessions are key. At the contamination stage, the brand heritage and universe are more prevalent in the consumer brand relationship, while at the singularization stage, products or possessions are the most important because they have gained personal meaning for consumers. This chapter falls into Quadrants 1 or 2 in Figure 0.1 and Quadrants 1 or 2 in Figure 0.2.

3   Part II: Personality and Social Groups and Brand Relationships

Part II of the book discusses the role that personality and social groups have in brand relationships, including how personality and interpersonal relationships influence brand relationships as well as brand relationships for different consumer segments such as children and fans of sports brands.

Chapter 4, by Ronald Voorn, Sabrina Hegner, and Ad Pruyn, discusses "Product Type and Personality in Brand Relationships," including the influence of personality and product type and their interaction effects on brand love. Results of an online survey of 410 students between ages 18 and 26 in the Netherlands were analyzed with multiple regressions. The study finds that a higher score on openness significantly predicts higher brand love, and that mostly transformational products (e.g., candy bars, beer, fashion, and cars) are able to generate a higher brand love score compared with informational products (e.g., aspirin, detergents, insurance, and electrical tools). High involvement products did not result in higher overall brand love scores compared with low involvement products. The study also finds significant interaction effects for all five personality traits on several brand love dimensions. The involvement with a product category interacts significantly with extraversion and conscientiousness, whereas the motivational type to which a product belongs shows strong interactions with openness in particular, but also extraversion, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and agreeableness. Brand love can lead to considerable benefits for companies. In-depth knowledge of the personality of the target groups involved can aid marketers in designing effective brand support programs to generate brand love. This chapter falls into Quadrants 4 and 2 in Figure 0.1 and Quadrant 2 in Figure 0.2.

Chapter 5, "The Personality of Brand Lovers," by Philipp Rauschnabel, Aaron Ahuvia, Björn Ivens, and Alexander Leischnig, explores the psychological mechanisms that lead to brand love. The authors focus on the Big Five theory of human personality and investigate whether, how, and why personality traits lead to brand love. They use personality theory to shed light on the broader question of how consumer brand relationships such as brand love interact with interpersonal relationships. This chapter reports on a survey that measured consumer brand love toward favorite fashion brands. The data were analyzed using structural equation modeling, and results showed that extraversion and neuroticism are positively related to brand love. People who are single are higher in brand love than people in committed romantic interpersonal relationships, suggesting that people may use brand love to compensate for a lack of interpersonal love. The researchers suggest that brand relationships are used to compensate for deficient of interpersonal relationships. The fact that brand love was positively related to neuroticism (which often interferes with interpersonal relationships) and that brand love was stronger among singles than among those who had a romantic relationship, both inferred that brand love may compensate for a lack of

interpersonal love. However, the fact that brand love was also positively related to extraversion, a personality trait of people who like forming interpersonal relationships, indicates that in some cases brand love may be motivated by a general propensity to form relationships, whether interpersonal or brand. This chapter falls into Quadrant 2 in Figure 0.1 and Quadrant 2 in Figure 0.2.

Valérie Hémar-Nicolas, Mathilde Gollety, Coralie Damay, and Pascale Ezan discuss in Chapter 6 the "Role of Brands When Children Share Snacks." While previous studies on children's consumer behavior have usually demonstrated the social role clothing brands play, the authors of this chapter examine how children choose foods during snack time. The study is based on 64 children between 6 and 12 years old who participated in one of ten organized snack times (five with unbranded products and five with branded products). Children were observed and then interviewed in focus groups. The results show that children tend to select products according to their taste preferences, making individual decisions that are not influenced by their peers. Food brands, even those consumed within a peer group, are not used by children to convey their identities and enhance social integration or acceptance. Nevertheless, brands offer a common language children can use to designate products. This chapter contributes to identifying the role food brands play in children's lives and group behavior. The results are helpful for marketing and branding food to children, suggesting that taste and actual brand performance are more important than the brand itself for children. This chapter falls into Quadrant 1 in Figure 0.1 and Quadrant 1 or 2 in Figure 0.2.

Chapter 7, "Brand Relationships with Hockey Teams," by Samil A. Aledin, finds that consumer relationships with sports (team) brands are underexplored in the current literature. In examining fans relationships with hockey teams, this qualitative study consists of ten in-depth interviews in which male participants between 29 and 55 years of age were asked to tell their 'life story' with their favorite hockey team. The interpretation was inspired by the constructs of Fournier's (1998) and Kim and Trail's (2011) BRQ models. High levels of brand commitment and avoidance are characteristic of consumers' brand relationship with hockey teams. If the brand relationship is not 'inherited' from a family member, it is generally chosen at an early stage of a person's life and seldom occurs randomly. However, once the team is chosen, it is often for life, just as are teams to avoid, distain, and even hate. The chapter discusses special characteristics of consumer brand relationships with sports teams, especially the high level of brand commitment and the importance of social interaction

with fellow and rival supporters. This chapter falls into Quadrant 2 in Figure 0.1 and between Quadrants 2 and 4 in Figure 0.2.

4   Part III: Measuring and Managing Brand Relationships

Part III of the book first outlines a new framework of consumer brand relationships and presents four primary brand relationships stages: establishment, augmentation, maintenance, and outcome. The next chapter discusses business-to-business brand relationships, while the last two chapters explore the development and application of the Brand Equity Relationship Assessment (BERA) platform. BERA delivers a real-time assessment of over 4,000 brands across 200 categories via the BERA platform.

The first chapter in Part III, Chapter 8, looks at "A New Consumer Brand Relationships Framework," by Sreejesh S. and Subhadip Roy. Even though the concept of CBR is well researched, there is considerable criticism against the existing conceptualizations of CBR. This chapter proposes a new conceptualization and presents a theoretical model of the antecedents and consequences of brand relationships. A grounded theory approach explores the dimensions of CBRs and the related constructs based on data from 20 users of major brands, a series of in-depth interviews, documentary evidence, follow-up participant checks and collaborative analysis. Over 68 CBR-related concepts were coded, seven major categories of CBR were identified, and a theoretical model to describe the process of CBRs was developed. Four CBR stages were identified with their respective contexts as (a) relationship establishment (cognitive context); (b) relationship augmentation (affective context); (c) relationship maintenance (conative context); and (d) relationship outcome (action or behavioral context). Subcategories of each stage of the model were identified, and the relationships illustrated. The chapter contributes to branding theory by presenting a new CBR conceptual model. This chapter covers Quadrants 1 and 2 in Figure 0.1 and Quadrant 1 and 2 in Figure 0.2.

Chapter 9, "Brand Relationships in the Commodity Market," by Antônio Santos, Cid Gonçalves Filho, Euler Brandão, and Gustavo Souki, proposes and tests a hypothetical model to explore and explain brand relationships in the commodity market. The authors interview three focus groups and test the proposed model by applying a sample of 385 respondents. Emotional brand image was the factor that had the highest impact on brand equity. The results show that brand experience significantly impacts brand image. The chapter contributes to

a better understanding of the process of evaluating and managing brands in commodity markets. The company, which runs a point of sales (PoS) promotional strategy and motivates consumers to try the product, also conducted an emotional advertising campaign on television. Both the promotional strategy and the emotional advertising affected sales significantly, and this brand became the market leader in the region with a premium price tag. The results confirm that it is possible to differentiate commodity products through branding and establish emotional bonds between consumers and brands. This chapter falls between Quadrants 1 and 2 in Figure 0.1 and between Quadrants 1 and 2 in Figure 0.2.

Chapter 10, by Ryan Barker and Jeffrey Peacock, "Discovering and Sustaining the Consumer Brand-Bond," discusses the development of the BERA platform. BERA uses real-time, cloud-based technologies and financial and marketing information to assess the strengths of the consumer's emotional bonds to brands. The chapter first presents the five stages of "brand love": (1) new, (2) dating, (3) love, (4) boredom, and (5) divorce. Knowing a brand's stage of relationship development provides concrete clues to identifying the right tactics, the right timing for those tactics, and the right resource allocation necessary to support the seeding and the maintenance of brand love. The chapter discusses the four components of BERA's brand love measure: cognizance, regard, uniqueness, and meaningfulness, integrating both leading and lagging indicators. The lagging indicators (brand cognizance and brand regard) make up a consumer's short-term relationship with a brand (called 'today'), while the leading indicators (brand uniqueness and brand meaningfulness) define brands' future growth or potential (called 'tomorrow'). The chapter explores the economics of brand love and argues that the emotional connection is the most powerful predictor of brand profitability over time. Finally, the authors discuss how to manage the marketing mix to build and sustain brand love. This chapter falls into Quadrants 2 and 4 in Figure 0.1 and covers all the Quadrants in Figure 0.2.

Chapter 10 provides the concept and structure behind the BERA platform. In the last chapter of this book, Chapter 11, Ryan Barker and Jeffrey Peacock present the development of the brand love scale and its practical applications. Entitled "Measuring and Managing Brand Love: The BERA Platform," the chapter discusses the various steps taken to develop BERA's brand love scale, from item generation to scale purification by mean of exploratory factor analysis to scale validation. The authors apply the scale to 4,000 brands from 200 product categories. Every week, BERA conducts an online survey in the United States with a

sample of 20,000 respondents subject to quotas that conform to census data from the country in which the data are gathered. Each respondent rates specific brands in multiple categories (a total of 200 categories), each populated with a mix of high- and low-performing brands, representing 75 percent of the category's total market share. BERA provides three key informational scores for each brand: (1) brand experience, engagement, and preference; (2) awareness and performance of the 5P marketing levers; and, (3) the brand bond – or brand love. BERA also calculates four key ratios specifically for marketing and financial officers to use, such as the 'Brand Balance Ratio', the 'Talk and Listen Ratio', the 'Pricing Power Ratio', and the 'Customer Quality Composition'. Finally, the chapter gives multiple examples of BERA's application to various US companies. This chapter falls between Quadrants 1 and 2 in Figure 0.1 and covers all Quadrants in Figure 0.2.

Note

1. Editor Marc Fetscherin, in collaboration with Dr. Daniel Heinrich, outlined in their special issue editorial article in the *Journal of Brand Management* (JBM) these two taxonomies related to brand relationships. Like this book, the special issue in JBM included papers presented at the 3rd International Consumer Brand Relationships Conference. Permission to reprint has been granted by the publisher.

References

Aron, D. and Muñiz, A.M. (2002) *Firing Back: Consumer Created Brand Hate Sites*, 105th Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association.

Batra, R., Ahuvia, A., and Bagozzi, R. (2012) "Brand Love" *Journal of Marketing*, 76(2): 1–16.

Bauer, H., Heinrich, D., and Martin, I. (2007) *How to Create High Emotional Consumer Brand Relationships? The Causalities of Brand Passion*. In: M. Thyne, K. Deans and J. Gnoth (eds) Proceedings of the Australia and New Zealand Marketing Academy Conference. Dunedin, pp. 2189–2198.

Blackston, M. (1993) *Beyond Brand Personality: Building Brand Relationships*. In: A.D. Aaker, A.L. Biel and A. Biel (eds) *Brand Equity & Advertising: Advertising's Role in Building Strong Brands*. Hillsdale, NJ, pp. 113–124.

Bloemer, J. and Kasper, H. (1995) "The Complex Relationship between Consumer Satisfaction and Brand Loyalty" *Journal of Economic Psychology*, 16(2): 311–329.

Donovan, L., Priester, J., MacInnis, D., and Park, W. (2012) *Brand Forgiveness: How Close Brand Relationships Influence Forgiveness*. In: S. Fournier, M. Breazeale and M. Fetscherin (eds) *Consumer Brand Relationships: Theory and Practice*, pp. 184–203.

Fajer, M. and Schouten, J. (1995) *Breakdown and Dissolution of Person-Brand Relationships*. In: F.R. Kardes and M. Sujan (eds) NA – Advances in Consumer

Research Volume 22. Provo, UT: Association for Consumer Research, pp. 663–667.

Fetscherin, M., and Heinrich, D. (2014) "Consumer Brand Relationships: A Research Landscape" *Journal of Brand Management*, 21(5): 366–371.

Fournier, S. (1998) "Consumers and Their Brands: Developing Relationship Theory in Consumer Research" *Journal of Consumer Research*, 24(4): 343–373.

Fournier, S., Breazeale, M., and Fetscherin, M. (2012) *Consumer Brand Relationships: Theory and Practice*. New York: Routledge, p. 456.

Keller, K. L. (2001) *Building Customer-Based Brand Equity: A Blueprint for Creating Strong Brands* (pp. 68–72). Marketing Science Institute.

Kim, Y. K. and Trail, G. (2011) "A Conceptual Framework for Understanding Relationship Between Sport Consumers and Sport Organizations: A Relationship Quality Approach" *Journal of Sport Management*, 25(1): 57–69.

Krishnamurthy, S. and Kucuk, S.U. (2009) "Antibranding on the Internet" *Journal of Business Research*, 62(11): 1119–1126.

Lavidge, R. and Steiner, G. (1961) "A Model for Predictive Measurements of Advertising Effectiveness" *Journal of Marketing*, 25(4): 59–62.

Lee, M., Motion, J., and Conroy, D. (2009) "Anticonsumption and Brand Avoidance" *Journal of Business Research*, 62(2): 169–180.

MacInnis, D., Park, W., and Priester, J. (2009) *Handbook of Brand Relationships*. New York: M.E. Sharpe, pp. 424.

Rusbult, C. E. (1980) "Commitment and Satisfaction in Romantic Associations: A Test of the Investment Model" *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 16(2): 172–196.

Storbacka, K., Strandvik, T., and Grönroos, C. (1994) "Managing Customer Relationships for Profit: The Dynamics of Relationship Quality" *International Journal of Service Industry Management*, 5(5): 21–38.

Sussan, F., Hall, F., and Meamber, L. (2012) "Introspecting the Spiritual Nature of a Brand Divorce" *Journal of Business Research*, 65(4): 520–526.

Part I
Love and Brand Relationships

1
Role of Brand Love in Consumer Brand Relationships

Noël Albert and Dwight Merunka

1 Introduction

Research into consumer brand relationships has proposed and tested various relational concepts, including brand trust (Hess, 1995), brand commitment (Fullerton, 2005) and brand identification (Escalas and Bettman, 2003). The brand relationship paradigm has been successful because of its relevance for understanding brand loyalty, conceptualized as long-lasting relationships with the brand that rely on deep, underlying feelings toward it (Fournier, 1998). More recent studies also demonstrate that consumers can experience a feeling of love for their brand (Albert *et al.*, 2008a; Batra *et al.*, 2012). Drawing on seminal work by Shimp and Madden (1988) and Ahuvia (1993), studies of brand love tend to focus on its conceptualization (Ahuvia, 1993) and measurement (Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006). But even as brand love has emerged as an important consumer brand relationship construct, we still know little about what generates a love relationship (e.g., trust) and what its behavioral consequences may be (e.g., repeat purchase). For example, brand love may be influenced by product or brand characteristics (e.g., hedonic product, brand quality) and may influence loyalty toward the brand (Batra *et al.*, 2012; Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006). Yet few studies have conceptualized or explored how established constructs from the consumer brand relationship paradigm explain brand love (e.g., commitment, trust, identification). Because love is essentially a relational construct, it logically should be linked to other relational constructs. We therefore investigate how brand love might be explained by other consumer brand relationship (CBR) constructs and its position in a nomological framework.

Specifically, we consider two key research questions: is brand love distinguishable from other well-known relational constructs? How does

brand love relate to these constructs? By addressing these questions, our research offers several contributions. We link love for the first time to two well-established relational constructs (trust and commitment) and confirm its link to brand identification. Love is conceptually similar to other relational constructs, which makes it important in establishing the nomological relationships of brand love with other established constructs, as well as in confirming that brand love is a distinguishable facet of CBR (i.e., discriminant validity). Finally, this study responds to Palmatier *et al.'s* (2006) concern about the lack of comparisons between the effects of relational constructs by comparing the impact of brand love and brand commitment (both mediator variables in our model) on willingness to pay a price premium and positive word of mouth (WOM) (two dependent variables). Overall, then, this research establishes the theoretical and managerial importance of the concept of love for a brand.

2 Theoretical framework

2.1 Brand love: conceptualization, antecedents, and outputs

Since it was introduced by Shimp and Madden (1988), brand love has been a topic of great interest for brand managers. Initially, researchers adapted the interpersonal love theory (Sternberg 1986) to consumption contexts, such that brand love appeared composed of three dimensions: passion, intimacy, and commitment (e.g., Lastovicka and Sirianni, 2011; Shimp and Madden, 1988). The self-inclusion theory of love (Aron and Aron, 1986) also has been adapted to marketing (Ahuvia, 1993). This theory posits that people need to become part of another to feel loved. Therefore, Ahuvia (1993) proposes that when a brand reaches both a high real and desired level of integration with the consumer's sense of self, that consumer feels love for the brand.

Another stream of research has investigated brand love without referring to an interpersonal theory of love. Carroll and Ahuvia (2006) do not refer explicitly to interpersonal love, and propose instead that brand love consists of passion, attachment, positive evaluations of the brand, positive emotions in response to the brand, and declarations of love for the brand. However, their measurement of brand love is unidimensional and may fail to catch the complexity of love, a construct usually presented as multidimensional (Albert *et al.*, 2008b; Batra *et al.*, 2012). Investigating CBR, Fournier (1998) identifies six possible relationships: love and passion, self-connection, commitment, interdependence, intimacy, and brand partner quality. The brand love relationship is deep and

enduring (beyond simple affect), such that the loved brand is considered irreplaceable. The consumer suffers when deprived of the brand for any extended period of time. Brand love also leads to biased, positive perceptions of the brand. Albert *et al.* (2008b) identify six first-order dimensions of brand love (idealization, intimacy, pleasure, dream, memories, unicity) that constitute two second-order dimensions (passion and affection). Passion and affection also appear as critical dimensions of interpersonal love (Baumeister and Bratslavsky, 1999). Finally, Batra *et al.* (2012) establish that consumers' love for a brand consists of seven dimensions: perceived functional quality, self-related cognitions, positive affect, negative affect, satisfaction, attitude strength, and loyalty.

A growing literature on brand love has concentrated on its conceptualization rather than its antecedents and consequences, however. Some studies propose several antecedents of brand love, such as status as a hedonic brand (i.e., brands for which fun, pleasure, or enjoyment are primary benefits) or a self-expressive brand (i.e., the brand enhances the social self or reflects the inner self; Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006), brand quality (Batra *et al.*, 2012), and brand identification (Bergkvist *et al.*, 2010). Other research offers a few consequences, including influences on brand loyalty (Batra *et al.*, 2012; Bergkvist *et al.*, 2010; Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006) or active participation in a brand community (Bergkvist *et al.*, 2010).

Because only these few antecedents and consequences have been associated with brand love, we still lack a good understanding of how it relates to CBR constructs in a nomological framework. Brand love pertains to the relational paradigm (Fournier, 1998); therefore, it should connect with other relational constructs. However, the distinction between other, well-known relational constructs and brand love, as well as brand love's place in the relevant nomological framework, is yet to be established. In turn, we model brand love within a nomological framework that includes several well-established CBR constructs (brand trust, commitment, and identification) and establish causal relationships between the constructs.

2.2   Relational concepts

Three well-known CBR constructs likely associate with brand love. We highlight their links as well as their differences.

2.2.1   Brand identification

Consumers choose products and brands not only for their utilitarian values but also for their symbolic benefits. Brands possess deep meaning (MacCraken, 1989) and serve to build consumers' self-concept or

identities. Consumers use brands to construct their selves, present themselves to others, or achieve their identity goals (Escalas and Bettman, 2003). Consumers identify with brands to the "degree to which the brand delivers on important identity concerns, tasks, or themes, thereby expressing a significant aspect of the self" (Fournier, 1998, p. 364). Furthermore, brands have the ability to reflect important facets of the consumer's identity and express significant aspects of the self (Fournier, 1998). Studies on brand identification thus identify two sources of congruency between the consumer and the brand: one that stems from the brand's image, values, or personality, referred to as "brand identification" (Escalas *et al.*, 2003; Fournier, 1998), and another that is external to the brand and is based instead on the typical consumer of the brand (Escalas and Bettman, 2003). Because this second source refers to the focal consumer's identification with typical consumers of the brand, it is termed 'customer identification.' Therefore, overall brand identification comprises both brand identification and customer identification.

2.2.2   Brand trust

A key construct in relational marketing (e.g., Morgan and Hunt, 1994), brand trust offers an important component of successful marketing relationships (Garbarino and Johnson, 1999). In a consumer brand relationship context, trust reflects assumptions about reliability, honesty, and altruism that consumers attribute to brands (Hess, 1995). This construct encompasses both cognitive and affective elements (Delgado-Ballester *et al.*, 2003). The cognitive dimension indicates a perception that the brand will meet expectations and respect its obligations (Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001). The affective dimension, in contrast, is based on perceptions of honesty and altruism (Delgado-Ballester *et al.*, 2003).

2.2.3   Brand commitment

Brand commitment is a psychological disposition that implies a positive attitude toward the brand and a willingness to maintain a valued relationship with it (Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001; Evanschitzky *et al.*, 2006). Commitment also consists of two components: affective and continuance. Continuance commitment is "rooted in economic and psychological switching costs and scarcity of alternatives" (Fullerton, 2005, p. 101), such that it results from the consumer's perception that no other brands are of interest or that switching costs are too high (Evanschitzky *et al.*, 2006; Fullerton, 2005). Affective brand commitment is more emotional, with "its roots in identification, shared values, attachment and trust" (Fullerton, 2005, p. 100). This emotional and

affective connection influences consumer behavior (retention, brand repurchase, positive WOM). Furthermore, commitment may lead to brand loyalty, which is the main objective of brand managers, because it provides in turn advantages such as greater resistance to competitors' marketing actions, positive word-of-mouth effects, or reduced marketing costs (Aaker, 1991; Dick and Basu, 1994).

2.2.4   Contrasts

The conceptual differences between love and trust are explicit: love is a feeling the consumer develops toward the brand, whereas trust is rooted in the consumer's expectations about the brand's honesty, altruism, and reliability. Distinctions between love and identification or commitment are subtler, though. They are all relational constructs and similar in nature. Moreover, commitment has an emotional component (Fullerton, 2005) with characteristics that are similar to brand love. In terms of identification, psychologists (Aron and Aron, 1986) and marketers (Ahuvia, 1993) both assert that love depends on integration with the self. This integration phenomenon appears in brand identification; thus, perhaps love and identification are the same concept.

   Yet we argue that love should be distinguished from commitment and identification. Commitment represents the consumer's willingness to maintain a relationship with the brand (Fullerton, 2005), while love is an intense feeling the consumer has toward the brand (Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006). Moreover, cognitive commitment may result from a lack of alternatives (Fullerton, 2005). That is, commitment is a result of a comparison of existing alternatives in the marketplace, which rarely occurs with brand love. Furthermore, some components of brand love, such as bringing to mind important events or persons (Albert *et al.*, 2008b), imply a special connection between the consumer and the brand, a process that cannot result from a cognitive comparison of different brands. Finally, attachment to the brand is an antecedent of a willingness to maintain a relationship with it (Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001; Park *et al.*, 2010). We thus posit that love is an antecedent of brand commitment.

   In addition, identification is a cognitive process, whereas love has both cognitive (idealization) and emotional (affective proximity) components (Albert *et al.*, 2008b). Consumers probably identify with more brands than they love. Ahuvia (1993) indicates that integration may not be sufficient to prompt a sense of love for a brand; the desire for integration also must be taken into account. Identification and love therefore differ. Overall, consumers identify with and are committed to a large range of brands, whereas love applies to a far more limited number of brands.

2.3 Model

The model we propose (1) considers brand love as a multidimensional construct, (2) integrates both causes and consequences of brand love, and (3) includes well-established constructs from CBR literature (brand trust, brand commitment, and brand identification). Brand identification and trust are determinants of brand love; both empirically determine brand affect. Brand commitment, a consequence of brand affect (Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006; Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001), also appears as a consequence of brand love. The behavioral outcomes of both brand love and brand commitment include positive word-of-mouth effects and acceptance of a price increase. These consequences reflect a managerial perspective on brand love.

A consumer who identifies with a brand develops positive feelings toward it (Harrison-Walker, 2001). Ahuvia (1993) also notes that an object or brand must be perceived as part of the consumer to be loved, such that loved objects express deeply held values and highlight the consumer's identification with the brand. Therefore,

H1: Brand identification has a positive influence on brand love.

Algesheimer *et al.* (2005) demonstrate that identification with a brand community leads to greater brand commitment. In an organizational context, Keh and Xie (2009) show that a company with high customer identification benefits from customer loyalty. We adopt these findings in our branding context and propose:

H2: Brand identification has a positive influence on brand commitment.

Although brand love has not previously been associated with brand trust, trust frequently appears to describe a love feeling between partners (Fehr, 1988). Furthermore, trust is empirically associated with love and intimacy (Larzelere and Huston, 1980). It therefore follows that

H3: Brand trust has a positive influence on brand love.

Trust is usually considered an important antecedent of commitment in relational marketing studies (Garbarino and Johnson, 1999; Morgan and Hunt, 1994). In consumer marketing, trust influences both

attitudinal loyalty and purchase loyalty (Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001). Therefore,

H4: Brand trust has a positive influence on brand commitment.

Brand commitment and brand love have not been previously associated in marketing studies, but with these two distinct constructs, we posit that brand love influences brand commitment. From a conceptual standpoint, a consumer who feels intense affect for a brand should prefer to maintain the relationship (commitment). In a consumption context, commitment toward the brand should reflect some level of affect. Dick and Basu (1994) also indicate that consumers' emotional state in relation to a brand influences their loyalty. Several studies demonstrate an influence of consumer affect on loyalty too (Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006; Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001). Because commitment is the attitudinal component of brand loyalty (Oliver, 1999), we propose

H5: Brand love has a positive influence on brand commitment.

Affective loyalty goes even further to influence behaviors such as positive WOM or willingness to continue purchasing the brand even after a price increase (Aaker, 1991). Consumers are important spokespersons for brands they love (Dick and Basu, 2004; Fullerton, 2005; Harrison-Walker, 2001). Consumers who feel love for a brand are more likely to talk about it, through a process of identity construction (Batra *et al.*, 2012), and the influence of brand love on positive WOM has been demonstrated (Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006). We replicate these findings by predicting that

H6: Brand love has a positive influence on positive word-of-mouth.

The more the consumer values a brand, the more he or she should accept a price increase (Aaker, 1991), because the loss of a loved brand would be costly, in the form of distress and anxiety (Ahuvia, 1993; Thomson *et al.*, 2005). A loved brand also is valued and perceived as unique (Albert *et al.*, 2008a). Therefore, a consumer should accept a price increase, because there are no other alternatives, and he or she wants to continue to benefit from the positive emotions linked to the loved brand. Therefore,

H7: Brand love has a positive influence on willingness to pay a price premium.

Commitment also implies that the consumer will be willing to pay a price premium for the valued brand (Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001; Keller, 1993). It has been well established that attitudinal loyalty influences consumer advocacy (Fullerton, 2005; Harrison-Walker, 2001) and that consumers committed to a brand engage in positive word-of-mouth activities (Dick and Basu, 1994). Therefore,

> *H8:* Brand commitment has a positive influence on positive word of mouth.
>
> *H9:* Brand commitment has a positive influence on willingness to pay a price premium.

In our model, brand love and brand commitment both represent mediating variables between the two antecedents (trust and identification) and the two consequences (willingness to a price premium and WOM). Palmatier *et al.* (2006, p. 139) complain that "empirical comparisons of the differential effects of these relational mediators are noticeably absent" and explicitly ask for comparisons of relational constructs. In response, we compare the impact of brand love and brand commitment on two outputs. This contribution is important because brand love and brand commitment both imply a strong connection between the brand and the consumer. Love is an intense feeling from the consumer toward the brand, while commitment is the consumer's promise to maintain the relationship with the brand.

Whereas brand love is a free choice by the consumer, brand commitment is not necessarily, especially in its cognitive form, which can arise from a scarcity of alternatives (Fullerton, 2005; Evanschitzky *et al.,* 2006). As a free choice, brand love is more affectively intense than commitment, so we expect that

> *H10:* Brand love has a greater impact on positive word of mouth than brand commitment.
>
> *H11:* Brand love has a greater impact on willingness to pay a price premium than brand commitment.

3   Methods

3.1   Measures

We use existing scales to measure all constructs. For brand love, we used a modified version of the scale by Albert *et al.* (2008b). From

Table 1.1   Scale reliability

Scale	Reliability (Joreskog's Rhô)
Brand Identification	.928
Brand Trust	.921
Brand Commitment	.858
Brand Love	.941
Willingness to Pay a Price Premium	.925
Positive Word-of-mouth Intentions	.872

Table 1.2   Discriminant validity

	Brand Identification	Brand Trust	Brand Love	Brand Commitment	Convergent Validity
Brand Identification		.276	.597	.411	.616
Brand Trust	.276		.468	.278	.593
Brand Love	.597	.468		.509	.724
Brand Commitment	.411	.278	.509		.633

a conceptual standpoint, this multidimensional scale captures the complexity of the feeling of brand love. It includes six first-order dimensions (idealization, intimacy, dream, pleasure, memories, and unicity) and two second-order components (passion and affection). The brand trust scale comes from Gurviez and Korchia (2002) and Wing and Angie (2006), and includes three dimensions (credibility, integrity, and goodwill), similar to the conceptualization suggested by Hess (1995). The measure of brand identification, derived from Escalas and Bettman (2003), consists of two dimensions: brand identification and customer identification. The brand commitment scale (Fullerton 2005) also is composed of two dimensions: affective and continuance brand commitment. Finally, positive WOM and willingness to pay a price premium were measured using one-dimensional scales derived from Cristau (2006). We summarize the psychometric properties of the scales in Tables 1.1 and 1.2. The discriminant validity has been tested by comparing the information shared by the constructs (square of the correlation) and the information they share with their measure (convergent validity). Results show that the scale's discriminant validity is established.

3.2   Participants and procedure

Through item randomization, we produced two versions of the questionnaire. An online panel company collected data in France, from 1,505 research participants (58.5% women, mean age 36 years). Consumers indicated their favorite brand (i.e., brand to which they are strongly attached), its product category, and how well the scale items describe their relationship with this brand.

To estimate the model parameters, we used partial least squares (PLS) structural equation modeling (Tenenhaus *et al.*, 2005). The PLS approach can effectively test the strength of relationships between latent variables, and it does not require a multinormal distribution.[1]

4   Results

To better understand how brand love relates to trust, identification, and commitment, we analyze the relationship between brand love and the other constructs at two levels: the construct (i.e., brand trust) and the dimensional (i.e., reliability, honesty, altruism for brand trust) levels. The dimensions are either affective or cognitive; therefore, this decomposition should reveal more clearly just what influences brand love.

4.1   Antecedents of brand love

Overall brand identification and brand trust explain 71.3 percent of brand love and have similar influences (path coefficients = .50 and .46, respectively), in support of H1 and H2. Two of the three brand trust dimensions influence love for the brand: reliability (β = .197) and honesty (β = .159). In line with Carroll and Ahuvia's (2006) results, overall brand identification also has a strong influence on brand love. Brand identification influences brand love more (β = .520) than customer identification does (β = .159).

4.2   Antecedents of brand commitment

Brand identification, brand trust, and brand love together explain 80.9 percent of brand commitment (R^2 bootstrap = .809), in support of H3, H4, and H5, respectively. That is, brand commitment is largely explained by brand love (β = .60), brand trust (β = .18), and brand identification (β = .20), which have less influence despite the common belief that they are the main constructs of strong consumer brand relationships. From a conceptual standpoint, these results confirm the importance of affect in CBR and reveal the importance of a love feeling for long-term relationships. Brand love has the most influence on both affective (β = .53) and continuance (β = .48) brand commitment.

4.3 Consequences of brand love and brand commitment

Brand love and brand commitment both have significant influences on positive WOM (R^2 bootstrap = .50), in support of H6 and H8. We also find support for H10, because the influence of brand love on positive WOM (β = .625) is greater than that of brand commitment (β = .372), which emphasizes the importance of affect for WOM activities. This finding confirms the influence of brand love on positive WOM (Batra *et al.*, 2012; Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006), although the influence in our study seems greater than that established in prior research. Finally, both affective (β = .129) and continuance (β = .167) brand commitment have less influence on positive WOM than brand love does (β = .473).

Brand love and brand commitment explain 37 percent of the willingness to pay a price premium, in support of H7 and H9. The influence of brand commitment on the consumer's willingness to pay a premium (β = .46) is greater than the effect of brand love (β = .37) however, so we must reject H11. These results are consistent with Thomson *et al.*'s (2005) findings and indicate that consumers' brand love influences their willingness to continue to buy the brand, even after price increases. Brand love exerts an influence on willingness to pay that is similar to the influence of affective brand commitment. Continuance brand commitment has a lesser impact on the consumer's acceptance of a price premium. That is, willingness to pay a price premium is mostly motivated by affective reasons. Before increasing their brand's price, practitioners should encourage consumers to develop affect-based relationships with the brand. Technical superiority will not be sufficient to retain consumers. The structural relationships among the constructs appear in Figure 1.1.

5   Discussion and conclusion

Research on brand love remains in its infancy, offering limited insights into the antecedents and consequences of this construct. By specifying
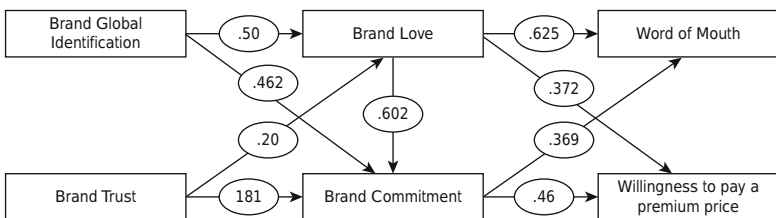
Figure 1.1   Research results

the role and place of brand love in a nomological framework, this study confirms the importance of a consumer's love for a brand, both theoretically and managerially.

5.1   Summary and discussion of findings

The results demonstrate the importance of identification and trust for developing brand love. The relationships between brand trust and brand love had not been established previously in the marketing literature, although they often appear associated in social psychology studies. As in interpersonal love contexts (Fehr, 1988), trust in the partner seems to help determine a person's feelings toward the partner/brand. When a consumer believes that he or she can rely on the brand, it facilitates the development of a love feeling. Furthermore, two of the three trust dimensions enhance brand love. The consumer's attribution of fair motivations (honesty) and expertise (reliability) influence a feeling of love. The third dimension of brand trust, altruism, which corresponds to the brand's willingness to take consumers' interests into account, does not affect brand love, however. Perhaps consumers do not perceive reciprocity in their brand relationships, or they simply recognize that brands have interests that contrast with their own. This result indicates that love is not exactly blind in a consumption context, although trust remains an important determinant of brand love.

In line with previous studies (Batra *et al.*, 2012; Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006), we confirm the importance of brand identification in affective relationships, in accordance with psychological theories that indicate that through a cognitive process, the beloved must be integrated with the self (Aron and Aron, 1986). The consumer must feel psychological proximity to develop an affective proximity with the brand. A specific contribution of this research is its demonstration that consumer love for a brand depends on both brand identification and identification with other customers. Not only must there be a fit between the brand and consumers' personality or values (e.g., Batra *et al.*, 2012; Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006) but the identification with typical brand customers, opinion leaders, or influential consumers in brand communities also may influence the development of a feeling of love for a brand. Previous studies have limited their investigation to congruency between the brand and the consumer. Our results extend this identification to typical brand consumers, providing new insights for brand love literature. By highlighting the impact of both brand trust and brand identification on brand love, we extend previous results and reveal that brand love results from consumer brand relationships, not just brand characteristics (e.g.,

quality in Batra *et al.*, 2012) or consumer attributes (e.g., social deficit in Lastovicka and Sirianni, 2011).

As another contribution, we demonstrate the significant influence of brand love on brand commitment. Love influences attitudinal loyalty. An interesting and new finding here is the influence of brand love on the two dimensions of commitment, affective and continuance. Love plays an important role in maintaining the relationship with the brand for both psychological/functional reasons and affective reasons. The relationship between love and commitment also indicates the importance of brand love for management; it influences long-term brand relationships. Brand love affects positive WOM and the consumer's willingness to pay a price premium too. Not only does love influence brand commitment but it also encourages consumers to speak positively about the brand and maintain their relationship, despite the high price level. Brand love therefore influences both attitudinal and behavioral loyalty.

Finally, our last contribution comes from our comparison of the predictive ability of the relational constructs in our model. Palmatier *et al.* (2006) indicate that the marketing literature has lacked such comparisons. Brand love has a greater influence on brand commitment ($\beta = .60$) than brand trust ($\beta = .18$) or brand identification ($\beta = .20$). The affective elements of brand relationships appear central and necessary for the consumer's commitment to the brand. Brand love also has a stronger influence on positive WOM ($\beta = .62$) than brand commitment ($\beta = .37$), such that brand love may be critical for brand communications. Collectively, these results highlight the importance of brand love and the central role of affective elements in consumer brand relationships.

5.2 Managerial implications

Brand love is influenced similarly by brand identification ($\beta = .50$) and brand trust ($\beta = .46$). The influence of brand identification on brand love should convince practitioners to create a closer proximity between their brands and consumers, such as by highlighting brand values or the brand's personality in corporate communications. The creation of a brand community also may favor consumers' identification. Moreover, because brand trust positively influences brand love, product quality is an issue. Elements such as after-sales service, service quality, and effective employee training to ensure they can address customer needs all affect a consumer's trust and consequently his or her love for the brand. Brand love positively influences brand commitment, WOM, and willingness to pay a price premium. Companies therefore can expect some return on their investments in such actions.

5.3   Further research

Our research demonstrates that brand love may be influenced by brand relationship attributes. Previous studies indicate that brand attributes may affect consumer love. Consumer characteristics (e.g., personality, need for affect, attachment styles) also may contribute to love for a brand, which constitutes an interesting research question. Using a qualitative approach, Lastovicka and Sirianni (2011) demonstrate that brand love may encompass a social deficit. Thus another research question arises: What kind of antecedents (consumer, brand, or relationship attributes) have the greatest impact on brand love? In other words, where is brand love rooted: in the brand, in the consumer, or in the relationship between the partners?

Notes

Reprinted (w ith minor edits) with permission from Emerald Insight. The original article was published in the Journal of Consumer Marketing with the following reference: Albert, N., & Merunka, D. (2013). The Role of Brand Love in Consumer-Brand Relationships. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 30(3), 258–266.

1. Because PLS does not possess formal indexes to test the adequacy of the data for the model, Tenenhaus *et al.* (2004) propose an overall goodness-of-fit index (GoF) that varies between 0 and 1, such that 1 indicates a perfect fit of the data to the model. The absolute GoF for our model equals .581, which is satisfactory (Wetzels *et al.*, 2009); the XL Stata software does not give any information on the R-square contributions when one variable has a negative loading on the dependent variable.

References

Aaker, D. A. (1991) *Managing Brand Equity*, New York: The Free Press.

Ahuvia, A. C. (1993) "*I Love It! Towards a Unifying Theory of Love Across Diverse Love Objects*" PhD Dissertation, Northwestern University, Evanston, IL.

Albert, N., Merunka, D., and Valette-Florence, P. (2008a) "When Consumers Love their Brands: Exploring the Concept and its Dimensions" *Journal of Business Research*, 61(10): 1062–1075.

Albert, N., Merunka, D., and Valette-Florence, P. (2008b) "The Feeling of Love Toward A Brand: Measurement and Concept" *Advances in Consumer Research*, 36: 300–307.

Algesheimer, R., Dholakia, U. M., and Herrmann, A. (2005) "The Social Influence of Brand Community: Evidence from European Car Clubs" *Journal of Marketing*, 69: 19–34.

Aron, A. and Elaine N. A. (1986) *Love as Expansion of the Self: Understanding Attraction and Satisfaction*, New York: Emisphere.

Batra, R., Ahuvia, A.C., and Bagozzi, R. (2012) "Brand Love" *Journal of Marketing*, 76(2): 1–16.

Baumeister, R. F. and Bratslavsky, E. (1999) "Passion, Intimacy and Time: Passionate Love as a Function of Change in Intimacy" *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 3(1): 47–67.

Bergkvist, L. and Bech-Larsen, T. (2010) "Two Studies of Consequences and Actionable Antecedents of Brand Love" *Brand Management*, 17(7): 504–518.

Carroll, B. A. and Ahuvia, A.C. (2006) "Some Antecedents and Outcomes of Brand Love" *Marketing Letters*, 17(2): 79–90.

Chaudhuri, A. and Holbrook, M. B. (2001) "The Chain Effects of Brand Trust and Brand Affect to Brand Performance: The Role of Brand Loyalty" *Journal of Marketing*, 65(2): 81–93.

Cristau, C. (2006) "L'attachement a une Marque: Conjonction de la Dépendance et de l'Amitié" *Revue française du Marketing*, 207(2/5): 5–24.

Delgado-Ballester, E., Munuera-Aleman, J. L., and Yaguë-Guillén, M. J. (2001) "Development and Validation of a Brand Trust Scale" *International Journal of Market Research*, 45(1): 35–53.

Dick, A. S. and Basu, K. (1994) "Customer Loyalty: Toward an Integrated Conceptual Framework" *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 22(2): 99–113.

Escalas, J. E. and Bettman J. R. (2003) "You Are What They Eat: The Influence of Reference Groups on Consumers' Connections to Brands" *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 13(3): 339–348.

Evanschitzky, H., Yier, G., Plassmann, H., Niessing, J., and Meffert, H. (2006) "The Relative Strength of Affective Commitment in Securing Loyalty in Service Relationships" *Journal of Business Research*, 59: 1207–1213.

Fehr, B. (1988) "Prototype Analysis of the Concepts of Love and Commitment" *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 55, 4: 557–579.

Fournier, S. (1998) "Consumers and Their Brands: Developing Relationship Theory in Consumer Research" *Journal of Consumer Research*, 24(4): 343–373.

Fullerton, G. (2005) "The Impact of Brand Loyalty Commitment on Loyalty to Retail Service Brands" *Canadian Journal of Administrative Sciences*, 22(2): 97–110.

Garbarino E. and Johnson, M. S. (1999) "The Different Roles of Satisfaction, Trust, and Commitment in Customer Relationships" *Journal of Marketing*, 63(2): 70–87.

Gurviez, P. and Korchia, M. (2002) "Proposition d'une Echelle de Mesure Multidimensionnelle de la Confiance dans la Marque" *Recherche et Applications en Marketing*, 17(3): 41–62.

Harrison-Walker, L. J. (2001) "The Measurement of Word-of-Mouth Communication and an Investigation of Service Quality and Customer Commitment as Potential Antecedents" *Journal of Service Research*, 4(1): 60–75.

Hess, J. S. (1995) "Construction and Assessment of a Scale to Measure Consumer Trust" *AMA Educators' Conference, Enhancing Knowledge Development in Marketing*, 6, B. B. Stern and G. M. Zinkhan, (eds) Chicago: American Marketing Association, 20–25.

Keh, H. T. and Xie, Y. (2009) "Corporate Reputation and Customer Behavioral Intentions: The Role of Trust, Identification and Commitment" *Industrial Marketing Management*, 38: 732–742.

Keller, K. L. (1993) "Conceptualizing, Measuring and Managing Customer-Based Brand Equity" *Journal of Marketing*, 57(1): 1–22.

Larzelere, R. E. and Huston, T. L. (1980) "The Dyadic Trust Scale: Toward Understanding Interpersonal Trust in Close Relationships" *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 42(3): 595–604.

Lastovicka, J. L. and Sirianni, N. J. (2011) "Truly, Madly, Deeply: Consumers in the Throes of Material Possession Love" *Journal of Consumer Research*, 38(2): 323–342.

MacCraken, G. (1989) "Who is the Celebrity Endorser? Cultural Foundations of the Endorsement Process" *Journal of Consumer Research*, 16: 310–321.

Morgan, R. M. and Hunt, S. H. (1994) "The Commitment-Trust Theory of Relationship Marketing" *Journal of Marketing*, 58(3): 20–38.

Oliver, R. L. (1999) "Whence Consumer Loyalty?" *Journal of Marketing*, 63: 33–44.

Palmatier, R.W., Dant, R. P., Grewal, D., and Evans, K. R. (2006) "Factors Influencing the Effectiveness of a Relationship Marketing: A Meta Analysis" *Journal of Marketing*, 70(4): 136–153.

Park, C. W., MacInnis, D. J., Priester, J., Eisingerich, A. B., and Iacobucci, D. (2010) "Brand Attachment and Brand Attitude Strength: Conceptual and Empirical Differentiation of Two Critical Brand Equity Drivers" *Journal of Marketing*, 74(6): 1–17.

Shimp, T. A., and Madden, T. J. (1988) "Consumer-Object Relations: A Conceptual Framework Based Analogously on Sternberg's Triangular Theory of Love" *Advances in Consumer Research*, 15(1): 163–168.

Sternberg, R. J. (1986) "A Triangular Theory of Love" *Psychologist Review*, 93(2): 119–135.

Tenenhaus, M., Esposito, V. Chatelin, Y.-M., and Lauro, C. (2005) "PLS Path Modeling" *Computational Statistics & Data Analysis*, 41(1): 159–205.

Thomson, M., MacInnis, D. J., and Park, W. C. (2005) "The Ties that Bind: Measuring the Strength of Consumers' Emotional Attachment to Brands" *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 15(1): 77–91.

Wing C. S., and Angie, N. K. O. (2006) "A Study of Trust in E-Shopping before and after First-Hand Experience is Gained" *Journal of Computer Information Systems*, Summer: 125–130.

Wetzels M., Oderkerken-Schröder G., and van Hopper, C. (2010) "Using PLS Path Modeling for Assessing Hierarchical Construct Models: Guidelines and Empirical Illustration" *MIS Quarterly*, 33(1): 177–195.

2
Will You Defend Your Loved Brand?

Mansoor Javed, Sanjit Roy, and Bano Mansoor

1 Introduction

Consumers and products have been in question since the earliest thoughts about marketing, with the prime focus on transactions. Later, the focus on transactions started to be replaced by a focus on relationships, and so the focus shifted from products to brands. Initially, the importance of relationships was recognized among the different marketing players, manufacturers, suppliers, distributors, and then somehow customers. But the real shift in the thinking about marketing emerged from the real focus on the consumer brand relationships, with the prime focus on '*consumers*,' the prime end user of any products or services. And the quest began from this focal shift, how consumers respond to the brand offerings and efforts, how they relate themselves to brands, how they feel about brands, and how and what they attribute to the brands to which they feel related.

In this quest, researchers started applying interpersonal relationship theories to consumer brand relationships that resulted in the emergence of a number of consumer brand relationship paradigms and/or constructs, such as brand relationship quality (Fournier, 1998), brand attachment (Park *et al.*, 2006), brand commitment (Morgan and Hunt, 1994), brand passion (Bauer *et al.*, 2007, Heinrich *et al.*, 2012), brand loyalty (Tsai, 2011), brand trust (Aydin and Ozer, 2005; Ball *et al.*, 2004; Doney *et al.*, 2007; Flavian *et al.*, 2005), brand forgiveness (Donovan *et al.*, 2012; Heinrich *et al.*, 2012), and brand love (Albert *et al.*, 2009; Batra *et al.*, 2012; Carrol and Ahuvia, 2006; Ismail and Spinelli, 2012). Most importantly, research on relationship-building highlighted the significance of consumer brand relationships in educing favorable consumer behavior (Tsai, 2011).

Therefore, the research reported here introduces 'brand defense,' a new marketing construct that explains the extent of consumers' favorable behavior towards their loved brands, as a consequence of close consumer brand relationships. The study primarily focuses on the different intensities of consumers' positive word-of-mouth (WOM) behavior toward their loved brands in a scenario of negative WOM, that is positive WOM, brand advocacy, and brand defense. The objectives of the study were (1) to see whether brand love antecedes the different levels of positive WOM behaviors, (2) to see whether brand love can induce consumers to defend their loved brands against negative WOM, and (3) to see whether other relationship constructs, such as brand loyalty, brand trust, and brand forgiveness mediate the relationship between brand love and brand defense.

2   Background

This study is built on the exploration of one of the most prevalent consumer brand relationships' benefit for brands, WOM, and its varied intensities toward consumers' loved brands. The WOM attributions are explored in the scenario of negative WOM, to explore consumers' defensive or protective behavior toward their loved brands. The study aims to address the question of whether consumers can go beyond simply positive WOM, and/or brand advocacy and defend their loved brands against criticism. The research is based on the existing literature that signifies the importance of WOM (Arndt, 1967; Harrison-Walker, 2001; deMatos and Rossi, 2008; Mazzarol, *et al.*, 2007; Sweeney *et al.*, 2008), and WOM being one of the most common attribute of most consumer brand relationship constructs (Albert *et al.*, 2009; Batra *et al.*, 2012; Bauer *et al.*, 2007; Carrol and Ahuvia, 2006; Ismail and Spinelli, 2012; Park *et al.*, 2006; Park and MacInnis, 2006).

WOM has gained extraordinary importance in regard to image promoter (Sweeney, *et al.*, 2008), and decision clincher (Arndt, 1967), due to the perceived nonbiased, and noncommercial nature of WOM information. WOM is also believed to be stronger than any other form of advertising (Arndt, 1967). WOM gained tremendous attention from researchers with the realization of its effectiveness in regard to consumers' beliefs and perceptions that WOM is true and unbiased information (Arndt, 1967; Harrison-Walker, 2001; deMatos and Rossi, 2008). Therefore, researchers have been exploring a number of antecedents (deMatos and Rossi, 2008; Mazzarol, *et al.*, 2007; Sweeney *et al.*, 2008), consequences, outcomes (Sweeney *et al.*, 2008), and triggers

(Mazzarol, *et al.*, 2007) of WOM. And, with the recent shift in marketing research and practice in the last two decades, the significance of WOM is further recognized in the context of the consumer brand relationship's benefit.

The emergence of the consumer brand relationship as an important marketing domain (Fournier, 1998) encouraged researchers to apply interpersonal relationship constructs to these relationships (Fournier, 1998; Morgan and Hunt, 1994; Park *et al.*, 2006). It was proposed that, similar to interpersonal relationships among humans, individuals also form relationships with brands (Fournier, 1998) that yield mutual benefits for consumers and brands. And it was evidenced that WOM is one of the most common benefit of closest consumer brand relationships as observed by most relationship studies (Albert *et al.*, 2009; Batra *et al.*, 2012; Bauer *et al.*, 2007; Carrol and Ahuvia, 2006; Ismail and Spinelli, 2012; Park *et al.*, 2006; Park and MacInnis, 2006).

In regard to the consumer context, WOM provides the opportunity for consumers to express their opinions, whether positive or negative, about any products, services, or brands (Harrison-Walker, 2001). Consumers can get information about any brand, product, or service even before experiencing it, and such information has become even more accessible and convenient with the widespread of telecommunications and the Internet (deMatos and Rossi, 2008; Ng *et al.*, 2010). Consumers consider such information useful due to its unbiased origin, and, therefore, follow such advice in their purchase decisions (Arndt, 1967; Harrison-Walker, 2001; de Matos and Rossi, 2008), which makes such advice patterns crucial for brands and marketers.

The literature, therefore, suggests both benefits and drawbacks of WOM for brands, depending on the nature of WOM, whether positive or negative. The major benefits of WOM for brands include the increased knowledge about consumers' perceptions about their brand offerings without spending huge amounts of money on marketing surveys and research. Also, positive WOM, including consumers' recommending behavior, does free marketing for the brand (Peck *et al.*, 1999). However, on the other side, negative WOM about a brand can result in sales slashes, as a number of studies have confirmed the influential impact of negative information over positive information (Assael, 2004; East *et al.*, 2008; Kroloff, 1988; Skowronski and Carlston, 1989). Also, there are claims that generally the negative information is fewer as compared to positive information (East *et al.*, 2007; Naylor and Kleiser, 2000), but this makes negative information more valuable or diagnostic (Fiske, 1980). Also, negative information is considered as useful

evidence for the unreliability of a brand, and this suggests that negative information is more effective in forming a judgment (Chevalier and Mayzlin, 2003; Fiske, 1980; Mittal *et al.*, 1998; Mizerski, 1982). However, a number of studies negate this belief, and suggest that negative WOM is generated twice or, thrice the positive WOM by dissatisfied consumers. It shows a very lower propensity of positive WOM supplied by satisfied consumers as compared to negative WOM supplied by dissatisfied consumers (Goodman and Newman, 2003; Hanna and Wosniak, 2001; Heskett *et al.*, 1997). Irrespective of the frequency of negative and positive WOM, it has been shown that both negative and positive WOM play a role in consumers' attitude toward a brand and in purchase behavior (Charlett *et al.*, 1995). The roles and significance of both positive and negative WOM suggest the overall importance of WOM, and it has served as the motivation for the study. Based on the proposition that positive WOM can revert the damaging impact of negative WOM, this study builds its argument on the existing literature. The overarching importance of WOM as a relationship benefit (Hennig-Thurau *et al.*, 2002; Ng *et al.*, 2011) provides the motivation to explore and understand the different aspects and the extent of close consumer brand relationships, such as brand love (Albert *et al.*, 2009; Batra *et al.*, 2012; Carrol and Ahuvia, 2006; Ismail and Spinelli, 2012), brand attachment (Park *et al.*, 2006; Park and MacInnis, 2006), and passion (Bauer *et al.*, 2007) in the marketing context. In all such consumer brand relationships, particularly brand love, WOM has emerged as one of the most common and prominent attributes (Albert *et al.*, 2009; Batra *et al.*, 2012; Bauer *et al.*, 2007; Carrol and Ahuvia, 2006; Ismail and Spinelli, 2012; Park *et al.*, 2006; Hennig-Thurau *et al.*, 2002; Ng *et al.*, 2011). Even along with positive WOM, consumers are even observed refusing to negative brand information in a few instances (Park *et al.*, 2006). The extant literature shows scant research on negative WOM and how to avert a negative WOM crisis. Therefore, considering the strategic nature of WOM, and increasing realization that WOM has been revealed to be one of the most common consequences of close consumer brand relationships, the study explores the WOM outcomes of brand love when a loved brand is faced with negative WOM.

3   The conceptual framework and research model

The experience of love is central to the closest relationships. Because love can mean differently to different love relationships, for example, love for friends, children, or a romantic partner (Graham, 2011) and

non-living objects (Shimp and Maden, 1988). It is also believed that love is one of the essential components of a successful relationship (Simpson *et al.*, 1986). Therefore, with the realization of the significance of consumer brand relationships, and their different facets (Fournier, 1998), researchers also began to observe love in consumer brand relationship scenarios (Ahuvia, 2012; Albert *et al.*, 2009; Batra *et al.*, 2012; Carrol and Ahuvia, 2006; Fetscherin and Dato-on, 2012; Fournier, 1998; Heinrich *et al.*, 2012; Ismail and Spinelli, 2012; Wallace *et al.*, 2012), and found love as a strong relationship construct. In the brand love scenario, consumers have been revealed to attribute several positive behaviors toward brands, including increased loyalty (Ahuvia, 2012; Albert *et al.*, 2009; Carrol and Ahuvia, 2006; Kamat and Parulekar, 2007), trust (Albert *et al.*, 2009), a price premium (Heinrich *et al.*, 2012), and forgiveness (Donovan *et al.*, 2012; Heinrich *et al.*, 2012), and the most common attribute of brand love is revealed to be positive WOM (Albert *et al.*, 2009; Batra *et al.*, 2012; Ismail and Spinelli, 2012; Carrol and Ahuvia, 2006; Wallace, 2012). Not only brand love but also several studies have confirmed to date that customers in close brand relationships tend to demonstrate higher WOM behavior such as brand attachment (Park *et al.*, 2006) and brand passion (Bauer *et al.*, 2007). Therefore, the literature confirms the significance of brand love in regards to WOM attributions and their consequent benefits for brands.

Moreover, as mentioned previously, brand love does not only promote WOM activity but also posits a number of other behavioral attributes that further promote positive WOM attributions. This study, therefore, suggests that investigating brand trust (Bruhn *et al.*, 2012), brand forgiveness (Donovan *et al.*, 2012; Heinrich *et al.*, 2012), and brand loyalty (Ahuvia, 2012) as the attributions of brand love can further result in the promoting of WOM. Consumers' WOM behavior is viewed in a hierarchy based on the intensity of positive WOM attributions, and suggest brand advocacy as a superior form of positive WOM, and brand defense being the strongest positive WOM attribution that supersedes brand advocacy, particularly in case of negative WOM, the research model is depicted in Figure 2.1.

The study conceptualizes that brand love antecedes brand trust, and that brand trust further antecedes the three facets of positive WOM behavior: positive WOM, brand advocacy, and brand defense. Moorman *et al.* (1993) define trust as "a willingness to rely on an exchange partner in whom one has confidence." And a number of researchers propose that close consumer brand relationships foster brand trust and confidence (Bauer *et al.*, 2012; Bruhn *et al.*, 2012). Moreover, trust is considered as
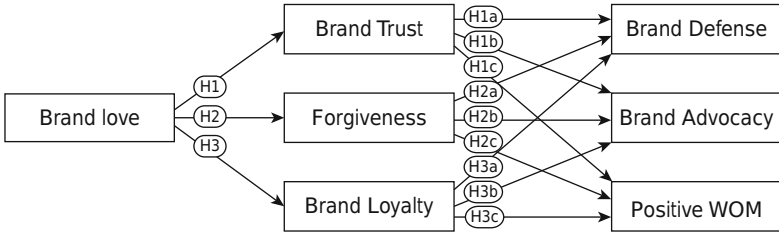
Figure 2.1   Research model: negative word-of-mouth scenario

one of the objectives that can describe the feeling of love (Albert *et al.*, 2007). Consumers who love a brand seem to declare that the brand has never disappointed them and express their satisfaction with the brand (Albert *et al.*, 2007). Trust is one of the antecedents of positive WOM behavior (deMatos and Rossi, 2008), and so is Brand Love (Albert *et al.*, 2009; Batra *et al.*, 2012; Ismail and Spinelli, 2012; Carrol and Ahuvia, 2006; Wallace, 2012). Therefore, according to the existing research brand love antecedes both brand trust and positive WOM. Moreover, Park *et al.* (2006) suggest that consumers do not believe the negative information about the brands to which they are attached, and not only disbelieve the information but defend the brand. In Batra *et al.* (2012), trust was considered as one of the dimensions of brand love, where the results of their study suggested WOM as an outcome of brand love. Therefore, the following hypotheses are developed:

H1: Brand love has an impact on brand trust.

H1a: Brand trust mediates the relationship between brand love and brand defense.

H1b: Brand trust mediates the relationship between brand love and brand advocacy.

H1c: Brand trust mediates the relationship between brand love and positive word of mouth.

The brand forgiveness construct is developed based on interpersonal relationship theory and is adapted to the study. In regard to forgiveness in the interpersonal relationship literature, it is suggested that individuals in high-quality relationships have a higher inclination to forgive their partners (Allemand *et al.*, 2007; Finkel *et al.*, 2002; Kearns and Fincham, 2005; McCullough *et al.*, 1998). Even in the case of offenses that they remember, individuals forgive their partners; however, higher levels of

relationship satisfaction govern such forgiveness (Allemand *et al.*, 2007), relationship quality (Kearns and Fincham, 2005), and closeness of a relationship (McCullough *et al.*, 1998). It is observed that individuals in higher quality relationships tend to empathize more with their partner and attribute softer or more positive behaviors to their partners' mistakes or transgressions that posit greater forgiveness ultimately (Kearns and Fincham, 2005; McCullough *et al.*, 1998). Similar to interpersonal relationships, researchers also applied the concept of forgiveness to consumer brand relationships (Donovan *et al.*, 2012; Heinrich *et al.*, 2012). Donovan *et al.*'s (2012) study investigated brand forgiveness and future behavioral intentions in the case of brand relationship closeness, and found that brand forgiveness out of brand relationship closeness plays a key role in moderating future brand behaviors. Heinrich *et al.* (2012) also investigated forgiveness and price premium in the context of brand love, and found supporting evidence that both forgiveness and price premium are the outcomes of brand love. In the present study, brand forgiveness is observed as one of the moderating factors for post-love behavior of consumers in the case of negative WOM. Therefore, it is proposed that brand forgiveness posits positive WOM attributes toward the loved brand out of a higher inclination to forgive the loved brand, even if consumers believe the negative information. Therefore, based on the aforementioned literature, the following hypotheses are developed:

H2: Brand love has an impact on brand forgiveness.

H2a: Brand forgiveness mediates the relationship between brand love and brand defense.

H2b: Brand forgiveness mediates the relationship between brand love and brand advocacy.

H2c: Brand forgiveness mediates the relationship between brand love and word of mouth.

Brand loyalty has been one of the most studied and most important constructs in evaluating the intangible benefits of consumer brand relationships. According to Fournier (1998, p. 343), "The brand loyalty literature is perhaps most capable of informing theory concerning consumer brand relationships." Brand loyalty refers to consumers' repurchase intentions of the brand and readiness to recommend it to other consumers (Fournier, 1998; Tsai, 2011). The definition of brand loyalty itself identifies the prospective nature of brand loyalty in generating a superior WOM behavior that is recommending (advocacy). Therefore, brand loyalty seems to attribute positive behavioral intention toward

the brand to which a consumer is loyal. However, there are several studies that confirm the development and increase in brand loyalty as a consequence of brand love (Ahuvia, 2012; Albert *et al.*, 2009; Carrol and Ahuvia, 2006; Kamat and Parulekar, 2007). According to a meta-analysis of WOM research by deMatos and Rossi (2008), most WOM studies were focused on constructs like consumer satisfaction, loyalty, commitment, trust, and perceived value. Their findings revealed that a direct relationship was found between positive WOM activity, and factors that antecede WOM, such as satisfaction and loyalty. Moreover, Henning-Thurau *et al.* (2002) also found WOM and loyalty as relational benefits for brands, and the outcomes for their relationship marketing efforts. The preceding literature suggests that consumer brand relationships, including brand love, promote brand loyalty and positive WOM behaviors, as well as that brand loyalty itself promotes positive WOM attributions. Therefore, the following hypotheses are developed:

H3: Brand love has an impact on brand loyalty.

H3a: Brand loyalty mediates the relationship between brand love and brand defense.

H3b: Brand loyalty mediates the relationship between brand love and brand advocacy.

H3c: Brand loyalty mediates the relationship between brand love and word of mouth.

3.1   Conceptualization, and definition of main constructs

3.1.1   Brand love

Researchers believe that at least some form of love, believing romantic love, has been present within all human groups in all eras of human history (Hatfield and Rapson, 2002). With the growth in branding literature, researchers started assuming brand-consumer relationships attributing similar characteristics as of interpersonal relationships (Aaker, 1997; Fournier, 1998). Moreover, love also started to gain appreciation and become included in the consumer brands relationship context in the research (Aaker, 1997; Fournier, 1998). Sternberg's (1987) triangular theory of love attracted the lot in understanding consumer brand love relationships. Most of the literature on brand love initially was developed based on this theory (Heinrich *et al.*, 2012; Fetscherin and Dato-on, 2012), and offers avenues to dig further into interpersonal love relationships to provide a further basis for understanding and measuring brand love and its outcomes. Graham (2011) has recently conducted a meta-analysis of 'love' that explores the

higher-order factors as assessed by the most popular measures of love. The results negate the common conceptualizations of love, suggesting that the existing love measures fall into three discrete higher-order factors, based on global self-report love measures, in which most measures appear to tap into a single general factor of love. It propose that love outcomes can be viewed in general, whether it stemmed out of any relational soil, but depict having similar impact overall. Graham (2011) compared the general nature of love with intelligence research, that is like a single general intelligence factor at a higher-order level, and so is love can be viewed as a unified general love factor. Therefore, based on these findings, consumers' love for brands can also be viewed as a general brand love factor that yields a general set of positive behaviors. Graham (2011) suggests using the experience sampling method (Graham, 2008) to avoid the high overlapping of self-report measures in love, and this may also be useful for brand love, as well, to better distinguish its proposed components, as brand love is developing as an analogous concept as interpersonal love. In this study, brand love is considered as a general love factor (Graham, 2011), as similar to interpersonal love relations, consumers also feel love toward their favorite brands, and attribute positive behaviors toward those brands. (Albert *et al.*, 2009; Batra *et al.*, 2012; Carrol and Ahuvia, 2006; Fournier, 1998; Ismail and Spinelli, 2012).

3.1.2 Brand trust

In this study, brand trust is conceptualized based on the extant marketing literature, and it considers Moorman *et al.* (1993, p. 83) definition that considers trust as one's "willingness to rely on an exchange partner in whom one has confidence." The authors further define trust as a belief, sentiment, or expectation about one's exchange partner based on the partner's expertise, reliability, and intentionality (Moorman *et al.*, 1993). Ganesan (1994) defines such trust as the credibility that results from the extent of a buyer's belief in the supplier's expertise.

3.1.3 Brand forgiveness

This study conceptualizes brand forgiveness in the interpersonal relationship context. According to the interpersonal forgiveness literature, individuals in high-quality relationships feel a higher inclination to forgive their partners (Allemand *et al.*, 2007; Finkel *et al.*, 2002; Kearns and Fincham, 2005; McCullough *et al.*, 1998). Even in the case of remembered offenses, individuals forgive their partners; however, high-level relationship satisfaction (Allemand *et al.*, 2007), relationship quality (Kearns and Fincham, 2005), and the closeness of a relationship

(McCullough *et al.*, 1998) govern such forgiveness. The study adopts Donovan *et al.* (2012) definition of brand forgiveness, which is the "inclination to forgive a loved brand."

3.1.4   Brand loyalty

In this study, brand loyalty is conceptualized based on the extant marketing literature and considers Fournier's (1998) and Tsai's (2011) definitions of loyalty, which refer to brand loyalty as consumers' repurchase intentions of the brand and readiness to recommend it to other consumers (Fournier, 1998; Tsai, 2011).

3.1.5   Positive WOM

There is no unanimously agreed-upon definition of WOM found in the literature thus far, but the most accepted meaning of WOM is a noncommercial communication regarding a brand, product, or service (Graham and Havelena, 2007; Harrison-Walker, 2001; Sweeney *et al.*, 2010). In this study, positive WOM is defined as any positive thing said or written about the brand.

3.1.6   Brand advocacy

Brand advocacy is considered as a superior form of WOM in this study. It is also consistent with Wallace *et al.* (2012) statement about advocacy, which says, "advocacy encompasses and extends beyond the traditional concept of WOM." It refers to consumers' recommending behavior (Peck *et al.*, 1999), and this study sticks to this definition of brand advocacy.

3.1.7   Brand defense

The study conceptualizes and measures a new construct named "brand defense." It is proposed as the strongest form of positive WOM behavior that goes beyond brand advocacy. Brand defense is defined as a state of positive WOM attributions, in which consumers in close consumer brand relationships or brand love defend the brand from any criticism. Brand defense is conceptualized as consumers' protective behavior for their favorite brands. The idea is coined based on the WOM and consumer brand relationship literature (for example, Park *et al.*, 2006, Park and McInnis, 2006; Bendapudi and Berry, 1997), and the personal observation of day-to-day consumer responses toward favorite brands.

4   Research methods

The current study, with a focus on measuring a new construct, adopts a multiphase mixed methods approach. It is divided into the two research

stages: (1) scale development through the extant literature, phenomeno-logical interviewing, and pilot investigation, and (2) empirical model validation and hypotheses testing, conducted in a sequential order (see Figure 2.1 for research methodology overview).

The first phase of the research involved phenomenological inter-viewing with three British women (Fournier, 1998) to generate themes for scale development (Churchill, 1979), and in-depth inquiry of consumers' WOM attributions toward favorite brands in negative circumstances, and to decide on the product categories for the pilot and the main study surveys. The study uses the snowball sampling technique for data collection for both the pretest and the final surveys, based on its popularity in the marketing literature due to the convenience in data collection (Brady *et al.*, 2012; Zinkhan *et al.*, 1983). The study involves the inquiry of British/UK consumers aged 18 and over, as the repre-sentative sample. The British consumers comprises of mixed race with multinational, multiracial, and multicultural society, which facilitates generalizability of results within the quantitative study. By using British/UK consumers, the researcher would have the opportunity to gather a diverse poll of opinion through the participants' belonging to different cultures, backgrounds, ethnicities, which will provide diverse data, repre-senting different cultural traits and some common consumer behavior due to living in the same market environment. Furthermore, British resi-dents possess both similarities and differences; therefore, confining the context to British consumers offers some control over the overall sample due to the population's residing in the same environment.

The study explores the WOM outcomes of brand love to avert a nega-tive WOM impact using a scenario-based approach (Donovan *et al.*, 2001) in which consumers are given a scenario, to assume or recall any event, where there loved brand might faced any criticism for any mistake or failure, regardless of that criticism based on truth, or rumors. The consumers' responses are taken on a seven – point Likert scale (1 = not at all; 7 = completely agree). The pilot study facilitated reliability analysis and factor loadings of the new and existing scales, and the viability of the research instrument. The survey used existing scales for brand love, positive WOM, brand advocacy (Kemp *et al.*, 2012; Kim *et al.*, 2001), brand loyalty, and brand trust (Table 2.1). In regard to brand forgiveness, a forgiveness scale from the interpersonal relationship literature was used and adapted to the study, the seven-item scale was further reduced to three final scale items due to lower factor loadings, and factors were not loaded on a single construct. Carrol and Ahuvia's (2006) ten-item brand love scale was also reduced to eight items due to cross-loadings of factors. The study involved developing a brand defense scale from

Table 2.1 Scale items with literature source

Constructs		Scale Items	Source
Brand Love	BL1	This is a wonderful brand.	Carrol and Ahuvia (2006)
	BL2	This brand makes me feel good.	
	BL3	This brand is totally awesome.	
	BL4	This brand makes me very happy.	
	BL5	I love this consumer electronics brand.	
	BL6	This brand is a pure delight.	
	BL7	I am passionate about this brand.	
	BL8	I am very attached to this brand.	
Brand Trust	BT1	I know my brand; I will refuse to believe the negative information.	Aydin and Ozer (2005); Flavian *et al.* (2005); Ball *et al.* (2004) Doney and Canon, (1997); Doney *et al.* (2007)
	BT2	I trust my brand, and I will refuse to believe the negative information.	
	BT3	I believe the information, but I will not blame my brand, nothing is perfect.	
	BT4	My brand always fulfills the promises that it makes to its customers.	
Brand Loyalty	LY1	I will prefer my present brand over others in the future.	Narayandas (1996) Evanschitzky *et al.* (2006) Bennet and Thiele (2000) Patrick *et al.* (2003) Fullerton (2003)
	LY2	I will not switch from this brand to try another brand.	
	LY3	I feel a strong sense of identification toward this brand.	
	LY4	I like my brand.	
Brand Forgiveness	BF1	I forgive my favorite brand.	Bennet and Thiele (2000)
	BF2	Even though the negative information about my favorite brand hurt me, I do not feel ill will toward my favorite brand.	

Construct	Code	Item	Source
	BF3	I feel warm toward this cosmetics brand.	
Word of Mouth	WOM1	I will tell more people about the experience of the consumer electronics brand than any other consumer electronics brand.	Lang (2009) Sweeney *et al.* (2010)
	WOM2	I will seldom miss an opportunity to tell others about the experience of my favorite consumer electronics brand.	
	WOM3	When I tell others about my experience with the consumer electronics brand, I tend to talk about it in great detail.	
	WOM4	I will say positive things about the consumer electronics brand.	
Brand Advocacy	BA1	I will share my experience about the brand.	Kim *et al.* (2001)
	BA2	I will recommend my consumer electronics brand.	
	BA3	I will ask people to try the consumer electronics brand themselves.	
Brand Defense	BD1	I will take their criticism as personally threatening and will refuse to believe the negative information against my consumer electronics brand.	Scale developed for the study
	BD2	I will take their criticism as personally threatening and will argue for my brand.	
	BD3	I will try to protect my brand against criticism.	
	BD4	I will refer to the strong points of my consumer electronics brand.	
	BD5	I will convince them of the strong points of my consumer electronics brand.	
	BD6	I will protect my brand against any criticism.	
	BD7	I will not let people criticize my consumer electronics brand.	
	BD8	I will make people realize that my consumer electronics item has better features.	
	BD9	I will defend my brand.	

scratch, and developed nine items that remained nine after exploratory factor analysis and reliability analysis with factor loadings for all scale items over .7 with .924 Cronbach's alpha value for construct reliability.

As discussed above, the final measurement instrument developed in the phase of the pilot investigation that was successfully administered at Bristol Online Surveys with 128 British mobile phone consumers. However, the final study with the revised research instrument and newly devised brand defense scale involved two surveys among British residents with two different product categories, cosmetics and consumer electronics, with 344 and 356 respondents respectively. The results of the final surveys are discussed next.

5   Results

The final data analyses involved exploratory factor analysis for unidimensionality, Cronbach's alpha for scale reliability, and confirmatory factor analysis for reliability and validity of scale items, and the research instrument (Tables 2.2 and 2.3). The squared multiple correlations values of all the indicators are greater than or equal to .50 that represent reliable measurement models that show high indicator validity. The composite reliability of the constructs is greater than .6, which further strengthens the reliability of the constructs. Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct is equal to or greater than .50 for both datasets (cosmetics, consumer electronics), which indicates convergent validity for the measurement model. All the AVE values for both surveys are greater than the squared interconstruct correlations, which show the distinctiveness of the constructs. The model fit indices for either the surveys were equal or above .90 that depicts sound research models. The hypotheses were tested with structural equation modeling (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988), using AMOS 19 (Tables 2.4 and 2.5). The Sobel Test of mediation (Baron and Kenny, 1986) revealed significant structural model path values for the subsequent relations (Tables 2.6 and 2.7).

The path coefficients of the structural equation model along with their p-values provide direct evidence of the hypotheses that are accepted/rejected, as shown in Tables 2.4 and 2.5. The p-values shown in Tables 2.4 and 2.5 are associated with the standardized path coefficients. According to the results, the path coefficients between brand love and brand trust ($\beta = .772$, $p < .001$) for cosmetics and ($\beta = .737$, $p < .001$) for consumer electronics are both significant, and thus Hypothesis H1 is accepted for both the surveys. Similarly, the path coefficients between brand love and brand forgiveness ($\beta = .567$, $p < .001$) for cosmetics and ($\beta = .751$, $p < .001$)

Table 2.2   Cosmetics – EFA, Cronbach's alpha, and CFA

Constructs		Factor Loadings	Variance Explained (%)	α	SMC	CR	Λ	AVE
BL	BL1	.814	56.6	.807	.515	.89	.659	.50
	BL2	.861			.517		.719	
	BL3	.835			.503		.673	
	BL4	.802			.513		.560	
	BL5	.840			.410		.640	
	BL6	.806			.501		.631	
	BL7	.841			.569		.754	
	BL8	.840			.569		.754	
BT	BT1	.879	72.6	.870	.509	.79	.713	.50
	BT2	.915			.677		.823	
	BT3	.797			.526		.571	
	BT4	.812			.503		.666	
LY	LY1	.877	77.3	.902	.528	.82	.726	.53
	LY2	.889			.580		.762	
	LY3	.902			.524		.724	
	LY4	.847			.528		.654	
BF	BF1	.904	81.6	.887	.599	.77	.774	.53
	BF2	.923			.584		.764	
	BF3	.882			.523		.680	
WOM	WM1	.871	76.6	.898	.500	.81	.707	.52
	WM2	.866			.510		.685	
	WM3	.882			.561		.749	
	WM4	.882			.637		.798	
BA	BA1	.888	82.1	.891	.671	.84	.819	.61
	BA2	.927			.722		.850	
	BA3	.903			.598		.773	
BD	BD1	.835	77.2	.962	.528	.92	.727	.56
	BD2	.856			.560		.748	
	BD3	.875			.590		.768	
	BD4	.894			.635		.797	
	BD5	.890			.643		.802	
	BD6	.890			.641		.801	
	BD7	.880			.591		.769	
	BD8	.883			.607		.779	
	BD9	.901			.654		.808	

Note: BL = Brand Love; BT = Brand Trust; LY = Brand Loyalty; BF = Brand Forgiveness; WOM = Word of Mouth; BA = Brand Advocacy; BD = Brand Defense; α = Cronbach's alpha; SMC = Squared multiple Correlations; CR = Composite reliability; λ = Standardized Loadings; AVE = Average Variance Extracted.

for consumer electronics are also significant for both surveys, and thus Hypothesis H2 is accepted for both the surveys. The path coefficients between brand love and brand loyalty ($\beta = .681$, $p < .001$) for cosmetics

Table 2.3   Consumer electronics – EFA, Cronbach's alpha, and CFA

Constructs		Factor Loadings	Variance Explained (%)	α	SMC	CR	λ	AVE
Brand Love	BL1	.814	56.6	.828	.501	.91	.509	.53
	BL2	.861			.511		.608	
	BL3	.835			.530		.659	
	BL4	.802			.515		.644	
	BL5	.840			.509		.700	
	BL6	.806			.510		.699	
	BL7	.841			.607		.779	
	BL8	.840			.544		.666	
Brand Trust	BT1	.879	72.6	.832	.517	.85	.683	.59
	BT2	.915			.533		.730	
	BT3	.797			.521		.649	
	BT4	.812			.508		.639	
Brand Loyalty	LY1	.877	77.3	.906	.515	.90	.689	.68
	LY2	.889			.553		.743	
	LY3	.902			.716		.846	
	LY4	.847			.557		.746	
Brand Forgiveness	BF1	.904	81.6	.875	.561	.85	.749	.65
	BF2	.923			.673		.820	
	BF3	.882			.505		.636	
Word of Mouth	WM1	.871	76.6	.883	.530	.87	.656	.64
	WM2	.866			.601		.776	
	WM3	.882			.538		.734	
	WM4	.882			.590		.768	
Brand Advocacy	BA1	.888	82.1	.913	.695	.89	.833	.74
	BA2	.927			.727		.853	
	BA3	.903			.580		.762	
Brand Defense	BD1	.835	77.2	.952	.539	.93	.734	.60
	BD2	.856			.569		.754	
	BD3	.875			.569		.755	
	BD4	.894			.513		.688	
	BD5	.890			.542		.736	
	BD6	.890			.576		.759	
	BD7	.880			.612		.782	
	BD8	.883			.489		.699	
	BD9	.901			.605		.778	

Note: BL = Brand Love; BT = Brand Trust; LY = Brand Loyalty; BF = Brand Forgiveness; WOM = Word of Mouth; BA = Brand Advocacy; BD = Brand Defense.

Table 2.4 Structural equation models – cosmetics

			Estimate	Comments
Brand Love	→	Brand Loyalty	.681***	H3 (Accepted)
Brand Love	→	Brand Trust	.772***	H1 (Accepted)
Brand Love	→	Brand Forgiveness	.567***	H2 (Accepted)
Brand Loyalty	→	Positive WOM	.395***	Path Significant at .001
Brand Loyalty	→	Brand Defense	.158**	Path Significant at .01
Brand Loyalty	→	Brand Advocacy	.417***	Path Significant at .001
Brand Forgiveness	→	Positive WOM	.065	H2c (Rejected)
Brand Forgiveness	→	Brand Defense	.261***	Path Significant at .001
Brand Forgiveness	→	Brand Advocacy	.078	H2b (Rejected)
Brand Trust	→	Positive WOM	.549***	Path Significant at .001
Brand Trust	→	Brand Defense	.535***	Path Significant at .001
Brand Trust	→	Brand Advocacy	.504***	Path Significant at .001

Note: ***$p < .001$ and **$p < .01$.

Table 2.5 Structural equation models – consumer electronics

			Estimate	Comments
Brand Love	→	Brand Loyalty	.708***	H3 (Accepted)
Brand Love	→	Brand Trust	.737***	H1 (Accepted)
Brand Love	→	Brand Forgiveness	.751***	H2 (Accepted)
Brand Loyalty	→	Positive WOM	−.131*	Path Significant at .05
Brand Loyalty	→	Brand Defense	.109*	Path Significant at .05
Brand Loyalty	→	Brand Advocacy	.162**	Path Significant at .01
Brand Forgiveness	→	Positive WOM	.863***	Path Significant at .001
Brand Forgiveness	→	Brand Defense	.748***	Path Significant at .001
Brand Forgiveness	→	Brand Advocacy	.794***	Path Significant at .001
Brand Trust	→	Positive WOM	.194**	Path Significant at .01
Brand Trust	→	Brand Defense	.137**	Path Significant at .01
Brand Trust	→	Brand Advocacy	-.069	H1b (Rejected)

Note: ***$p < .001$, **$p < .01$, *$p < .05$.

and ($\beta = .708$, $p < .001$) for consumer electronics are both significant, and thus Hypothesis H3 is also accepted for both the surveys.

The Sobel test (Tables 2.6 and 2.7) is only run for significant paths; therefore, the paths that are insignificant will not be included in the test, and the Hypotheses for those paths are already rejected based on the structural modeling results, as shown in Tables 2.4 and 2.5. Therefore, H2b and H2c are already rejected for cosmetics, and H1b is rejected for consumer electronics. The Sobel statistics equal or above 1.9 show that

Table 2.6   Sobel test results – cosmetics

Mediation Path	Sobel Test Statistics	Hypotheses
Brand Love > Trust > Brand Defense	4.587***	H1a (Accepted)
Brand Love > Trust > Brand Advocacy	4.244***	H1b (Accepted)
Brand Love > Trust > Positive WOM	5.427***	H1c (Accepted)
Brand Love > Forgiveness > Brand Defense	3.377***	H2a (Accepted)
Brand Love > Loyalty > Brand Defense	1.970*	H3a (Accepted)
Brand Love > Loyalty > Brand Advocacy	4.020***	H3b (Accepted)
Brand Love > Loyalty > Positive WOM	4.725***	H3c (Accepted)

Note: ***$p < .001$ and *$p < .01$.

Table 2.7   Sobel test results – consumer electronics

Mediation Path	Sobel Test Statistics	Hypotheses
Brand Love > Trust > Brand Defense	.151	H1a (Rejected)
Brand Love > Trust > Positive WOM	.259	H1b (Rejected)
Brand Love > Forgiveness > Brand Defense	5.556***	H2a (Accepted)
Brand Love > Forgiveness > Brand Advocacy	6.108***	H2b (Accepted)
Brand Love > Forgiveness > Positive WOM	6.689***	H2c (Accepted)
Brand Love > Loyalty > Brand Defense	1.538*	H3a (Accepted)
Brand Love > Loyalty > Brand Advocacy	2.284**	H3b (Accepted)
Brand Love > Loyalty > Positive WOM	2.2379**	H3c (Accepted)

Note: ***$p < .001$, **$p < .05$ and *$p < .01$.

there exists a mediation effect; therefore, the hypothesis is considered accepted.

6   Discussion

The findings of the study suggest interesting insights into the benefits of a close consumer brand relationship, particularly brand love, in generating different levels of consumers' positive WOM attributions toward the loved brand. The study involved developing a model for measuring the different WOM outcomes of brand love in the scenario of negative WOM, by developing a scale for "brand defense," to measure this new construct. The study proposes to view WOM behavioral outcomes in a hierarchy in order to develop an improved understanding of the different levels and intensities of consumers' behavioral attributions

toward a brand (Javed, 2013), as suggested by Park *et al.* (2006) and Park and McInnis (2006). Park *et al.* (2006) and Park and McInnis (2006) suggested viewing the overall consumer behaviors toward brands in the form of a hierarchy; however, this study involves exploring merely the consumers' WOM behaviors toward a brand in a hierarchy.

The final study is conducted with two sets of surveys with two different product categories for cross-validation of results. The role of brand forgiveness and trust differs for the two surveys. With regard to cosmetics, forgiveness does not seem to mediate the relationships of brand love with both WOM and brand advocacy; however, it supports the brand defense attributions. It suggests that consumers defend a brand out of the mediating effect of forgiveness in brand love, even if they are not recommending that brand (brand advocacy). This finding is worth noting for managers to build such consumer brand relations that would promote defense for fighting back negative WOM. In the case of trust in consumer electronics products, consumers do not seem to provide positive WOM, brand advocacy, or brand defense against negative WOM out of trust for the loved brand. However, the study of cosmetics findings suggests that brand love fosters consumer brand trust that prevents consumers from trusting the negative information and leads to an automated defense behavior. Therefore, the difference in hypotheses results further enunciates the need for further research with more product categories to study the differing WOM patterns, particularly brand defense.

In sum, the study suggests for managers that brand love with its positive WOM outcomes followed by advocacy and brand defense can avert the destructive impact of negative WOM. Therefore, by employing adequate strategies to foster consumer brand love bonds, managers can reverse the advice pattern in the market through their brands' own defenders and advocates. The major limitation of the research is that it compares only two product categories. A future study should be carried out with a large sample of multiple products to examine the exact impact of brand love on WOM behavior and the existence of brand defense.

6.1 Contributions and managerial implications

The increasing importance of the consumer brand relationship and consumers' attributions toward their loved brands support the importance of this study.

One of the major managerial or practical implications of the study is that companies can create a score for brand defense, and they can measure the brand defense score over a period of time. For example,

if something negative happens to, or by any brand, like Nike or Apple (such as any brand or product failure or merely any rumors about the brand), one can actually measure to what extent consumers defend it by calculating the brand defense score. The company can also compute the score of brand defense over a period of time. This will provide an indication of how close their customers are with their brand. The score of brand defense calculated through median over time can indicate the level of consumers defending a brand. Thus, if the brand defense score increases, it will indicate that brand love is having a positive impact on consumer behavior that is promoting brand defense behavior over time. The impact of forgiveness on consumer brand relationships has been observed in the case of Nike design failure (Donovan *et al.*, 2012). Therefore, the findings imply that developing strong relationships with consumers can help brands grow and be sustained in the market.

References

Aaker, J. (1997) "Dimensions of Brand Personality" *Journal of Marketing Research,* 34: 347–56.

Ahuvia, A. (2012) "Relationships Are Complicated: On Construct Validity When Consumer-Brand Relationships are Systems." In S. Fournier, M. Breazeale, and M. Fetscherin (eds) *Consumer-Brand Relationships Theory and Practice,* Routledge: London and New York, pp. 204–220.

Albert, N., Merunka, D., and Valette-Florence, P. (2008) "When Consumers Love Their Brands: Exploring the Concept and Its Dimensions" *Journal of Business Research,* 61: 1062–1075.

Albert, N., Merunka, D., and Valette-Florence, P. (2009) "The Feeling of Love Toward a Brand: Concept and Measurement" *Advances in Consumer Research,* 36: 300–307.

Allemand, M., Amberg, I, Zimprich, D., and Fincham, F. (2007) "The Role of Trait Forgiveness and Relationship Satisfaction in Episodic Forgiveness" *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, 26: 199–217.

Anderson, J.C. and Gerbing, D.W. (1988) "Structural Equation Modeling in Practice: A Review and Recommended Two-Step Approach" *Psychological Bulletin*, 103(3): 411–423.

Arndt, J. (1967) *Word of Mouth Advertising: A Review of the Literature. Research Monograph,* New York: Advertising Research Foundation.

Assael, H. (2004) *Consumer Behavior: A Strategic Approach.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Aydin, S. and Ozer, G. (2005) "National Customer Satisfaction Indices: An Implementation in the Turkish Mobile Telephone Market" *Marketing Intelligence and Planning*, 23(5): 486–504.

Ball, D., Coelho, P.S., and Machas, A. (2004) "The Role of Communication and Trust in Explaining Customer Loyalty" *European Journal of Marketing*, 38: 1272–1293.

Baron, R. M., and Kenny, D. A. (1986). "The Moderator–Mediator Variable Distinction in Social Psychological Research: Conceptual, Strategic, and Statistical Considerations" *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 51(6): 1173–1182.

Bauer, H. H., Heinrich D. and Isabel, M. (2007) "How to Create High Emotional Consumer Brand Relationships? The Causalities of Brand Passion" Paper presented at Australian and New Zealand Marketing Academy Conference (ANZMAC) December 3–5, Dunedin, New Zealand.

Bendapudi, N. and Berry, L. L. (1997) "Customers' Motivations for Maintaining Relationships with Service Providers" *Journal of Retailing,* 73: 15–37.

Batra, R., Aaron A., and Richard, B. (2012) "Brand Love" *Journal of Marketing*, 76: 1–16.

Brady, M. K., Voorhees, C. M., and Brusco, M. J. (2012) "Service Sweethearting: Its Antecedents and Customer Consequences" *Journal of Marketing,* 76: 81–98.

Bruhn, M., Karlan D., and Schoar, A. (2012) "The Impact of Consulting Services on Small and Medium Enterprises: Evidence from a Randomized Trial in Mexico" mimeo, Yale University.

Carroll, A. and Aaron A. (2006) "Some Antecedents and Outcomes of Brand Love" *Marketing Letters*, 17: 79–89.

Charlett, D., Garland, R., and Marr, N. (1995), "How Damaging Is Negative Word of Mouth?" *Marketing Bulletin*, 6: 42–50.

Chevalier, J. A. and Mayzlin, D. (2003) "The Effect of Word of Mouth on Sales: Online Book Reviews" *Journal of Marketing Research*, 44(3): 345–354.

Churchill, G. A. (1979) "A Paradigm for Developing Better Measures of Marketing Constructs" *Journal of Marketing Research,* 16(1): 64–73.

deMatos, C. A. and Rossi C. A. (2008) "Word-of-Mouth Communications in Marketing: A Meta-Analytic Review of the Antecedents and Moderators" *Academy of Marketing Science,* 36: 578–96.

Doney, P. M., Barry J. M., and Abratt, R. (2007) "Trust Determinants and Outcomes in Global B2B Services" *European Journal of Marketing*, 41: 1096–1116.

Donovan, L. A. N., Priester, J. R., MacInnis, D. J., and Park, C. W. (2012) "Brand Forgiveness. How Close Brand Relationships Influence Forgiveness." In: Fournier, S., Breazeale, M. and Fetscherin, M. (eds) *Consumer-Brand Relationships Theory and Practice,* Routledge: London and New York, pp. 184–203.

East, R., Hammond, K., and Lomax, W. (2008) "Measuring the Impact of Positive and Negative Word of Mouth on Brand Purchase Probability" *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 25: 215–224.

Fetscherin, M. and Dato-on, M. (2012) "Investigating Two Alternative Love Relationships." In Fournier, S., Breazeale, M. and Fetscherin, M. (eds) *Consumer-Brand Relationships Theory and Practice,* London and New York: Routledge, pp. 151–164.

Finkel, E. J., Rusbult, C. E., Kumashiro, M., and Hannon, P. A. (2002) "Dealing with Betrayal in Close Relationships: Does Commitment Promote Forgiveness?" *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology,* 82: 956–974.

Fiske, S. T. (1980) "Attention and Weight in Person Perception: The Impact of Negative and Extreme Behavior" *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology,* 38(6): 889–906.

Flavian, C., Guinaliu, M., and Torres, E. (2005) "The Influence of Corporate Image on Consumer Trust: A Comparative Analysis in Traditional Versus Internet Banking" *Internet Research*, 15(4): 447–470.

Fournier, S. (1998) "Consumers and Their Brands: Developing Relationship Theory in Consumer Research" *Journal of Consumer Research,* 23: 343–73.

Ganesan S. (1994) "Determinants of Long-Term Orientation in Buyer-Seller Relationships" *Journal of Marketing*, 58: 1–19.

Goodman, J. and Newman, S. (2003) "Understand Customer Behavior and Complaints" *Quality Progress,* 36(1): 51–55.

Graham, J. and Havlena, W. (2007) "Finding the 'Missing Link': Advertising's Impact on Word of Mouth, Web Searches, and Site Visits" *Journal of Advertising Research*, 47: 427–435.

Graham, J. M. (2008) "Self-Expansion and Flow in Couples' Momentary Experiences: An Experience Sampling Study" *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology,* 95, 679–694.

Graham, J. M. (2011) "Measuring Love in Romantic Relationships: A Meta-Analysis" *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships,* 28: 748–771.

Hanna, N. and Wosniak, R. (2001) *Consumer Behavior: An Applied Approach*, Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Harrison-Walker, J. (2001) "The Measurement of Word-of-Mouth Communication, and an Investigation of Service Quality and Customer Commitment As Potential Antecedents" *Journal of Service Research,* 4: 60–75.

Hatfield, E. and Rapson, R. L. (1996) *Love and Sex: Cross-Cultural Perspectives,* Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Heinrich, D., Albrecht, C., and Bauer, H. H. (2012) "Love Actually? Measuring and Exploring Consumers' Brand Love." In: Fournier, S., Breazeale, M. and Fetscherin, M. (eds) *Consumer-Brand Relationships Theory and Practice,* London and New York: Routledge, pp. 151–164.

Henning-Thurau, T., Gwinner, K. P., and Gremler, D. D. (2002) "Understanding Relationship Marketing Outcomes: An Integration of Relational Benefits and Relationship Quality" *Journal of Service Research,* 4(3): 230– 247.

Heskett J. L., Sasser W. E., and Schlesinger L. A. (1997) *The Service Profit Chain*, New York: The Free Press.

Ismail. A. R. and Spinelli, G. (2012) "Effects of Brand Love, Personality and Image on Word of Mouth: The Case of Fashion Brands Among Young Consumers" *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management,* 16(4): 386–398.

Javed, M. (2013) "Beyond Brand Advocacy; WOM as Brand Defense," Paper presented at *the Consumer Brand Relationship Conference,* May 15–17, Boston.

Kamat, V. and Parulekar, A. (2007) "Brand Love—the Precursor to Loyalty," in *Advertising and Consumer Psychology: New Frontiers in Branding; Attitudes, Attachments, Relationships,* 94–95.

Kearns, J. N. and Fincham, F. D. (2005) "Victim and Perpetrator Accounts of Interpersonal Transgressions: Self-Serving or Relationship-Serving Biases?" *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin,* 31: 321–333.

Kemp, E., Childers, C., and Williams, K. H. (2012) "Place Branding: Creating Self- Brand Connections and Brand Advocacy" *Journal of Product and Brand Management*, 21(7): 508–515.

Kim, W. G., Han, J. S., and Lee, E. (2001) "Effects of Relationship Marketing on Repeat Purchase and Word-of-Mouth" *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research*, 25(3): 272–288

Kroloff, G. (1988) "At Home and Abroad: Weighing in" *Public Relations Journal,* 44(8): 8–10.

Mazzarol, T., Sweeney, J. C., and Soutar, G. N. (2007) "Conceptualizing Word-of-Mouth Activity, Triggers and Conditions: An Exploratory Study" *European Journal of Marketing*, 41: 1475–1494.

McCullough, M. E., Rachal, K. C., Sandage, S. J., Worthington, E. L., Jr., Wade-Brown, S., and Hight, T. (1998) "Interpersonal Forgiving in Close Relationships II: Theoretical Elaboration And Measurement" *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 75: 1586–1603

Mizerski, R. W. (1982) "An Attributional Explanation of the Disproportionate Influence of Unfavorable Information" *Journal of Consumer Research*, 9: 301–310.

Moorman, C., Deshpande, R., and Zaltman, G. (1993) "Factors Affecting Trust in Market Relationship" *Journal of Marketing*, 57: 81–101.

Mittal, V., Ross, T., and Baldasare, M. (1998) "The Asymmetric Impact of Negative and Positive Attribute-Level Performance on Overall Satisfaction and Repurchase Intentions" *Journal of Marketing*, 62: 33–47.

Morgan, R. M. and Hunt, S. D. (1994) "The Commitment-Trust Theory of Relationship Marketing" *Journal of Marketing,* 58(3): 20–38.

Naylor, G. and Kleiser, S. B. (2000) "Negative Versus Positive Word-of-Mouth: An Exception to the Rule" *Journal of Satisfaction, Dissatisfaction and Complaining Behavior*, 13: 26–36.

Ng, S., David, M, E., and Dagger, T. S. (2011) "Generating Positive Word-of-Mouth in the Service Experience" *Managing Service Quality,* 21: 133–51.

Park, C. W., Macinnis, D. J., and Priester, J. (2006) "Beyond Attitudes: Attachment and Consumer Behavior" *Seoul National Journal,* 12: 3–36.

Park, C. W. and Deborah J. M. (2006) "What's In and What's Out: Questions Over the Boundaries of the Attitude Construct" *Journal of Consumer Research,* 33: 16–18.

Peck, H., Payne, A., Christopher, M., and Clark, M. (1999). *Relationship Marketing: Strategy and Implementation*, Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann Ltd.

Shimp, T. and Madden, T. (1988) "Consumer-Object Relations: A Conceptual Framework Based Analogously on Sternberg's Triangular Theory of Love" *Advances in Consumer Research,* 15*:* 163–168.

Simpson, J. A., Campbell, B., and Berscheid, E. (1986) "The Association between Romantic Love and Marriage: Kephart (1967) Twice Revisited" *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 12: 363–372.

Skowronski, J. J. and Carlston, D. E. (1989) "Negativity and Extremity Biases in Impression Formation: A Review of Explanations" *Psychological Bulletin,* 105: 131–142.

Sternberg, R. J. (1987) *"*Liking Versus Loving: A Comparative Evaluation of Theories" *Psychological Bulletin,* 102(3): 331–345.

Sweeney, Jillian C., Soutar G. N., and Mazzarol, T. (2008) "Factors Influencing Word of Mouth Effectiveness: Receiver Perspectives" *European Journal of Marketing,* 42: 344–364.

Sweeney, J, S., Soutar, G. N., and Mazzarol, T. (2010) "Word of Mouth: Measuring the Power of Individual Messages" *European Journal of Marketing,* 46: 237–257.

Tsai, S. (2011) "Fostering International Brand Loyalty through Committed and Attached Relationships" *International Business Review*, 20: 521–534.

Wallace, E., Buil, I., and Chernatony, L. (2012) "Do Self-Expressive Brands Create Greater Brand Love and Brand Advocacy among Facebook Users?" Paper

presented at the *European Marketing Academy Conference (EMAC)* May 22–25, Lisbon.

Zinkhan, G. M., Burton, S., and Wallendorf, M. (1983) "Marketing Applications for Snowball Sampling: Potential Benefits and Problems." In: Darden, W. R., Monroe, K. B. and Dillon, W. R. (eds) *Research Methods and Causal Modeling in Marketing*, 1, Chicago: American Marketing Association, pp. 5–8.

3
Evolution of Luxury Brand Love Intensity over Time

Gachoucha Kretz

1 Introduction

In their integrative review of the concept of material possession attachment, Kleine and Baker (2004) suggest that further research should be carried out to better understand the difference between consumer brand bonds and consumer-possession bonds. Based on their extant literature review, Kleine and Baker (2004) recommend clarifying these concepts that express bonds with brands and possessions, using terms such as 'brand relationships' (Edson Escalas, 2004; Escalas and Bettman, 2003; Fournier, 1998; Muniz Jr. and O'Guinn, 2001), 'brand love' (Ahuvia, 1993; Albert *et al.*, 2008; Batra *et al.*, 2012; Carroll and Ahuvia 2006), 'possession attachment' (Ahuvia 2005a; Belk 1988; Kleine and Baker 2004; Kleine III *et al.*, 1995; Wallendorf and Arnould 1988), and 'possession love' (Lastovicka and Sirianni 2011). In particular, they highly recommend a study on how possession attachment evolves into brand meaning over time.

Following Kleine and Baker's (2004) conclusion and advice, the aim of the present study is to explore commercial love for luxury brands and products through a series of qualitative analyses: (1) clarifying the concepts and boundaries of brand love and possession love, their role and content, and how they interact and articulate in time. This chapter addresses the process through which consumers who hold emotional bonds to a specific possession ('possession love'), developing meanings and positive emotional bonds toward its relating brand ('brand love'), (2) studying the reverse process by which consumers have strong bonds toward a brand and develop an emotional attachment toward products of this brand, (3) investigating the potential articulation of brand love and product love over time. The existing literature on bonds and relationship

types with possessions and brands is rich. In a first step this chapter makes a detailed review of it and also highlights potential confusion between the related concepts, while defining the key concepts of this study and delineating the conceptual scope. In a second step, it details the research method (respondents, field, qualitative data collection and interpretation method). In the third step, the chapter presents the main findings of the study and provides a discussion and conclusion.

2 Conceptualizing bonds with objects

As shown in the following, the existing literature in consumer research provides a handful of studies that analyze people's relationships with objects (whether brands or possessions). Among the numerous concepts used to theorize the binding with brands or possessions, some have been widely accepted. In particular, the concepts often applied to people's bonds with possessions are 'possession attachment' (Ball and Tasaki 1992; Belk, 1988; Grayson and Shulman, 2000; Kleine III *et al.*, 1995; Wallendorf and Arnould, 1988) and, recently, 'possession love' (Lastovicka and Sirianni, 2011; Shimp and Madden 1988). In the realm of brand bonds, 'brand love' (Albert *et al.*, 2008; Batra *et al.*, 2012; Bergkvist and Bech-Larsen, 2010; Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006; Fournier, 1998; Fetscherin and Conway Dato-on, 2012; Hemetsberger *et al.*, 2009; Heinricht *et al.*, 2012; Kamat and Parulekar, 2007; Keh *et al.*, 2007; Long-Tolbert and Gammoh, 2012; Patwardhan and Balasubramanian, 2013; Rossiter, 2012; Roy *et al.*, 2012) and 'brand attachment,' including 'brand relationships' (Fournier, 1998; Muniz Jr. and O'Guinn, 2001) and 'self-brand connections' (Edson Escalas, 2004; Escalas and Bettman, 2003) are the two concepts mostly shared by the existing research. Figure 3.1 summarizes the four concepts.

2.1 Possession attachment

Kleine and Baker (2004) provide an integrative review of what material possession attachment is: "multi-faceted property of the relationship between a specific individual or group of individuals and a specific, material object that an individual has psychologically appropriated, decommodified and singularized through person-object interaction" (p. 1). It is argued that possession attachment relies on specific objects that may have no particular face value but that have gained emotional value in time in the eyes of their owner (Ball and Tasaki, 1992; Belk, 1988; Grayson and Shulman, 2000; Kleine III *et al.*, 1995; Wallendorf and Arnould, 1988). Appropriation is a key process in possession attachment

Bond / Feeling

		Love	Attachment
Relationship with Object	Brand	Albert *et al.*, 2008; Batra *et al.*, 2012; Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006; Fetscherin and Conway Dato-on, 2012	Fournier, 1998; Muniz Jr and O'guinn, 2001
	Product	Lastovicka and Sirianni, 2011; Shimp and Madden 1988	Ball and Tasaki 1992; Belk,1988; Grayson and Shulman, 2000; Kleine III *et al.*, 1995; Wallendorf and Arnould,1988

Figure 3.1 Relationships – bond matrix
Source: Author.

and occurs through 'decommodification' and 'singularization' (Kopytoff, 1986; Wallendorf and Arnould, 1988; Wallendorf and Arnould, 1991). Those two processes help 'remove' the commercial aspect of products to make them unique, singular, and irreplaceable for their owners (Grayson and Shulman, 2000; Wallendorf and Arnould, 1988).

Possession attachment is possible because the related object has indexical and verification value (Kleine and Baker, 2004; Grayson and Shulman, 2000; Mayer and Belk, 1982). The object becomes a tangible representation of intangible past events, family or friendship bonds, and that tangibility makes it possible for owners to verify that such events and symbolic relationships have indeed existed. Possession attachment (intangible) is stronger as the underlying (tangible) object is irreplaceable (Grayson and Shulman, 2000). Irreplaceable possessions are possessions whose meaning cannot be replaced, even by exact replica, because they verify a specific symbolic meaning (e.g., graduation, grandfather gift).

While 'possession attachment' is usually imbued with emotions, often-positive feelings, and a sense of well-being (Kleine and Baker 2004), it is different from 'possession love.' Attachment encompasses more than just feelings: it also comprises identity, self-definition, and extended self (Belk, 1988; Ball and Tasaki, 1992; Karanika and Hogg 2013; Kleine III *et al.*, 1995; Lastovicka and Fernandez, 2005). Possession love, in contrast, focuses on particular feelings of love toward possessions.

2.2 Possession love

Shimp and Madden (1988) initiated the research stream on possession love by proposing a conceptual model of 'consumer-object relationships,'

basing it on the Triangular Theory of Love developed by Sternberg (1986). Building on recognition in the previous literature that emotional bonds generate possession attachment (Kleine and Baker, 2004), Lastovicka and Sirianni (2011) investigate a specific form of possession attachment they label "material possession love." They define it as "a property of a consumer's relationship with a specific psychologically appropriated possession, reflecting the nature and degree of a consumer's positive emotional attachment to an object" (p. 324). Thus, their focus is driven by the positive feeling of love experienced by the owners of material possessions.

The concept of possession love is interesting for consumer research because it drives attention toward the potential commercial value of possessions, while the research focus on possession attachment had only addressed consumer well-being so far. In particular, Lastovicka and Sirianni (2011) provide evidence that obsessed owners nurture their beloved possessions and can spend substantial amounts of money on object care and maintenance. This in turn drives potential for revenues for marketers through additional sales and services.

2.3   Brand attachment

For Kleine and Baker (2004), there is no such thing as brand attachment since only the specific material object can generate attachment through past experiences. Several authors, however, have described and empirically studied brand attachment (Batra *et al.*, 2012; Holt, 2004; McAlexander *et al.*, 2002; Muniz Jr. and O'Guinn, 2001; Schouten and McAlexander, 1995; Thomson and MacInnis, 2005). Schouten and McAlexander (1995) and Muniz Jr. and O'Guinn (2001) first theorized collective and tribal admiration for a brand, thus seeding the idea that consumers may feel bonded to specific brands. Thomson and MacInnis (2005) introduced the term 'brand attachment,' asserting that an emotional bond exists between consumers and brands. Holt (2003, 2004, 2005) provided cultural grounding for brand attachment and documented the emergence of brand icons with which consumers forge deep connections through shared meanings that revolve around culture, collective stories, myths, and conventions. Finally, Batra *et al.* (2012) give evidence of brand attachment based on in-depth interviews with a wide corpus of respondents.

Consumers who are attached to brands experience emotions that may generate strong loyalty (Holt, 2004, 2005; Thomson *et al.*, 2005), the willingness to pay a premium price for the brand (Thomson *et al.*, 2005), or brand advocacy when feelings are experienced collectively (McAlexander, 1995; Muniz Jr. and O'Guinn, 2001). Consumer brand attachment arises from self-brand connections and relationships at an individual level (Edson Escalas, 2004; Escalas and Bettman, 2005;

Thomson *et al.*,. 2005) and from shared conventions and stories at a collective level (Holt, 2004). Conceptually speaking, the existing research on love for commercial objects has not clearly mentioned brand attachment, with the exception of Ahuvia's study (2005b), and has rarely clarified the difference between brand love and brand attachment, except for Albert *et al.*'s (2008) and more recently Batra *et al.*'s (2012) studies. The following section is an attempt to summarize the articles mentioned here and to delineate brand love as compared to brand attachment.

2.4   Brand love

Brand love is a recent construct that has driven a great deal of research (Albert *et al.*, 2008; Batra *et al.*, 2012; Bergkvist and Bech-Larsen, 2010; Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006; Fournier, 1998; Fetscherin and Conway Dato-on, 2012; Hemetsberger *et al.*, 2009; Heinricht *et al.*, 2012; Kamat and Parulekar, 2007; Keh *et al.*, 2007; Long-Tolbert and Gammoh, 2012; Patwardhan and Balasubramanian, 2013; Rossiter, 2012; Roy *et al.*, 2012) and managerial attention with the notion of "lovemarks" (Roberts and Lafley, 2005).

   Initial research on brand love has focused on the emotions that people feel for a brand. Fournier (1998) first suggested that consumers develop strong relationships toward brands, including love. Ahuvia (1993) initiated the construct of brand love based on already theorized love relationships (Shimp and Madden, 1988). Moving beyond the traditional frameworks of interpersonal love, he then developed a brand love prototype comprising (1) passion for the brand; (2) brand attachment; (3) positive evaluation of the brand; (4) positive emotions in response to the brand; and (5) declarations of love toward the brand (Ahuvia, 2005b). Carroll and Ahuvia (2006) defined brand love as the "degree of passionate emotional attachment a satisfied consumer has for a particular trade name" (p. 81). Subsequent research has enriched the brand love definition, but also brought substantial confusion and debate about the concept (Albert *et al.*, 2008; Batra *et al.*, 2012) because it was mostly based on existing theoretical frameworks of love as a relationship (Shimp and Madden, 1988; Sternberg, 1986).

   Albert *et al.* (2008) first proposed an exploration of the concept of brand love, breaking free from the constraints of interpersonal love theories. Their wide-scale study in a French context yielded 11 dimensions of love toward brands. Congruent with Ahuvia's (2005b) love prototype, they found brand love to rely on emotions. But they also showed that brand love might encompass more dimensions than just emotions, namely identity construction, relationship, consumer experience, or brand specificities. However, they did not find brand attachment to be part of brand love.

Batra *et al.*'s (2012) integrative literature review proposes consensus around a brand love definition. Re-exploring the brand love prototype developed in 2005, they provide a higher-order model of brand love comprising attachment, but also self-definition motives and passion-driven behaviors. They also recommend that future research consider brand love as a relationship more than a mere emotion.

Studying brand love is of high managerial interest because it addresses key issues in brand management: how to turn "liking" into "love" and thus maintain consumer brand relationship over time (Batra *et al.*, 2012). It also drives managers' attention to potential cultural issues and differences and helps the adaptation of local marketing actions (Albert *et al.*, 2008).

3   Articulating brand and possession bonds

The preceding sections attempted to circumscribe brand and product attachment, brand and product love, and to identify similarities and differences between them. This clarification work raises the following questions: (1) How are possession attachment, brand attachment (and self-brand connection), brand love, and possession love articulated in a commercial research context?; (2) How are they similar or different when they are part of the commercial or the private spheres?; (3) How can we account for the irreplaceable status of brands?; (4) what roles and interrelationships do brand love and possession love entertain?

3.1   Brand irreplaceability

A first unclear area relates to brand irreplaceability as compared to possession irreplaceability. Existing research mostly bolsters possession irreplaceability (Belk, 1988; Grayson and Shulman, 2000; Wallendorf and Arnould, 1988) because of possession indexicality, verification, and singularity power. Kleine and Baker (2004) assert that only possession attachment may exist. Indeed, brands are the recipients of perceptions about fungible and exchangeable products. Fungible products are totally substitutable and undifferentiated in consumers' minds. As such, they cannot be irreplaceable. Some authors, however, mention that brands may be irreplaceable, whether collectively in brand communities (Muniz Jr. and O'Guinn, 2001), in the case of iconic brands (Holt, 2004), or at a more personal level when consumers have a feeling for brands that serve identity purposes (Albert *et al.*, 2008; Batra *et al.*, 2012; Edson Escalas, 2004; Thomson and MacInnis, 2005) and provide emotional satisfaction (Albert *et al.*, 2008; Batra *et al.*, 2012; Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006; Rossiter, 2012; Patwardhan and Balasubramanian, 2013). In addition, everyday

life provides multiple examples of consumer sadness because brands have been withdrawn from the marketplace.

The question rises: does brand irreplaceability exist? If we assume that it does not, how can we account for brand bonds? If we accept that brand irreplaceability does exist, how does it relate with brand bonds? And how do brand bonds and possessions articulate in that perspective? This issue will be tackled below.

3.2   Brand and possession bonds in the marketplace versus in the private sphere

The second grey area concerns brand and possession bonds when they migrate from the market space to the private space. The existing literature suggests, for example, that attachment to possessions arises when the possession has escaped the marketplace and gained private meanings and singularity (Kleine and Baker, 2004; Lastovicka and Sirianni, 2011). Conversely, possessions that are still imbued with market meanings and commercial value can be better grasped through possession love (Lastovicka and Sirianni, 2011). Similarly, brand love is more efficient in the research of commercial issues (Batra *et al.*, 2012).

Past research suggests that products remain products as long as they are part of the marketplace. As soon as they enter the private sphere and are subject to singularization, however, they reach the status of (favorite) possessions. Based on that premise, researchers exploring commercial phenomena should use possession love as an object of study, while those who want to investigate consumer well-being-related phenomena should study possession attachment. Regarding brands, as mentioned previously, some authors contend that brands may never escape the marketplace and become irreplaceable, as a set of fungible products. However, others suggest that brand may well be subject to singularization, lose their commercial meaning, and thus integrate the private sphere. From that perspective, brand love may be a more adequate concept for studying the commercial aspects of the relationship.

In the remainder of this chapter, we will use the term 'products' for possessions that are not singularized. Since we focus on the consumer brand relationship in a commercial setting, we will address commercial love anchors, namely possession love and brand love.

3.3   Brand love and possession love roles and articulation in a commercial setting

The existing research is still quite silent on the roles and articulation of brand and possession love in the marketplace. Lastovicka and Sirianni

(2011) argue that very little is known about the roles of brand love and possession love, and how they interact. While providing novel insight on possession love, the authors do not detail how possession love evolves over time, while theories of love and attachment clearly mention that emotional relationship deepen and grow as the relationships develop (Patwardhan and Balasubramanian, 2013).

Future research is also called to detail the roles and interactions of brand love with possession love (Lastovicka and Sirianni, 2011). Questions remain unanswered, for example, is brand love more powerful when consumers fancy the product they do not own, or is it also operant afterwards, and how? Is brand love still active when the product has been singularized into a favorite possession, and if so, how? Will possession love overshadow brand love in that case, or not? The present study provides answers to these questions, in particular in parts 5.4 and 5.5.

Overall, the question of what anchors commercial love (i.e., brand love and possession love) and how brand love and possession love interact and develop over time still requires further investigation. In particular, if consumers love a brand first, how do meanings and love transfer to the product/possession? If possession/product love arises first, how do meanings and love transfer to the brand?

Analyzing and describing the relationship between brand love and product/possession love, however, requires a clear understanding of the relationship and hierarchies existing between the underlying objects of love: the hierarchy and links between the brand and the product.

3.4 Brand hierarchy, brand equity, and commercial love

Except when they are new to the market and are launched as new product brands, brands grow and develop within brand portfolios (Aaker, 2004; Kapferer, 2012). Brand hierarchies thus emerge as a consequence of brand portfolio management and rationalization. They usually follow a one-tier architecture, an umbrella brand and product categories or products below, or a two-tier architecture, a mother brand and daughter brands (Kapferer, 2012). Whatever the brand hierarchy constructed, products always benefit from the equity of the umbrella or the mother brand (Aaker, 2004, Kapferer, 2012). Branding theory states that all investments, whether marketing or communication ones, contribute to strengthen the brand image, identity, and brand equity. In particular, the more companies invest in brands, the stronger those brands' equity grows, including consumer brand awareness and perceptions. As a consequence, if companies boost investments in the mother or the umbrella brand, consumer attention and perceptions will be drawn to the mother
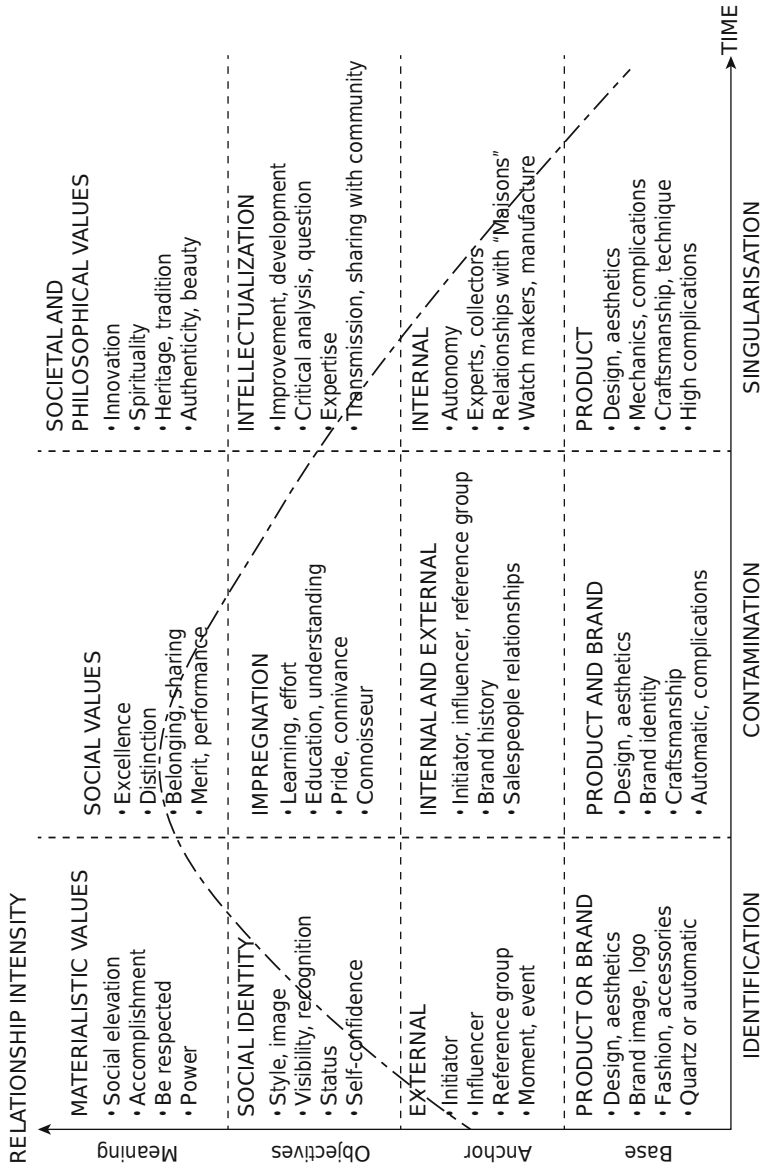
RELATIONSHIP INTENSITY →

	IDENTIFICATION	CONTAMINATION	SINGULARISATION
Meaning	MATERIALISTIC VALUES • Social elevation • Accomplishment • Be respected • Power	SOCIAL VALUES • Excellence • Distinction • Belonging, sharing • Merit, performance	SOCIETAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL VALUES • Innovation • Spirituality • Heritage, tradition • Authenticity, beauty
Objectives	SOCIAL IDENTITY • Style, image • Visibility, recognition • Status • Self-confidence	IMPREGNATION • Learning, effort • Education, understanding • Pride, connivance • Connoisseur	INTELLECTUALIZATION • Improvement, development • Critical analysis, question • Expertise • Transmission, sharing with community
Anchor	EXTERNAL • Initiator • Influencer • Reference group • Moment, event	INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL • Initiator, influencer, reference group • Brand history • Salespeople relationships	INTERNAL • Autonomy • Experts, collectors • Relationships with "Maisons" • Watch makers, manufacture
Base	PRODUCT OR BRAND • Design, aesthetics • Brand image, logo • Fashion, accessories • Quartz or automatic	PRODUCT AND BRAND • Design, aesthetics • Brand identity • Craftsmanship • Automatic, complications	PRODUCT • Design, aesthetics • Mechanics, complications • Craftsmanship, technique • High complications

TIME →

Figure 3.2 The relationship evolution

Source: Author. The dotted line represents the weight of the brand in the intensity of the relationship experienced by the consumer. It declines as soon as the product and the singularization process supersede the value of the brand.

or umbrella brand. But if communication and marketing happen to focus on the product level, then consumers will know the products' brand much better than the mother or the umbrella brand. According to brand management theory, brands and products are thus closely linked within a brand portfolio all the more as the umbrella brand has a strong brand equity. As a consequence, it would be relevant to consider brand love as closely linked to product love and probably as dominant. Conversely, if consumers know the products better than the umbrella brand within a brand portfolio, product love may be stronger than brand love.

If consumers know the brand better, they may start loving the brand first. If they know the product(s) better, they may enter the love relationship via the product(s). The question of the relationship between brand and product knowledge, and brand and product love should also be addressed to better understand how commercial love (i.e., brand and product love) emerge and are articulated. Answers to this question are provided in part 5.4. and Figure 3.2.

The current literature provides evidence of commercial love, meaning 'brand love' and 'product/possession love.' Among the questions requiring further investigation, we chose to address the following ones: (1) What anchors commercial love – the brand or the product/possession? Specifically, we seek to understand the impact of brand portfolio management decisions on commercial love. (2) What is the weight/power of each? In particular, is brand love or product love dominant? Under what conditions? (3) How do brand love and product love interact over time? (4) How do they articulate over time? This chapter contributes to the existing knowledge by trying to understand brand love and product love longitudinally. Based on that premise, researchers exploring commercial phenomena should use possession love as an object of study, while those who want to investigate consumer well-being-related phenomena should study possession attachment. The first one relates to possessions that have not yet migrated from the marketplace and still hold commercial value, while the second one describes products that have been appropriated and have integrated into the private sphere through decommodification and singularization.

4   Method

Renowned scholars have expressed the need for further exploratory research in the realm of brand and product love (Albert *et al.* 2008, Ahuvia 2005b, 1993, Fournier 1998). Thus this chapter employs an exploratory

interpretive approach to revisit brand love and product love, breaking free from preconceived frameworks and exploring commercial love anchors and the longitudinal articulation of brand love and product/possession love.

4.1 Luxury brands and products stimuli

Luxury brands and products have been chosen as objects of this study for their potential to provide theoretical and managerial insight. First, consumers form strong emotional bonds with luxury products and brands. Second, a study from Bain and Company (2013) states that 2012 was the third year in a row of double-digit growth for personal luxury goods, which have now reached over the 200 billion-euro ceiling. Worldwide, luxury goods spending will grow by 2 percent, to €217 billion at current exchange rates during 2013. Moreover, luxury brands and products were theoretically relevant, too, as luxury objects cover all aspects of 'love,' whether they are received as a gift, inherited from parents, or bought as rewards or guilty pleasures or to show off. Luxury brands and products are more likely to generate love because (1) they are highly hedonistic and symbolic (Carroll and Ahuvia 2006); (2) they serve symbolic needs such as public conspicuous consumption or identity construction (Kapferer and Bastien, 2012); (3) they are more likely to cover all dimensions that generate brand love as found by Batra *et al.* (2012); and (4) emotional attachment comes from private appropriation and singularization, that is, connection and closeness and dedication to making the relationship last with an object (Lastovicka and Sirianni 2011). Finally, luxury brands usually are umbrella brands that cover products within product categories. Marketing and communication investments are directed either to the umbrella brand (e.g., Louis Vuitton) or to the product below the umbrella (e.g., the Keepall bag). It is thus easy to decipher and interpret the hierarchy and connection between the brand and the product(s) in this area.

4.2 Data collection

We interviewed 22 luxury apparel and accessories (including fine watches and jewelry) consumers. Interviews were semi-structured, but respondents were encouraged to develop whatever they felt was interesting without any time limit. Respondents were chosen based on their obvious luxury-buying behaviors and declared passion for luxury brands and products. They were mainly French, but half of them had international exposure and interest, and a third of the respondents were living in France but were from a foreign country. Age span ranged from 21

to 60 years old, and on average, respondents were around 40 years old. Each interview lasted between two and four hours. Following the recommendations by Albert *et al.* (2008), the author did not use the word 'love' or words linked to any interpersonal relationships, all the more so as many respondents were French and very little likely to express love for consumption objects, consistent with findings by Albert *et al.* (2008).

Respondents were not informed about the precise research question. They had only a broad idea of the research topic that was presented as "you and luxury products and brands." Projective techniques and, specifically, collages about what came to their mind when they mentioned luxury products or brands were used as a way to grasp the feelings of love. We also explored the relationship between brand and product love by triggering narratives about their story with specific beloved products and brands, starting from how their relationship began to how it evolved. Finally, respondents were asked why they bought luxury products or brands and what effects these products had on them in the short term in grasping instant benefits but also in the long term in assessing their goals and values fulfillment.

5   Results

A grounded theory approach (Glaser, 1998, 1992; Jones and Noble, 2007) and iterative coding (Belk *et al.*, 2012) were used to analyze the data.

Borrowing from renowned scholars (Ahuvia, 2005a; Kozinets *et al.*, 2010), six cases were selected and reported as illustrative case studies because they are fully representative of the interviews carried out and highlight the major findings. Those six sample responses illustrate the three relationship phases that have been identified and will be further discussed: identification, contamination, and singularization (Table 3.1).

The remainder of this part will present and discuss the results of my study.

5.1   Brands can be irreplaceable

While previous research sometimes denied brand irreplaceability, we discovered that consumers claim the brands they love are irreplaceable. For example, Mon declared she adored Saint Laurent and "would die" if the brand disappeared. Talking with her, we discovered that brands might also be irreplaceable, even though they are not tangible or are a collection of fungible products. What really mattered were the designer's creativity and the related brand savoir-faire because they represented the potential for a future crush and a purchase, and a promise to accompany further

Table 3.1 Relationship phases with luxury brands

Relationship Phase	Respondent	Respondent Profile	Selected Significant Verbata
Identification	Mon, 30 years old	Thai socialite, very wealthy family. Has been living in Paris for a few years; spends on haute couture shopping and going out in the hippest places in Europe. Trendsetter and fashion and luxury expert. Passionate about fashion and luxury: attends every show she can. Values her image as an independent woman, jet setter, and trendsetter. Hates followers; admits she wants to be unique and remarked upon.	I love [luxury objects] because with them, I can be who I am and the one I really want to be. More than that, thanks to them, I can love myself at any time.
	Anne, 25 years old	Half French and half Vietnamese MBA student and entrepreneur in fashion accessories and jewels. Has lived and studied in many countries (USA, UK, France). Values hard work, success, and rewards. For her, success should be shown off through luxury consumption and purchase.	I love Chanel as a brand because of Coco. I absolutely admire this woman who was so smart, so independent, so good at business, and who changed the world. The women's world. She was revolutionary.
Contamination	Dominique, 55 years old	Partner business lawyer in a top-tier American law firm and "ultra wealthy." Owns many houses, collects 14 luxury sport cars, fine wines, and watches. Of French bourgeois family origin; regrets his money and success are not enough to gain recognition from aristocrats. Claims he values family and heritage, but also obviously seeks status, power, social elevation, and belonging to people "with a name and family" and "who count."	I buy a lot of luxury items. I particularly like Aston. I started with one model I really liked, then bought other ones I found really beautiful. For my watch, I started with the brand I fancied, and then I chose the model.
	Omar, 35 years old	French born, raised in London, and now a banker in Dubai. Long history of buying luxury items (fine watches and men accessories). Feels social pressure by peer bankers and lawyers to possess and display luxury. Very much attached to his familial roots; values work, merit but also heritage and history-related values.	You don't love a fine watch for the brand. You love the watch for the watch, right? But in the case of that brand, it is special. I read so much about their financial performance, their branding strategy, how they manage their retailing structure to do business. It made me love their products and buy a watch from them because I could wear a piece from that company.

(continued)

Table 3.1 Continued

Relationship Phase	Respondent	Respondent Profile	Selected Significant Verbata
Singularization	Sylvie, 45 years old	Luxury marketing executive in love with luxury, specifically fine watches. Works for an exclusive timepiece brand; has been a collector since she was a teenager. Describes timepieces she loves very poetically and philosophically; always makes a link between beloved timepieces and values: expertise, innovation, beauty, authenticity, and spiritual elevation.	You really need to know and appreciate what a complication is or the difference between layers of mother of pearl and simple enamel before you can contemplate paying 50,000 euros for a complicated watch. What matters to me is how someone has been able to master gravity with a new tourbillon or spinning tourbillon. I do not really care if it is Greubel Forsey or of it is Jeager Lecoultre, except if it tells something about the manufacturer, the R&D; the watch makers, etc.
	Dimitrie, 37 years old.	French business lawyer in an American global law firm. True timepiece expert and passionate. Cannot own the timepieces he loves (not affordable even for ultra-wealthy). Very knowledgeable about watch making and timepieces. Grants high importance to family values, tradition, and heritage.	This little box can perfectly start movement from nothing and make an intangible concept – time – tangible. Plus, it is an evidence of humankind's genius and our propensity to think about elevation ... philosophical issues like what time is and what it means. A watch represents a concept, and not the slightest one: time! Can you imagine? A haute couture dress represents timeless beauty and femininity. Plus, you buy yourself the best craft and the most outstanding talents of your time. Whether it is embroiderers or watchmakers.

identity construction. Brand irreplaceability depended on the abstract power to support present and future personal identity statements. If the brand disappears, the respondent loses one landmark among the set of brands from which to select to build and maintain an identity.

5.2   Luxury product/possession love degrees

Consistent with Lastovicka and Sirianni (2011), we also found three degrees of love for products/possessions.

The first degree of product/possession love was very enthusiastic and passionate ("I love this bag so much"). This love is mostly found on the basis of product design, style, and aesthetic qualities but also in popular culture. If celebrities appeared in public with a specific bag, then we discovered that several respondents wanted to imitate them by wearing the same bag. Moreover, if an item had been advertised in A-list fashion magazines, then it would also trigger passion and admiration for many respondents. Products/possessions are fashionable and trendy, which makes them desirable. As soon as the fashion fades, love fades with it. Similarly, as soon as the consumer has satisfied his or her burning desire, the passion disappears.

The second degree of product/possession love was much milder and more oriented toward understanding. Respondents made the effort to know more about the product/possession: what it is made of; how it was crafted and by whom; the reason for the design choice; the family of products the product/possession belongs to. The design and aesthetics of the product/possession were still very important for the respondents, but the "backstage" had also become very important, including the raw materials, the crafts and skills, and the making of the product/possession.

The last degree of product/possession love is very deep and relies on deep knowledge and understanding, expertise about the product/possession. At that stage, what seemed to matter to many respondents was the relationship they had with the product/possession, based on expert knowledge of it and commitment to preserving and maintaining it.

Overall, we found three types of product/possession love quite similar to those of Lastovicka and Sirianni (2011). However, Lastovicka and Sirianni (2011) did not mention any sequence in time, which this chapter attempts to address.

5.3   Luxury brand love degrees

Heinrich *et al.* (2012) have found three degrees of brand love, similar to that of possession love (passion, intimacy, and commitment). We have also discovered three degrees of brand love.

The first degree relates to brand adoration or passion ("I absolutely adore this brand"). The brand was associated almost all the time with the founder or the designer, and with his or her lifestyle, success, talent, and creativity. In the case of Anne, it became obvious throughout the interview that she admired and envied Coco Chanel as a successful woman with whom she could identify. As an entrepreneur, she is passionate about Chanel because the brand verifies success and performance in her eyes. In short, brand adoration or passion is the first degree of brand love, inspired by founders or designers because they facilitate identification and parasocial interaction. We also found respondents who loved brands because they associated them with celebrities or with movies they loved. Marketing, public relations, and communication actions thus highly impacted luxury brand love. The logos, the monograms, and, generally speaking, the brand image generate brand passion at that level.

The second degree of brand love shows a strong desire to better know the brand, its history, core values, and DNA. Respondents explained their love for the brand came from their admiration for its identity, heritage, know-how and skills, and outstanding craftsmanship. The excellence, performance, and success associated with the beloved brands as well as the potential to achieve distinction via that brand fuel that love. Consumers made an effort and worked hard to self-train about the brand in order to gain some kind of connoisseurship and to feel closer and more connected to the brand. Overall, the second degree of love is less passionate but much more involved and aims at closeness and understanding.

Finally, the last degree of brand love we have identified is a highly committed love. Brand lovers know the brands, love them thoroughly, and can adopt a critical point of view toward it. Some consumers go as far as sharing their comments and suggestions for technical improvement when they have criticism against the brand they love. This type of brand love is highly involved and highly demanding and critical. Passion is past; admiration is strong if the brand delivers on its promises, but any slight mistake is harshly criticized and backfires.

To conclude, we found three degrees of luxury brand love: a passionate brand love; closeness and connectedness brand love; involvement brand love. Our typology resembles Heinrich *et al.* (2012) and Albrecht *et al.*'s (2012) typology of passion, intimacy, and commitment for brand love. How those types of brand love interact with different types of product/possession love has yet to be detailed. The following section explains how and when brand love dominates product/possession love and vice versa.

5.4   Brand love and possession love articulation in time

Consistent with Fournier (1998) or Lastovicka and Sirianni (2011), we found that respondents' narratives with brands and products evolve over time. We discovered three relationship phases in a respondent's life with beloved brands and products: (1) the identification phase, (2) the contamination phase, and (3) the singularization phase. The strength of each type of love varied with the phase of the relationship. Brand love was always present and combined with product love, but more or less operant depending on the relationship phase. Figure 3.2 illustrates our findings.

We found an evolution in the depth and types of love over time, quite similarly with Fournier's (1998) observations. This product/brand love trajectory appeared to develop in time through three steps: (1) identification, (2) contamination, (3) singularization.

5.4.1   Identification phase

During the identification phase, consumers enter the relationship with the product or the brand based on their knowledge of either the product or the brand. This knowledge has been shaped by popular culture, celebrities, and brand and product communication (e.g., advertising, promotion, public relations events). Oswald (2010) found that consumers in emerging markets like China have no or very little brand knowledge to develop brand literacy over time. It starts with "superficial" literacy (status, power, price) and then evolves into sophisticated literacy, including deep emotions and common knowledge relating to the brand. Consistent with Oswald (2010), we discovered that consumers who are not luxury brand literate enter the brand and product relationship by searching identification with brands and celebrities whose status, power, image, and glamour inspire the buyers.

Consumers purchase luxury brands to achieve identity construction based on others' gaze and opinion and in relation to reference groups. Taste is shaped by "what's hip or trendy" or desired by others, more than by mere product or brand literacy and knowledge – thus external anchors. The values pursued by consumers are mostly social elevation and individual accomplishment. Consumers want recognition and respect from others, and therefore they want statutory objects and products and thus conspicuous signs of wealth, including logos and branded items. Some consumers may never deepen their relationship to the second phase: they want to enjoy the vast choice of logotyped products following trends and celebrities, and pursuing style objectives, but they do not care about the brand per se or the qualities and singularities of possessions.

5.4.2   Contamination phase

In the contamination phase, consumers have already been exposed to brands and iconic products and have become brand literate. They can tell the difference among the scope of luxury brands existing in the market. They have been "contaminated" because at this point, they have shaped knowledge and taste for specific brands and products and can tell the story, heritage, and DNA of each brand. They can also tell the ones that fit most their personal history, personality, and values. "Contamination" operates because consumers progressively enter the brand values and universe and start to like it for more than just the product or brand itself.

Consumers' motivations to buy are based on nascent appreciation of brand history and heritage and personal relationships with salespeople. Buyers get to know backstage craftsmanship and skills and know-how. They also have to make an effort to learn about the brand and the covered products it includes. This leads to a certain pride because hard-working consumers achieve a status of connoisseur that distinguishes them from "mass luxury buyers" (Dominique). In the contamination phase, values that count and drive consumers to certain brands are mainly excellence and distinction. They want to show they belong to a selective club of people of good taste and who are connoisseurs. A sense of belonging to the ones who are "knowledgeable" is highly operant in this phase.

The contamination phase is a decisive step in the brand love and possession love relationship. The brand gains weight more than products in the generation of love. At this stage consumers have to work hard to get to know the brand, its history and heritage, and its DNA. The contamination phase acts as a rite of passage for consumers to become genuine connoisseurs. They have to make an effort to enter the brand universe and history, to master brand knowledge before they become brand connoisseurs. Products at this stage are less important in the generation of love. However, they still bolster brand DNA by providing tangible illustration of skills and crafts.

5.4.3   Singularization phase

The singularization phase can be seen as the ultimate step in the relationship between consumers and luxury brands. At this stage, consumers have become experts in the brands they love and are able to take a bird's eye view of brand propositions. As a consequence, consumers can also become critical of brands that may be deceiving in their view. Their expertise helps identify the brands and products they love. Usually luxury consumers opt for brands because of peers' gaze, a certain need for status, or a desire to show off. Yet consumers who

have accessed the singularization phase have learned to think autonomously, that is, to "singularize" their own choices: they break free from others' advice and social pressure because they know products well enough to select the ones they love. They can rely on their own product and brand knowledge, and thus, the anchor for brand and product love is internal.

Consumers who have accessed the singularization phase are brand and product experts: they perfectly know the brand, but their outstanding expertise regards the products of the brand. They are incredibly knowledgeable about collections, craft, designers and so forth. Therefore, when "singularized consumers" choose a product at that stage, their choice reflects a capacity for criticism and autonomy of evaluation, which is not the case in the contamination phase. Consumers have entered the very small community of experts who share opinions and criticism among the group. High expertise leads to more abstraction: respondents were relating the outstanding aspects of the products with highest societal and philosophical values like freedom, innovation, spirituality, heritage or tradition, authenticity, or beauty.

At this stage of the relationship, brand love is mentioned, but much less than the objects underlying love. Product or possession love is much more prevalent because consumers have singularized products issued by the brand. Possessions at this stage are tangible representations of the values consumers seek in buying luxury objects: brand values and savoir-faire. For example, fine watch lovers look for timelessness and mastery of time, and favor the brands that esteem those terminal values. In addition, singularized possessions have become physical evidence of society's values and advances. The following section details how brand love and possession love are articulated depending on the relationship phases and dominance patterns.

5.5 Brand love or product love dominance

In line with existing research, the respondents all mentioned emotions and feelings for brands and products. They reported beloved brands' and products' identity relevance and impact on behavior. They also sometimes mentioned loved brands before product or possession love and vice versa. Following Lastovicka and Sirianni's (2011) recommendation, we first noted when respondents spontaneously expressed brand love or product love first. We then tried to reconstruct why they had mentioned the brand or the product first by interpreting the respondent's narrative of his or her story about the brand. We discovered that brand love or product love dominance depended on the relationship phase in which the consumers were involved.

5.5.1   *Identification phase*

In the first phase of the relationship ("Identification"), consumers express either love for the product or love for the brand. In other words, the basis of commercial love can be either the brand or the product.

Anne, for example, answered by mentioning iconic items, as if they always superseded brands (e.g., "the 2.55" and never "a Chanel bag"). She probably did so because the products she mentioned have gained such a high sign value through iconicity that they could be considered as brands. Product love emerged because those iconic products could help her show her sense of style and edgy taste, while encouraging others' envy.

Mon only mentioned brands she loved. Asked why she loved Saint Laurent or Shu Uemura so much, she explained thoroughly how the brand associations and universe fit her own universe and ideal self. She felt passionate about those brands because they faithfully serve a quite narcissistic project: loving herself at any time. Reciprocity is also experienced. Brand love emerged because brands the respondents love help with intimate and very sensitive identity projects. Consumers hope brand and celebrity iconicity in popular culture will transfer to their own self. In the identification phase, consumers invariably love products or brands provided the product or the brand is socially iconic.

5.5.2   *Contamination phase*

In the second phase of the relationship (contamination), respondents expressed love. The underlying objects were also mentioned, but when they were, they were fungible and exchangeable in consumers' minds. We found striking that this contamination phase led respondents to excellent knowledge of the brand, which made brand love sound dominant in consumer discourses.

To Omar, for example, loving a brand sometimes comes from the products, and sometimes from the brand's behavior in business. He says he loves a brand first because of the products, but he admits that he is also attracted to products because of what he knows from the brand at the business level.

For Dominique, brand love comes mainly from the brand's social iconicity. Any time he wants to buy a new luxury item, he will go for the brand that social convention considers the most iconic, desirable. Only then will he decide on the piece he wants to purchase based on his taste. Unlike Anne, though, Dominique does not seek iconic products but rather iconic brands that are socially desirable, recognizable, and carry high symbolic values such as power, connoisseurship, and status in the face of the reference group to which he wants to belong.

In the contamination phase, products seem to combine with brands to generate brand love. There could not be any brand love without

products to which respondents could refer. However, at that stage, the brand values, history, and heritage, as well as their social value are key in the emergence of brand love. Respondents progressively become "contaminated" by the brand DNA and universe.

5.5.3 Singularization phase

In the singularization phase, respondents showed much more interest in products than in brands. Specifically, products had lost their commercial value. Owners have singularized products into possessions and personally iconic objects. Brand love has faded at that stage, in the benefit for possession love. Singularization occurred because owners were experts, highly knowledgeable about the technical aspects of the objects. Their ability and capacity to "see through" the product to extract its internal beauty drives possession love.

For example, Sylvie was much more interested in timepieces than brands when she spoke of the luxury brands she loved. The product was the anchor of her feelings of love. However, her love for the products did not depend on how socially desirable they were. Instead, it is the mere pleasure of knowing them intrinsically and being capable of understanding their technique-related beauty that drives the love. Here, product love and brand love are disconnected as the product supersedes the brand: Sylvie has constructed her love relationship based on an intrinsic and intimate knowledge of the products, their specificities and technicalities. In her discourse, the brand is only a way of recognizing the technical specificities and innovations brought by each piece. Outstanding craftsmanship supersedes brand communication.

In the singularization phase, objects seemed to gain magic for the respondents. Abstract qualities and philosophical potential supported possession love. Dimitrie, for example, explained that outstanding luxury pieces embodied physical evidence of human genius and the capacity to make pieces that are indexical of "big concepts" (Dimitrie).

Because objects are granted outstanding technicalities and the capacity of making philosophical concepts and human values tangible, brands – as receivers of perceptions and of past communication – had lost their luster to the eyes of the respondents. As a consequence, in the singularization phase, brand love has left the floor to possession love.

6   Conclusion

The present chapter aimed at studying commercial love and, in particular, the role and articulation of brand love and product love over time.

Consistent with Lastovicka and Sirianni (2011), we found three types of product love, and consistent with Heinrich *et al.* (2012) and Albrecht *et al.* (2012), three types of brand love. Data obtained from in-depth interviews suggested three phases in which the three types of brand and product love appear to combine: (1) identification phase, (2) contamination phase, (3) singularization phase.

The "identification phase" is the first contact consumers have with brands or products. When consumers do not know the brand and the covered products well, they tend to identify with external anchors such as the celebrities, reference groups, or advertisements that have made the products or the brand famous. Consumers' brand literacy and knowledge rely on communication at this stage. They seek to construct a social identity based on social pressure and status needs. They mainly value status and social visibility because the meaning they assign to the relationship is based on materialistic values (social elevation and accomplishment). Brand love may supersede product love if the brand has been more promoted than the product. Conversely, product love may supersede the brand if the product or range of products was pushed forward by brand communication.

The "contamination phase" is the step in which consumers get "contaminated" by the brand values, DNA, history, heritage and skills, and know-how of the product. At this stage, consumers are involved in brand knowledge and literacy much more than in the first stage. They indeed make an effort to better understand the craft and the brand, the products and the makers. In other words, consumers enter an "impregnation" process by which they deeply enter the luxury brandscape or brand universe. The knowledge and attachment they acquire over time creates internal anchors they use to evaluate luxury brands and products. In so doing, consumers dedicate themselves to excellence and performance in luxury consumption and aim at social values such as distinction and personal achievement. Self-training and personal effort are displayed to gain a connoisseur status and to belong to the happy few who know the brand well. As a consequence, the brand supersedes the products at this stage because what really counts is the brand heritage, skills, and values. The products are still important, however, as tangible evidence of the brand's know-how and legitimacy.

The "singularization phase" is the ultimate relationship phase in which consumers know the brand and its products perfectly. At this stage, the products are not products anymore: consumers singularize them and consider them as "possessions." Consumers are much more demanding toward the brand during this phase: it should be up to its reputation and come up with objects that are worthy of the brand name. Consumers

who singularize are real experts who can identify brand errors or flaws in new products and thus be very critical. They have learned to evaluate luxury product and brand options based on mere internal anchors, that is, their own expertise and opinion. As a consequence, these "possessions" supersede the brand itself during that stage. Even though the brand is still loved as a "warrantee," most important is the "object" technicalities and the answer to societal and philosophical values. Indeed, singularizers have gotten to know the objects so well that they have intellectualized their relationships with luxury possessions: they can express opinions about them, suggest improvements, and generate influential word-of-mouth. Those consumers are more interested in the societal and philosophical value of products than in their status or sign value. They want spirituality, beauty, innovation, and the respect of craft heritage.

Respondents suggest that iconicity is key in the articulation of brand love and possession love. Indeed, brands or products have to convey shared meaning for the peers and the reference groups, whether they rely on identity and status (social iconicity), knowledge of the brand and the products (history iconicity), or technical expertise (technical iconicity). We also found that brand love and product love can manifest independently. When consumers seek to build an image and social status, socially iconic products and brands compete in the process of generating a love relationship. When consumers are looking for performance and greater knowledge, products and brands collaborate to generate love. Finally, when consumers look for intellectual elevation and the pleasure of understanding what is not accessible, the product "informs" (in the Latin sense of "shapes") commercial love.

Our findings suggest managerial implications in brand portfolio management, communication and advertising, or customer relationship management (CRM).

Regarding brand portfolio management, specifically brand extension, depending on the relationship phase, the brand is more or less relevant and powerful for consumers. As a consequence, extensions should rely on brands when the brand generates more commercial love (identification and contamination phase) and rely on products when crafted objects trigger more commercial love (identification and singularization phase). In the realm of communication and particularly advertising, the findings suggest that investments should be focused at the brand level or the product depending on the relationship phase. Either brands or products should be focused on during the identification phase. In particular, PR actions and product placement with celebrities or movies would be efficient at the product level, while PR events and brand communication would be operant at the brand level. During the contamination phase,

the brand and its heritage and DNA should be the emphasized. Managers should thus communicate about brand history and background, showcase craft and skills, allow visits (e.g., workshops, boutiques, show videos of production and their making-of). Because singularized consumers are product experts and expect expertise demonstration from the brands in the singularization phase, expert communication and information should be privileged. It should particularly focus on technicalities.

Brand and product communication should also take into account the level of maturity and literacy of the market. For example, in emerging markets or with nonliterate consumers who are more likely to stay in the identification phase, messages should convey status and style, while the two other stages require deep information about the brand and the objects. Similarly, CRM should consider the level of literacy and involvement consumers have developed. While consumers in the identification phase are less likely to be loyal and to chase novelty for the sake of logos and style construction, contaminated and singularized consumers may well seek greater knowledge and interactions with the brands and the products that could improve their literacy and expertise. Yet this chapter encompasses limitations. In particular, its exploratory objective limited data collection and interpretation to qualitative interpretive research methods, whose findings are not generalizable. It thus calls for future validation on a wider sample based on qualitative and quantitative investigations.

References

Aaker, D. A. (2004) *Brand Portfolio Strategy: Creating Relevance, Differentiation, Energy, Leverage, and Clarity*. New York: Free Press.

Ahuvia, A. C. (1993) "I Love It! Towards a Unifying Theory of Love across Diverse Love Objects," Unpublished PhD dissertation, Northwestern University.

Ahuvia, A. C. (2005b) "The Love Prototype Revisited: A Qualitative Exploration of Contemporary Folk Psychology," Working Paper, University of Michigan-Dearborn.

Albert, N., (2008) "Passion for the Brand and Consumer Brand Relationships," ANZMAC.

Albert, N., Merunka D., and Valette-Florence P. (2008) "When Consumers Love Their Brands: Exploring The Concept And Its Dimensions" *Journal of Business Research*, 61(10): 1062–1075.

Bain Company (2013) Worldwide Luxury Markets Monitor Spring 2013 Update and Fall Update. Retrieved from www.bain.com/publications.

Ball, A. D. and Tasaki L. H. (1992) "The Role and Measurement of Attachment in Consumer Behavior" *Journal of Consumer Psychology,* 1(2): 155–172.

Batra, R., Ahuvia A., and Bagozzi R. (2012) "Brand Love" *Journal of Marketing,* 76(2): 1–16.

Belk, R. W. (1988) "Possessions and the Extended Self" *Journal of Consumer Research,* 15: 139–168.

Belk, R. W., Fischer E., and Kozinets R.V. (2012) Quali*tative Consumer and Marketing Research*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Bergkvist, L. and Bech-Larsen T. (2010) "Two Studies of Consequences and Actionable Antecedents of Brand Love" *Journal of Brand Management,* 17(7): 504–518.

Carroll, B. A. and Ahuvia A. C. (2006) "Some Antecedents And Outcomes of Brand Love" *Marketing Letters,* 17(2): 79–89.

Edson Escalas, J. (2004) "Narrative Processing: Building Consumer Connections to Brands" *Journal of Consumer Psychology,* 14(1): 168–180.

Escalas, J. and Bettman J. (2005) "Self-Construal, Reference Groups, And Brand Meaning" *Journal of Consumer Research,* 32(3): 378–389.

Fetscherin, M. and Conway D. (2012) "Brand Love: Investigating Two Alternative Love Relationships." In: S. Fournier, M. Breazeale and M. Fetscherin (eds.) *Consumer Brand Relationships: Theory and Practice*, Milton Park, Abingdon (United Kingdom): Routledge.

Fournier, S. (1998) "Consumers and Their Brands: Developing Relationship Theory in Consumer Research" *Journal of Consumer Research* 24(4): 343–353.

Glaser, B. (1992) *Basics of Grounded Theory Analysis: Emergence vs. Forcing*. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.

Glaser, B. (1998) *Doing Grounded Theory*. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.

Grayson, K. and Shulman D. (2000) "Indexicality and the Verification Function of Irreplaceable Possessions: A Semiotic Analysis" *Journal of Consumer Research,* 27(1): 17–30.

Heinrich, D., Albrecht C.M., and Bauer H.H. (2012) "Love Actually? Measuring and Exploring Consumers' Brand Love." In: S. Fournier, M. Breazeale and M. Fetscherin (eds) *Consumer-Brand Relationships: Theory and Practice*, Milton Park, Abingdon (United Kingdom): Routledge.

Hemetsberger, A., Kittinger-Rosanelli, C., and Friedmann, S. (2009) "'Bye Bye Love' – Why Devoted Consumers Break Up with Their Brands" *Advances in Consumer Research* 36: 430–437.

Holt, D. B. (2004) *How Brands Become Icons: The Principles of Cultural Branding*, Cambridge: Harvard Business Press.

Holt, D. B. (2005) "How Societies Desire Brands: Using Cultural Theory To Explain Brand Symbolism." In: Ratneshwar, S.& Mick, D.G. (eds.) *Inside Consumption*, London: Routledge, 273–291.

Jones, R. and Noble G. (2007) "Grounded Theory and Management Research: A Lack of Integrity?" *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal,* 2(2): 84–103.

Kamat, V. and Parulekar A. A. (2007) "Brand Love – The Precursor to Loyalty." In: J. Priester, D. MacInnis and W. Park (eds) *Advertising and Consumer Psychology: New Frontiers in Branding; Attitudes, Attachments, Relationships*, Santa Monica, CA: Society for Consumer Psychology: 94–95.

Kapferer, J. N. (2012) *New Strategic Brand Management: Creating and Sustaining Brand Equity* (5th ed.). London, Kogan Page

Kapferer, J. N. and Bastien V. (2012) *The Luxury Strategy: Break the Rules of Marketing to Build Luxury Brands*. London, Kogan Page.

Karanika, K. and Hogg M. K. (2013) "Trajectories Across The Lifespan of Possession-Self Relationships" *Journal of Business Research,* 66(7): 910–916.

Keh, H. T., Pang J., and Peng S. (2007) "Understanding and Measuring Brand Love." In: J. Priester, D. MacInnis and W. Park (eds) *Advertising and Consumer Psychology: New Frontiers in Branding; Attitudes, Attachments, Relationships*, Santa Monica, CA, Society for Consumer Psychology: 84–88.

Kleine III, R. E., Schultz Kleine S., and Allen C. (1995) "How is a Possession 'Me' or 'Not Me'? Characterizing Types and an Antecedent of Material Possession Attachment" *Journal of Consumer Research,* 22: 327–345.

Kleine, S. S. and Baker S. M. (2004) "An Integrative Review of Material Possession Attachment" *Academy of Marketing Science Review* 8: 1–35.

Kopytoff, I. (1986) *The Cultural Biography of Things: Commodification as Process*, Cambridge, UK, Cambridge University.

Lastovicka, J. L. and K. V. Fernandez (2005) "Three Paths to Disposition: The Movement of Meaningful Possessions to Strangers" *Journal of Consumer Research,* 31(4): 813–823.

Lastovicka, J. L. and Sirianni N. J. (2011) "Truly, Madly, Deeply: Consumers in the Throes of Material Possession Love" *Journal of Consumer Research,* 38(2): 323–342.

Long-Tolbert, S. J., and Gammoh B. S. (2012) "In Good and Bad Times: The Interpersonal Nature of Brand Love in Service Relationships" *Journal of Services Marketing,* 26(6): 391–402

Mayer, R. and Belk R. (1982) "Acquisition of Consumption Stereotypes by Children" *Journal of Consumer Affairs,* 16(2): 307–321.

McAlexander, J. H., Schouten, J., and Koenig H. (2002) "Building Brand Community" *The Journal of Marketing,* 66(1): 38–54.

Muniz Jr., A. M., and O'Guinn T. C. (2001) "Brand Community" *Journal of Consumer Research,* 27(4): 412–432.

Oswald, L. R. (2010) "Developing Brand Literacy among Affluent Chinese Consumers A Semiotic Perspective" *Advances in Consumer Research,* 37: 413–419.

Patwardhan, H. and S. K. Balasubramanian (2011) "Brand Romance: A Complementary Approach to Explain Emotional Attachment toward Brands" *Journal of Product & Brand Management,* 20(4): 297–308.

Patwardhan, H. and Balasubramanian S. K. (2013) "Reflections on Emotional Attachment to Brands: Brand Romance and Brand Love" *Journal of Customer Behaviour,* 12(1): 73–79.

Roberts, K. and Lafley A. G. (2005) *Lovemarks: The Future beyond Brands* (revised ed.), PowerHouse Books.

Rossiter, J. R. (2012) "A New C-OAR-SE-Based Content-Valid and Predictively Valid Measure That Distinguishes Brand Love from Brand Liking" *Marketing Letters,* 3(23): 905–916.

Roy, S. K., Eshghi, A., and Sarkar, A. (2012) "Antecedents and Consequences of Brand Love" *Journal of Brand Management,* 19(7): 325–332.

Schouten, J. W. and McAlexander J. H. (1995) "Subcultures of Consumption: An Ethnography of The New Bikers" *Journal of Consumer Research,* 22(1): 43–61.

Shimp, T. A. and Madden T. J. (1988) "Consumer-Object Relations: A Conceptual Framework Based Analogously on Sternberg's Triangular Theory of Love" *Advances in Consumer Research,* 15(1): 163–168.

Sternberg, R. J. (1986) "A Triangular Theory of Love" *Psychological Review,* 93(2): 119.

Sternberg, R. J. and Weis K. (2006) *The New Psychology of Love*, New Haven: Yale University Press.

Thomson, M. and MacInnis D. J. (2005) "The Ties That Bind: Measuring the Strength of Consumers' Emotional Attachments to Brands" *Journal of Consumer Psychology,* 15(1): 77–91.

Wallendorf, M. and Arnould E. J. (1988) "'My Favorite Things': A Cross-Cultural Inquiry into Object Attachment, Possessiveness, and Social Linkage" *Journal of Consumer Research,* 14(4): 531–547.

Wallendorf, M. and Arnould E. J. (1991) "'We Gather Together': Consumption Rituals of Thanksgiving Day" *Journal of Consumer Research,* 18(1): 13–31.

Part II

Personality and Social Groups, and Brand Relationships

4

Product Type and Personality in Brand Relationships

Ronald Voorn, Sabrina Hegner, and Ad Pruyn

1 Introduction

Most manufacturers wish that all their customers would start a relationship with their brands. Not just any relationship but preferably one that is of an exclusive and loyal nature since this can be very beneficial (Sheth and Parvatiyar, 1995). This was also the central theme in the book *Lovemarks* (Roberts, 2004), which stipulated that great brands need more than just respect to earn undying loyalty from their consumers. In 2004, Roberts posited that respect for the brand is required, but that only when brand love is obtained can the hearts of followers be unlocked. Since then it seems as if brand love has become the Holy Grail for brand marketing research.

Brand love research is still in its infancy (Pang, Keh, and Peng, 2009) and finds its origin in the studies of consumer brand relationships that were first conceptualized in the nineties (Aaker and Fournier, 1995; Fournier, 1995, 1998). In most of these studies the interpersonal relationship metaphor was used to gain a better understanding of the different types of relationships between people and brands. It was posited that brands are contributing partners in relationships (Aaker, 1996; Aaker, 1997; Aaker and Fournier, 1995; Fournier, 1998). These relationships can be studied from different perspectives such as, for instance, the interpersonal norms on which they are based (Aggarwal, 2004), the intensity of the level of emotional attachment towards brands (Thomson *et al.*, 2005), or even the kind of love relationship (Albert *et al.*, 2008; Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006; Fetscherin and Conway Dato-on, 2012). With regard to the latter, Batra *et al.* (2012) developed a dimensional theory for brand love and found that obtaining it can be very beneficial. Its rewards are higher degrees of repurchase behavior, more positive word-of-mouth (WOM), and a stronger resistance to adverse brand news.

Assuming that brand love is an affective state (Batra *et al*., 2012), psychological research shows a strong link between that and personality traits. Building on the differential emotions theory of Izard (Izard, 1977; Izard and Malatesta, 1987), we propose that consumer personality not only plays an important part in human relationships but also in brand relationships (Lin, 2010; Matzler *et al*., 2006; Mulyanegara *et al*., 2009; Ozer and Benet-Martinez, 2006; Rauschnabel *et al*., 2013; Roberts *et al*., 2007). This is also the case with brand love. Using Costa and McCrae's (1992) Big Five personality traits model, Rauschnabel *et al.* (2013) show that people with a higher score on extraversion and neuroticism cultivate stronger brand love.

Besides the influence of personality traits on brand love, the authors of the present chapter will investigate the differential effect of product categories on brand love. Carroll and Ahuvia (2006) claim that it is relatively easier for hedonic and self-enhancing products to obtain brand love. Nevertheless, in relation to the field of consumer brand relationships, contradictory findings exist regarding the effects of product category on relationship quality. Christy *et al*. (1996), Veloutsou (2007), and Wilson (2011) point to a positive effect for the influence of high product category involvement on the brand relationship quality, whereas Valta (2013) finds no support at all. Current empirical studies on brand love, however, focus on a single product category from rather high-involvement categories like consumer electronics or apparel (Batra *et al*., 2012; Rauschnabel *et al.,* 2013). This raises the question whether brand love can only be obtained in those product categories. An application of the Rossiter–Percy grid is thus carried out to measure the direct influence of product category on brand love. Furthermore, we explore whether product category offers an additional explanation for the varying results of personality traits on relationships. We propose that product category acts as a moderator between personality and brand love. Therefore, the research questions this study will seek to answer are the following:

RQ1: To what extent does personality influence brand love?

RQ2: To what extent does the product category influence brand love?

RQ3: To what extent does the product category moderate the relationship between personality and brand love?

This study seeks to expand the current knowledge by contributing additional insights into the influence of the product category on the

relationship between personality and brand love. This will assist the further development of the theory of consumer brand relationships as well as assist practitioners in developing better brand building programs. For the concept of brand love, the prototype of Batra *et al.* (2012) will be used in this study since it is an empirically constituted grounded prototype.

2   Theoretical framework

2.1   Brand love

Perspectives in marketing have changed from an economic exchange focus to a relationship perspective between consumers and brands (Fournier, 1995, 1998). According to Veloutsou (2007), the economic exchange element is still a valid layer in the consumer behavior process but "the addition of the relationship is due to the increased sophistication of the exchange process and in some occasions satisfies a secondary need for interaction" (p. 21).

Brand love is one of the more recent types of relationship that has been added to the spectrum of possible consumer brand relationships (Pang *et al.*, 2009). Building on the interpersonal relationship theory approach, Carroll and Ahuvia (2006) conducted a study to investigate long-term relationships between consumers and brands. These are described as brand love relations, which Carroll and Ahuvia (2006) defined as "the degree of passionate emotional attachment a satisfied consumer has for a particular trade name" (p. 81). As a main outcome they find that brand love exists and helps predict brand loyalty and positive WOM for self-expressive and hedonistic brands. They make a clear distinction, however, between brand liking and brand love. The latter is described as a more enduring and deeper continuum distinctly different from the concept of liking a brand. Consumers who love a brand have usually integrated the brand into their selves and have a long-term relationship with it. Although Carroll and Ahuvia (2006) also recognize that consumers can use the expression "I love a brand" loosely, they do not exclude the possibility entirely that consumers can sometimes experience their relationship with a brand "as fully analogous to the stronger forms of interpersonal love" (p. 81).

In their study, however, Albert *et al.* (2008) claim that brand love is a culturally determined phenomenon and is not covered completely by any single interpersonal love theory. They claim that the concept of love is culturally grounded and can never be the same as love for a

person, at least not for French consumers. Rather than the possibility to describe the connections with brands in terms of love or relationships, they find a set of characteristics and dimensions. French consumers use the words 'adoring' and 'liking,' but not the word love to describe their feelings toward brands. Likewise avoiding the analogy with interpersonal love, Fetscherin and Conway Dato-on (2012) posit that the love relations between consumers and brands are more similar to parasocial love, the sort of relationship that one can have with celebrities, which is by definition a one-directional relationship since brands cannot love people back. They define brand love as "a multidimensional construct consisting of a satisfied consumer's experience with a brand, which leads not only to brand loyalty (a predecessor of brand love) but to a deeply emotional relationship" (p. 151).

One major difference from other studies of brand love is Batra *et al.* (2012) are showing that brand love is mostly considered a less important relationship. It does not contain any of the acts of altruism normally associated with interpersonal love since a brand cannot love people back. Therefore they conclude that although theories on interpersonal love might seem a logical and tempting place to start, one needs to check carefully whether the analogy is correct and an appropriate basis for developing better insights into the concept of brand love. They raise the point that similarities between brand and interpersonal love should be studied empirically and go one step further by organizing a grounded prototype study that reveals seven factors that constitute brand love. These are respectively

1. self-brand integration (SBI), the degree to which the brand expresses a consumer's identities and deeply held beliefs about life as well as its salience;
2. passionate desire to use (PDU), the degree to which a consumer desires to spend time with the brand and invest other resources in it both in the future and the past;
3. positive emotional connection (PEC), the degree to which the brand fits naturally into a consumer's life;
4. anxiety separation distress (ASD), the degree of fear experienced should the brand cease to exist;
5. long-term relationship (LTR), the intention of continued future use and willingness for a long-term relationship;
6. positive attitude valence (AV); and
7. attitude strength (AS), robust and firm convictions.

Additionally, brand love scores on this prototype demonstrate three consequences: repeat purchase intention, positive word-of-mouth intention, and increased resistance to adverse brand information. Below we will discuss the concept of personality traits and its relationship with affective states in general and brand love in particular.

2.2 Personality

Personality traits can be defined as "relatively enduring patterns of thoughts, feelings and behaviors that represent a readiness to respond in particular ways to specific environmental cues" (Fayard *et al.*, 2012, p. 1). Personality is measured by using the personality theory as developed by McCrae and John (1992) and which describes personality as "the most important ways in which individuals differ in their enduring emotional, interpersonal, experiential, attitudinal, and motivational styles", (p. 175). In their Five-Factor Model (FFM), also called the Big Five model, McCrae and John (1992) describe the following personality dimensions:

1. openness (the degree to which one is open to new experiences)
2. conscientiousness (the level of planning needed in one's life)
3. extraversion (the need to seek company of others)
4. agreeableness (the degree of helpfulness towards others)
5. neuroticism (the individual's level of emotional stability)

These enduring factors and their combinations, which are different for every individual, determine to a great extent how people act in their social life toward others, including brands. Based on Izard's Differential Emotions Theory, it is assumed that that there is a strong and conceptually consistent relation between emotional experiences and traits of personality. (Izard, 1977; Izard and Malatesta, 1987). As such, there has been considerable research on the link between personality and affective states, with the link between extraversion and positive affect, and neuroticism and negative affect being well established (Rusting and Larsen, 1997). Conscientiousness is linked to both positive and negative affect (Watson *et al.*, 1988; Fayard *et al.*, 2012). Especially, agreeableness refers to emotional dispositions in relationships (e.g., Kubiak *et al.*, 2007; Tobin *et al.*, 2000). Individuals who score high on openness to experience seem to experience a wider range of feelings and emotions than people low on this trait (McCrae, 2007; Terracciano *et al.*, 2003); hence, these individuals seem to be more open to loving experiences that transcend traditional interpersonal relationships. As brand love is

defined as a positive affective state, this relationship should also hold true for the research object of brand love and its dimensions.

Additionally, research shows that in human relationships higher levels of openness, extraversion, agreeableness, and in particular lower levels of neuroticism are usually correlated with higher degrees of interpersonal relationship quality (Heller *et al.*, 2004; Ozer and Benet-Martinez, 2006). Personality traits also help explain negative relationship outcomes. Ozer and Benet-Martinez (2006), as well as Roberts *et al.* (2007) report that neuroticism and low agreeableness are predictors for negative relationship outcomes.

In research on the influence of personality traits in relationship with brands, extraversion was regularly found to have an influence (Lin, 2010; Matzler *et al.*, 2006; Mulyanegara *et al.*, 2009; Rauschnabel *et al.*, 2013). In that sense, Mulyanegara *et al.* (2009) demonstrate that more extroverted consumers rather engage in relationships with more sociable brands and that conscientious consumer's value trust in brands with which they interact. This was also confirmed for extraversion by Matzler *et al.* (2006) and further strengthened by Lin (2010), who presents another example of extraversion's positively predicting the relation with existing brands in a study involving toys and video games. In their study on the relation between brand love and personality traits, Rauschnabel *et al.* (2013) also find that a higher score on extroversion predicts a higher score on brand love. Therefore this study proposes H1: Extroversion is positively associated with brand love and its dimensions.

Following interpersonal relationship theory and the role of personality in this, Rauschnabel *et al.* (2013) predicted that neuroticism plays a different role in the brand love relationship compared to interpersonal relationships. The researchers theorized that people with higher scores on neuroticism have lower quality interpersonal relationships, which is in line with accepted theory (Heller *et al.*, 2004), and would therefore use brands to compensate for the lack of love they might experience in their current human relationships. The results of their study showed indeed clear proof of this. In light of these findings, this study proposes H2: Neuroticism is positively associated with brand love and its dimensions.

On openness, the findings in extant consumer brand relationship research are more diverse. Matzler *et al.* (2006) report a positive relation with brand. The authors found that extroversion and openness are positively related to hedonic product value and that openness directly and extroversion indirectly influence brand affect. Therefore, we propose H3: Openness is positively associated with brand love and its dimensions.

Lin (2010) reports a significant predictive relation between agreeableness and brand relationship. A higher score on agreeableness is linked to trust, compliance, and altruism (Costa and McCrae, 1992), which is usually a predictor for a higher quality of relationship (Heller *et al.,* 2004; Ozer and Benet-Martinez, 2006). For this reason, this study proposes H4: Agreeableness is positively associated with brand love and its dimensions.

No significant literature was found indicating a relationship between conscientiousness and brand love. Moreover, in the specific study on the relation between personality and brand love by Rauschnabel *et al*. (2013), no relationship was found between this trait and brand love either. Hence this study proposes no hypotheses on the relationship between the conscientiousness trait and brand love.

2.3   The role of product category type

The role that the product category plays has regularly been the subject of study in the field of marketing research. One of the earlier studies on this subject was carried out by Vaughn (1980), who developed a model for the advertising agency Foote Cone and Belding (FCB model), which posited that products (and brands) could be divided into two separate dichotomies: thinking or feeling, and high and low involvement. It was proposed that people had different relations and needs toward products in each of the possible four combinations. Further evidence was found in a study by Claeys *et al*. (1995). Their study shows that products in the 'thinking' category needed predominantly informational advertising and 'feeling' products would benefit from self-enhancing, more image-related advertising.

Rossiter *et al*. (1991) extended the FCB model further to the Rossiter–Percy grid (RP grid) by combining the motivational product type to which a product belongs with the level of involvement (see Figure 4.1).

In the RP grid, products are divided into four quadrants. These are determined according to the level of involvement (high versus low) and the type of motivation involved (informational and transformational). The level of involvement with a product is determined by the degree to which the target group perceives a risk with the selection and purchase. These risks can be of a monetary, social, or psychological nature such as value-, personality-, or self-expressive functions (Percy and Rosenbaum-Elliott, 2012; Rossiter *et al*., 1991). If the perceived risk is higher, more elaboration will be triggered (Johnson and Eagly, 1989), whereby involvement acts as a moderator on brand evaluations (Petty *et al*., 1983; Petty and Cacioppo, 1986) and the quality of brand relationships (Wilson, 2011).

Type of Motivation

		Informational	Transformational
Type of Decision	Low Involvement	Typical product categories (Brands may differ) • Aspirin • Light beer • Detergents • Routine industrial products	Typical product categories (Brands may differ) • Candy • Regular beer • Fiction novels
	High Involvement	Typical product categories (Brands may differ) • Microwave oven • Insurance • Home renovation • New industrial products	Typical product categories (Brands may differ) • Vacation • Fashion/clothing • Cars • Corporate image

Figure 4.1   The Rossiter–Percy grid, 1991

Note: We divided products according to the level of involvement and type of motivation.

The types of motivation that are distinguished in the RP grid are based on either the problem-solving qualities of a product (informational) or their gratification potential (transformational). In the first case, products are predominantly chosen for their ability to solve problems for consumers who require mainly factual information (Rossiter *et al.*, 1991). The transformational products are chosen for their ability to bring consumers into a desired "sensory, mental, or social state" (p. 16). Utilitarian or informational products, due to their very nature, contain fewer attributes of a social, self-, or value-expressive kind than transformational products. They exist to solve problems. Hedonic and self-expressive products and brands, on the other hand, transform their consumers into a desired state, whether that is of an intellectual, social, or self-gratifying nature. Rossiter *et al.* (1991) notice a lower brand appreciation score for utilitarian products and higher scores for value- or self-expressive products. This is confirmed in a study by Carroll and Ahuvia (2006), who add to this by stating that it is relatively easier for hedonic and self-enhancing products to obtain brand love.

Although some studies address the influence of product categories on the relationships between people and brands, little is still really known

about this, particularly where it involves brand love. In the field of consumer brand relationships, there are even conflicting opinions on the effects of product category on relationship quality. Christy *et al.* (1996), Veloutsou (2007), and also Wilson (2011) point to a positive effect for the influence of high product category involvement on the brand relationship quality, while others find no support at all (Valta, 2013). Even though it seems that the influence of involvement on the relationship quality is controversial, there are still sufficient indications, however, that the motivational type to which a product belongs has a direct effect (Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006; Rossiter *et al.*, 1991; Veloutsou, 2007). It is therefore hypothesized that the product category influences brand love and its dimensions. Therefore, we propose H5: Product category influences brand love and its dimensions. In particular, high-involvement products and transformational products lead to higher brand love scores compared to low-involvement and informational products.

Additionally, the authors wonder whether there is a moderating influence of the product categories on the relationship between personality traits and brand love. As research shows no clear pattern of the relationship between personality and affective states toward brands, we assume that the product category plays a moderating role between personality and consumer relationships. For instance, research shows that extraversion is linked with hedonism affecting brand emotions (Matzler *et al.*, 2006), thus indicating that the product category might present an explanatory predictor for the varying results of personality on consumer relationships. To the best of our knowledge, no subsequent research to date has investigated this moderating relationship. Therefore, this study represents the first exploratory research to examine this effect.

Analyzing the interaction of the RP grid and personality traits on the separate brand love elements, we expect the transformational category to have a much more profound interaction than the other three. This is primarily due to the high symbolic and self-enhancing value that products in this category tend to have for consumers (Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006; Rossiter *et al.* 1991; Vaughn, 1980). Therefore H6 reads as follows: Product category influences the relationship of personality traits on brand love and its dimensions.

The effect of the independent variable of personality (as defined by the Big Five), moderated by product category, on the brand love prototype and its elements is captured in our proposed model for this study and is presented in Figure 4.2.
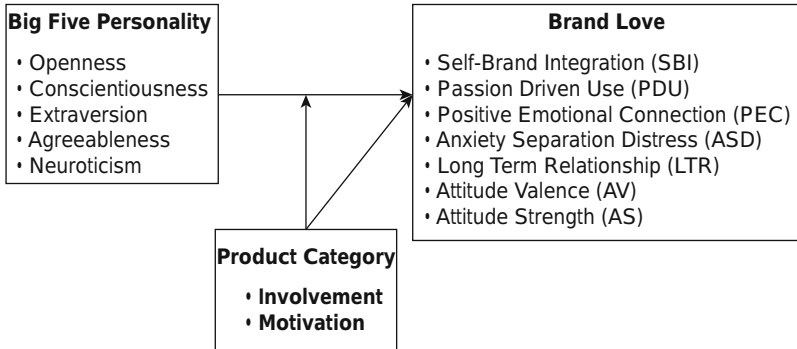
Figure 4.2   The influence of the Big Five on brand love moderated by product category

3   Methodology

3.1 Pretest

An online pretest was organized with a convenience sample of 30 students, who were familiar with the RP grid, to obtain two products per grid category. The students were requested to score 30 products on the criteria of involvement (low or high) and product type need (informational or transformational). The two most pronounced products per RP grid category were selected. These were the following products and their scores per RP grid category:

1. high-involvement and informational (HII): insurance (24) and laptop (23)
2. low-involvement and informational (LII): toilet paper (19) and detergent (16)
3. high-involvement and transformational (HIT): shoes (23) and clothing (21)
4. low-involvement and transformational (LIT): ice cream (22) and beer (14)

For each of these four product categories, one prominent brand was selected based on its market share in the Netherlands.

3.2   Measures and participants

The Big Five personality traits were measured with the ten-item scale of Hofmans *et al.* (2008) validated for the Dutch language and based on the Costa and McCrae (1992) NEO-FFI-scale. The reliability of the Big

Five scales is assessed with the Spearman-Brown formula as it is appropriate for a two-item measure (Eisinga *et al.*, 2012). Acceptable range is between .60 and .90. The values range between .36 (openness) and .74 (extroversion), which is very low; nevertheless, as it is only a two-item scale with one reverse coded item, the values are acceptable. A study by Rammstedt and John (2007) shows that even with a reduction from 44 to 10 items to measure personality, the scale retains a substantial portion of the reliability and validity of the original instrument.

Brand love is measured with a shortened 27-item scale based on the work of Batra *et al.* (2012). Interitem reliability of the 27-item brand love scale is analyzed using Cronbach's alpha. The scale reliabilities are between .74 and .89 for the single brand elements, and therefore exceed the standard value of .7 (Nunnally, 1978). Additionally, composite reliability and average variance extracted show values greater than .6 and .5 (Bagozzi *et al.*, 1991). Discriminant validity is tested and established following the procedures of Fornell and Larcker (1981).

The respondents were assigned at random to a questionnaire with one brand for the assessment of the assumed relationship. The respondent had to be familiar with the brand in order to proceed with the questionnaire. Four hundred ten Dutch students completed the online questionnaire. The respondents' age was between 18 and 26 with an average age of 22.3 (SD = 2.26). Of the respondents, 120 (29.3%) were male and 290 female (70.7%).

4 Results

4.1 The relation between personality and the brand love prototype

A multiple regression analysis is conducted to predict the brand love mean score from openness (O), conscientiousness (C), extroversion (E), agreeableness (A), and neuroticism (N). In general, personality predicts 1.6 percent ($R^2 = .016$) of the brand love prototype. Of the Big Five, only openness added statistically significantly to the predicted brand love mean, $F(5, 404) = .845$, $p < .05$, adj. $R^2 = .004$. Regression coefficients and significance level can be found in Table 4.1.

Based on these findings, hypotheses H1, H2, and H4 have no support. Therefore, openness is the only Big Five personality trait to significantly predict the brand love prototype. H3 is therefore supported.

Additionally, we checked the influence of personality traits on the individual brand love dimensions. Again, only openness has a significant influence. Two effects are found from openness on anxiety separation distress ($\beta = .110$, $p = .029$) and positive emotional connection ($\beta = .118$, $p = .019$).

Table 4.1 Summary of multiple regression analysis for predicting brand love by the Big Five

Big Five	B	SE B	β	t	Sig. (p)
Openness	.088	.039	.115	2.287	.023*
Conscientiousness	−.018	.033	−.027	−.551	.582
Extroversion	−.008	.032	−.013	−.265	.791
Agreeableness	.006	.047	.007	.132	.895
Neuroticism	.027	.036	.037	.735	.463

*Note: *p < .05.

4.2 The relation between product category and the brand love prototype

The influence of the two RP grid dimensions, involvement and motivation, on overall brand love and its dimensions were tested using independent t-tests. This study found that transformational products had statistically significantly higher brand love scores (M = 1.97) compared to informational products (M = 1.72), [t (345) = −5.961, p = .000], while high-involvement products (M = 1.88) do not lead to higher brand love scores compared to low-involvement products (M = 1.81), [t (345) = 1.692, p = .092].

Regarding the single dimensions of brand love, the results can be found in Table 4.2. These show that transformational products reach higher brand love on the dimensions self-brand integration, passion-driven use, positive emotional connection, long-term relationship, attitude valence, and attitude strength compared to informational products. Additionally, high-involvement products lead to higher brand love scores on the dimensions self-brand integration, positive emotional connection, and anxiety separation distress compared to low-involvement products.

4.3 Tests of the moderator effect of product category involvement and motivational group

To obtain a better understanding of the influence of product category on the relationship between personality and brand love, the separate brand love elements, univariate and multivariate analyses of covariance were performed. No interaction effects were found on overall brand love, but the single brand love dimensions yielded several significant results. In Table 4.3 the results are reported for those interactions that have a significance level below *p* < .1. Due to the exploratory nature of our study, the threshold of significance was set to *p* = .10 (Burns *et al.*, 1990).

Table 4.2 Results from the independent t-test

Product category	Brand Love Dimension	Mean	T-value	Sig. (p)
Trans	SBI	1.64	−2.09	.037**
Info		1.45		
HI		1.70	3.59	.000**
LI		1.38		
Trans	PDU	2.00	−4.83	.000***
Info		1.53		
HI		1.83	1.26	.209
LI		1.70		
Trans	PEC	2.13	−4.84	.000***
Info		1.66		
HI		2.11	4.46	.000***
LI		1.67		
Trans	ASD	1.38	.25	.806
Info		1.40		
HI		1.56	3.97	.000***
LI		1.20		
Trans	LTR	2.36	−4.01	.000***
Info		1.71		
HI		2.17	1.61	.108
LI		1.91		
Trans	AV	5.65	−4.97	.000***
Info		4.85		
HI		5.23	−.42	.673
LI		5.30		
Trans	AS	6.00	−3.81	.000***
Info		5.25		
HI		5.64	.05	.964
LI		5.63		

Note: HI = high involvement, LI = low involvement, Trans = transformational, Info = informational, SBI = Self-brand integration, PDU = Passionate desire to use, PEC = Positive emotional connection, ASD = Anxiety separation distress, LTR = Long-term relationship, AV = Positive attitude valence, AS = Attitude strength.
***p < .001 and **p < .01.*

Taking a closer look at the interactions, the results per interaction are presented and discussed (see also Figures 4.3, 4.4, and 4.5). Three interaction effects of involvement and the personality traits extraversion and conscientiousness were established. The first interaction between involvement and extraversion was found with respect to the brand love element of passionate desire to use. For extroverted individuals, the PDU is greater for high-involvement than for low-involvement products. A greater passionate desire to use a brand belonging to the low-involvement product category occurs for introverted individuals.

Table 4.3   Summary of interactions effects

Interaction	Dependent Variable	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Involvement * E	PDU	3.641	1	3.641	3.709	.055*
Involvement * C	PEC	2.869	1	2.869	3,021	.083*
Involvement * C	LTR	7.928	1	7.928	3,009	.084*
Motivation * E	LTR	12.522	1	12.522	4.752	.030**
Motivation * O	LTR	12.380	1	12.380	4.699	.031**
Motivation * O	SBI	2.983	1	2.983	3.640	.057*
Motivation * O	ASD	2.641	1	2.641	3.086	.080*
Motivation * C	AV	9.061	1	9.061	3.461	.064*
Motivation * N	AV	8.526	1	8.526	3.257	.072*
Motivation * A	AS	11.522	1	11.522	2.929	.088*

Note: *E = extroversion, C = conscientiousness, O = openness, N = neuroticism, A = agreeableness. Abbreviations used for dependent variables: PDU = passionate desire to use, PEC = positive emotional connection, LTR = long-term relationship, SBI = self-brand integration, ASD = anxiety separation distress, AV = attitude valence, and AS = attitude strength. **p < .01 and *p < .05.*

The second and third interaction effect results from conscientiousness and involvement. If conscientiousness is low, the PEC as well as the LTR with a brand is greater for high-involvement than for low-involvement products. Only minor differences are detected though between low- and high-involvement products on both the PEC and LTR with a brand for high-conscientious individuals. So it seems the involvement with a product category is irrelevant to the development of brand love in the case of a highly conscientious consumer personality.

Looking at the motivational product type, two interactions with personality traits were found on the brand love dimension LTR (see Figure 4.4). More open consumers score higher on LTR when transformational products are involved, whereas this is the opposite for less open consumers who score higher on LTR in the case of informational products. Furthermore, a significant interaction between extraversion and the motivational type on LTR was found. For extroverted consumers, the difference between informational and transformational products is less relevant than for introverted consumers. Introverted consumers generate a greater score on long-term relationship in the case of transformational products.

Additionally, further interaction effects of the motivational product type and personality traits were found (see Figure 4.5). Openness and motivation resulted in two interactions on the brand love dimensions SBI and ASD. More open individuals experience greater SBI when
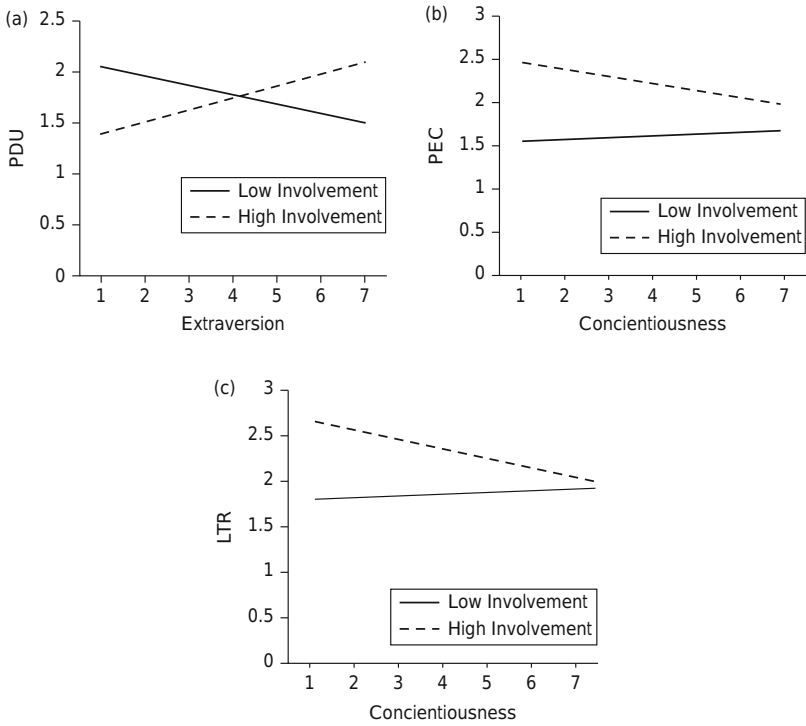
Figure 4.3   Interactions of extraversion and the involvement with the product category on brand love elements

transformational products are involved, whereas less open individuals experience greater SBI when informational products are involved. ASD on the other hand is high for open individuals no matter which motivation type is involved, whereas for less open individuals ASD is greater for informational products.

Furthermore, the results show interaction effects between conscientiousness as well as neuroticism and the motivational product type on AV. If conscientiousness is low, AV is greater in the case of transformational product type, whereas if conscientiousness is high, transformational products generate only marginal higher effects on AV. If neuroticism is high, the score on AV is greater for informational products than for transformational products. The opposite is true if an individual is more neurotic. In this case transformational products score higher on AV.
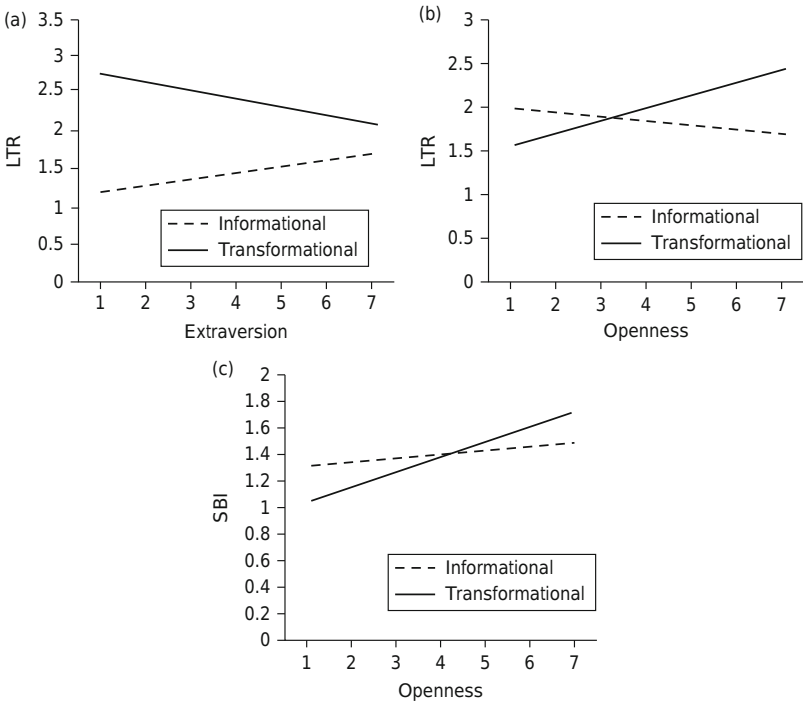
Figure 4.4 Significant, partial interactions between openness and extraversion, the motivational product type, and the long-term relationship

Additionally, we found an interaction effect between agreeableness and the motivational product type on AS. If respondents score high on agreeableness, their AS is higher when transformational products are involved. When the individual scores lower on agreeableness, a higher attitude strength is measured for informational products.

5 Discussion

In this final part of the chapter the following subjects will be addressed. First, the outcomes of this study will be summarized and discussed. Then theoretical implications will be presented, followed by limitations in combination with recommendations for further research. Finally, the recommendations for managers will be presented.
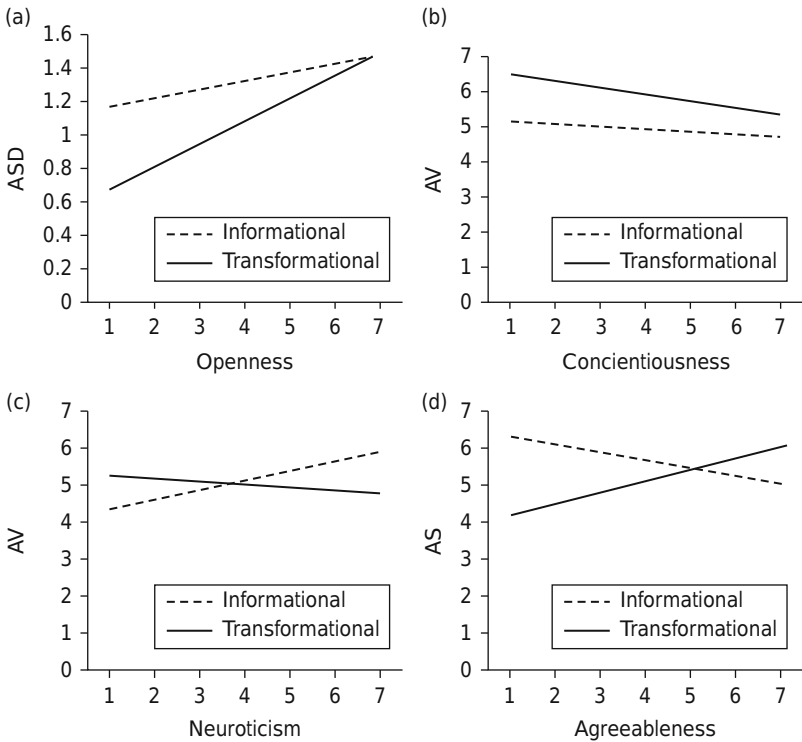
Figure 4.5 Other interactions between personality the motivational product type and brand love elements

5.1 Summary and discussion of findings

Understanding how to influence what drives consumers to form relationships with brands is of great importance to companies. The present study contributes to this by examining the influence of personality and product type on brand love, as well as the moderating influence of product type on the relationship between personality traits and brand love. For brand love, the model by Batra *et al.* (2012) was selected as it represents the most comprehensive understanding of the brand love concept to date. An online survey of 410 Dutch students demonstrated the existence of brand love and enabled the discovery of influential factors for building brand relationships.

The first objective of this research was to examine the influence of the Big Five personality traits (Costa and McCrae, 1992) on brand

love. This study found that a higher score on openness significantly predicts higher brand love. In other words, if individuals are more open to new experiences, they are able to generate more brand love.

The fact that this study found openness to significantly predict higher scores on brand love was new in comparison with the main findings of Rauschnabel *et al.* (2013). Openness entails the propensity to actively use one's imagination, be more sensitive to the aesthetics of objects, and demonstrate intellectual curiosity and adventurousness, as well as an inclination to prefer variety (McCrae and John, 1992). The four RP grid dimensions in combination span different psychological (high/low involvement, transformative, hedonistic, self-enhancement) and functional consequences (informational, problem solving). These all link to different Big Five facets. So openness seems to be the only common and logical distinguishing facet to significantly predict higher scores on brand love across the whole RP grid.

In the current study, the questions are answered on eight different brands belonging to four different RP grid categories (Rossiter *et al.*, 1991). This might offer further explanation as to why the influence of the other personality traits on brand love are not confirmed. In contrast to fashion brands (as used in the study of Rauschnabel *et al.,* 2013), which belong to the high-involvement and high-transformation RP category, the other RP categories offer less possibility for external self-expression and are thus potentially of lower self-affirming value. Hence this might lead to other outcomes in relation to the influence of extraversion and neuroticism on brand love scores.

A further potential explanation for the differences on the personality scores between Rauschnabel *et al.* (2013) and this study might be a difference in the length of the Big Five questionnaire used. For this study, the ten-item personality inventory (TIPI) (Gosling *et al.,* 2003) was applied as translated into Dutch by Hofmans *et al.*, (2008). Although the TIPI is evaluated quite positively for its psychometric qualities (Gosling *et al.*, 2003), it cannot be excluded that this might have created a difference in outcomes on the influence of extraversion and neuroticism on brand love.

The second objective of this study was to investigate the influence of the product category as measured by the RP grid on brand love. The results show that especially transformational products are able to generate a higher brand love score compared to informational products. High-involvement products did not result in higher overall brand love scores

compared to low-involvement products. Therefore, hypothesis 5 was partly confirmed for overall brand love. Nevertheless, high-involvement products result in higher scores on the dimensions self-brand integration, positive emotional connection, and attitude strength compared to low-involvement products. So although it is easier for transformational than informational products to achieve brand love, the involvement with a product category is of less importance, and low-involvement brands can achieve the same scores on brand love as high-involvement brands.

Regarding the third objective of this study, the moderating influence of the product category on the relationship between personality and the brand love elements was examined. This study found significant interaction effects for all five personality traits on several brand love dimensions. The involvement with a product category interacts significantly with extraversion and conscientiousness, whereas the motivational type to which a product belongs shows strong interactions with openness in particular, but also extraversion, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and agreeableness.

This study found support for the view that a consumer's personality influences the level of brand love experienced. Openness significantly contributes to this. Additionally some effects were found for the moderating influence of the product category in the relationship between consumers and their love relationship with brands. Also the moderating effects of the specific grid quadrants were only noticeable for the motivational product type. The good news is that it is not a given that brand love is limited to certain product types. Very recent research by Huang and Mitchell (2014) also points this out and states furthermore that although great consumer brand relationships do require some imagination on the part of the consumer, it is quite feasible for marketers to evoke this no matter what product type is involved.

5.2 Managerial implications

Brand love can lead to considerable benefits for companies. In-depth knowledge of the personality of the target groups involved can aid marketers in designing effective brand support programs to generate brand love. Understanding which elements are important to generate brand love for the target group should be essential for every brand manager. In this study it was demonstrated that in the case of a brand love relationship openness positively predicts a higher level of love. Aiming to obtain more open consumers in their user portfolio is therefore a wise course of action for brand managers.

This study additionally demonstrates that the motivational category to which a brand belongs has a direct effect on the achieved brand love score. Brand managers with brands in the transformational product category therefore have a small advantage over other brand managers. The positive news for all other brand managers is that the game is completely open, however, since the moderation analyses show that different preferences for product types exist depending on the personality type.

Rossiter *et al.* (1991) explain that a product assigned to a certain category does not automatically mean that no brand love can be generated. Both this study and others (Huang and Mitchell, 2014) confirm this, too, which is very positive news, especially for lower-involvement and informational products. Great relations can be built with consumers as long as brands deliver on promise, evoke feelings and associations of a relationship, and use careful framing and branding. When marketers love their products and turn them into relevant brands for consumers, much is possible.

5.3   Limitations and future research directions

As is true for any study, the current study also has some limitations. Due to the selection of students, one should be careful not to generalize the results of this study for the whole population. For instance, students are known to score higher on the need for variety (van Trijp *et al.*, 1996). This might potentially lead to lower brand relationship quality and therefore brand love scores. Nevertheless, the choice of students was to facilitate comparability with Batra *et al.* (2012) and Rauschnabel *et al.* (2013), who employed 49 percent students in their respondents set.

Also noteworthy is that respondents in this study were not orchestrated to only respond on the basis of a brand they loved. This is contrary to other brand love studies such as those of Batra *et al.* (2012) and Rauschnabel *et al.* (2013). In this study respondents were randomly assigned to a brand and product category. Thus it is likely that respondents were assigned to products they did not love. This was done to obtain as many real-life effects as possible. The brand love scores in this study would, however, have been higher if respondents had only scored on the brands they themselves already loved. This was not the right course of action, though, since we wanted to study the moderating effect of product category. Employing respondents according to the brands they love will not yield solid information on the moderating effects of product category as it will be of no influence.

A further observation is that the number of females in this study is somewhat overrepresented compared to the Dutch statistics on students per gender (OCW, 2013), as in the comparable study on brand love by Rauschnabel *et al.* (2013). Theoretically this could have had an effect. Future research should investigate the relationship between gender and personality on brand love in greater detail.

Another point that needs to be raised is that in the setup of the current study, in which respondents were randomly assigned to products, the scores on brand love were rather low (as can be seen in Figures 4.3, 4.4, and 4.5). In future studies it might be interesting, therefore, to measure the incidence of the existence of brand love for products as such. How often it occurs is an interesting question in itself, both for academia as well as managers, because some, like Sharp (2010), for instance, argue that the existence of relationships and especially love between consumers and brands is highly questionable, "Love is a many-splendored thing, but not a big part of brand buying" (p. 110). It is, however, interesting to note that this current study demonstrated that even when respondents are randomly assigned to different products, brand love does appear to exist.

An additional interesting avenue for future research is related to cultural differences. A major difference between Germany and the Netherlands is on the dimension of masculinity or femininity (Hofstede and Hofstede, 2005; Hofstede and McCrae, 2004). Germany scores very high on masculinity (66), whereas the Netherlands scores very low (15) (Hofstede Center, n.d.). In countries that score high on masculinity (like Germany, where the Rauschnabel *et al.* (2013) study was performed), brands are often used as a sign of status confirmation. The opposite is the case in feminine cultures, such as in the Netherlands, where the current study was performed. In Dutch culture, one wants to fit in more than one wants to stand out (Hofstede and Hofstede, 2005). It seems therefore that Germans who score high on extraversion and neuroticism want to externally affirm their status with the brand of apparel they wear, as found by Rauschnabel *et al.* (2013). Further studies of the role of the Big Five and brand love in other cultures would augment the current knowledge on this subject.

References

Aaker, D. A. (1996) *Building Strong Brands*. New York: Free Press.

Aaker, J. (1997) "Dimensions of Brand Personality" *Journal of Marketing Research,* 34: 347–356.

Aaker, J. and Fournier, S. (1995) "A Brand as a Character, a Partner and a Person: Three Perspectives on the Question of Brand Personality" *Advances in Consumer Research,* 22: 391–395.

Albert, N., Merunka, D., and Valette-Florence, P. (2008) "When Consumers Love Their Brands: Exploring the Concept and its Dimensions" *Journal of Business Research,* 61(10): 1062–1075.

Aggarwal, P. (2004) "The Effects of Brand Relationship Norms on Consumer Attitudes and Behavior" *Journal of Consumer Research*, 31: 87–101.

Bagozzi, R., Yi, Y., and Phillips, L. (1991) "Assessing Construct Validity in Organizational Research" *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 36(3): 421–458.

Batra, R., Ahuvia, A., and Bagozzi, R. (2012) "Brand Love" *Journal of Marketing,* 76(2): 1–16.

Burns, A., Gillett, P., Rubinstein, M., and Gentry, J. (1990) "An Exploratory Study of Lottery Playing, Gambling Addiction and Links to Compulsive Consumption" *Advances in Consumer Research,* 17: 298–305.

Carroll, B. and Ahuvia, A. (2006) "Some Antecedents and Outcomes of Brand Love" *Marketing Letters*, 17(2): 79–89.

Christy, R., Oliver, G., and Penn, J. (1996) "Relationship Marketing in Consumer Markets" *Journal of Marketing Management*, 12(1–3): 175–187.

Claeys, C., Swinnen, A., and Vanden Abeele, P. (1995) "Consumers' Means-End Chains for 'Think' and 'Feel' Products" *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 12(3): 193–208.

Costa, P. and McCrae, R. (1992) "Four Ways Five Factors are Basic" *Personality and Individual Differences,* 13(6): 653–665.

Eisinga, R., Grotenhuis, M., and Pelzer, B. (2012) "The Reliability of a Two-Item Scale: Pearson, Cronbach, or Spearman-Brown?" *International Journal of Public Health,* 58: 1–6.

Fayard, J., Roberts, B., Robins, R., and Watson, D. (2012) "Uncovering the Affective Core of Conscientiousness: The Role of Self-Conscious Emotions" *Journal of Personality*, 80(1): 1–32.

Fetscherin, M. and Conway Dato-on, M. (2012) "Brand Love: Investigating Two Alternative Love Relationships." In: Fournier, S., Breazeale, M. and Fetscherin, M. (eds) *Consumer-Brand Relationships: Theory and Practice*. London: Routledge.

Fornell, C. and Larcker, D. F. (1981) "Structural Equation Models with Unobservable Variables and Measurement Error: Algebra and Statistics" *Journal of Marketing Research,* 18(3): 382–388.

Fournier, S. (1995) "Toward the Development of Relationship Theory at the Level of the Product and Brand" *Advances in Consumer Research*, 22: 661–662.

Fournier, S. (1998) "Consumers and Their Brands: Developing Relationship Theory in Consumer Research" *Journal of Consumer Research,* 24(4): 343–353.

Gosling, S., Rentfrow, P., and Swann, W. Jr. (2003) "A Very Brief Measure of the Big Five Personality Domains" *Journal of Research in Personality,* 37: 504–528.

Heller, D., Watson, D., and Ilies, R. (2004) "The Role of Person Versus Situation in Life Satisfaction: A Critical Examination" *Psychological Bulletin*, 130(4), 574–600.

Hofmans, J., Kuppens, P., and Allik, J. (2008) "Is Short in Length Short in Content? An Examination of the Domain Representation of the Ten Item Personality Inventory Scales in Dutch language" *Personality and Individual Differences,* 45(8): 750–755.

Hofstede Center (n.d.) Country Scores. Available at: http://geerthofstede.com/countries.html (Accessed on May 12 2013).

Hofstede, G. and Hofstede, G. (2005) *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind.* Revised and expanded, 2nd ed. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Hofstede, G. and McCrae, R. (2004) "Personality and Culture Revisited: Linking Traits and Dimensions of Culture" *Cross-Cultural Research,* 38(1): 52–88.

Huang, H. H., and Mitchell, V. W. (2014) "The Role of Imagination and Brand Personification in Brand Relationships" *Psychology and Marketing*, 31(1): 38–47.

Izard, C. E. (1977) *Human Emotions*. New York: Plenum Press.

Izard, C. E., and Malatesta, C. Z. (1987) "Perspectives on Emotional Development. I: Differential Emotions Theory of Early Emotional Development." In: J. D. Osofsky (ed.): *Handbook of Infant Development* (2nd ed., pp. 494–554) New York: Wiley-Interscience.

Johnson, B. and Eagly, A. (1989) "Effects of Involvement on Persuasion: A Meta-Analysis" *Psychological Bulletin,* 106(2): 290–314.

Kubiak, T., Wiedig-Allison, M., Zgoriecki, S., and Weber, H. (2011) "Habitual Goals and Strategies in Anger Regulation" *Journal of Individual Differences,* 32(1): 1–13.

Lin, L. (2010) "The Relationship of Consumer Personality Trait, Brand Personality and Brand Loyalty: an Empirical Study of Toys and Video Games Buyers" *Journal of Product and Brand Management,* 19(1): 4–17.

Matzler, K., Bidmon, S., and Grabner-Kräuter, S. (2006) "Individual Determinants of Brand Affect: the Role of the Personality Traits of Extraversion and Openness to Experience" *Journal of Product and Brand Management*, 5(7): 427–434.

McCrae, R. R. (2007) "Aesthetic Chills as a Universal Marker of Openness to Experience" *Motivation and Emotion*, 31, 5–11.

McCrae, R. and John, O. (1992) "An Introduction to the Five-Factor Model and Its Applications" *Journal of Personality,* 60: 175–215.

Mulyanegara, R., Tsarenko, Y., and Anderson, A. (2007) "The Big Five and Brand Personality: Investigating the Impact of Consumer Personality on Preferences towards Particular Brand Personality" *Journal of Brand Management,* 16(4): 234–247.

Nunnally, J. (1978) *Psychometric Methods*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

OCW (2013) Trends in Beeld 2012. Available at: www.trendsinbeeld. minocw.nl / grafieken/3_1_1_3.php (Accessed May 7 2013).

Ozer D. and Benet-Martınez, V. (2006) "Personality and the Prediction of Consequential Outcomes" *Annual Review of Psychology,* 57: 401–421.

Pang, J., Keh, H. T., and Peng, S. (2009) "Effects of Advertising Strategy on Consumer-Brand Relationships: A Brand Love Perspective" *Frontiers of Business Research in China*, 3(4): 599–620.

Petty, R., Cacioppo, J., and Schumann, D. (1983) "Central and Peripheral Routes to Advertising Effectiveness: The Moderating Role of Involvement" *Journal of Consumer Research,* 10(2): 135–146.

Petty, R. and Cacioppo, T. (1986) *From Communication and Persuasion: Central and Peripheral Routes to Attitude Change.* New York: Springer-Verlag.

Percy, L. and Rosenbaum-Elliott, R. (2012) *Strategic Advertising Management.* Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Rammstedt, B. and John, O. (2007) "Measuring Personality in One Minute or less: A 10-item Short Version of the Big Five Inventory in English and German" *Journal of Research in Personality,* 41(1): 203–212.

Rauschnabel, P., Ahuvia, A., Ivens, B., and Leischnig, A. (2013) "*Who Loves Brands? Exploring the Relationship between Personality, Interpersonal Love, and Brand Love*" Proceedings from EMAC 2013. Istanbul, Turkey.

Roberts, Kevin (2004) *Lovemarks: The Future Beyond Brands.* Auckland, New Zealand: Reed Publishing (NZ) Ltd.

Roberts, B., Kuncel, N., Shiner, R., Caspi, A., and Goldberg, L. (2007) "The Power of Personality: The Comparative Validity of Personality Traits, Socioeconomic Status, and Cognitive Ability for Predicting Important Life Outcomes" *Perspectives on Psychological Science,* 2(4): 313–345.

Rossiter, J., Percy, L., and Donovan, R. (1991) "A Better Advertising Planning Grid" *Journal of Advertising Research,* 31: 11–20.

Rusting, C.L. and Larsen, R.J. (1997) "Extraversion, Neuroticism, and Susceptibility to Positive and Negative Affect" *Personality and Individual Differences,* 22(5): 607–612.

Sharp, B. 2010 *How Brands Grow.* Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press

Sheth, J. N. and Parvatiyar, A. (1995) "Relationship Marketing in Consumer Markets: Antecedents and Consequences" *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 23: 255–271.

Terracciano, A., McCrae, R. R., Hagemann, D., and Costa, P. T., Jr. (2003) "Individual Difference Variables, Affective Differentiation, and the Structures of Affect" *Journal of Personality*, 71: 669–703.

Thomson, M., MacInnis, D. J., and Whan Park, C. (2005) "The Ties That Bind: Measuring the Strength of Consumers: Emotional Attachments to Brands" *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 15(1): 77–91.

Tobin, R. M., Graziano, W. G., Vanman, E. J., and Tassinary, L. G. (2000) "Personality, Emotional Experience, and Efforts to Control Emotions" *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology,* 79: 656–669.

Valta, K. S. (2013) "Do Relational Norms Matter in Consumer-Brand Relationships?" *Journal of Business Research*, 66(1): 98–104.

Van Trijp, H. C., Hoyer, W. D., and Inman, J. J. (1996) "Why Switch? Product Category: Level Explanations for True Variety-Seeking Behavior" *Journal of Marketing Research*, 33(3): 281–292.

Vaughn, R. (1980) "How Advertising Works: A Planning Model" *Journal of Advertising Research,* 20(5): 27–33.

Veloutsou, C. (2007) "Identifying the Dimensions of the Product-Brand and Consumer Relationship" *Journal of Marketing Management*, 23(1–2): 7–26.

Watson, D., Clark, L. A., and Tellegen, A. (1988) "Development and Validation of Brief Measures of Positive and Negative Affect" *Personality and Social Psychology,* 54: 1063–1070.

Wilson, B. J. (2011) "An Investigation Into Three Consumer Constructs: Explaining The Nature of Relations Influencing Brand Relationship Quality" (Doctoral dissertation, RMIT University).

5
The Personality of Brand Lovers

Philipp Rauschnabel, Aaron Ahuvia, Björn Ivens, and
Alexander Leischnig

1 Introduction

In everyday conversation, people frequently talk about 'loving' products, brands, and consumption activities such as skiing or eating out at restaurants. Previous studies have found that talk about love is more than a colorful figure of speech (Ahuvia, 1993). There is mounting evidence that consumers use mental schemas and processes such as love not only in interpersonal contexts ("I love you") but also in consumption contexts ("I love my car") (Aaker, 1997; Ahuvia, 2005; Batra *et al.*, 2012; Fournier, 1998). Brand love is a legitimate form of love alongside romantic love, parental love, friendship love, unrequited love, and other types of love. Henceforth, we will use the term 'brand love' in a very general way, to refer to the love of brands (including nonprofit brands), products and services, product categories (e.g., cell phones, fashion), as well as specific products (i.e., a particular consumer's cell phone).

Research on brand love began with a conceptual article by Shimp and Madden (1988), followed by the first major empirical study specifically on brand love (Ahuvia, 1992, 1993), and Fournier's (1998) now classic work on consumer brand relationships, which included brand love as one relationship type. Since then, over 100 journal and conference papers have been published on brand love, usually examining its antecedents and consequences, and sometimes suggesting new conceptualizations of the construct. In this chapter, we will use the conceptualization of brand love developed by Batra *et al.* (2012) as shown in Table 5.1, which includes seven major dimensions, three of which contain multiple subdimensions.

Batra *et al.* (2012) have shown that brand love stimulates consumers' repurchase intentions, positive word-of-mouth (WOM), resistance to

Table 5.1   Brand love

Major Dimension	Subdimension(s)
Positive Attitude Valence	The consumer evaluates the love object positively, using whatever criteria are most relevant for that type of thing.
Positive Emotional Connection	The consumer experiences (a) a sense of "rightness" or *intuitive fit* between him- or herself and the love object, (b) *positive affect* when thinking about or using the love brand, and (c) *emotional attachment* to the love brand.
Self-Brand Integration	The love brand is integrated into the consumer's (a) *current self-identity* and (b) *desired self-identity*. It represents deeply held values and group identities that help create (c) *life meaning and other intrinsic rewards*, rather than simply being a tool to accomplish a goal. This strong incorporation of the love brand into the consumer's self is supported by (d) *frequent thoughts*[a] about the love brand.
Passion-Driven Behaviors	The consumer has a high level of (a) *things done in the past* (aka past involvement and interaction) with the love brand, (b) a current *passionate desire to use* it, and (c) a *willingness to invest resources* such as time and money in it.
Long-Term Relationship	The consumer wishes the love brand to be a part of his or her life for a long time to come.
Anticipated Separation Distress	If the love brand were to disappear, it would be emotionally painful for the consumer.
Attitude Strength[b]	The consumer has a high degree of certainty in, and confidence about, his or her opinions regarding the love brand.

Source: Rauschnabel and Ahuvia (2014); c.f. also Batra *et al.* (2012); Rauschnabel (2014).
a) In previous studies this has been called "attitude strength 1."
b) In previous studies this has been called "attitude strength 2." Research that has used the Batra *et al.* (2012) brand love conceptualization (Bagozzi *et al.* 2013; Rauschnabel and Ahuvia 2014) has reported statistical concerns with the attitude strength dimension (low alpha and small AVE-values). Similar issues were encountered in this data. Hence, we have dropped this dimension from the brand love construct, and to save space we have omitted any discussion or analysis of it.

negative information, and brand loyalty. In addition, these authors showed that brand love may vary in its intensity and that it exists also at low or moderate levels. Even if a consumer does not come close to the intensity of attachment to a brand that in everyday language might be called 'true love,' moving a consumer from a moderate level to a somewhat higher

level of brand love can produce important improvements in a variety of managerial important outcomes (Batra *et al.*, 2012).

Because brand love relates positively to favorable consumer responses, such as brand loyalty or positive word-of-mouth (Batra *et al.*, 2012), a deeper understanding of its causal antecedents is paramount. Here, previous studies identified broad sets of factors, including product-related, consumer-related, and firm-related variables. For example, Carroll and Ahuvia (2006) emphasize the hedonic and symbolic nature of products as determinants of brand love. Rauschnabel and Ahuvia (2014) demonstrate that a brand's level of anthropomorphism influences brand love. Other work highlights consumers' identification with a brand, their trust in a brand, and brand community as predictors of brand love (Albert and Merunka, 2013; Albert *et al.*, 2012; Bergkvist and Bech-Larsen, 2010). In addition, store image, perceived transactional value, and corporate social responsibility have been found to influence brand love (Vlachos and Vrechopoulos, 2012).

Drawing on theory and empirical research on consumer personality, this chapter investigates how the Big Five personality dimensions influence the development of brand love. The objectives of this study are twofold. First, this study aims to connect personality literature and branding literature by unraveling what personality traits affect the development of brand love. Second, this study aims to identify psychological facilitators and inhibitors of brand love. To achieve these goals, this chapter includes an empirical study with 320 respondents. We analyzed the data using structural equation modeling.

2 Personality and relationships

Human personality is defined as "the set of psychological traits and mechanisms within the individual that are organized and relatively enduring and that influence his or her interactions with, and adaptations to, the intrapsychic, physical, and social environments" (Larsen and Buss, 2005, p. 4). According to this definition, traits represent the characteristics that allow to describe why people are different from each other. Similarly, mechanisms refer more to the processes of personality, that is, the involved psychological processes that entail information-processing activity. For example, extraverted individuals are more prepared to notice and act on certain kinds of social and interpersonal information than non-extraverts (Larsen and Buss, 2005).

The Big Five conception is the most widely accepted framework in personality research (Costa and McCrae, 1992). It has been developed

based on the theoretical premise that all individual differences have been translated into human language during the evolution of human language (John *et al.*, 1988). Based on systematic analyses of personality adjectives in lexica, and the application of factor-analytic procedures, several researchers – independent from the population they have studied – have extracted five broad dimensions of human personality: Openness to Experiences, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism (OCEAN). Each of these dimensions (syn.: trait) consists of several subdimensions (syn.: facets) that describe each trait more detailed. Table 5.2 lists these five dimensions and typical adjectives associated with those who score on each trait.

Personality is a key aspect of interpersonal relationships, as some individuals with particular personality characteristics are more motivated and/or able to create and maintain relationships (Costa and McCrae, 1992; Larsen and Buss, 2005). For example, Asendorpf and Wilpers (1998) conducted a longitudinal study and found that personality traits, particularly extraversion, agreeableness, and conscientiousness, predicted various relationship-specific outcomes, such as the number of peer relationships, conflicts, or falling in love. Similarly, Lopes *et al.* (2003) showed that individuals' relationship satisfaction is associated with their personality structure. Again, the authors found extraversion, agreeableness, and conscientiousness are positively related to successful interpersonal relationships. In contrast, a negative effect was found for neuroticism.

With a focus on romantic interpersonal love, other researchers (e.g., Ahmetoglu *et al.*, 2009; Lopes *et al.*, 2005; White *et al.*, 2004) showed that individuals with high levels of extraversion, conscientiousness, and agreeableness, and low levels of neuroticism report higher levels of satisfaction with their romantic relationships. However, particularly for extraversion, some studies also showed contrary results. For example, Eysenk (1980) found that extraverted men are more likely to get divorced than introverted men, probably because extraverts are more often promiscuous.

One can interpret these mixed findings about extraversion as indicating that extraversion reflects an individual's ongoing motivation to create (new) interpersonal relationships, but not per se his or her ability to maintain them. In line with that, prior research provides mixed findings about the role of openness in social relationships. For example, Karney and Bradbury (1995) or Shaver and Brennan (1992) found that openness had negative effects on marital stability and the length of relationships, respectively. Demir and Weitekamp (2006) studied personality

Table 5.2   Big Five personality traits

Dimension (Traits)	Adjectives, which describe typical high scorers	Effect on interpersonal relationship satisfaction
Conscientiousness	Effective, organized, dutiful, ambitious, prospective	In general positive
Agreeableness	Trustworthy, altruistic, sincerely, self-sufficient, tender-minded	In general positive
Openness	Creative, innovative, sensitive, experimental, analytical, exposed	In general negative
Neuroticism	Anxious, frustrated, depressive, ashamed, compulsive, prone to stress	In general negative
Extraversion	Expansive, sociable, decisive/ dominant, active, adventurous, hilarious	Mixed findings

in the context of friendship relationships, but did not identify any significant correlates.

The third column of Table 5.2 lists the general effects of the Big Five personality traits on individuals' relationship satisfaction/stability.

3   Hypotheses

Theory of consumer brand relationships contends that the mechanisms underlying interpersonal relationships are also active in situations in which consumers develop relationships to nonhuman entities such as brands (e.g., Fournier, 2009; Fournier and Alvarez, 2012; Fournier, Avery, and Alvarez, 2012; Guese, 2010; Kervyn, Fiske, and Malone, 2012). Consumers' tendency to treat brands as relationship partners builds upon anthropomorphism (Delbaere *et al.*, 2011; Kiesler, 2006; Kim and McGill, 2011; Landwehr *et al.*, 2011; Puzakova *et al.*, 2013; Rauschnabel and Ahuvia, 2014), that is, consumers' predisposition to apply human attributes to nonhuman objects (Epley *et al.*, 2007). Although extant research has not looked at how consumer personality influences brand love, it has studied the effects of personality on consumer brand relationships more broadly. This research has focused on what we will call *the compensatory effect*, which means that consumer brand relationships are used to compensate for a deficit in consumers' interpersonal relationships (Lastovicka and Sirianni, 2011; Mikulincer and Shaver, 2008; Pieters, 2013; Wallendorf and Arnould, 1988).

Personality theory enters the picture, because it helps explain the origin of the deficits for which consumer brand relationships are compensating. For example, Malär *et al.* (2011) show that consumers with low self-esteem tend to create consumer brand relationships in order to satisfy their needs for self-enhancement. Table 5.2, column 3, is based on prior research in personality psychology and summarizes the effects of personality traits on the satisfaction with interpersonal relationships. Following the logic of the compensatory effect, we maintain that personality traits that increase a person's satisfaction with interpersonal relationships, decrease their propensity for brand love.

H1: Agreeableness is negatively related to brand love.

H2: Conscientiousness is negatively related to brand love.

Vice versa, personality traits that decrease a person's interpersonal satisfaction, increase his or her propensity for brand love.

H3: Openness to experiences is positively related to brand love.

H4: Neuroticism is positively related to brand love.

The compensatory effect is based on the idea that when a person lacks social relationships, he or she experiences a high level of motivation to form relationships; this motivation then influences their consumer behavior leading them to create consumer brand relationships such as brand love. We note however that a lack of social relationships is just one reason why a person might have a high motivation to form relationships. Some people might have a strong social motivation simply because they are gregarious, even if they do not suffer from a lack of interpersonal relationships. In these situations we propose that a *complementary effect* is more relevant. This complementary effect occurs when the desire to form interpersonal relationships reflects a broader positive orientation toward relationships in general, and hence toward consumer brand relationships as well. In other words, some people are just relationship prone (Chang and Chieng, 2006; Mende and Bolton, 2011; Yim *et al.*, 2008). These highly relationship-prone people create both interpersonal and consumer brand, relationships (Rochberg-Halton and Csikszentmihalyi, 1981).

It is perhaps surprising that the evidence is *mixed* regarding whether extraversion is linked to an increased ability to form positive social relationships (Table 5.1). These mixed findings are due primarily to the fact

that extraverts sometimes neglect current relationships, as they pursue new ones, leading their preexisting relationship partners feeling jealous or neglected. However, a brand will not react in the same way. Therefore, we would not expect extraverts' pursuit of new brand relationships to damage their existing brand relationships. Hence, we would expect extraverts' tendency to form new relationships to simply translate into more brand love. Based on the complementary effect, we propose H5:

H5: Extraversion is positively related to brand love.

4   Methodology and research design

4.1   Construct measures

We used a standardized questionnaire as the main data collection instrument. The questionnaire contained three sections. In the first section, we presented questions about the dependent variable, brand love. Respondents were asked to answer these questions with regard to their favorite fashion brand. In the second section, we asked for the independent variables, the five personality dimensions. The third section of the questionnaire asked for demographics.

We used existing scales to measure all constructs. To capture brand love, we used a short scale developed by Bagozzi *et al.* (2013) that measures the multidimensional structure of brand love with 28 items. We eliminated the attitude valence dimensions because of statistical concerns, as discussed in the theory section (Table 5.1), resulting in 26 items. In addition, to measure the Big Five personality traits, we used the scales by Borkenau and Ostendorf (1993). Three items per dimension were applied. All scales were presented on seven-point Likert-type rating scales anchored in 1 = 'totally disagree' and 7 = 'totally agree'.

4.2   Sample and data collection

Data collection involved an online survey in fall 2012. Respondents were invited via social networks and an e-learning platform to take part in a survey about fashion brands. A lottery of Amazon vouchers was provided as incentive when respondents voluntarily left their e-mail address at the end of the questionnaire.

In sum, 320 German respondents were surveyed and considered for the analyses. The sample consists of respondents with an average age of 28.7 years (*SD* = 9.6). Females and students were overrepresented in the sample (60.9% females; 48.8% students). Because our theoretical framework argues based on interpersonal relationships theories, we also

surveyed respondents' relationships status, and found that 40.9% of the respondents stated they were single.

4.3 Estimation approach

We used structural equation modeling to analyze the hypothesized relationships, using Mplus 7.1 and a Maximum Likelihood estimator with robust standard errors (MLR). To reduce model complexity, we employed item parceling for the brand love dimensions. This approach has been repeatedly used in previous related studies (e.g., Malär *et al.*, 2011). We assessed overall model fit using several fit indices, including CFI, TLI, RMSEA, SRMR, as well as the χ^2-statistics. In addition, we assessed local fit indices by estimating Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, and average variances extracted.

5 Results

5.1 Results from the measurement model

Fit indices and scale reliabilities reveal a good overall model fit. Particularly, the measures of overall fit met conventional standards, suggesting that our model fits the data well [χ^2(174) = 342.09, $p < .001$; root mean square error of approximation [RMSEA] = .055, standardized root mean square residual [SRMR] = .061, Tucker Lewis Index [TLI] = .904, and comparative fit index [CFI] = .920]. Tests for discriminant validity show no serious problems (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). In particular, for each pair of variables, the squared correlation was always lower than the average variances extracted from each of the two constructs. Furthermore, no substantial threat of common method bias is identified using Harman's single factor test (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003). This was reflected by a significantly worse fit of a model in which all manifest variables loaded on a single factor [χ^2(210) = 2314.80; $\Delta\chi^2$ = 1,972.71; Δd.f. = 36; $p < .001$].

5.2 Results from the structural model

Figure 5.1 presents the standardized coefficients of the hypothesized structural model. In particular, neuroticism (H4: γ = .355; p = .001) and extraversion (H5: γ = .218; p = .030) are both positively related to brand love. Thus, the results support H4 and H5. In contrast, agreeableness (H1: γ = .047; p = .526), conscientiousness (H2: γ = .080; p = .289), and openness (H3: γ = .065; p = .391) were not found to significantly predict brand love. These findings reject H1, H2, and H3. In total, personality explains 9 percent of the variance of brand love in our model.
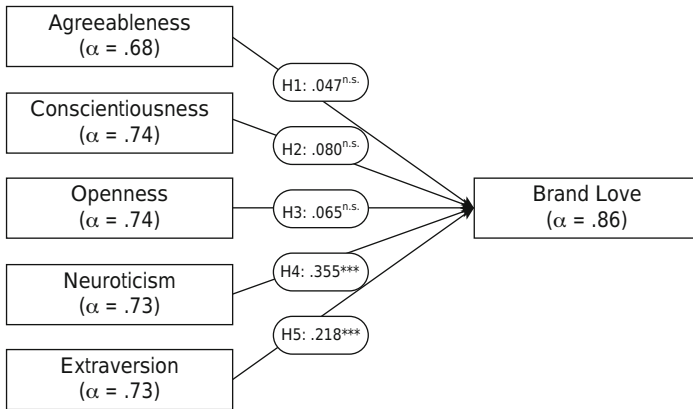
Figure 5.1   Results of the study

Notes: Standarized coefficients presented only ********p* ≤ .001 and n.s. > .10.

5.3   Additional exploratory analyses

Because we assume that brand love should be affected by a person's interpersonal relationship situation, we also investigated the effect from a consumer's relationship status on brand love. In line with Lastovicka and Sirianni (2011), we assume that an individual's relationship status reflects his or her current interpersonal relationship situation. The compensatory effect thus would assume that singles score higher on brand love, whereas the complementary effect would assume that engaged consumers tend to love their favorite fashion brand more.

The results of an ANOVA show that singles score higher on brand love than do couples (m_{single} = 3.42; $m_{couples}$ = 3.23; F = 3.09, *p* = .080). Further analyses revealed that relationship status only affects the brand love dimension self-brand integration (m_{single} = 2.91; $m_{couples}$ = 2.62; F = 5.29, *p* = .022; the effect was not significant for the other brand love dimensions; all *p* > .10).

5.4   Robustness tests

To assess the stability of our findings, several robustness tests were conducted. First, because younger respondents and females were over-represented in our sample, we analyzed the extent to which brand love is affected by these two demographic variables to assess the magnitude of this potential threat. We did not identify any significant effects (all *p* > .10).

Second, one could argue that the effects reported above might be biased due to the fact that some personalities are more focused on brands than others. We assessed this potential threat by including a measure of the consumer's overall importance of brands while shopping for clothing as a control variable (Fischer *et al.*, 2010). Including this variable did not affect the aforementioned findings substantially.

Third, we replicated the analyses using different methodologies. For example, we estimated a second structural model without modeling the covariances between the personality traits. Additionally, we ran a multiple linear OLS regression analysis. These methodological replications led to similar results and thus underline the stability of the findings.

6   Discussion

To the best of our knowledge, this is the first study investigating the influence of the Big Five personality traits on brand love. Therefore, our study contributes to the understanding of the psychological mechanisms that lead to brand love. The results show that extraversion and neuroticism drive brand love. However, openness, conscientiousness, and agreeableness were not found to be significantly related to brand love.

On the one hand, our results provide partial support that consumers may apply their interpersonal relationship abilities to brands, what has been termed as the complementary effect. This complementary effect occurs when people are strongly inclined to form relationships, and this inclination leads both, more interpersonal relationships and more consumer brand relationships. The complementary effect received support from the fact that extraversion, which includes a propensity to form interpersonal relationships, was positively related to brand love. Particularly extraverts, that is, consumers with a high motivation to create interpersonal relationships, are more likely to create higher levels of brand love as compared to their introverted counterparts. However, no significant effects were identified for openness and agreeableness, which is somehow in line with the finds of Matzler *et al.* (2007), who found no significant effects from openness on brand passion, but from extraversion.

Our findings provide mixed support for the compensatory effect, in which brand love is used to compensate for social deficits. In support of the compensatory effect, being neurotic decreases a person's social success and, this study found, increases their brand love. Furthermore, singles (as opposed to respondents who were married or in a steady

dating relationship), tended to have higher levels of brand love, perhaps to compensate for a lack or interpersonal romance.

One key limitation of this research is that it utilizes a nonrepresentative sample; therefore, the findings cannot be generalized. Furthermore, brand love was measured specifically with regard to favorite clothing brands, so it is possible that some of the effects found in the study may be attributable to differences in respondents' involvement in fashion, rather than differences in their general propensity for brand love. These concerns are somewhat lessened due to the findings regarding gender. Given that women tend, on average, to have a stronger interest in fashion than do men, if the brand love data significantly reflected a general interest in fashion, we would have expected to see higher level of brand love from women than from men. However, no direct effect from gender on brand love was found. Similarly, controlling for consumers' importance of brands in fashion did not affect our results.

This study also highlights several avenues for future research. Besides addressing the limitations by extending the findings on more heterogeneous samples and other product categories, future studies should explore whether another aspect of neuroticism, such as anxiety, accounts for some of its relationship with brand love. Terror management theory (Rindfleisch *et al.*, 2009) has already shown that anxiety is positively associated with materialism. So it is quite plausible that the anxiety inherent in neuroticism may be driving some of the relationship between this personality trait and brand love. Additionally, fear of rejection could be another interesting construct in the interplay between social relationships and consumer brand relationships. This is due to the fact that one core difference between consumer brand relationships and interpersonal relationships is that humans can reject another person (that is, deny a relationship), whereas the likelihood of being rejected from a brand is generally not existent.

In line with that, future research should also focus on the personality profiles of brand lovers. This in an important contribution, as Percy (1976, p. 123) has argued that traits are "less effective than personality profiles in predicting specific consumer behavior." Future studies should investigate effects of personality profiles on the usage behavior. The application of the fs/QCA-methodology could be a way to address this (e.g., Leischnig *et al.*, 2014).

7 Conclusion

Brand love is an important topic both for managers and scholars. Our study provides more insights about the personality of brand lovers and

provides deeper insights into the interplay between social relationships and consumer brand relationships. The findings, especially from the complementary effect, suggest that we should not look at brand love only as an emotional booby prize, that is, a prize given to the person who finishes last in a contest, to help reduce his or her bad feelings, used to compensate for interpersonal deficits.

Note

References

Aaker, J. L. (1997) "Dimensions of Brand Personality" *Journal of Marketing Research*, 34(3): 347–356.

Ahmetoglu, G., Swami, V., and Chamorro-Premuzic, T. (2010) "The Relationship Between Dimensions of Love, Personality, and Relationship Length" *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 39(5): 1181–1190.

Ahuvia, A. C. (1992) "For the Love of Money: Materialism and Product Love" In: Rudman F. and Richins, M. L. (eds.) *Meaning, Measure, And Morality of Materialism.* Association for Consumer Research, Provo, UT.

Ahuvia, A. C. (1993) "I Love It! Towards a Unifying Theory of Love across Diverse Love Objects" PhD Dissertation, Northwestern University.

Ahuvia, A. C. (2005) "Beyond the Extended Self: Loved Objects and Consumers' Identity Narratives" *Journal of Consumer Research*, 32(1): 171–184.

Ahuvia, A. C. (2014) "Nothing Matters More to People than Other People: Brand Meaning, Brand Love and Social Relationships" *Review of Marketing Research*, forthcoming.

Albert, N. and Merunka, D. (2013) "The Role of Brand Love in Consumer-Brand Relationships" *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 30(3): 258–266.

Albert, N., Merunka, D., and Valette-Florence, P. (2012) "Brand Passion: Antecedents and Consequences" *Journal of Business Research*, 66(7): 904–909.

Asendorpf, J. B. and Wilpers, S. (1998) "Personality Effects on Social Relationships" *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 74(6): 1531–1544.

Bagozzi, R. P., Batra, R., and Ahuvia, A. C. (2013) "Brand Love: Development of an Operational Scale and Answers to Unaddressed Questions" *Working Paper*, Ann Arbor, MI.

Batra, R., Ahuvia, A. C., and Bagozzi, R. P. (2012) "Brand Love" *Journal of Marketing*, 76(2): 1–16.

Baumeister, R. F., DeWall, C. N., Mead, N. L., and Vohs, K. D. (2008) "Social Rejection Can Reduce Pain and Increase Spending: Further Evidence that Money, Pain, and Belongingness are Interrelated" *Psychological Inquiry*, 19(3–4): 145–147.

Bergkvist, L. and Bech-Larsen, T. (2010) "Two Studies of Consequences and Actionable Antecedents of Brand Love" *Journal of Brand Management*, 17(7): 504–518.

Borkenau, P. and Ostendorf, F. (1993) *NEO-Fünf-Faktoren-Inventar (NEO-FFI) nach Costa und McCrae*. Hogrefe.

Carroll, B. A. and Ahuvia, A. C. (2006) "Some Antecedents and Outcomes of Brand Love" *Marketing Letters*, 17(2): 79–89.

Chang, P. and Chieng, M. (2006) "Building Consumer-Brand Relationship: A Cross-Cultural Experiential View" *Psychology and Marketing*, 23(11): 927–959.

Costa, P. T. and McCrae, R. R. (1992) *Revised NEO Personality Inventory (NEO PI-R) and NEO Five-Factor Inventory (NEO-FFI) Professional Manual*. Odessa: Psychological Assessment Resources.

Delbaere, M., McQuarrie, E. F., and Phillips, B. J. (2011) "Personification in Advertising" *Journal of Advertising*, 40(1): 121–130.

Epley, N., Waytz, A., and Cacioppo, J. T. (2007) "On Seeing Human: A Three-Factor Theory of Anthropomorphism" *Psychological Review,* 114(4): 864–886.

Eysenck, H. J. (1980) "Personality, Marital Satisfaction, and Divorce" *Psychological Reports*, 47(3f): 1235–1238.

Fischer, M., Völckner, F., and Sattler, H. (2010) "How Important Are Brands? A Cross-Category, Cross-Country Study" *Journal of Marketing Research*, 47(5): 823–839.

Fornell, C. and Larcker, D. F. (1981) "Evaluating Structural Equation Models with Unobservable Variables and Measurement Error" *Journal of Marketing Research*, 18(1): 382–388.

Fournier, S. (1998) "Consumers and Their Brands: Developing Relationship Theory in Consumer Research" *Journal of Consumer Research*, 24(4): 343–373.

Fournier, S. (2009) "Lessons Learned about Consumers' Relationships with Their Brands" In: MacInnis, Deborah J., C. Whan Park, and Joseph R. Priester (eds) *Handbook of Brand Relationships*. New York: M. E. Sharpe, pp. 5–23.

Fournier, S. and Alvarez, C. (2012) "Brands as Relationship Partners: Warmth, Competence, and In-Between" *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 22(2): 177–185.

Fournier, S., Avery, J., and Alvarez, C. (2012) *A Contracting Framework for Understanding Consumers' Relationships with Brands*. Boston, MA.

Guese, K. S. (2010) "Consumer-brand Relationships: A State-of-the-Art Review and Future Research Directions" *Working Paper,* University of Bamberg.

John, O. P., Angleitner, A., and Ostendorf, F. (1988) "The Lexical Approach to Personality: A Historical Review of Trait Taxonomic Research" *European Journal of Personality*, 2(3): 171–203.

Karney, B. R. and Bradbury, T. N. (1995) "The Longitudinal Course of Marital Quality and Stability: A Review of Theory, Method, and Research" *Psychological Bulletin*, 118(1): 3–34.

Kervyn, N., Fiske, S. T., and Malone, C. (2012) "Brands as Intentional Agents Framework: How Perceived Intentions and Ability Can Map Brand Perception" *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 22(2): 166–176.

Kiesler, T. (2006) "Anthropomorphism and Consumer Behavior" *Advances in Consumer Research*, 33(1): 149–149.

Kim, S. and McGill, A. L. (2011) "Gaming with Mr. Slot or Gaming the Slot Machine? Power, Anthropomorphism, and Risk Perception" *Journal of Consumer Research*, 38(1): 94–107.

Landwehr, J. R., McGill, A. L., and Herrmann, A. (2011) "It's Got the Look: The Effect of Friendly and Aggressive 'Facial' Expressions on Product Liking and Sales" *Journal of Marketing*, 75(3): 132–146.

Larsen, R. J. and Buss, D. M. (2005) *Personality Psychology: Domains of Knowledge about Human Nature*, 2nd ed. NewYork: McGraw-Hill.

Lastovicka, J. L. and Sirianni, N. J. (2011) "Truly, Madly, Deeply: Consumers in the Throes of Material Possession Love" *Journal of Consumer Research*, 38(2): 323–342.

Leischnig, A., Geigenmueller, A., and Lohmann, S. (2014) "On the Role of Alliance Management Capability, Organizational Compatibility, and Interaction Quality in Interorganizational Technology Transfer" *Journal of Business Research*, 67(6): 1049–1057.

Lopes, P. N., Salovey, P., and Straus, R. (2003) "Emotional Intelligence, Personality, and the Perceived Quality of Social Relationships" *Personality and Individual Differences*, 35(3): 641–658.

Malär, L., Krohmer, H., Hoyer, W. D., and Nyffenegger, B. (2011) "Emotional Brand Attachment and Brand Personality: The Relative Importance of the Actual and the Ideal Self" *Journal of Marketing*, 75(4): 35–52.

Mende, M. and Bolton, R. N. (2011) "Why Attachment Security Matters: How Customers' Attachment Styles Influence Their Relationships with Service Firms and Service Employees" *Journal of Service Research*, 14(3): 285–301.

Mikulincer, M. and Shaver, P. R. (2008) "'Can't Buy Me Love': An Attachment Perspective on Social Support and Money as Psychological Buffers" *Psychological Inquiry,* 19(3–4): 167–173.

Percy, L. (1976) "A Look at Personality Profiles and the Personality-Attitude-Behavior Link in Predicting Consumer Behavior" *Advances in Consumer Research*, 3(1): 119–124.

Pichler, E. A. and Hemetsberger, A. (2007) "Who Is Spreading the Word? The Positive Influence of Extraversion on Consumer Passion and Brand Evangelism" *Marketing Theory and Applications*, 25–26.

Pieters, R. (2013) "Bidirectional Dynamics of Materialism and Loneliness: Not Just a Vicious Cycle" *Journal of Consumer Research*, 40(4): 615–631.

Podsakoff, P. M., MacKenzie, S. B., Lee, J. Y., and Podsakoff, N. P. (2003) "Common Method Biases in Behavioral Research: A Critical Review of The Literature and Recommended Remedies" *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 88(5): 879–903.

Puzakova, M., Kwak, H., and Rocerto, J. F. (2013) "When Humanizing Brands Goes Wrong: The Detrimental Role of Brand Anthropomorphization amidst Product Wrongdoings" *Journal of Marketing*, 77(5): 81–100.

Rauschnabel, P. A. (2014) "The Psychology of Brands. Empirical Investigations through the Lens of Social and Cognitive Theories" PhD Dissertation, Department of Marketing, University of Bamberg.

Rauschnabel, P. A. and Ahuvia, A. C. (2014) "You're So Loveable: Anthropomorphism and Brand Love" *Journal of Brand Management,* 21(5): 372–395.

Rindfleisch, A., Burroughs, J. E., and Wong, N. (2009) "The Safety of Objects: Materialism, Existential Insecurity, and Brand Connection" *Journal of Consumer Research*, 36(1): 1–16.

Rochberg-Halton, E. and Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1981) *The Meaning of Things: Domestic Symbols and the Self*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Shaver, P. R. and Brennan, K. A. (1992) "Attachment Styles and the 'Big Five' Personality Traits: Their Connections with Each Other and with Romantic Relationship Outcomes" *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 18(5), 536–545.

Shimp, T. A. and Madden, T. J. (1988) "Consumer-Object Relations: A Conceptual Framework Based Analogously on Sternbergís Triangular Theory of Love" *Advances in Consumer Research*, 15(1): 163–168.

Vlachos, P. A. and Vrechopoulos, A. P. (2012) "Consumer-Retailer Love and Attachment: Antecedents and Personality Moderators" *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 19(2): 218–228.

Wallendorf, M. and Arnould, E. J. (1988) "'My Favorite Things': A Cross-Cultural Inquiry into Object Attachment, Possessiveness, and Social Linkage" *Journal of Consumer Research*, 14(3): 531–547.

White, J. K., Hendrick, S. S., and Hendrick, C. (2004) "Big Five Personality Variables and Relationship Constructs" *Personality and Individual Differences*, 37(7): 1519–1530.

Yim, C. K., Tse, D. K., and Chan, K. W. (2008) "Strengthening Customer Loyalty through Intimacy and Passion: Roles of Customer-Firm Affection and Customer-Staff Relationships in Services" *Journal of Marketing Research,* 45(6): 741–756.

6
Role of Brands When Children Share Snacks

Valérie Hémar-Nicolas, Mathilde Gollety, Coralie Damay, and Pascale Ezan

1   Introduction

In her campaign to prevent childhood obesity, Michelle Obama has called on food manufacturers to produce and promote healthy foods, and to use the power of brands to teach to children to adopt healthy eating behaviors.

"If there is anyone here who can sell food to our kids, it's you. You know what gets their attention. You know what makes that lasting impression. You know what gets them to drive their parents crazy in the grocery store. And I'm here today to ask you to use that knowledge and that power to our kids' advantage." (Michelle Obama, to the Grocery Manufacturers Association [GMA] on March 16, 2010, qtd. by Black, 2010).

Indeed, from a very early age, children live in what Sherry (1998) has called a 'brandscape' and exhibit great knowledge of food and beverage brands (Nairn, 2010). Therefore, developing a better understanding of the way in which children use brands to make their food decisions is critical for helping brand managers to implement brand strategies consistent with children's well-being. Prior research has highlighted that brands help children to recall and to recognize products (Macklin, 1996; McNeal and Ji, 2003), and evaluate food products on both functional and emotional bases (Pecheux and Derbaix, 1999). Additionally, children learn the symbolic and social value of brands within their peer group and use brands to build their self-identity and facilitate their social integration (Ezan, 2004; Chaplin and John, 2005; Moschis and Moore, 1979). Thus far, previous studies have mostly demonstrated the social role played by clothing brands (Elliott and Leonard, 2004; Hogg *et al.*, 1999; Rodhain, 2006) and very few have focused on the social

meaning of food brands (Roper and La Niece, 2009). Indeed, clothing brands are socially relevant because they are publicly consumed and then influenced by peer-driven influence (Bearden and Etzel, 1982; Childers and Rao, 1992). Conversely, numerous studies have shown that children's eating habits are mainly formed within the family and that brands consumed in the private sphere are not likely to be influenced by peers (Moore and Moschis, 1981; Oliveria *et al.*, 1992; Patrick and Nicklas, 2005; Sondergaard and Edelenbos, 2007). However, children increasingly eat meals outside the family setting, like in school cafeterias or social outings with friends (Hémar-Nicolas *et al.,* 2013; Kuntz *et al.,* 2012; Persson-Osowski *et al.*, 2012), and there is growing evidence that their eating behaviors are also influenced by their peers (Birch, 1980; Salvy *et al.*, 2012).

In this context, identifying the role played by food brands in children's peer groups may be helpful when considering the future of children's food marketing and tackling the issue of childhood obesity. This research provides a valuable contribution to this issue by exploring the role played by food brands when children share a meal with peers. Conducted under the research program MARCO (Marketing to Children and Obesity), financed by the French National Agency for Research (NAR), its findings contribute to answering the following two questions: are food brands taken into account by children when they share mealtime together? Are food brands a source of self-identity and social recognition within peer groups?

The first section presents a review of the literature pertaining to children and brands. Then, the second section describes the qualitative methodology used to analyze how brands contribute to the food choices that children make in the presence of their peers. The findings reported in the third section and discussed in the fourth section, highlight that children mostly select products according to their flavor whatever the brand name is. They make individual decisions and are hardly influenced by their peers.

2 Conceptual background

2.1 Children and food branding

Brands are an integral part of children's life, and with respect to food brands, the offering dedicated to young consumers is very large and strongly promoted (Linn and Novosat, 2008; Mayo and Nairn, 2009). Unsurprisingly, from a very early age, children are able to name a large number of food brands (Nairn, 2010). Based on developmental psychology

theories, prior research has studied how children of different ages relate to brand names, and how they memorize and use them in their decision-making process (Baxter and Lowrey, 2011; John, 1999; McNeal and Ji, 2003). By the time children are three years of age, brands serve identification-related functions, help children recognize the products in a store, and influence their choices (Kinsky and Bichard, 2011; Valkenburg and Buijzen, 2005). To differentiate products, young children use brands' visual cues, such as logos, packaging, brand characters, or colors (John and Sujan, 1990; Macklin, 1996; McNeal and Ji, 2003; Soldow, 1985). These nonverbal elements also may influence children's choices (Gollety and Guichard, 2011; Ogba and Johnson, 2010). When children grow older, they still pay a lot of attention to nonverbal brand cues, but they are able to better recall brand names and verbal information (Rossiter, 1976). By the age of seven years, children begin to categorize brand and product knowledge according to similarities and differences related to perceptual (e.g., colors, product shape) but also underlying attributes (e.g., taste, usage situation) (Bahn, 1986; John and Sujan, 1990). Moreover, some studies have reported that children often use brand names in a generic sense to define a product category (Marshall *et al.,* 2002; Otnes *et al.*, 1994), such as referring to hamburgers by the name McDonald's™, because the brand name is easier to remember. These findings suggest that children's brand categorization within a product category is based on a graded structure in which a particular brand is more typical of a product category than other brands (Mervis and Rosch, 1981). However, whereas the concept of brand typicality and its impact on the decision-making process has been widely studied with adults (Barsalou, 1985; Loken and Ward, 1990; Nedungadi and Hutchinson, 1985), very little research has explored this issue with young consumers (Rouen-Mallet, 2002). In particular, there still is no evidence that a more typical brand name is more highly evaluated by children.

Concerning the role played by brand names in the evaluation of food products, prior research has pointed out that children rate products with familiar brand names higher than products with unfamiliar names (Levin and Levin, 2010). Choosing a familiar brand enables them to reduce the perceived risk of selecting the wrong product (Hémar-Nicolas and Gollety, 2011). Robinson *et al.* (2007) have shown that three- to five-year-old children preferred the taste of foods when the products were in a McDonald's™ wrapper versus a wrapper without a brand logo. When evaluating brands, children (under twelve years of age) are more likely to rely on perceptual and tangible attributes (Marshall *et al.,* 2002; Zhang and Sood, 2002). Children's attitude toward a food brand is based

on both emotional and utilitarian factors (Pecheux and Derbaix, 1999). The emotional factors have a stronger impact on children's brand attitude, however. Thus, young consumers are appealed to well-known characters, who enrich the playfulness of the product and increase children's purchase requests (Hémar-Nicolas, 2011; Linn and Novosat, 2008). Drawing on the concept of 'nutri-tainment' or 'eater-tainment,' marketers often try to combine nutrition and entertainment when targeting children (Elliott, 2011; Gram *et al.,* 2010; Lulio, 2010): offering a cookie with cereal and that is in the shape of Spiderman™ provides taste enjoyment and nutritional benefits, while projecting children into a fantasy world. Thus, appealing branding that uses famous characters may boost the choice of healthy foods (Wansink *et al.*, 2012).

Based on theories of developmental psychology, a large number of the studies cited above has focused on the way children learn and use brand information depending on their cognitive development. Yet, children become consumers in a socioeconomic and cultural environment that may account for their relationships with food brands (Diamond *et al.*, 2009; Elliott and Leonard, 2004; Hamilton and Catterall, 2006; Nairn *et al.*, 2008). Children learn eating practices through social interactions within different socialization contexts (Brown and Laundry-Meyer, 2007; Lake and Townshend, 2006; Moschis and Moore, 1979). Previous studies have shown that children's first knowledge and preferences form within the family (Oliveria *et al.*, 1992; Valkenburg and Buijzen, 2005; Zajonc and Markus, 1982). However, as children grow up, they increasingly consume food brands outside the family, in particular within their peer group (Kuntz *et al.*, 2012; Persson-Osowski *et al.*, 2012). Although numerous studies have explored the influence of peers on food learning (Birch, 1980; Greenhalgh *et al.*, 2009; Salvy *et al.,* 2012), little research has examined how peer group affects children's food brand preferences and choices (Roper and La Niece, 2009).

2.2   Food brand consumption within peer group

A peer group can be defined as "a group of children of relatively the same age" (Corsaro, 2011, p. 301), and it is formed in various settings (e.g., neighborhood, school, sports center). Research conducted in different fields of the social sciences such as sociology, psychology, and education have highlighted the referent role played by the peer group in children's socialization (Bandura, 1977; James and Prout, 1990; Qvortrup *et al.*, 2011) and specifically in their consumption learning (Moschis and Churchill, 1978; Ward, 1974). Parents play the dominant role in influencing children, but peers exert an increasing influence as children grow

up (Moore and Moschis, 1981; Valkenburg and Cantor, 2001). In addition, whereas children learn the utilitarian dimensions of consumption with their parents, they find out the symbolic aspects of consumption with their peers (Dotson and Hyatt, 2005; Moschis and Churchill, 1978). Children begin to understand within a peer group that brands can be used to express their self-identity and to facilitate their social integration (John, 1999; Elliott and Wattanasuwan, 1998). Prior research has demonstrated that children gradually figure out consumption symbolism and the symbolic meaning of brands (Belk *et al.*, 1982; Belk *et al.*, 1984; Chaplin and Lowrey, 2010). At around seven years of age, children begin to use brands to define themselves and their peers, but these inferences mostly rely on concrete and simple elements, like owning a well-known brand, and they lack a conceptual understanding of brand meanings (Chaplin and John, 2005). By the time children reach ten to twelve years of age, they can decode consumption symbols and use conceptual brand features to identify themselves and others according to personality traits, user characteristics, and reference groups (Achenreiner and John, 2003; Chaplin and John, 2005). Thus far, most studies in the area of consumer symbolism have focused on children's behavior in the clothing market and shown that children use clothing brands as a means of identification and social recognition within their peer group (Elliott and Leonard, 2004; Hogg *et al.*, 1999; Ji, 2002; Ross and Harradine, 2004).

In the area of food consumption, studies have shown that peers can influence food preferences and increase children's acceptance of particular foods (Birch, 1980; Greenhalgh *et al.*, 2009; Salvy *et al.*, 2012). Children discover new food practices within their peer group, with whom they acquire new skills, values, and routines regarding food (Damay *et al.,* 2010). They experience the pleasure involved in sharing a meal with friends. Food is then an opportunity for building friendship bonds, and peers contribute to developing children's eating sociability (Hémar-Nicolas *et al.*, 2013; Persson-Osowski *et al.*, 2012; Roberts and Pettigrew, 2013). With respect to food brands, very few studies have focused on the influence exerted by the peer group on children's food brand preferences and choices (Roper and La Niece, 2009). In contrast to publicly consumed clothing brands, food brands traditionally were consumed in the private sphere of the family and thus, children have had little opportunity to use food brands outside the household to convey their social identity (Bearden and Etzel, 1982; Childers and Rao, 1992; John, 1999). Consequently, peer-driven influence would hardly affect food brands consumption. Yet, children increasingly eat meals outside the family, and food brands are increasingly consumed within the peer

group (Kuntz *et al.*, 2012; Persson-Osowski *et al.*, 2012), suggesting that children may also choose food brands according to their social meaning. McAlister and Cornwell (2010) have pointed out that three- to five-year-old children begin to judge others according to the food brands they consume. Using observations made during school recess, Delalande (2004) has highlighted that snack consumption at school constitutes a source of social esteem for children, especially when they bring new products that spark their peers' curiosity. In a study with children from low-income British families, Roper and La Niece (2009) have shown that eleven-year-old children prefer to eat commercial brands rather than store and discount brands, because these brands elevate their perceived status among their peers. As these findings emphasize, food brands can fulfill social roles when food consumption shifts from the family to the peer group. However, most of these findings come from individual interviews with children, in contexts that did not enable the observation of interactions within the peer group. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to explore the role played by food brands when children share a meal within the peer group, in a more naturalistic peer setting. Drawing on the theoretical framework pertaining to both consumer socialization and consumption symbolism, this study aims at exploring to what extent children use food brands to select products during a mealtime with their peers. We seek to answer the following two questions:

1. Do children take into account brand names when identifying and selecting products within the peer group?
2. Are food brands a source of self-identity and social recognition when they are consumed within the peer group?

3   Method

3.1   Sample

This study used a qualitative methodology and was based on the observation of ten snack times and group discussions. A total of 64 children in elementary school, aged six to twelve years (36% boys, 64% girls; average age around 8 years old), took part in one of the ten snack times (see Table 6.1). Each peer group consisted of children who were friends, in order to facilitate social interactions (Salvy *et al.*, 2012).

  The age bracket of our sample was based on John's consumer socialization model (1999). According to John's model, consumer socialization is viewed as a three-stage developmental process: the perceptual stage

Table 6.1 The structure of the sample

	Unbranded Snack Times						Branded Snack Times						
	1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	Subtotal	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	Subtotal	TOTAL
6 years old	2	2				4					1	1	5
7 years old	2	1	1		1	5			1	1	1	3	8
8 years old	2	1	3		2	8	1		4	5		10	18
9 years old			2	1	3	6	2	1			2	5	11
10 years old						5		7			2	9	14
11 years old						2	3				1	4	6
12 years old											2	2	2
Girls	5	1	2	3	3	14	4	8	4	4	7	27	41
Boys	1	3	6	2	4	16	2	0	1	2	2	7	23
TOTAL	6	4	8	5	7	30	6	8	5	6	9	34	64

(ages 3–7), the analytical stage (ages 7–11), and the reflective stage (ages 11–16). Our research focused on children at the analytical stage, because peers exert a growing influence at this stage, and children begin to understand the value of brands based on social meaning. Five in 64 children were 6 years old, and consequently were at the perceptual stage. Two in 64 children were 12 years old, and therefore at the beginning of the reflective stage. We decided to let these children participate in the study, because they were used to having their after-school snack with the other children, and we wanted to respect the children's habits. Fifty-seven in 64 children were at the analytical stage (average age around 8 years).

3.2 Procedure

The snack times were organized at one child's home after school, or in a recreational center, in order to observe the children in a natural and daily context. We opted for observing children from the upper- and lower-middle classes, because they account for a large part of the French population. Moreover, we did not define the sample size at the beginning of our study, but according to theoretical data saturation (Guest *et al.*, 2006; Yin, 1994). The data collection was interrupted when new important information stopped emerging. As explained above, our sample was made up of children belonging to the middle classes, and 89 percent of them were at the same sociocognitive stage (analytical). This homogeneity in terms of social economic status (SES) and sociocognitive development enabled us to observe similarities between the children (literal replication) (Yin, 1994). Nevertheless, the presence of children at the perceptual and reflective stages enabled us to potentially identify some changes due to sociocognitive differences (theoretical replication).

The authors were aware of the ethical problems related to research with children. Before the study, consent from the parents as well as the children themselves was obtained. The children and the parents were told that video footage would be used for academic and noncommercial purposes. To avoid any influence on their behaviors, the children were not informed of the research purposes precisely, but they could refuse to participate. Nevertheless, children were informed of the study's objectives at the end of each snack time.

3.3   Material choice

Regarding the composition of the snack times, the offering included nine food categories and three beverage categories usually consumed as snacks by French children and/or recommended by nutritionists (see Table 6.2). Three experts, two dieticians and one nutritionist, confirmed the appropriateness of the snacks. For five snack times, all the products were unpackaged so that food choices could not be influenced by the brand names. The products were removed from their packages and displayed on white plates, and the beverages were served in clear plastic glasses. The five other snack times offered the same products displayed in their packages, to show the brands. This research design allowed us to observe and compare unbranded and branded snack times, and helped us identify the role of brands in the decision-making process as well as potential interactions between peers triggered specifically by the presence of brands.

Before choosing this research design, we determined three options: (1) organizing snack times with only branded products versus snack times with only unbranded products (unpackaged); (2) offering both branded (packaged) and unbranded products (unpackaged) at all snack times to determine

Table 6.2   List of product categories offered to the children

Food categories	Beverage categories
Yogurt	Water
Fruits: fresh and dried	Orange juice
Applesauce	Cola
Cereal bars	
Cheese	
Fruit-flavored cookies	
Chocolate cookies	
Chocolate bars	
Bread	

Note: Fresh fruits were not branded because this product category is still not branded in France. Bread: Idem.

Table 6.3 List of food and beverage brands offered to the children for branded snack times

	Leading commercial brand	Retailer brand	Discount brand
Food categories			
Yogurt	P'tit Yop™	U™	Dia™
Applesauce	Pom'Potes™	Monoprix™	Leader Price™
Dried fruits	Maître Prunille™	U™	Dia™
Cereal bars	Prince™	Monoprix™	Dia™
Cheese	Laughing Cow™	Monoprix™	Dia™
Fruit-flavored cookies	3 Chatons by LU™	U™	Leader Price™
Chocolate cookies	Pepito by LU™	Casino Family™	Bien vu™
Chocolate bars	Kinder™	Casino Family™	Dia™
Beverage categories			
Water	Evian™	U™	Leader Price™
Orange juice	Tropicana™	Carrefour™	Dia™
Cola	Coca-Cola™	Casino™	Dia™

whether children prefer one over the other; (3) offering products with both known and unknown brands, to explore the impact of each child's brand familiarity. We chose the first pattern. When we tested the second pattern among children, we found that they believed the unpackaged products came from the displayed packages. The third pattern would have required the creation of ad hoc packages that lacked ecological validity.

Finally, to identify potential differences across types of brands, as Roper and La Niece (2009) indicated, for each product category we displayed three brand levels (see Table 6.3): a leading commercial brand, a retailer brand, and a discount brand.

3.4   Snack time procedure

The ten snack times followed the same procedure. The children were welcomed by two researchers and invited to sit down freely around a table on which plates were arranged. Then, they filled their plates, with the following invitation: "We have prepared a snack for you. You can choose what you want." During the first part of the observation period, the children could pick snacks up freely and eat what they wanted. If needed, one of the researchers helped them. At the end of this period, the researcher conducted a group discussion of around 30 minutes, using an interview guide that featured main themes to discuss. During the snack time, another researcher took pictures and video recorded the interactions. He also took notes, placing himself outside of the group to avoid disturbing the discussion.

3.5 Data collection and analysis

The data corpus consisted of ten videos (total of four hours). In total there were 150 pictures taken before, during, and after the snack, and field notes were written individually by each researcher and integrally transcribed verbatim from the discussions. Three researchers separately conducted qualitative thematic discourse analyses of the discussion transcripts and field notes, using the video footage to capture the intonation of voices and nonverbal data. The researchers performed a chronological content analysis to identify the different phases of the snack time (i.e., choice, consumption, second servings of certain foods, and the end of the snack time). They also used different analytical operations to categorize the data, make comparisons among them, and specify the content dimensions (Spiggle, 1994). Categories defined a priori guided the analysis: choice criteria, brand use, interactions among the children, and other influences from socialization agents. However, these categories were inductively honed into subcategories during the coding process (Glaser and Strauss, 1967).

4 Results

4.1 The role of food branding in the decision-making process

All the children observed in this study had a very good knowledge of food brands. They spontaneously recognized brands and quoted multiple brand names to speak about products, such as Yop™, Laughing Cow™, Coca-Cola™, Pepito™, Kiri™, McDonald's™, and so on. Even during snack times without branded products, the children used brand names to indicate some product categories, like cola (Coca-Cola™) or chocolate cookies (Pepito™). When we asked the children what a brand was for, their answers indicated detailed brand knowledge. They responded that it helped people recognize a product and suggested that people identified a product using its brand name and logo, but also other brand identity elements, such as colors or brand characters. The children also expressed a good understanding of the product line related to each brand. According to them, a brand can include an array of products. They recognized that these products had the same brand name because they were manufactured by the same firm and/or sold in the same retail stores. Finally, according to the children, brand is a means to distinguish the products of one company from those of another.

It [brand] helps people not to confound the products (girl, 8 years).

One difference reflects the product's origin (i.e., producer and/or retailer): it is the people who manufacture the product (girl, 9 years).

The difference between brands sometimes stems from brand attributes too:
Laughing Cow™, it's creamy cheese (boy, 7 years).
There are brands that sound more organic (girl, 9 years).

Very few children thought that brands might indicate the level of quality. If they did, they appeared mostly influenced by their parents' discourse:

My mother tells me that in Dia™ drinkable yogurt there are lots of coloring agents (girl, 8 years).

In contrast, none of the children reported that food brands might be useful to appeal to friends and then facilitate social integration.

With clothes we have to show we're like others. But with food we don't. There are different tastes (boy, 12 years).

The children explained that they knew brands foremost through their family, although they sometimes mentioned their peers, stores, and advertising as information sources:

When I go sleeping to Paul's house, I can eat applesauce like that [showing the Monoprix™ apple sauce] (girl, 8 years).

The branded snack times included leading national, retailer, and discount brands, in order to study whether the children perceived differences across brands according to their status. When speaking about brands, the children mentioned both retailers' brands and leading national brands. Most of the children had a good knowledge of brands owned by the stores where their parents shopped. They also could distinguish the national brands from retailers' ones and considered the main point of difference to be their origin. Some children denoted the leading national brands as 'real', compared with the retailer or discount brands' 'copies':

The original brand for cola is Coca-Cola™, for chocolate cookies it's Pepito™ and otherwise there are copies (boy, 9 years).

Even if they were aware of retailers' brands, the children mostly used the leading brand to refer to products in a category. For example, a girl asked her friends, "*Who wants another Yop™?*" while referring to a Dia™ drinkable yogurt drink. This suggests that many children

considered leading brands, like Pepito™, Pom'Potes™, or Yop™, as the typical product in their category. These findings highlighted that food brand names made up a common language within the peer group and the children frequently used brand names to speak about food with one another. In the following section, we will show to what extent food brands are also taken into account in the decision-making process.

4.2 Children's preferences

Although the children had a good knowledge of food brands and used brand names to indicate products, there is little evidence that the children selected products according to the brand names. Regardless of whether the snack time offered branded or unbranded products, the children chose product categories they liked, not brands:

> *We choose what we like [pointing out the three different applesauce packs], and it's always applesauce… so we don't pay attention to the brand* (girl, 10 years).

We did not find any noteworthy differences between boys and girls or between the youngest and the eldest children. The children seemed to choose products according to their own taste preferences and did not pay attention to their peers' choices:

> *I've chosen this bar because I like caramel* (girl, 9 years).
> *This is the flavor that I prefer. I prefer strawberry. I don't like raspberry very much* (boy, 6 years).

Unsurprisingly, most of the children preferred sweet and chocolate products (see Figures 6.1 and 6.2). This finding is consistent with prior studies (Birch, 1999), and children's preference for products high in sugar results more from biological factors than from the influence of the peer group. The offering of branded products did not change the children's decision-making process and did not trigger social interactions different from those observed during the unbranded snack times. During all the ten snack times, the children did not seem to judge their peers by the products and brands they chose. Sometimes some children privileged a brand, but their preferences are mainly likely due to past positive experiences with it, in line with a reinforcement mechanism. Most of these experiences had taken place in the family setting. In this sense, brand familiarity could influence preferences and choices.

(a) Branded snack time   (b) Unbranded snack time

Figure 6.1   Products and brands offered prior to start of snack time

(a) Branded snack time   (b) Unbranded snack time
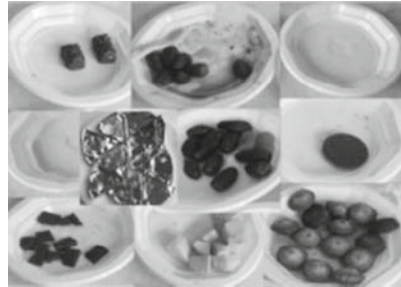
Figure 6.2   Remaining products and brands after snack time

Choosing a familiar branded product would allow the children to avoid perceived risk.

> *I didn't take [a cereal bar] because I didn't recognize it* (girl, 7 years).
>
> *I've taken this orange juice. It's Tropicana™, a well-known brand* (boy, 10 years).
>
> *I took this orange juice. That's what we have at home* (girl, 10 years).

In contrast, even if the children knew brand names, they rejected them when they were not accustomed to having some products for snack time:

> *[At snack-time], we don't eat Laughing Cow™!* (boy, 12 years).

While eating, the children hardly made comments on the brands displayed on the table, their own choices, and those of their friends. Some interactions addressed sociability rules, such as sharing food

among friends or taking care of others. For example, a group of female fourth-grade friends exchanged items among themselves to ensure a fair distribution, saying,

> *Do you mind if I take that one [a Prince™ chocolate bar] because I like dark chocolate?* (girl, 10 years).
>
> *Does anybody want the last Pepito™?* (girl, 9 years).

These types of interactions sometimes gave another child the idea of choosing the same product, but the primary aim of the interaction was not to influence peers' choices. The children mainly talked about their after-school activities and told funny stories. Yet, some children repeated songs or claims from advertisements, such as when one eight-year-old boy sang a Coca-Cola™ advertisement. In this case, the children used brands and their advertising communication as a cultural resource to interact with their peers. But, again, these practices within the peer group did not influence food behaviors.

As underlined above, the children often used the national leading brand name to designate a product category. However, leading brand names were not more frequently selected than retailers' or discount brands. That is, we did not observe a relationship between typicality and preference. The children hardly identified differences between brands. According to them, all the food products within a product category were similar and offered the same benefits, especially in terms of taste:

> *[Kinder™ and Casino™ and Dia™] are the same! They have the same taste!* (boy, 9 years).
>
> *It's exactly the same, this one or that one; it's just not the same picture* (girl, 9 years).

In designating retailers' brands as copies of national brands, the children did not express negative judgments. Very few of them perceived differences (taste or nutritional values) between the brands, saying for example,

> *[The Kinder™ and Casino™ chocolate bars] have the same taste but maybe their components are different. That is, perhaps there is the same thing but not in the same quantity* (girl, 8 years).

In summary, even if children knew numerous brands and used that knowledge to structure their understanding of the offering and to interact with their peers, they did not mobilize brand as an evaluation criterion.

We never observed that the children considered the social value of food brands: they did not select a food brand, especially a leading brand, to attract their peers' attention and gain social recognition.

5   Discussion and conclusion

This study explored the impact of brand on children's food choices within the peer group. It raised two research questions: Are brand names taken into account by children when they have a snack together? Is food brand a source of self-identity and social recognition within the peer group?

Regarding the first question, our findings show that children mostly select products according to their flavor, whatever the brand name is. They make individual decisions and are hardly influenced by their peers. Nevertheless, there is evidence that food marketing contributes to children's food experiences. Even if brand does not influence children's choices within the peer group, children use many brand names to designate food products, and the peer group shares a common language based on food branding. Brands help all the children categorize food products in the same way, which is structured around a typical brand. For example, Yop™ stands for the product category of drinkable yogurt, and each child understands that his or her friends are speaking about drinkable yogurt when he or she mentions Yop™. However, in contrast to to prior research conducted with adults (Loken and Ward, 1990; Nedungadi and Hutchinson, 1985), there is no evidence that children prefer typical brands. Children are not aware of the differences between brands when they make food choices. A typical brand is not associated with a better benefit, in particular taste or quality, because the category leader's attributes appear widely shared by other category members. Furthermore, children's food preferences seem to be more influenced by the family than by peers. Consistently with prior studies (Birch, 1999; Patrick and Nicklas, 2005; Sondergaard and Edelenbos, 2007), this study shows that children often reproduce practices they learn within the family and frequently choose product categories they are used to eating as snacks at home. Some children privilege brands with which they are familiar, because they are bought by their parents. These brands may be national brands, but also retailers' or discount brands. The findings suggest that children's food brand preferences are significantly influenced by the household food availability, and not essentially by advertising, which, in France, mostly promotes leading national brands. The preference for familiar brands probably results from a mere exposure effect within the family (Zajonc and Markus, 1982). Repeated exposure

to a stimulus generates familiarity with it and enhances positive attitudes. Children also like familiar objects because they are secure (Zajonc, 1968). This finding corroborates prior literature that supports the relationship between brand familiarity and preference (Hémar-Nicolas, 2011; Levin and Levin, 2010).

With respect to the second research question, that is, whether food brand is a source of self-identity and social recognition within the peer group, the study indicates that children pay very little attention to peers' food choices and to brands consumed by the latter. Children do not seek conformity with the peer group's attitudes and behaviors, and social recognition by eating the 'right' snack. The study does not highlight that children's food brand choices are influenced by a social norm established within the peer group. For example, choosing a leading brand that is strongly promoted in advertising, is not a way for children to improve social affiliation. By contrast, children are very respectful of their peers' choices and do not allocate a social value to food brands. One of the most important contributions of this research is then to emphasize that food brands, even when consumed in public, are not used by 6- to 12-year-old children to convey their identities and enhance social integration. This finding differs from previous research carried out in the area of consumption symbolism, according to which peers exert a stronger influence on the choice of publicly consumed brands, than the family. Several reasons may explain the differences. First, many prior studies were conducted with adults or teenagers (Bearden and Etzel, 1982; Childers and Rao, 1992; Liu and Hu, 2012). As for studies carried out with children, most of them have not explored the social value of food brands, but of more durable items, such as clothing and electronic goods (Chan, 2006a; Elliott and Leonard, 2004; Rodhain, 2006; Ross and Harradine, 2004). In addition, previous research on consumption symbolism has shown that, around 7 to 8 years of age, children pay attention to the symbolic meaning attached to 'owning' (and not only 'consuming') certain brands (Achenreiner and John, 2003; Chan, 2004, 2006b; Chaplin and John, 2005). They like to show off brands they 'possess,' to their friends in order to enhance social recognition. Concerning food products, children like to trade or give to peers food they own, in order to obtain social and psychological benefits in return (Delalande, 2004; Roberts and Pettigrew, 2013). In our study, the children could freely choose products and brands among a large offering, but snacks initially were owned by the researchers. The children did not have the opportunity to show off or give to their friends the food

products and brands they possessed, that is, purchased and/or brought from home.

Moreover, our findings slightly differ from those of Roper and La Niece's study (2009) that has highlighted that 11-year-old children's food brands choice is influenced by peer pressure. We do not observe peer pressure, even among older children (ages 10 to 12). The differences may be due to the socioeconomic background of the participants. The children in Roper and La Niece's study (2009) came from low-income families, whereas the children in our sample belonged to the upper- and lower-middle classes. In a less affluent context, both children and parents might see food brands as a means to compensate for feelings of social inadequacy tied to a lack of money (Elliott and Leonard, 2004; Hamilton and Catterall, 2006). Therefore, our study suggests that the social value of food brands should vary among children depending to their socioeconomic status. At least, the weak impact of peers on children's food brand choices may result from the children's age as well. Although during the analytical stage children increasingly evaluate brands according to their social value, they mainly seek to conform to the norms and values of their peer group at the reflective stage, that is by 11 to 12 years old (Bachmann *et al.*, 1993; Chaplin and John, 2005; Roper and La Niece, 2009).

From a managerial perspective, the study highlights that some brand names are defined by children as the typical brand of a product category. But brand typicality does not generate brand preference, because children have difficulties in differentiating brands' attributes and benefits. This finding invites brand's owners to rethink their brand positioning in order to underline their striking points of difference against competitive brands and enhance preference.

From a public policy perspective, this study supports the findings of prior research, according to which children's brand familiarity and eating behaviors are strongly influenced by the parents (Ayadi and Brée, 2010; Fisher and Birch, 1995; Marshall *et al.*, 2007). Consequently, to fight against childhood obesity, public policymakers as well as brands' owners (as they are invited by Michelle Obama) need to figure out actions that involve both children and parents.

Finally, this research has its limitations, which should be recognized, but suggestions for future research should also be indicated. As mentioned above, the children did not own the products and brands available during the snack time, since the snacks were provided by the researchers. Consequently, this study made it possible to explore the potential symbolic meaning attached to the choice and consumption

of products and brands, and not to their possession. That is why future research may invite children to bring in their own products. In this case, perhaps they would be more prone to show off their snack and to observe their peers' choices. In addition, the sample consisted of French children from the upper- and lower-middle classes. A next step would be to replicate this study with children from other socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds. Finally, this research sheds light on the importance of the concept of brand typicality in children's consumer behavior. This concept and its relationship with brand preference have been widely investigated with adults (Cohen and Nasu, 1987; Loken and Ward, 1990; Nedungadi and Hutchinson, 1985), but so far very few studies have focused on it with children.

References

Achenreiner, B. G. and John, D. R. (2003) "The Meaning of Brand to Children: A Developmental Investigation" *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 13(3): 205–219.

Ayadi, K. and Brée, J. (2010) "An Ethnography of Family Food Learning Transfers" *Young Consumers: Insight and Ideas for Responsible Marketers*, 11(1): 67–76.

Bachmann, G. R., John, D. R., and Rao, A. R. (1993) "Children's Susceptibility to Peer Group Purchase Influence: An Exploratory Investigation" *Advances in Consumer Research*, 20(1): 463–468.

Bahn, K. D. (1986) "How and When Do Brand Perceptions and Preferences First Form? A Cognitive Developmental Investigation" *Journal of Consumer Research*, 13(3): 382–393.

Bandura, A. (1977) *Social Learning Theory.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Barsalou, L. W. (1985) "Ideals, Central Tendency, and Frequency of Instantiation as Determinants of Graded Structure in Categories" *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition*, 11(4): 629–654.

Baxter, S. and Lowrey, T. M. (2011) "Phonetic Symbolism and Children's Brand Name Preferences" *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 28(7): 516–523.

Bearden, W. O. and Etzel, M. J. (1982) "Reference Group Influence on Product and Brand Purchase Decisions" *Journal of Consumer Research*, 9(2): 183–194.

Belk, R., Bahn, K. D., and Mayer, R. (1982) "Children's Recognition of Consumption Symbolism" *Journal of Consumer Research*, 9(1): 4–7.

Belk, R., Mayer, R., and Driscoll, A. (1984) "Children's Recognition of Consumption Symbolism in Children's Products" *Journal of Consumer Research*, 10(4): 386–397.

Birch, L. L. (1980) "Effects of Peer Models' Food Choices and Eating Behaviours on Preschoolers' Food Preference" *Child Development*, 51: 489–496.

Birch, L. L. (1999) "Development of Food Preferences" *Annual Review of Nutrition*, 19: 41–62.

Black, J. (2010) "First Lady Asks Foodmakers to be on Front Line Tackling Childhood Obesity." March 16, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/03/16/AR2010031603620.html, accessed February 27, 2013.

Brown, S. A. and Laundry-Meyer, L. (2007) "An Ecological Approach to High School Students' School Food Choice" *Journal of Family and Consumer Sciences Education*, 25(1): 34–44.

Chan, K. (2004) "Material World: Attitudes Towards Toys in China" *Young Consumers: Insight and Ideas for Responsible Marketers*, 6(1): 54–65.

Chan, K. (2006a) "Young Consumers and Perception of Brands in Hong Kong: A Qualitative Study" *Journal of Product and Brand Management*, 15(7): 416–426.

Chan, K. (2006b) "Exploring Children's Perception of Material Possessions: A Drawing Study" *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, 9(4): 352–366.

Chaplin, L. N. and John, D. R. (2005) "The Development of Self-Brand Connections in Children and Adolescents" *Journal of Consumer Research*, 32(1): 119–129.

Chaplin, L. N. and Lowrey, T. M. (2010) "The Development of Consumer-Based Consumption Constellations in Children" *Journal of Consumer Research*, 36(5): 757–777.

Childers, T. L. and Rao, A. R. (1992) "The Influence of Familial and Peer-Based Reference Groups on Consumer Decisions" *Journal of Consumer Research*, 19(2): 198–211.

Cohen, J. B. and Nasu, K. (1987) "Alternative Model of Categorization: Toward a Contingent Processing Framework" *Journal of Consumer Research*, 13(4): 455–472.

Corsaro, W. A. (2011) *The Sociology of Childhood*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Damay, C., Ezan, P., Golletty, M., and Nicolas-Hémar, V. (2010), "Social Interactions as Support for Learning about Food: The Case of the French School Cafeteria" *Young Consumers: Insight and Ideas for Responsible Marketers*, 12(2): 110–120.

Delalande, J. (2004) "Goûters 'Pique-Niques' et Maisons pour Peluches: Les Modes Enfantines Face à la Consommation." In: N. Diasio (ed.) *Au palais de Dame Tartine*. Paris: L'Harmattan, pp. 43–65.

Diamond, N., Sherry, J. F., Muniz, A. M., McGrath, M. A., Kozinets, R. V., and Borghini, S. (2009) "American Girls and the Brand Gestalt: Closing the Loop on Socio-Cultural Branding Research" *Journal of Marketing*, 73(3): 1189–1134.

Dotson, M. J. and Hyatt, E. M. (2005) "Major Influence Factors in Children's Consumer Socialization" *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 22(1): 35–42.

Elliott, C. (2011) "'It's Junk Food and Chicken Nuggets': Children's Perspectives on 'Kids' Food and the Question of Food Classification" *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, 10(3): 133–140.

Elliott, R. and Leonard, C. (2004) "Peer Pressure and Poverty: Consumption Symbolism among Children of the 'British Poor'" *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, 3(4): 347–359.

Elliott, R. and Wattanasuwan, K. (1998) "Brand as Symbolic Resources for the Construction of Identity" *International Journal of Advertising*, 17(2): 131–144.

Ezan, P. (2004) "De l'Objet de Collection à l'Objet Social, Impact des Pratiques de Consommation Enfantine et des Stratégies Marketing dans l'Installation d'une Mode" PhD dissertation, University of Caen-Basse Normandie, Caen, France.

Fisher, J. and Birch, L. (1995) "Fat Preferences and Fat Consumption of 3- to 5-Year-Old Children Are Related to Parental Adiposity" *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, 7: 759–764.

Glaser, B. G. and Strauss, A. L. (1967) *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*. Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company.

Gollety, M. and Guichard, N. (2011) "The Dilemma of Flavor and Color in the Choice of Packaging by Children" *Young Consumers: Insight and Ideas for Responsible Marketers*, 12(1): 82–90.

Gram, M., de la Ville, V. I., Le Roux, A., Boireau, N., and Rampnoux, O. (2010) "Communication on Food, Health and Nutrition: A Cross-Cultural Analysis of the Danonino Brand and Nutri-Tainment" *Journal of Marketing Communications*, 16(1/2): 87–103.

Greenhalgh, J., Dowey, A. J., Horne, P. J., Lowe, C. F., Griffiths, J. H., and Whitaker, C. J. (2009) "Positive- and Negative Peer Modelling Effects on Young Children's Consumption of Novel Blue Foods" *Appetite*, 56: 646–653.

Guest G., Bunce, A. and Johnson, L. (2006) "How Many Interviews Are Enough? An Experiment with Data Saturation and Variability" *Field Methods*, 18(1): 59–82.

Hamilton, K. and Catterall, M. (2006) "Consuming Love in Poor Families, Children's Influence on Consumption Decisions" *Journal of Marketing Management*, 22(9/10): 1031–1052.

Hémar-Nicolas, V. (2011) "Brand Characters on Packaging, a Catalyst for Children's Purchase Request: The Moderating Effect of the Narrative Presentation of the Character, the Child's Familiarity with the Character and the Child's Educational Level" *Recherche et Applications en Marketing*, 26(4), pp. 23–51 (English version online).

Hémar-Nicolas, V. and Gollety, M. (2012) "Using Brand Character When Targeting Children: What For? An Exploration of Managers' and Children's Viewpoints" *Young Consumers: Insight and Ideas for Responsible Marketers*, 13(1), pp. 20–29.

Hémar-Nicolas, V., Ezan, P., Gollety, M. Guichard, N., and Leroy, J. (2013) "How Do Children Learn Eating Practices? Beyond the Nutritional Information, the Importance of Social Eating" *Young Consumers: Insight and Ideas for Responsible Marketers*, 14(1): 5–18.

Hogg, M. K., Bruce, M., and Hill, A. J. (1999) "Brand Recognition and Young Consumer" *Advances in Consumer Research*, 26: 671–674.

James, A. and Prout, A. (1990) *Constructing and Reconstructing Childhood*. London: Falmer Press.

Ji, M. F. (2002) "Children's Relationships with Brands: 'True Love' or 'One-Night Stand'?" *Psychology and Marketing*, 19(4): 369–387.

John, D. R. (1999) "Consumer Socialization of Children: A Retrospective Look at Twenty-Five Years of Research" *Journal of Consumer Research*, 6(3): 183–213.

John, D. R. and Sujan, M. (1990) "Children's Use of Perceptual Cues in Product Categorization" *Psychology and Marketing,* 7(4): 277–294.

Kinsky, E. S. and Bichard, S. (2011) "'Mom! I've Seen that on a Commercial!' US Preschoolers' Recognition of Brand Logos" *Young Consumers Insight and Ideas for Responsible Marketers*, 12(2): 145–158.

Kuntz, M. G., Fiates, G. M., and Teixeira, E. (2012) "Healthy and Tasty School Snacks: Suggestions from Brazilian Children Consumers" *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 36(1): 38–43.

Lake, A. and Townshend, T. (2006) "Obesogenic Environments: Exploring the Built and Food Environments" *Journal of the Royal Society of Health*, 126(2): 262–267.

Levin, A. M. and Levin, I. P. (2010) "Packaging of Healthy and Unhealthy Food Products for Children and Parents: The Relative Influence of Licensed Characters and Brand Names" *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, 9(5): 393–402.

Linn S. and Novosat C. L. (2008) "Calories for Sale: Food Marketing to Children in the Twenty-First Century" *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 615(1): 133–155.

Liu, X and Hu, J. (2012) "Adolescent Evaluations of Brand Extensions: The Influence of Reference Group" *Psychology and Marketing*, 29(2): 98–106.

Loken, B. and Ward, J. (1990) "Alternative Approaches to Understanding the Determinants of Typicality" *Journal of Consumer Research*, 17(3): 111–126.

Lulio (de), S. (2010) "The Construction of Fun in Food Advertisements Targeting Children" *Young Consumers: Insight and Ideas for Responsible Marketers*, 11(2): 96–107.

Macklin, M. C. (1996) "Preschoolers' Learning of Brand Names from Visual Cues" *Journal of Consumer Research*, 23(3): 251–261.

Marshall, D., O'Donohoe, S., and Kline, S. (2007) "Families, Food, and Pester Power: Beyond the Blame Game?" *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, 6(4): 164–181.

Marshall, R. Woonbong, N., and Youngseong, S. (2002) "Children Learning Brand" *Proceedings of the Advances in Consumer Research Asia Pacific Conference*, 7, Beijing, 268–276.

Mayo, E. and Nairn, A. (2009) *Consumer Kids: How Big Business Is Grooming Our Children for Profit*. London: Constable and Robinson Ltd.

McAlister, A. R. and Cornwell, T. B. (2010) "Children's Brand Symbolism Understanding: Links to Theory of Mind and Executive Functioning" *Psychology and Marketing*, 27(3): 203–228.

McNeal, J. U. and Ji, M. F. (2003) "Children's Visual Memory of Packaging" *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 20(5): 400–427.

Mervis, C. B. and Rosch, E. (1981) "Categorization of Natural Objects" *Annual Review of Psychology*, 32: 89–115.

Moore, R. L. and Moschis, G. P. (1981) "The Role of Family Communication in Consumer Learning" *Journal of Communication*, 31(4): 42–51.

Moschis, G. P. and Churchill, G. A. Jr. (1978) "Consumer Socialization: A Theoretical and Empirical Analysis" *Journal of Marketing Research*, 15(4): 599–609.

Moschis, G. P. and Moore, R. L. (1979) "Decision Making among the Young: A Socialization Perspective" *Journal of Consumer Research*, 6(2): 101–112.

Nairn, A. (2010) "Children and Brands" In D. Marshall (ed.) *Understanding Children as Consumers*. London: Sage, pp. 96–114.

Nairn, A., Griffin, C., and Wicks, P.G. (2008) "Children's Use of Brand Symbolism" *European Journal of Marketing*, 42(5/6): 627–640.

Nedungadi, P. and Hutchinson, J. W. (1985) "The Prototypicality of Brands: Relationships with Brand Awareness, Preference and Usage" *Advances in Consumer Research*, 12(1): 498–503.

Ogba, I. E. and Johnson, R. (2010) "How Packaging Affects the Product Preferences of Children and the Buyer Behaviour of Their Parents in the Food Industry" *Young Consumers Insight and Ideas for Responsible Marketers*, 11(1): 77–89.

Oliveria, S. A., Ellison, R. C., Moore, L. L., Gillman, M. W., Garrahie, E. J., and Sineger, M. R. (1992) "Parent–Child Relationships in Nutrient Intake: The Framingham Children's Study" *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, 56: 593–598.

Otnes, C., Kim, Y. C., and Kim, K. (1994) "All I Want for Christmas: An Analysis of Children's Brand Requests to Santa Claus" *Journal of Popular Culture*, 27: 183–194.

Patrick, H. and Nicklas, T. A. (2005) "A Review of Family and Social Determinants of Children's Eating Patterns and Diet Quality" *Journal of the American College of Nutritio*n, 25(2): 83–92.

Pecheux, C and Derbaix, C. (1999) "Children and Attitude toward the Brand: A New Measurement Scale" *Journal of Advertising Research*, 39(4): 19–27.

Persson-Osowski, C., Göranzon, H., and Fjellström, C. (2012) "Children's Understanding of Food and Meals in the Foodscape at School" *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 36(1): 54–60.

Qvortrup, J., Corsaro, W. A., and Honig, M.-S. (2011) *The Palgrave Handbook of Childhood Studies*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Roberts, M. and Pettigrew, S. (2013) "Psychological Influences on Children's Food Consumption" *Psychology and Marketing*, 30(2): 103–120.

Robinson, T. N., Borzekowski, D. L., Matheson, D. M., and Kraemer, H. C. (2007) "Effects of Fast Food Branding on Young Children's Taste Preferences" *Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine*, 161(8): 792–797.

Rodhain, A. (2006) "Brands and the Identification Process of Children" *Advances in Consumer Research*, 33: 549–555.

Roper, S. and La Niece, C. (2009) "The Importance of Brands in the Lunch-Box Choices of Low-Income British School Children" *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, 8(2/3): 84–99.

Ross, J. and Harradine, R. (2004) "I'm Not Wearing That! Branding and Young Children" *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management*, 8(1): 11–25.

Rossiter, J. R. (1976) "Visual and Verbal Memory in Children's Product Information Utilization" *Advances in Consumer Research*, 3(1): 523–527.

Rouen-Mallet, C. (2002) "Sensibilité aux Marques et Formation de l'Ensemble Évoqué chez L'enfant" PhD dissertation, University of Pantheon Sorbonne, Paris, France.

Salvy, S.-A., de la Haye, K., and Hermans, R. C. J. (2012) "Influence of Peers and Friends on Children's and Adolescents' Eating and Activity Behaviors" *Physiology and Behavior*, 106: 369–378.

Sherry, J. R. Jr. (1998) "The Soul of the Company Store: Niketown Chicago and the Explored Brandscape." In: J.R. Sherry Jr. (ed.) *Servicescapes: The Concept of Place in Contemporary Markets*. Chicago: NTC Business Books, pp. 109–146.

Soldow, G. F. (1985) "The Ability of Children to Understand the Product Package: A Study of Limitations Imposed by Cognitive Developmental Stage" *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*, 4(1): 55–68.

Sondergaard, H. A. and Edelenbos, M. (2007) "What Parent Prefer and Children Like" *Food Quality and Preference*, 18(7): 949–962.

Spiggle, S. (1994) "Analysis and Interpretation of Qualitative Data in Consumer Research" *Journal of Consumer Research*, 21(3): 491–503.

Valkenburg, P. M. and Buijzen, M. (2005) "Identifying Determinants of Young Children's Brand Awareness: Television, Parents, and Peers" *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 26(4): 456–468.

Valkenburg, P. M. and Cantor, J. (2001) "The Development of a Child into a Consumer" *Applied Developmental Psychology*, 22: 61–72.

Wansink, B., Just, D., and Payne, C. (2012) "Can Branding Improve School Lunches?" *Preventive Medicine*, 166(10): 967–968.

Ward, S. (1974) "Consumer Socialization" *Journal of Consumer Research*, 1(2): 1–7.

Yin, R. K. (1994) *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. London: Sage Publication.

Zajonc, R. B. (1968) "Attitudinal Effects of Mere Exposure" *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology Monograph Supplement*, 9: 1–27.

Zajonc, R. B. and Markus, H. (1982) "Affective and Cognitive Factors in Preferences" *Journal of Consumer Research*, 9(2): 123–131.

Zhang, S. and Sood, S. (2002) "'Deep' and 'Surface' Cues: Brand Extension Evaluations by Children and Adults" *Journal of Consumer Research*, 29(1): 129–141.

7
Brand Relationships with Hockey Teams

Samil A. Aledin

1 Introduction

People relate to their favorite sports teams in a passionate manner. The experienced emotions are multifaceted ranging from happiness, pleasure, and pride to deep disappointment, anger, and hate. Sports managers view their teams as brands to be managed (Gladden and Funk, 2002). Sports teams, like other brands, generate diverse brand meanings in the minds of sports consumers. They have a strong symbolic dimension. First, sports spectating is a visible social activity. Second, the price of tickets to these events, along with the segmentation of seat location, influences consumers' ability to attend, in this manner contributing to the variability in sports attendance. Finally, sports teams usually represent unique brands of a sports product category/activity grounded in their promotional activities, their style of play, personality and the attitude of the players, and their logos, slogans, and other brand signifiers (Armstrong, 2007).

Current theoretical knowledge consists of themes and concept, such as fandom (Reysen and Branscombe, 2010; Winegard and Deaner, 2010), fan attraction (Bee and Havitz, 2010), team identification (Reding *et al.*, 2011; Wann and Pierce, 2005; Ware and Kowalski, 2012), motives and team involvement (Funk *et al.*, 2004), psychological well-being (Wann *et al.*, 2004; Wann, 2006), self-esteem (Bizman and Yinon, 2002), and sense of community (Fairley and Tyler, 2002). Thus, sports consumers' lives with their favorite teams are to a larger extent approached from the perspective of psychology and social psychology. In addition to this research, a more limited amount of sports consumption research has been conducted in the sphere of branding and relationship marketing. Gladden and Funk (2002) studied and identified dimensions of brand

associations in the context of sports. Their team association model is grounded in Keller's (1997) categorization of brand associations into 'attributes' (here: success, head coach, star player, management, stadium, logo, design, product delivery, and tradition), 'benefits' (identification, nostalgia, pride in place, escape, and peer group acceptance), and 'attitudes' (importance, knowledge, and affect). A sports consumer who memorizes the statistics of his or her favorite team players on a daily basis would be a person with a strong and favorable attitude toward the particular team, for example (Gladden and Funk, 2002). Finally, the core sports product (game) is produced, delivered, and consumed at the same time (Gladden and Sutton, 2009). Therefore, a part of the 'product' is the interaction between spectators and constituents of sports team organizations, and the development of a close relationship needs to be included in the marketing task (Aijo, 1996; Kim and Trail, 2011).

The theoretical knowledge is rather limited regarding consumers' brand relationships with sports teams (Kim and Trail, 2011). The objective of this study is to enhance the understanding of consumers' brand relationships with their sports teams through studying the relationships of ice hockey consumers.

2   Conceptual foundation

The body of related theoretical knowledge consists of some key sensitizing concepts and models. First, since the focus of consumer brand relationship research has been on consumer products and not on sports organizations, some defining concepts in sports consumption are discussed. Second, the seminal brand relationship quality (BRQ) Model of Fournier (1998) is presented, as well as an application of the BRQ model to the contexts of sports consumption by Kim and Trail (2011). This body of theoretical knowledge is expected to guide the reader in following the results of this study. Here sports consumption is approached from the perspective of consumer brand relationships, and sports teams are understood as brands, a collection of perceptions in the minds of consumers (Fournier, 1998). Thus, the academic discussion of whether sports teams are brands or not, is excluded in this context, and left for other studies.

2.1   Sensitizing concepts

A fan is usually defined as a person who has a strong interest in or admiration for a particular sports, art form, or famous person. Two closely related concepts to the consumer-sports brand relationship are

the positively correlated yet distinct 'fanship' and 'fandom.' A distinction can be made between a fan's personal connection with a sports team, and a fan's connection with other fans as a group. Fanship equals 'team identification,' and is defined as a fan's psychological connection to a team or its players. It indicates the extent to which the fan views the team as an extension of him- or herself (Wann *et al.*, 2001). Identification with a local sports team has been shown to result in a number of positive psychological health characteristics. Higher levels of sports team identification are linked with higher levels of personal and collective self-esteem, less alienation and depression, more positive and fewer negative emotions, more vigor, less fatigue, less confusion, less anger, and less tension (Linville, 1987; Reding *et al.*, 2011; Wann, 2006; Wann and Hamlet, 1994; Wann *et al.*, 2004). For example, team identification is positively correlated with personal and collective self-esteem (Bizman and Yinon, 2002; Wann, 1994).

Fandom is comparable to the concept of social identity (Reysen and Branscombe, 2010). Social identity theory, rooted in Henry Tajfel's (1982) work on categorization and social perception, concerns the dynamic and generative interdependence of the self-concept and intergroup relations (Hogg and Abrams, 1999). The central concept of the theory, social identity, refers to the particular aspects of the self-concept that derive from an individual's knowledge of and feelings about the group memberships he or she shares with others (Smith and Mackie 2000). An *in-group* is a group to which an individual belongs. The focus of the group membership is understandably on similarities, but there is also room for learning about the other members' uniqueness as individuals. An *out-group* is a group of which the 'observing' individual is not a member; it is simply different, and to some extent unattractive and unappealing. Moreover, its members are not considered to share similar goals and interests. (Smith and Mackie, 2000). In the context of brand consumption, consumers tend to accept the meanings of brands associated and consistent with an *in-group* and to reject those associated and consistent with an *out-group* (Escalas and Bettman, 2005). The research has suggested that sports fans categorize themselves and others as *in-groups* and *out-groups* (Voci, 2006). Furthermore, sports fans view themselves and other fans of the same sports team as sharing an essential group identity (Reysen and Branscombe, 2010).

2.2 Sensitizing models

Relationship quality can be defined as an "overall assessment of the strength of a relationship, conceptualized as a composite or

multidimensional construct capturing the different but related facets of a relationship" (Palmatier *et al.*, 2006). Fournier (1998) developed a BRQ model that consisted of 'love and passion,' 'self-connection,' 'commitment,' 'interdependence,' 'intimacy' and 'brand partner quality.' Her study was grounded in consumers' relationships with fast-moving consumer goods (FMCGs). During the last couple of years, Kim and Trail (2011) have adapted Fournier's (1998) model to the context of consumer-sports brand (team) relationships. They suggest that the appropriate dimensions of the BRQ model in sports should be 'trust,' 'commitment,' 'intimacy,' 'self-connection,' and 'reciprocity' (Kim and Trail, 2011; Kim *et al.*, 2011). *Trust* is one party's belief that its needs will be fulfilled by actions executed by the other party (Anderson and Weitz, 1989). *Commitment* has been described as "an exchange partner believing that an on-going relationship with another is so important as to warrant maximum efforts of maintaining it; that is; the committed party believes that the relationship is worth working on to ensure that it endures indefinitely" (Morgan and Hunt, 1994, p. 23). The level of familiarity, closeness, and openness are key characteristics to describe the nature of the link between sports consumers and sports brands (Harris and Ogbonna, 2008). These are the main elements of *intimacy*, which has a focus on the distance between an individual and an organization (Kim and Trail, 2011). *Self-connection* is the relationship quality facet that reflects the degree to which brand manages deliver essential identity concerns, tasks, or themes, and thereby express a significant aspect of the self (Fournier, 1998). And finally, *reciprocity* refers to internalized beliefs and expectations about the balance of obligations in an exchange relationship (Palmatier, 2008).

3 Methodology

3.1 Procedure

The data was collected in personal interviews that lasted between 60 and 80 minutes during fall 2012. In semi-structured interviews, the chosen sports consumers were asked to tell their life stories and relationships with their favorite hockey club from childhood to the current life stage. Probing techniques were used, and the probing was based on the question guide, which covered the essential themes regarding the research topic. However, room was left for the inductive thoughts and themes of the interviewees (McCracken 1998b; White *et al.*, 2012). The interviewees discussed freely and open-mindedly their relationships with their favorite teams. A personal in-depth interview was the most appropriate form of data collection for the purposes of this research, because

the interviewees were asked to tell their intimate life stories with their favorite teams. The interviews were recorded with a digital voice recorder in order increase the quality of the data and to allow the researcher to be active in his role.

3.1 Participants

The interviewees were comprised of ten adult (29–55 years of age) male ice hockey fans who had followed their team since their childhood or teenage by constantly attending the games and following their team in the media, for example. This study focused on more typical sports consumers of ice hockey, and for this reason the relationships of female supporters to sports were excluded from the sample. In addition, current ultra-fans (ultra-fanatic supporters with a tendency to violence) were also left out to keep the focus on more ordinary long-term supporters. The interviewees were recruited from national discussion sites on social media (e.g., jatkoaika.com) by placing an ad to these sites. Also, a number of the interviewees were word-of-mouth (WOM) recommendations of other interviewees. Thus, recruitment was also executed as a form of snowball sampling (e.g., Biernacki and Waldorf, 1981).

The evolutionary approach to relationships was chosen in order to reach a more in-depth and multifaceted understanding of the characteristics of sports consumers' brand relationships with their clubs. Seven of the interviewees were fans of two Helsinki-based local rival teams (HIFK and Jokerit), and the remaining three interviewees did not support their local teams, but teams of some other cities due to diverse reasons (e.g., former home town, close relative born in the city/town).

For a majority of interviewees, the relationship with their hockey club had started around age six to seven. However, one of the interviewees (Joel) implied that he was a HIFK supporter the moment he was born

Table 7.1 The list of interviewees

Interviewee	Age	Length of a relationship in years	Team
Owen	55	49	HIFK
Joe	32	25	HIFK
Ray	52	37	Jokerit
Henry	38	20	HIFK
Jon	43	36	HIFK
Michael	29	20	Ässät
Matthew	33	26	Jokerit
William	30	24	Tappara
Marc	38	31	TPS
Joel	39	"39"	HIFK

because he had inherited his father's fanatic relationship with HIFK. Thus, the starting point of the relationship was not always easily defined.

4   Results

Data analysis was executed by applying Thompson's (1997) hermeneutic framework for interpreting consumer stories. Thompson's framework consists of two stages of part-to-whole iterations. In the first stage, an *intratext* part, the researcher aims to make sense of the whole (a whole 'relationship' story by one interviewee) by reading the text again multiple times in order to gain an integrated understanding of the consumption meanings. In this study, the longitudinal relationship story of each participant was first analyzed as a whole in order to gain a holistic understanding of the relationship process. Thus, the developmental stages of the relationships and the reasons as well as the motives behind the developments were understood.

In the second stage of the analysis, an *intertextual* part, the researcher looks for similarities and differences across the stories of different consumers (Thompson, 1997). After the separate intratextual analysis of the ten longitudinal life stories of this study, comparison of the empirical knowledge followed. In this intertextual stage, common themes in individuals' relationships were addressed and categorized.

The presented concepts and models guided the interpretation, in which the researcher moved between empirical findings and this body of theoretical knowledge a number of times. Characteristics of consumers' brand relationships with hockey teams are approached from the perspective of earlier BRQ models. In line with Kim and Trail's (2011) suggestions for BRQs in sports consumption contexts, commitment, self-connection, intimacy, reciprocity, and trust are discussed.

4.1   Commitment

In the case of commitment, a party believes that a relationship is worth working on to ensure that it endures eternally (Morgan and Hunt, 1994). While marketers of most brands work hard to keep their consumers committed to their brands, consumers' brand relationships with hockey teams are to be created for life. Once the team is chosen, the team is not likely to be changed.

> *I chose my team when I was seven years of age. That is something you won't change. You may have many women in your life, but you'll only have one team* (Joe, 32).

If you start a relationship with a hockey team, you don't make changes. No matter if you did not like actions or share the values of the management. Now that I have chosen my team, I will not change it. It just feels like an impossible thing to do. It is like a religion. You choose to believe in something (Matthew, 33).

Grounded in the tenets of social exchange theory, Kim and Trail (2011) suggest that if a sports consumer perceives asymmetry in the exchange of benefits and cost, the sense of inequity may weaken the loyalty, reduce the likelihood of future exchange, and finally lead to termination of the relationship. The findings of this study do not support this notion. On the contrary, the interviewees addressed their increased interest in the team when it performed badly. They felt that their relationship partner needed their help and support more than in successful periods.

Your relationship with the team won't disappear. It exists both for better and worse (Michael, 29).

When my team is doing bad, I worry and follow them even more. It feels like they need my support more than usual (Joe, 32).

These lifelong relationships with hockey teams start when a father passes on his relationship to his son or daughter, or when a child adopts the hockey brand of his or her friends. However, if a person does not 'inherit' or 'adopt' the relationship with a hockey team, it may also start by coincidence. One of the interviewees discussed how his relationships with a hockey brand had started when he was doing his military service. One of two local national hockey league teams offered conscripts a special lower ticket price to attend the games, while the other did not. These tickets enabled him to start his fanatic relationship with the team.

I was in the army doing my military service at the time. Our leisure time committee arranged tickets and trips to different kinds of events. They had got discounted tickets from HIFK, but not from "Jokerit". The owner of Jokerit had not agreed on discounted ticket prices. So, I went to my first hockey game and got hooked with HIFK right away (Henry, 38 years).

In addition, for another interviewee a lifelong relationship with a hockey team had started when he had gotten irritated with a neighbor boy who had verbally abused the star player (national hockey hero) of the other local team. Although he did not have a prior interest in team

hockey, he had defended the "reputation" of the star player and started to attend the games, becoming a fan.

> *I had not been particularly interested in sports or ice -hockey before. A bunch of guys I knew speculated the upcoming derby between HIFK and Jokerit in the yard. One of the guys, an HIFK fan, discussed in a disrespectful manner Teemu Selanne, a young star player of Jokerit (to become later a Stanley cup winner). Just out of curiosity, I wanted to disagree with this boy. Later that evening I watched the game in which Jokerit won over HIFK by 7–2. After that I started to follow Jokerit games and became their fan* (Matthew, 33).

Thus, a brand relationship with a hockey team may start by "accident." This aspect is worth addressing, particularly when a relationship is built for life, unlike with many product and service categories.

4.2   Self-connection

Self-connection to a brand or organization parallels team identification (Kim and Trail, 2011). People have a tendency to construct stories in order to give their lives coherence and to create their identities (Escalas, 1997). People use brands to create and present self-images and to communicate to others who and what they are, as well as who they wish to be. As discussed earlier, 'team identification' is a fan's psychological connection to a team or its players. This connection indicates the extent to which a fan considers the team to be an extension of himself (Wann *et al.*, 2001). Team identification tends to start at backyard games in which the identities of star players are adopted.

> *That is exactly how it started, through players at that age (six to seven years of age). In backyard hockey games I wanted to be a certain star player (for example, Mr Timo Susi), things like that* (William, 30).

Unlike in most other consumer brand relationships, aggression and aggressive behavior have a role in brand relationships with hockey brands. The masculine and physical nature of the game and the abusive cheers of most fanatic fans are likely to have an impact on fans, particularly in adolescence. At this stage of personal development, identification with the team and other supporters seems to be an essential element in one's brand relationship.

> *At teenage I wanted to be like them. I admired their power and energy. I wanted to be a gladiator, too* (Owen, 55).

> *Bold-headed fans with their pumping fists were impressive for an 18-year-old teenager like me, and made me also shout for blood and fights. If you deeply love something, you deeply hate the other* (Henry, 38).

The aggressive behavior seemed to occur while fans attended the away games in other cities and towns. The consumption of alcoholic beverages on the way to away games led to harder verbal abuse with the fans of local teams, and resulted in threatening situations and fist-fights before, during, and after the games. The target of verbal abuse was the whole team or some star player of the team, for example. Due to a self-brand connection with the team, the insults to one's team and its star players were taken personally, and were likely to result in confrontations.

> *I travelled to the city of Turku with my friends to watch a game between Jokerit and TPS. I was sitting in the stand when one of the local supporters started call names our star player Teemu Selanne. I told him not call names a good player like him. When he started to elbow me, I asked him to 'step outside for a fist fight', but that was not what he wanted* (Ray, 52).

> *In away games liquor plays a major role. You open up your bottle in the bus at 1 pm and come back home at 5 am after the game. You get new intense relationships in those trips* (Joel, 39).

> *In one of the away games I got beat up in the toilet just for wearing my team's jersey. I did not say a word to these two guys that beat me up. But it is part of the picture. I have also taken part in fist fights* (Joel, 39).

Identity is articulated through the relationship between identification and difference (Hetherington, 1998). Identity is defined as the combination of what a person is (wishes to be) and what he is not (does not wish to be). The unique form of brand commitment discussed earlier is accompanied by an exceptional type of brand avoidance, that also seems to be 'for life.'

Brand avoidance is usually grounded in notions like dissatisfaction with the product, undesired self and self-concept incongruity, organizational disidentification, boycotting, and consumer resistance (Lee *et al.*, 2009). In brand relationships with hockey teams, brand avoidance seems to be primarily grounded in the idea of 'that other team' that prevents one's own team from winning games and championships. Thus, at the core of brand avoidance one finds the success of other teams. The reactions of fans to rival teams were more or less neutral as long as the rival

team did not present a threat to their own team, losing local derbies or playing in a lower division, for example.

> *Because they are not HIFK. They are our worst opponents* (Joe, 32).

> *I did not hate Jokerit at the time, because they were not successful. In the eighties they were always among the two bottom teams in the table. I hated Tappara (team from a city of Tampere), they won many championships at the time. I said my mother no to a trip to Tampere amusement park only, because Tappara was from Tampere* (Joel, 39).

> *The success of Jokerit (in the 1990s) and the verbal abuse from their fans irritated me a lot* (Michael, 29).

Another important element of brand avoidance is the fans of other teams with their irritating attitudes and behaviors. Jokerit fans used the success of their team to irritate HIFK fans, and HIFK fans used their 'big/older brother attitude' to communicate their much longer history as a hockey team. Fans of both teams implied that each other was arrogant.

> *I consider Jokerit fans a bunch of arrogant people. So, it is not the team itself, but it's the fans. I could never become a Jokerit fan* (Michael, 29).

> *Clearly the most annoying element of Jokerit is their fans* (Jon, 44) on of termination of consumers' relationships with hockey teams.

> *(At adolescence) I felt like being a part of the team. 'Today we're gonna win.' If the team lost, I really felt it was my fault. The whole package was an important part of my life. But today, I no longer feel like that. I have more important things in my life, like kids, for example* (Owen, 55).

> *When I started to work, I no longer had fights with fans of rival teams. At the time I also met my current wife. That was the end of one era* (Joel, 38).

The empirical data indicated that abusive interaction with the supporters of rival teams has an effect on an individual's relationship with his own team. Particularly, the intimacy is likely to change. One of the interviewees discussed how he felt he was less involved and less interested in his team after he changed his job from a company with the supporters of the rival team to a new job without any hockey supporters.

> *At my earlier job my boss was a fan of Jokerit. Verbal abuse was a lot of fun. But when I changed my job, I did not feel that close to HIFK at the absence of a partner for verbal abuse* (Henry, 38).

Abusive interaction seems to be a key element with the BRQ 'intimacy' in the context of hockey team brands. It tends to start right in the beginning of a brand relationship. In childhood, the interaction is more innocent and less insulting, but in the teenage years the aim moves toward irritation and confrontation. Verbal abuse (bragging) seems to generate as much pleasure for adult men as for the young boys who play hockey in the backyard. However, as adults with children, men may not have the time to attend the games as much as they did before. Here, the role of verbal abuse is likely to increase as an expression of the brand relationship with the hockey team. Discussion sites on hockey in social media, and Facebook, for example, offer a good ground for this development.

> *Only one boy in our class (elementary school) was a Jokerit fan. I went and asked him why he supported a team that sucks. He answered because his father did. However, we did not bully him for that* (Joel, 39).

Sometimes abusive interaction has a tendency to lead to nonphysical but rather mental abusive behavior toward the fan of the 'wrong team.' Supporters of an enemy team can be excluded in some social contexts, at school, for example.

> *We did not allow Jokerit fans to sit on our table at the school cafeteria nor to have a smoke with us during breaks at school* (Owen, 55).
>
> *The verbal abuse online today is pretty much the same as it was and as it still is when I meet people 'live.' Whose team is better, whose players top the charts* (Ray, 52).

4.4   Reciprocity and trust

According to the principle of reciprocity, when one benefits from another, the recipient should return the favor in proportion to what the other has done for him (Gouldner, 1960). Obvious returns of the favor to the supporters from a hockey team would be successful seasons and championships. Not all of the clubs are able to return favors like this, at least not on yearly basis. When we covered 'commitment,' we learned that supporters stick to their teams 'in good and in bad.' With some teams, the return on 'supporters' investment' may take a while. However, if hockey team brands are not limited to players, coaches, and managers, but also include a community of other supporters, the reciprocity principle is more likely to be appropriate for many teams.

Brand communities play a major in consumers' brand relationships with products and services (McAlexander *et al*., 2002; Muniz and

O'Guinn, 2000). Members of the community share their love and passion for the brand and widen their social networks. Brand relationships with hockey teams also offer a great ground for new acquaintances; once one starts to attend the games regularly, one meets people who share one's interest. Some of these acquaintances may turn into long-term friends.

> *I had a season ticket, and I always sat on the same stand. The guys who sat behind and in front of us heard our stupid jokes and laughed during games. At breaks we had beer and got better acquainted. In this manner I got about 15 new friends with whom I later rent a private busses and attended away games* (Ray, 52).

In the era of professional hockey, players, coaches, and team managers tend to change. Unlike in the days of amateur hockey, fans need to adapt to this constant change. A player who was trained and brought up on a fan's favorite team may play the next season for the team that is the fan's worst enemy due to a lucrative contract. As a result of this development, one of the interviewees implied that for him, the hockey team equaled its fans, not the players or other members of the hockey club. Supporters are the constant element of hockey teams, while all of the other elements are open for change.

> *Players and managers are only visiting the team. They can take off anytime, but the fans are there forever. Players don't mean a thing to me, but the people who attend the games do. Fans are the team* (Joel, 39).

Therefore, other supporters of one's favorite team play a vital role in the reciprocity dimension of the BRQ model for sports consumption. The trust element in Kim and Trail's (2011) BRQ model suggests that actions provided by sports clubs should fulfill supporter needs in order for clubs to be worthy of their supporters' trust. The consumer's trust in the organization can be conceptualized as the consumer's confidence in the quality and reliability of service or in the product offered by an organization, similar to the way in which the consumer's trust in an individual partner refers to the confidence in the quality and reliability of an action taken by the partner (Garbarino and Johnson 1999; Kim and Trail 2011).

Referring to the challenges of the reciprocity element of the model, the trust element in the model can also be seen as problematic. If a hockey organization's core service is a hockey game, and the object of supporters' needs is the success of the team, what can construct trust in

this context? While hockey players and managers may change a team, driven by financial lures, and teams may fail to succeed, the community created by other supporters can provide quality and reliability of action that is worthy of trust. This also supports the notion of including other supporters in the core of hockey team brands.

5   Conclusions

If an individual does not inherit the brand relationship with a hockey team from his or her parents or start to support the favorite team of friends, his or her relationship may start by accident. These kinds of relationships are likely to start among children in families with no particular interest in sports or people living in cities without their own hockey team.

Consumers' brand relationships with hockey teams are special among the portfolio of consumer brand relationships. Brand commitment is particularly strong, and the chosen team is not likely to change. Due to an early choice and immediate juxtapositioning with other hockey teams, the change of a favorite team is quadrated with a severe self-betrayal.

In the context of brand relationships with hockey teams, the main motivation for brand avoidance is the success of other teams. Brand avoidance is likely to start in childhood with the notion of "the other team that is preventing our team from winning titles" (respondent's words). Later, teenage brand avoidance gets more passionate, and diverse forms of abusive behavior with the supporters of other teams may occur. In addition to the success of other teams, their supporters become a reason to avoid, to be disgusted by, and even to hate the brand. This passionate and at worst aggressive stage in the relationship is likely to cool down in adulthood, when life gets meaningful in the form of a family with children, for example. Just as brand commitment to one's own team is for life, so is brand avoidance with regard to other teams.

The brand community has a special role in brand relationships with hockey teams. As the players and managers come and go in professional hockey, which is dictated by financial motives, the only permanent element of hockey teams is their supporters. In the relationship dichotomy, an individual consumer's relationship partner should not only be constructed of players and managers but also include a brand community of other supporters at the core of the brand. For some of hockey consumers, the supporters may equal the hockey team brand.

In addition to the vital role of the supporters of one's own favorite team, the role of supporters of rival teams needs be given more weight in consumers' brand relationships with hockey teams. In particular, *abusive interaction* should be added to Kim and Trail's (2011) model as an additional BRQ. Abusive interaction, particularly in the form of verbal assaults, is an element that starts in the beginning of relationships and follows supporters through diverse personal developmental stages. In addition, it was implied that a decrease in abusive interactions could result in an increased distance between the hockey team and the supporter.

Finally, in addition to traditional brand communication, hockey team managers should actively develop the activities of their brand communities, making the team attractive for those (young) consumers who do not inherit their relationships from relatives. The award should be motivating; a lifelong brand relationship with lifelong brand avoidance.

References

Anderson, E. and Weitz, B. (1989) "Determinants of Continuity in Conventional Industrial Channel Dyads" *Marketing Science*, 8(4): 310–323.

Armstrong, K. L. (2007) "Self, Situations, and Sports Consumption: An Exploratory Study of Symbolic Interactionism" *Journal of Sports Behavior*, 30(2): 111–129.

Bee, C. C. and Havitz, M. E. (2010) "Exploring the Relationship Between Involvement, Fan Attraction, Psychological Commitment And Behavioral Loyalty in a Sports Spectator Context" *International Journal of Sports Marketing and Sponsorship*, 11(1): 140–157.

Biernacki, P. and Waldorf, D. (1981) "Snowball Sampling: Problems and Techniques of Chain Referral Sampling" *Sociological Methods and Research*, 10(2): 141–163.

Bizman, A. and Yinon, Y (2002) "Engaging in Distancing Tactics among Sports Fans: Effects on Self-Esteem and Emotional Responses" *Journal of Social Psychology*, 142(3): 381–392.

Escalas, J. E. (1997) "The Positive Effects of Narrative Thought in Response to Advertising" *Advances in Consumer Research*, 24, 67–70.

Escalas, J. E. and Bettman, J. R. (2005) "Self-Construal, Reference Groups, and Brand Meaning" *Journal of Consumer Research*, 32(3): 378–389.

Fairley, S. and Tyler, B. D. (2002) "Bringing Baseball to the Big Screen: Building Sense of Community Outside of the Ballpark" *Journal of Sports Management*, 26(3): 258–270.

Fournier, S. (1998) "Consumers and their Brands: Developing Relationship Theory in Consumer Research" *Journal of Consumer Research*, 24(4): 343–372.

Funk, D. C., Ridinger L. L. and Moorman, A. M. (2004) "Exploring Origins of Involvement: Understanding the Relationship Between Consumer Motives and Involvement with Professional Sports Teams" *Leisure Sciences*, 26(1): 36–61.

Garbarino, E. and Johnson, M (1999) "The Different Roles of Satisfaction, Trust and Commitment in Customer Relationships" *Journal of Marketing,* 63(29), 70–87.

Gladden, J. M. and Funk, D. C. (2002) "Developing an Understanding of Brand Associations in Team Sports: Empirical Evidence from Consumers of Professional Sports" *Journal of Sports Management*, 16(1): 54–81.

Gouldner, A. W. (1960) "The Norm of Reciprocity: A Preliminary Statement" *American Sociological Review,* 25(2), 161–178.

Harris, F. C. and Ogbonna, E. (2008) "The Dynamic of Underlying Service Firm-Customer Relationships Insights from a Study of English Soccer Fans" *Journal of Service Research* 10(4): 382–399.

Hetherington, K. (1988) *Expressions of Identity: Space, Performance and Politics* (London: Sage Publications).

Hogg, M. A. and Abrams, D. (1999) "Social Identity and Social Cognition: Historical Background and Current Trends." In: D. Abrams and M.A. Hogg (eds) *Social Identity and Social Cognition.* Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, pp. 1–21.

Keller, K. L. (1993) "Conceptualizing, Measuring, and Managing Customer-based Brand Based Equity" *Journal of Marketing*, 57(1): 1–22.

Kim, Y. K. and Trail, G. (2011) "A Conceptual Framework for Understanding Relationship Between Sports Consumers and Sports Organizations: A Relationship Quality Approach" *Journal of Sports Management*, 25(1): 57–69.

Kim, Y. K., Trail, G. T., Woo, B., and Zhang, J. (2011) "Sports Consumer-Team Relationship Quality: Development and Psychometric Evaluation of a Scale" *International Journal of Sports Marketing and Sponsorship*, 12(3): 254–271.

Lee, M. S. W., Motion, J., and Conroy, D. (2009) "Anti-Consumption and Brand Avoidance" *Journal of Business Research*, 62(2): 169–180.

Linville, P. W. (1987) "Self-Complexity as a Cognitive Buffer against Stress-Related Illness and Depression" *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 52(4): 663–676.

McAlexander, J. H., Schouten, J. W., and Koenig, H. F. (2002) "Building Brand Community" *Journal of Marketing*, 66(1): 38–54.

Morgan, R. M. and Hunt, S. D. (1994) "The Commitment-Trust Theory of Relationship Marketing" *Journal of Marketing*, 58(3): 20–58.

Muniz, A. M. Jr. and O'Guinn, T. C. (2000) "Brand Community" *Journal of Consumer Research*, 27(4): 412–432.

Palmatier, R. W. (2008) "Interim Relational Drivers of Customer Value" *Journal of Marketing*, 72(4): 76–89.

Reding, F. N., Grieve, F. G., Derryberry, W. P., and Paquin, A. R. (2011) "Examining the Team Identification of Football Fans at the High School Level" *Journal of Sports Behavior*, 34(4): 378–387.

Reysen, S. and Branscombe, N. R. (2010) "Fanship and Fandom: Comparisons between Sports and Non-Sports Fans" *Journal of Sports Behavior*, 33(2): 176–193.

Smith, E. R. and Mackie, D. M. (2000) *Social Psychology*, 2nd edition. Philadelphia, PA: Psychology Press.

Taifel, H. (1982) "Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations" *Annual Review of Social Psychology*, 33(1): 1–39.

Thompson, C. J. (1997) "Interpreting Consumers: A Hermeneutical Framework for Deriving Marketing Insights From Texts of Consumers' Consumption Stories" *Journal of Marketing Research*, 34(4): 438–455.

Voci, A. (2006) "The Link between Identification and In-Group Favouritism: Effects of Threat to Social Identity and Trust-Related Emotions" *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 45(2): 265–284.

Wann, D. L. (1994) "The Noble Sports Fan: The Relationship between Team Identification, Self-Esteem, and Aggression" *Perceptual and Motor Skills*, 78(3): 864–866.

Wann, D. L. (2006) "Examining the Potential Causal Relationship between Sports Team Identification and Psychological Well-Being" *Journal of Sports Behavior*, 29(1): 79–95.

Wann, D. L. and Hamlet, M. A. (1994) "The Joiners Scale: Validation of a Measure of a Social Complexity" *Psychological Reports*, 74(3): 1027–1034.

Wann, D. L., Dunham, M. D., Byrd, M. L., and Keenan, B.I. (2004) "The Five-Factor Model of Personality and the Psychological Health of Highly Identified Sports Fans" *International Sports Journal*, 8(1), 28–36.

Wann, D. L., Melnick, M. J., Russell, G. W., and Peace, D. G. (2001) *Sports Fans: The Psychology of Social Impact of Spectators*. New York: Routledge.

Wann, D. L. and Pierce, S. (2005) "The Relationship between Sports Team Identification and Social Well-Being: Additional Evidence Supporting the Team Identification – Social Psychological Model Health Model" *North American Journal of Psychology*, 7(1): 117–124.

Ware, A. and Kowalski, G. S. (2012) "Sex Identification and the Love of Sports: BIRGing and CORFing among Sports Fans" *Journal of Sports Behavior*, 35(2): 223–237.

White, A., Breazeale, M., and Webster, C. (2012) "Motivations for the Brand Avoidance Relationships." In: S. Fournier, M. Breazeale and M. Fetscherin (eds) *Consumer-Brand Relationships – Theory and Practice*. London: Routledge, pp. 57–73.

Winegard, B. and Deaner, R. O. (2010) "The Evolutionary Significance of Red Sox Nation: Sports Fandom as a By-Product of Coalitional Psychology" *www.ejournal.net,* 8(3): 432–446.

Part III

Measuring and Managing Brand Relationships

8
A New Consumer Brand Relationships Framework

S. Sreejesh and Subhadip Roy

1 Introduction

The creation of brand-based differentiation is the most influential approach to the development and maintenance of competitive advantage, particularly a consumer-focused competitive advantage. For consumers, these differential aspects may act as a signal of achieving expectation, which will provide more confidence and believability that the brand will meet their expectations (Kim *et al.*, 2008). The extant literature on consumer brand management has examined these differentiating aspects, based on which consumers perceive and evaluate brands, for example, brand equity (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1998), brand personality (Aaker, 1997; Batra *et al.*, 1993; Plummer, 1985), and brand extensions (Aaker and Keller, 1993; Nakamoto *et al.*, 1993). Recently, a new stream of literature stated that consumers differentiate brands based on how they relate to them (Fournier, 1998), and this gave rise to a new area of thinking, called consumer brand relationships (CBRs) (e.g., Fournier, 1998; McAlexander *et al.*, 2002; Parvatiyar and Sheth, 2001; Webster, 1992).

Even though relationship marketing researchers (e.g., Juttner and Wehrli, 1994) have already addressed the issue of maintaining strong relationships with customers as a long-term strategy, a focus on the attitudinal and behavioural aspects of CBR was missing. This conceptualization has become even more important in the case of the developing nations, specifically India, as a country passing through waves of globalization and whose markets are experiencing the entry of more and more global brands with time. The availability of global brands coupled with rising income levels have created challenges for brands to attract and to retain customers. In such a scenario, a model of CBR that incorporates attitudinal and behavioural aspects is required, which would

incorporate the development and flow of events for a consumer in the formation of a relationship with a brand. Such a model would enable academicians to test and calibrate for empirical accuracy and at the same time provide practitioners with a prescription for the development of a strong CBR with its target audience.

Reflecting the critical role of relationships in branding, and marketing in general, the study of CBRs has been represented in the literature for more than two and half decades since Blackston's (1992) study of building brands equity through brand relationships. Even though CBRs reflect strong cognitive, affective, and behavioral ties with a brand (Blackston, 1992; Nebel and Blattberg, 2000), early research primarily gave more emphasis to interpersonal metaphoric transfer and considered only limited aspects of consumer brand relationships. These were either from attitudinal or behavioral perspectives, namely social-motive and affective attachments (e.g., self-connection and love/passion), behavioral ties (e.g., brand commitment and interdependence), and cognitive beliefs, such satisfaction and brand partner quality (Fletcher *et al.*, 2000; Fournier, 1994, 1998; Park *et al.*, 2002). To our knowledge, to date, no attempt has been made to integrate attitudinal (cognitive, affective, and conative) and behavioral elements into the CBR paradigm, even though researchers have pointed out that combining all these elements yields strong and durable CBRs (Kim *et al.*, 2013). As a result of this lack of explication in the existing literature, there is a lack of clear operationalization and lack of systematic and integrated theory building in CBRs (Tsai, 2011).

Therefore, the objective of the present study is to establish a new theoretical basis for understanding CBRs based on a nonmetaphoric, noninterpersonal approach. The study will integrate the attitudinal and behavioral components of CBR. Thus, the present study will present a more practical model of CBR grounded in pragmatic data and at the same time provide a testable one from the empirical point of view. The expected outcomes of the present study will enable the CBR researchers to view the CBR constructs as well as identify the antecedents and consequences of the same.

The rest of the paper is arranged as follows. The second section provides a brief literature review, followed by a detailed research methodology in the third section. The creation of a grounded theory of CBR is explained in the fourth section. Following this, the study results are discussed. The academic and practical implications are illustrated in the penultimate sections before the study concludes.

2 Literature review

2.1 Consumer brand relationships

The significance of studying CBR has been widely acknowledged by studies in marketing. For companies, retaining existing customers is economically more profitable than constantly seeking new customers (Sheth and Parvatiyar, 1995). The magnitude of customer retention has been a major source of the relative productivity of the firm (Reichheld, 1996). Strong CBR was also found to provide competitive advantage to the firm (Day *et al.*, 1988; Webster, 1992).

The importance of CBR has also been acknowledged by practitioners, such as brand managers and advertisers (Langer, 1997; Sweeney and Chew, 2002). CBRs play a significant role in maintaining the relevance of the brand, a good customer base, and in augmenting a competitive and fast-moving marketplace (Sweeney and Chew, 2002). It has also been recognized that the consumers' strong and deep-rooted relationship with a brand will generate strong market share and profits, provide a competitive edge, and facilitate better marketing decisions in terms of product positioning, advertising, reinforcement of attitudes, and finally a higher volume of purchase and repeated behavior (Blackston, 1992; De Chernatony and Dall'Olmo Riley, 1998; Sweeney and Chew, 2002). Therefore, it is essential to understand the role of brands in consumers' lives and vice versa.

There has been considerable research on CBR (e.g., Fournier, 1998; Park *et al.*, 2013) in the last 15 years. A seminal study by Fournier (1998) used several interpersonal theories and introduced a model of CBRs called the Brand Relationship Quality Model (BRQ model). This BRQ model measures the strength and depth of consumer relationship with brands, and conceptualizes the BRQ concept in terms of six dimensions or facets: partner quality, intimacy, behavioral interdependence, personal commitment, self-concept connection, and love/passion. Researchers have investigated various aspects of CBR. For example, Kim *et al.* (2005) made an attempt to develop a scale to measure brand relationship quality. Kaltcheva and Weitz (1999) investigated the CBR elements, such as mediation and reciprocity on consumer attributions to intention and selfishness and found the same to be related to consumers' pleasant and unpleasant experiences with the brand. Thomson and Johnson (2002) studied the role of a relationship orientation variable called brand attachment, and examined the predictive and explanatory power on the satisfaction of CBRs. Hess and Story (2005) came up with an important relationship variable called

relationship commitment and proposed the trust-based relationship commitment model. Jevons *et al.*, (2005) studied CBR from the manager's perspective and suggested different management strategies for different types of brand relationships. Swaminathan *et al.* (2007) synthesized two brand-related concepts such as the self-concept connection and country-of-origin connection and stated that the CBR can be formed on the basis of individual- (self-concept connection) or group-level connections (country-of-origin connection) that may subsequently influence brand equity. Veloutsou and Moutinho (2009) examined the role of brand reputation and tribalism on the strength of CBRs. Since a brand is considered to be an identification factor, Papista and Dimitriadis (2012) made an attempt to examine the conceptualization of relationship quality and examined the link between relationship quality and consumer brand identification. In studies of the alternative constructs of relationships, attempts have been made to examine how the negative aspects of brand-related factors influence relationships with consumers. For example, Huber *et al.* (2010) studied the role of brand misconduct on CBRs. Park *et al.* (2013) proposed and empirically tested a new model of CBRs called the attachment-aversion (AA) model. According to this model, the consumer is attached and feels close to a brand when the brand is perceived as a means for self-expansion, called brand attachment. At the same time, when the consumer perceives a brand as a threat, he or she feels distant from the brand, a phenomenon called aversion (Park *et al.*, 2013).

CBR researchers have also investigated the relationship of CBR with related marketing variables, such as the connection between brand personality and CBR (e.g., Hayes *et al.*, 2006; Smit *et al.*, 2007; Zhou *et al.*, 2012). The underlying assumption is that if a brand possesses personality characteristics similar to the human personality, then CBRs will be similar to interpersonal relationships. The contextual role of CBR has been investigated outside of product branding (e.g., Carlson *et al.*, 2009; Nyadzayo *et al.*, 2011; Sweeney and Chew 2002; Xie and Heug, 2012). CBR studies have also tried to explore cross-cultural interactions in relationship formation. For example, Chang and Chang (2006) attempted to build a framework of CBRs by integrating an experiential view through conducting a cross-cultural study in China and Taiwan. Saunders and Rod (2012) sought to augment traditional investigations of CBRs through associative network theory and found the same to be similar to network maps where brand information flowed back to stakeholders leading to CBR.

Researchers have also examined subcultural or group effects on CBR. Olson (1999) and Kates (2000) explored CBR from the perspective of

women consumers and gay men respectively, using qualitative research. Ji (2002) used relationship metaphors to examine how CBRs develop among children in the family setting. Zayer and Neier (2011), using a series of in-depth interviews, examined the applicability of the CBR typology proposed by Fournier (1998) to a segment of heterosexual male shoppers of fashion and grooming products. Hwang and Kandampally (2012) examined the role of three relationship-building factors, such as the self-concept connection, brand attachment, and brand love in the context of CBR for young consumers of luxury products. Recently, Sahay *et al.* (2012) examined the role of gender difference in CBR with respect to affect and cognition.

In spite of numerous studies that have employed different approaches to understand the phenomenon of CBRs over the past two and a half decades, the current understanding in this paradigm still suffers from lack of external validity. This is basically due to the inability of the preceding research to contribute a clear conceptual understanding of the CBR phenomenon. The current understanding of the CBR paradigm also lacksa clear agreement on the operationlization of the construct of CBRs (Tsai, 2011).

Generally, there are two schools of thought when it comes to the conceptualization and operationalization of CBRs, which are relationship quality and the investment relationship. Few studies give importance to the integrative role of the attitudinal and behavioral aspects of CBRs during their conceptualization (e.g., Blackston, 1992; Nebel and Blattberg, 2000). A common theme across these two schools of thought has been the identification, development, and integration of surrogate attitudinal and behavioral measures, which is required to conceptualize and operationlize CBRs (Tsai, 2011; Park *et al.*, 2012). Blackston (1992) in his conceptualization was precise in asserting that both attitudinal aspects and behaviors define CBRs. By viewing CBRs as a attitude-behavior related in their framework, the authors were able to investigate the concept from a causal perspective, which permits the identification of the antecedents of CBRs. Their research, however, offers the only conceptual framework of the theory, and does not provide any empirical validation.

3 Methodology

Considering the nature of our study, the qualitative research approach used for conceptual model development is the so-called Grounded

Theory (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). Locke (2001) stated that the grounded theory is best suited in those situations in which the researchers want to (a) capture complexity, (b) link with reality, (c) facilitate theoretical work in substantive areas that have not been well researched by other scholars, and (d) put life into established fields to provide an alternative conceptualization for the existing work.

The use of the grounded theory approach in the present study can provide the basis for an alternative view of the well-established field of CBRs through its open-ended approach to data collection, followed by a systematic approach to theory development. To conduct the grounded theory phase of this study, a multistage process was designed following the suggestions given by Glaser and Strauss (1967), Strauss (1987), Strauss and Corbin (1994), and Glaser (1992).

3.1   Process and domain

The process of interest in this study was that of brand relationship development by consumers. Thus, the cases of interest were those consumers who have a strong and deep-rooted relationship with brands. The relationships were not stipulated a priori, and each respondent was allowed to discuss the relationships that he or she wanted to bring up. However, in some situations, different relationships of interest (based on the data gathered so far and theoretical considerations) were prompted by the researcher.

During the study, the researcher remained conscious that both the major and the minor CBR process had to be explored. Table 8.1 shows the typical major and a minor CBR processes explored. The domain was delimited to include only those brands that have been already established in the marketplace, specifically, in the product categories of durables and nondurables and that have high familiarity in the marketplace.

Table 8.1   Major and minor brand relationship processes investigated

Major Relationship Processes	Minor Relationship Processes
1. Relationship Establishment	1. Evaluation of the brand quality and performance
2. Relationship Augmentation	2. Emotional connection with the brands
3. Relationship Maintenance	3. Purchase intention with the brands
4. Relationship Outcomes	4. Confidence and trust with the brands
5. Attitudinal Relationship	5. Purchase evaluation with the brand
6. Behavioral Relationship	6. Repurchase evaluation with brands

3.2 Informant selection and recruitment

The researchers purposefully recruited study participants from five different shopping malls that were located in a metropolitan city (Hyderabad, India). Of the 55 individuals who were approached, 40 become the research participants, who stated their willingness to participate in this study and who represented the broad criteria listed in Table 8.2.

3.2.1. Informant identification

In addition to the above-mentioned purposive considerations, the selected 40 participants were further screened and identified in stages, as listed in Table 8.3.

Table 8.2 Purposive criteria in informant selection

Variable	Criteria
Years of relationship with brands	Those consumers who have been consuming the brands since the last one year
Household income	Annual income between Rs.100,000–1,000,000
Demographic status	Consumers from different parts of the country
Age	Consumers belong to the age group of 20–50 years of old

Table 8.3 Stages of recruitment

Stage	Description
Identification	Identification through convenience sampling, and suitability based on the key purposeful critieria
Assessment of accessibility	Assessment of likelihood of providing rich data, the possibility of interaction in various settings, and likelihood of achieving intimate familiarity. Assessed through communication about the project. Recruitment process terminated at this stage for nonsuitable prospects
Screening	Administering of screening questionnaire to verify recruitment criteria and other demographic information
Interview	First, an interview conducted through face-to-face interaction with the participants
Follow-up	Additional interviews were conducted after an appointment with the participants through direct interaction or over telephone

3.2.2.   Assessment of accessibility

When prospective research participants telephoned the researchers and informed them about their willingness to participate in this study, they were screened for their suitability to participate in an interpretive study. The criteria used to screen the respondents are presented in Table 8.4. Then the researchers explained the purpose and scope of the study, and also made a prerecruitment communication with each participant to assess these considerations. The cues derived during this communication were used to assess the suitability of the respondents for the study. Participants who did not qualify based on these considerations were excluded at this stage.

3.2.3   Screening

Once the researchers felt confident that the respondents satisfied the above-mentioned considerations (Tables 8.2, 8.3, and 8.4), they were formally recruited into the study. All these processes generated a suitable respondents list of 20. Among the 20 participants, 11 were males and the rest were females. All the selected participants were the consumers of major brands, with an age ranging from 20 to 50, who had been buying this brand since the last year. The selected participants came from different regions of the country, which mainly aimed to avoid cultural bias in consumers' brand purchase and their relationships. The participants' educational level ranged from undergrad equivalent to having a PhD. The selected respondents' purchase frequency with the

Table 8.4   Assessment of accessibility

Criteria	Mode of Confirmation
Likelihood that the information would be rich	1. Does the respondent show a good inclination to describe the events in detail? 2. Does the respondent put efforts to recall the events? 3. Does the respondent show no signs of reservation about giving responses for the study?
The possibility of achieving familiarity	1. Does the respondent provide personal information? 2. Does the respondent show a high level of interest in the study?
Likelihood of face-to-face interactions in multiple settings	1. Is the respondent ready to meet in person? 2. Is the respondent willing to meet more than once (directly or indirectly)? 3. How flexible does the respondent appear to be about scheduling meetings?

brand varied from regular purchaser (more than four times a month) to occasional purchaser (once a month). All those consumers who were involved in this study had experience with the brand ranging from one year to more than ten years. The profiles of the study participants are presented in Table 8.5.

3.2.4   Interviews and follow-ups

At the beginning of the interview, the participants were informed that their participation was completely voluntary. This was mainly done to avoid discomfort on the part of the respondents. During the interview, the interviewer assured that the participants that none of them would face any kind of distress or discomfort, before, during, or after the process. For follow-up interviews, the participants were contacted before the interview and asked to select their interview place and time.

Table 8.5   Profile of respondents

Name	Age	Gender	Ex. with brand in years*	Brand	Study Stages
Rajeesh	28	Male	1.0	Samsung	1
Divya.	25	Female	1.2	Tommy	1 and 2
Mittal Parik	32	Male	2.0	Tupperware	3
Swati Sharma	23	Female	1.2	BagIt	2
Sourabh Bhattercherjee	28	Male	7.0	Goldflake	1 and 2
Kartikeya Vats	20	Male	10.0	Nike	3
Shubhangi Bose	31	Male	4.0	Revlon	1 and 2
Gurveen Kaur	24	Female	1.8	Allen Solly	1
Shipra	32	Male	9.0	Bausch and Lomb	3
Charu Atiri	26	Female	5.0	Subway	1
Jayraj	50	Male	1.1	US Polo	1 and 2
Deep	33	Male	3.0	Budweiser	3
Naveen	31	Male	3.2	Arrow	1
Sidharth Negi	39	Male	6.0	Casio	3
Noel D'Souza	31	Male	1.1	Apple	1
Akshay Babbar	45	Male	2.5	Kennth Cole	1 and 3
Eureka Singh	25	Female	1.2	Zara	1
Shoaib Ahmed Khan	33	Male	1.5	HP	1
Kiran	41	Male	1.8	Puma	1
Meghna	29	Female	2.5	Esprit	1 and 2

Note: * shows experience with the brands in years, study stages show the stages at which the respondents were interviewed.

3.3   Sampling procedure: theoretical sampling

The study followed a theoretical sampling procedure. In this study, the researchers during the qualitative data collection (sampling) entered with the supposition that it would be an open-ended and flexible process that would likely be modified over the course of the study as the study progressed. In this type of sampling, the need for data collection is decided by the emerging theory, whereby the researcher jointly collects information, codes, and analyzes the information, and then progressively determines which sample and information to collect next in order to develop a theory as it emerges. The process stopps at a stage at which it is clear that additional interviews will yield theoretical saturation. In this research, the data collection began by interviewing a respondent from a shopping mall who had established a relationship with a mobile brand during the last 1.1 years. This initial interview helped the researchers understand the starting point of the relationship building. The researchers then interviewed another respondent to understand his attitudinal characteristics during the relationship establishment. In this fashion, the researchers gradually interviewed 20 different individuals. Some of them were repeatedly interviewed to understand the real process of brand relationships. The sampling process stopped when the researchers were convinced that there was no additional information to be gained from the next respondent (called theoretical saturation). This sampling process helped the researchers explore and integrate the attitudinal and behavioral dimensions of CBRs and establish the theoretical framework.

3.4   Data gathering

Data was primarily gathered through a series of in-depth interviews. The duration of these interviews ranged from 60 to 90 minutes. These semi-structured in-depth interviews aimed at exploring and understanding the attitudinal and behavioral dimensions of CBRs, as well as the integration of these dimensions, and thereby forming a conceptual model of CBRs. The tentative initial in-depth interview protocol was composed of several sections, specifically, the questionnaire protocol composed of questions related to the starting point of relationship building, the evaluative aspect before and after relationship identification, the affective aspect, the intentional aspect, and the outcome of CBRs. In addition, the researchers collected the information about the type of the respondent's relationship with brands, the reason behind this relationship, and the peculiarity of the relationship partner (brand)

etc. The in-depth interviews started with some informal questions (warm-up questions). As the study followed theoretical sampling, data collection and analysis were carried out simultaneously. This simultaneous data collection and analysis helped the researchers generate questions instantaneously and modify the protocol. This process of protocol modification helped the researchers get more insights into the problem. The analysis process involves utilizing particular coding procedures such as open, axial, and selective coding. This coding process normally begins with open coding. During data collection, the respondents were asked to talk about their experience with the brand. These questions were intended to uncover attitude formation, in an attempt to explore how and what would be the starting point of relationship establishment. Respondents were also probed about the kind of evaluation they had about the brand during their starting point of relationship formation. Participants were also probed to talk about their affective and emotional feeling with the particular brand and also their respective thoughts and feeling about the specified brand. During the interview, once the interviewer found support for some of the dimensions of cognitive, affective, and behavioral components, then the questions were directed toward these dimensions in order to understand more about them. Questions were also asked that aimed to identify the intentional aspect of the relationship. During the interview, attempts were also made to provide the respondents with a distinct voice, which mainly enabled him or her to explain feelings and affection in detail about the brand. All the interviews were conducted in a naturalistic setting, and this approach helped the researchers understand the process of relationship building in a context-specific (brand) setting. To illustrate their views clearly, the respondents were motivated to draw on their personal experiences and those of friends. In all the interviews, the information was recorded and later transcribed for further analysis. The data collection processes for the in-depth interviews lasted around five months. The detailed questionnaire protocol for the semi-structured in-depth interviews is provided in Appendix 1.

3.5   Assessment of trustworthiness

The study followed the criteria proposed by Flint *et al.* (2002) for the assessment of the trustworthiness of the qualitative phase. Table 8.6. gives a detailed description of the assessment of the trustworthiness of the grounded theory approach.

Table 8.6   Trustworthiness of grounded theory

Criteria	Description	Mode of Confirmation
Credibility	The rate at which the results are generated seems to be a better representation of the data	Five months to conduct in-depth interviews. Detailed summary of initial interpretation was given to participants for feedback
Transferability	Extent to which findings can be applied in other contexts	Use of theoretical sampling
Dependability	The extent to which findings are stable and consistent	Found stability in participants' opinion about the phenomenon regardless of changes that occurred
Confirmability	The extent to which the interpretations generated from the phenomenon are from the participants and free from researchers biases	Two persons were actively involved as auditors
Fit	Extent to which finding matches with the study under investigation	Satisfied through credibility, dependability, confirmability and detailed description of concepts
Understanding	The rate at which the respondents believe the results generated are their real-world representations	Results generated were submitted to the participants, and it was confirmed that they reflected their opinions
Generality	Extent to which findings capture multiple aspect of a phenomenon.	Interviews were lengthy to capture multiple aspects of the phenomenon
Integrity	Extent to which interpretations are influenced by participants' unwillingness and misinformation	All the interviews were conducted in professional and nonthreatening way

4   Results and analysis

After the completion of each interview, the collected information was transcribed and analyzed in line with the procedures suggested by Glaser and Strauss (1967), Strauss (1987), Strauss and Corbin (1990), and Glaser (1992). First, the information in the transcripts was broken down into different concepts of incidents, ideas, events, and acts, and then a label/name/code was assigned to it. The concepts that related to each other were combined in order to form dense, more abstracted, and well-developed

categories. Second, the data were coded for relevance to a specific phenomenon or incidents within a specific category for conditions, intervening conditions, strategies and tactics, and consequences (Strauss 1987; Strauss and Corbin 1990). Third, the categories were refined, modified, and integrated to from new or core-level categories. These procedures are integrated with the constant comparative method proposed by Glaser and Strauss (1967). During the constant comparison, the concepts and categories were constantly compared with similar concepts and categories, with the eventual goal of integrating concepts and categories across incidents. This overarching framework helped us in the data collection and analysis. These stages are explained in detail in the following sections.

4.1 Discovering concepts and categories (open coding)

In this stage, 14 semi-structured interviews were undertaken using 14 consumers of the study sample. All of this collected information was open coded. The aim of this open coding was to assign a conceptual label (representational/in vivo) to each concept or statement found within the data. As the data gathering and analysis were simultaneous, open coding was conducted and revised after each interview. During this process, 68 unique concepts were generated. Then, those 68 concepts were grouped through a constant comparison of concepts to reduce the number of concepts. This led to the formation of subcategories. Then, these subcategories were grouped together and assigned names that were more abstract than those of the concepts grouped under them. The names selected in these categories typically surfaced by borrowing from the extant literature reviewed at this stage, as this procedure is consistent with the recommendations of Strauss (1987) and Strauss and Corbin (1990). The complete list of concepts, categories, and subcategories identified by the study are shown in Table 8.7.

During this stage, the generated concepts were constantly compared in order to generate questions for subsequent interviews. In addition, the consumers' statements were compared and contrasted with each other to group similar concepts. This procedure was helpful to create further questions and to reduce and integrate the similar concepts. During this stage, the researchers also reviewed the extant literature related to the concepts, which was helpful to describe and delimit subcategories and categories. During this stage, the researchers were also involved in writing theoretical memos, that is "the theorizing write-up of ideas about codes and their relationships as they strike the analyst while coding" (Glaser 1978, p. 83). Memo writing was essential to keep track of emerging categories, stimulate further coding, and aid reliability.

Table 8.7 List of concepts and categories

Stage	Category	Concepts
Relationship Establishment	Brand Attitude	Brand knowledgeability, confidence about the performance in the future, comfortable and easily available, importance of the brand, positive quality evaluation, started accidently, and was appealing
	Brand Satisfaction	The brand offers more than the expectation, happiness, purchase satisfaction, immense satisfaction, satisfaction with quality and price, satisfaction with the usage of the brand
Relationship Augmentation	Brand Attachment	Associating with brand, best friend, best companion, brand is a kind of identity, brand is a part of the family, correlate with the brand and person, emotional attachment, feel close to the brand, feeling possessiveness, love toward the brand, makes sense to buy it again, matching personality, memories about the brand, passionate about the brand, personal connection with brand, positive feelings, serious and intimate, something special, something that suits, reflection of personality, remembrance, emotional quotient, like a mate, brand shows personality, something special, want to hug it, bonding
	Brand Trust	Confidence about the brand, high faith, nothing gone bad until date, reliable and global, brand credibility, secure, trustworthiness, consistency in performance, keeping the promises
Relationship Maintenance	Brand Commitment	Brand as a future option, intention to purchase different varieties of the brand, intention to buy, decides to stick with the brand, likes to stick to the brand
Relationship Outcome	Brand Loyalty	Brand recommendation, long-lasting relationship, everlasting, loyal and consistent, purchase of every product variety of the brand, repeated buying
	Brand Equity	A differential effect that others can't provide, always prefer brand irrespective of competitor, brand is the first preferred one, brand matters most, gives a punch that other brands don't, knowledge of everything about the brand, substitutes can't compensate for the brand, brand is a synonym for the product, brand is more important

Note: The generated subcategories are presented in the theoretical framework.

4.2 Relating subcategories and categories (axial coding)

The purpose of this stage of coding was to identify the relationship among various subcategories and categories. Strauss and Corbin (1990) recommended using a paradigm model to organize these categories. First, the open-coded categories were revised to examine whether they were consistent with the new data, and in many cases they were further subcategorized. Then, the analysis was centered on each category. One at a time the relationship patterns in the data were identified and integrated. During this stage, four analytical steps were applied simultaneously as follows: (a) relating subcategories to a category using statements that denoted the relationships between the sub-categories and the phenomenon, (b) verifying these hypotheses against actual data, (c) identifying the properties of categories and their subcategories, and (d) linking categories at the dimensional level. During the analysis, it was found that at the dimensional level there were four major categories. The ongoing and simultaneous data collection and analysis (stage 1 and stage 2) allowed categories and subcategories to emerge out of the data and facilitated the establishment of a number of provisional hypotheses. It has been stated that the development of these kinds of provisional hypotheses is the main output of a grounded theory study (Seaman and Basili, 1997).

4.3 Generation of action diagram

During the axial coding process, the study proposed the relationship between concepts and categories and between categories and categories. It stated that the relationships identified during axial coding were considered to be loose and tangled (Strauss and Corbin, 1994). Therefore, this was tackled and sorted out during the last stage of the data analysis process, called the selective coding stage. This stage of the selective coding phase involved six semi-structured in-depth interviews with six consumers. During this stage, the interview questions were primarily developed from the previous stage (stage 2) and based on provisional hypotheses proposed during the axial coding stage. In this selective coding stage, the relationships identified during the axial coding were verified and tested. This process helped the researchers understand the conditions leading to the formation of the CBR. This phase also helped to test the provisional hypotheses and to develop a preliminary model of consumer brand relationships. The core category, categories, subcategories, and their various relationships were then combined to form a theoretical framework, as shown in Figure 8.1.
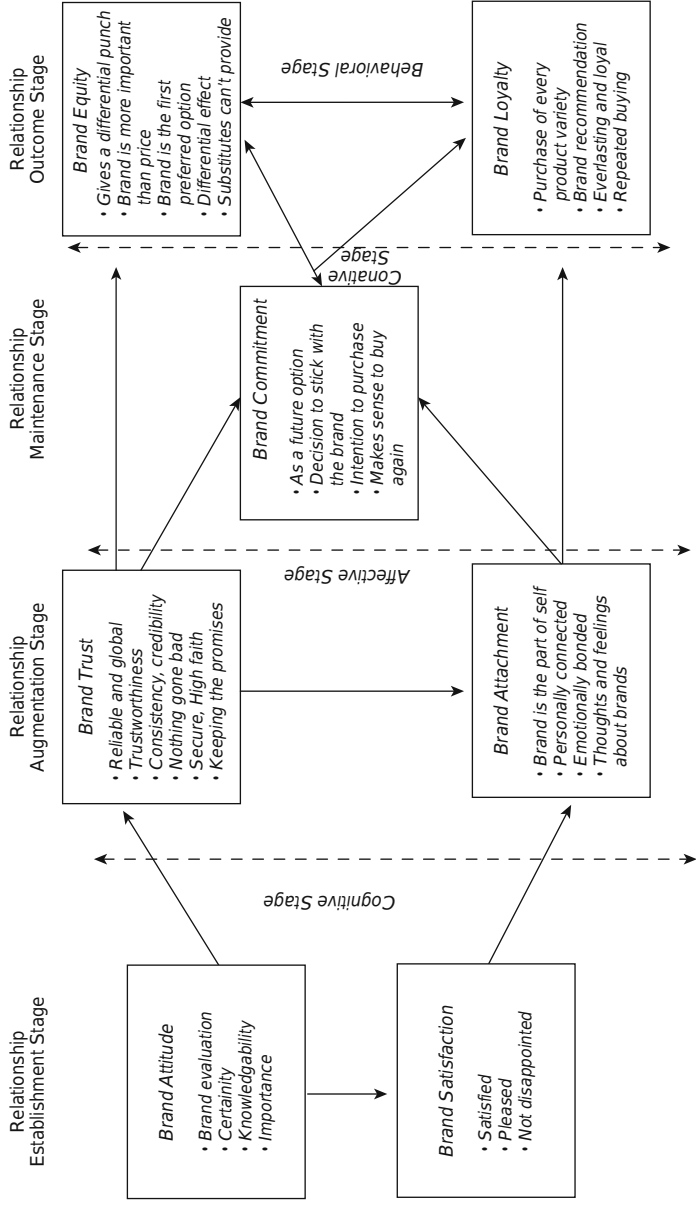
Figure 8.1   A new consumer brand relationships framework

In the selective coding phase, the concepts identified in Stages 1 and 2 were combined to create the phenomenon of CBRs as a set of four stages. These were (1) the relationship establishment stage (cognitive context); (2) the relationship augmentation stage (affective context); (3) the relationship maintenance stage (conative context); and (4) the relationship outcome stage (behavioral/action context).

This coding phase supported that during the relationship establishment stage, the cognitive aspect of CBRs play a major role. CBRs during this stage were derived from current or previous knowledge, interaction with the brand, and information about the brand from other sources. The respondents stated that their relationship during this stage (establishment stage) would develop through their evaluation and comparison between their preferred brands with their alternatives based on their earlier interaction or reference. It was also evident that CBRs during the cognitive context consist of (a) attitude strength (composed of the valence and strength of the attitude toward the brand), and (b) satisfaction with the brand, in which consumer assesses the performance of the brand in terms of his or her expectations.

The second core dimension of CBRs was the relationship augmentation stage. This is a deeper sense of CBRs' forming an affective orientation. This aspect of CBRs related to the trustworthiness, self-connection with the brand, and brand prominence in their (consumers) thought process. In this regard, the selective coding showed that the second phase of relationship augmentation involved brand trust and brand attachment.

Nonetheless, CBRs were not sufficiently stable in the affective stage. They could be influenced by various deteriorations, mainly due to the attractiveness of competitive offerings.

Thus, CBR maintenance happened in a conative context, in which consumers showed their intention or commitment to achieve a goal-related orientation toward the brand. It was also found that during this stage consumers built a deeper level of relationships with brands compared to the earlier stages.

To complete the CBR sequence, the analysis went beyond the assessment of these three contexts, namely cognitive, affective, and conative. The results support the fact that the outcome phase of the relationship happens only in an action context. In detail, consumers first develop cognitive brand-relationships with brand attitude strength and brand satisfaction, then affective relationships through a brand trust and brand attachment, then conative brand relationships with a deeply held commitment and intention to buy, and finally the action part of

relationships, overcoming obstacles to achieve the action through their intense brand equity and loyalty. The following subsections will present these stages of CBRs with relevant CBR stories.

4.4   Consumer brand relationship stories

4.4.1   *Relationship establishment stage*

During this stage, two types of relationships emerged from the data: (1) attitudinal relationship and (2) satisfied relationship. Attitudinal relationships could be further subdivided into two parts. First was a positive evaluation toward the brand. The following quotes are representative of the customer comments associated with their attitudinal and satisfied relationships:

> Initially when I bought this brand I didn't know about its performance, because it was still in the testing period. I came to know about the performance of the brand from my friends. The first watch that I got from this company (brand) is still with me, and I have got it repaired just once in 10 years. So the quality aspect is very good, and the company provides the pick up service as no other brand could provide. Design, ease of carry, and other add-on features it can give are the differentiating aspects of this brand. Even a Rs.500 watch can give you time, or satisfy your needs, but if the company can surprise you with a brand which you can never imagine with a watch, it would act as a major hold on to me.

During the relationship establishment stage, respondents also reported the strength dimensions along with a strong evaluation, such as certainty, knowledge, and the importance of the brands. For example:

> My friend suggested this brand, it helped me to develop a positive attitude and confidence that since I am traveling and live in a hostel, it's a quick snack and better than brands like McDonald's because its oil free, good for health, and known for customization.

The role of the strength dimension was also clear in the respondents' knowledge ability with brands. The amount of information about the brand that accompanies one's attitude toward it was always recalled and assessed by knowledge parameters. It was also evident from the conversation that the importance consumers personally attached to a brand also played a crucial role in relationship establishment. This strength of the relationship was a major antecedent to brand satisfaction and brand trust.

The participants' opinions showed that their relationship was satisfied when the interviewer asked them to describe the stage and the type of relationship during relationship establishment. However, detailed probing on the same brought out the exact nature of the relationship. Participants stated that satisfaction comes when the performance of the brand meets their expectations, and this satisfaction is a motivating factor behind brand attachment, for example:

> My relationship with (brand) is a satisfied one. Satisfaction comes when you do what you really want to do. This is because everything is just so simple, from making calls to surfing the net. Even if any message comes, you don't have to unlock your phone, the message just gets flashed on your screen. It's simple, easy, and its operations are too smooth, hence I am attached using iPhone or iPod.

From the responses it was clear that the relationship establishment constructs, namely brand attitude strength and satisfaction, work as a precondition for relationship augmentation and maintenance.

4.4.2   Relationship augmentation stage

Respondents stated that trustworthiness and attachment to brands was very important in augmenting CBRs. From the respondents' words, trustworthiness indicates the confidence that the brand (product) performed up to their expectations and was dependable. The following quotes are representative of the customer comments associated with the brands' trustworthiness and attached relationships.

> It (brand) has been trustworthy and as the length of a cigarette is 69 mm, so the time it takes to burn according to my level is 5 to 6 minutes. If I am working, and feeling sleepy during my work, with a smoke I can go on to my work for an hour or more.
>
> It's a relationship of trust, I feel the brand to be my partner because whenever I bought this watch I was sure enough that this is never going to be bad.

It was also evident from the customer conversation that the brand was honest in its promises and claims, and was respectful of its customers.

> It has till date not deceived me. and I am sure it will not do so in future as well…I have complete trust on it to deliver what it stands for.

The brand trust is the outcome of strong positive attitudes. Whenever the brand keeps the promises of the customers, it develops into trust that drives the customer to be with the brand for a considerable period of time.

Respondents' brand relationship statements suggest that detailed brand relationship argumentation developed around a deeply held attachment with brands, such as deeper associations, feelings, and strong bonds.

> The brand is absolutely a part of me because whenever I want to have something, drink something…I go and grab it (brand).

It was also clear from the responses that these deeply held attachments were the outcomes of consumer trust and satisfaction with that brand.

> Since it's like my partner and so will go on and high on emotional attachment, it's basically coming from my trustworthiness with it and the satisfactory performance.

4.4.3   Relationship maintenance stage

The responses revealed that a high level of commitment to the brand or the intention to maintain relationship longevity was common across strong brand relationships. During the interviews, respondents openly expressed their relationship maintenance through showcasing their intention to stay with the brand and through brand pledges.

> Yes, this brand is still and will always be the option in the future, because there is a sense of loyalty associated with it, or If tomorrow I need to buy a phone again, it has to be Apple. Till now they have always come up with better versions from 2g to 3g to 4s. Every product of this brand has outperformed others.

It was also evident that commitment toward the brand becomes stronger with time.

> Whenever I go to purchase a watch, it (brand) has a distinct design ready for me which is totally different from what I had owned. So my relationship is going deeper and deeper because without going to other brands, I know that probably this has the watch I am looking for.

It was also evident that a long-term orientation was the basic factor that prompted the consumer to repeat purchase the brand. Commitment also

fostered stability by showing a differential effect that other competitors could not provide.

> Yes, it is here to stay in my life… I don't think for some time to come I will move away from this brand, this brand adds something different, that others can't provide.

4.4.4   *Relationship outcome stage*

The core outcome of strong brand relationships for relationship maintenance was a rich differentiating effect or brand equity. While consumers expressed their intentions to stay with the brand, they also showed their endowed value toward the brand.

> For me, price is not an issue when selecting my brand. Even if there are offers, I still would buy it at whatever price it is available.

It was also evident that this brand equity is the outcome of brand trust and its associated credibility.

> I will go for Apple iPhone, because I have been using this brand from quite some time and I have trust on Apple. One will always go for something that one trusts even though others offer the same products. Until and unless I get some good and strong reason, I won't think of buying another brand.

This differentiating value protects the relationship through a full range of relationship biases and repeated buying.

> I feel it is an aura because once you start using an Apple product, you can't really go to another product. I had Apple products before and I wanted to buy a phone, so I bought the next version, which is Apple 4s. Even though I had options to buy other phones (brands), I am still would like stick to Apple.

The action-related behaviors or behavioral loyalty were also revealed in the outcome stage of CBRs. Respondents also expressed behavioral loyalty. However, their stories showed that their loyalty came from the brands' trustworthiness, the differential effect (brand equity), and their feelings and emotions, or the affective component (attachment) that the brand provided. It was also evident that loyal consumers would be

biased toward the brand and would recommend the brand to others. Illustrative quotes identify behavioral loyalty as follows:

> Yes, now I am a repeated purchaser of this brand, its basically because of the trustworthiness of the brand, emotional connection, and finally the differentiated effect that the brand possesses.

5   Interpretation of the findings

Relationship phases that emerged during the qualitative exploration supported those found in the extant literature. Both attitudinal and behavioral aspects were found to interplay in relationship formation between brand and consumers (Blackston, 1992; Nebel and Blattberg, 2000). The attitudinal phase of CBRs had three key stages, namely cognitive, affective, and conative (Evanschitzky and Wunderlich, 2006; Oliver, 1997, 1999). During the cognitive stage, consumers form strong and positive brand attitudes. Consumers at this stage develop attitude strength through comparing the brand and its alternatives based on past experiences and/or vicarious knowledge related to the offering, brand attributes, performance of the brand, or current experience based information about the brand (Back and Parks, 2003; Evanschitzky and Wunderlich, 2006; Oliver, 1997; 1999). Such attitudes may become strong when they are based on thoughtful processing. Strong attitude development is the starting point of brand relationships (Fullerton, 2005). When the performance of the brand meets customers' expectations, cognitive evaluations result in brand satisfaction. Brand satisfaction is the outcome of the subjective evaluation that the chosen alternative (the brand) meets or exceeds the expectations (Engel *et al.*, 1990). Busacca and Castaldo (2003) in their conceptual framework stated that the beginning of the CBR is also determined in terms of brand satisfaction. The second stage of the CBR is the affective relationship, which provides a deeper sense of relationships. CBRs in this stage develop from strong favorable attitudes toward the brand and its overall evaluation (Oliver, 1997). They helps the customer augment the relationship. This stage occurs when the brand offers resources in the service of self-expansion, which develops through brand trust or consistency in the performance of the brand. Customers may subsequently develop strong connections between the brand and the self, as well as mental models of the brand and the self (Park *et al.*, 2010). In this stage, brand-related thoughts and feelings are easily and frequently accessed, and brand attitudes develop into brand attachments. This affective relationship stage

is very essential in the attitudinal CBR formation (Bandyopadhyay and Martell, 2007; Han *et al.*, 2009; Oliver, 1997, 1999). During the relationship augmentation stage, the CBR is subjected to various deteriorations, particularly due to the attractiveness of competitive brands (Evanschitzky and Wunderlich, 2006). Therefore, for the relationship to continue, it is essential for consumers to move into the conative phase of CBRs. In this stage, the brand's prominence and its linkage to the self may incline consumers to invest resources to maintain the relationship.

However, even if the consumer passes through the cognitive, affective, and conative stages, the CBR will be accomplished in its fullness at the behavioral/action phase (Oliver, 1997, 1999). To summarize, customers first form cognitive CBRs through attitude strength and brand satisfaction. Then, they form affective CBRs through trusted and attached relationships, followed by conative CBRs with a deeply held brand commitment. All of these function as an integrative framework, which finally results in a behavioral/ action relationship.

The establishment of the theoretical model adds value to the existing literature on CBRs in several ways. First, it provides a more comprehensive, detailed, and integrated understanding of how consumers actually form relationships with brands than previous studies of individual constructs. Second, the theoretical model of the CBR demonstrates the process of changes in relationships and helps identify the most useful pathway through which consumers might develop relationships with the brand.

6 Managerial implications

The well-grounded and the integrative CBR model provides relevant information to brand managers and also offers a wide spectrum of information to solve their managerial uncertainty and policy making in strategic brand management. First, the structure of the CBR model provides insights into the antecedents of behavioral loyalty. In particular, the model proposed in this study offers managers potentially important information for analyzing the brand's strength in terms of its competitors in the product category. For example, if the major antecedent source that explains loyalty to the brand is found in the absence of brand equity (the path is insignificant), this indicates that the brand might not have a differential knowledge structure in consumers' minds in terms of its competitors. Conversely, if the commitment to the brand is the major antecedent source, the strength of the brand lies in its ability to create affective and conative (intentional) elements, and not in its differentiated

knowledge structure in the consumer's mind. Based on this explanation, brand managers should devise appropriate strategic actions. Brands that are competing in those product categories in which differentiated brand knowledge structure matters could focus on strong, unique, and favorable brand equity development in their strategic marketing actions to build strong relationships. In this condition, those brands that are able to frame a strong competitive frame of reference, point of parity, and point of difference would be better off focusing on the aspects that facilitate differential comparisons. Similarly, if the brand is competing in those product categories in which the brand knowledge differentiation is not too essential, brand managers should devise marketing programs to develop brand commitment or devise strategies to curb brand switching.

The mediating role of affective components, namely brand trust and brand attachment, provide additional insights into the creation of brand commitment, brand equity, and behavioral loyalty. For example, if the main antecedent source that explains loyalty to the brand is found in the absence of brand equity, brand managers might target the building of more brand attachment and therefore, brand commitment that results in brand loyalty. Conversely, if consumers' brand commitment and attachments are mainly responsible for explaining loyalty to the brand, the equity element is lagging because of the nonconsideration of the trust element in brand-building efforts.

Second, companies that intend to manage their brand with stronger CBRs can consider the model to achieve greater understanding about when, where, and how to invest in the establishment of the customer bond. For example, they may consider the process through which the development of a bond with a brand can be executed. The identification of attitudinal and behavioral constructs and their integration proposed by this study would also more directly answer the call from the marketing practitioner community for more precision in terms of relationship establishment and decision-making. To summarize, the CBR model developed in this study can help marketers realize the strategic management of relationship establishment, augmentation, maintenance, and execution. Therefore, it is recommended that brand managers develop and manage CBRs from the perspective of the multidimensional integrative facet of the consumer relationship and not merely based on a traditional assessment and understanding of either an attitudinal or a behavioral perspective.

7   Conclusions and future research directions

It was proposed that the CBR is an integration of attitudinal and behavioral components that is an aggregation of four dimensions: (a) cognitive

component, (b) affective component, (c) conative component, and (d) action or behavioral component. These four components were generated and integrated during the qualitative phase of this study. The grounded theory phase of the study suggested that the emergence of these four attitudinal components happens at different stages of CBRs. Thus, the support that the relationship between brand and consumer is sequential, in which the relationship starts with the establishment of cognitive aspects, is augmented through the affective aspects, is maintained through the conative aspects, and finally creates an outcome during the behavioral phase. This conclusion is highly contentious in the CBR literature, and is a topic for further study. In addition, the interdependency of the four attitudinal and behavioral components proposed to represent CBRs become apparent from the findings.

During the grounded theory phase of the study, it was found that there were seven dimensions of CBRs: brand attitude strength, brand satisfaction, brand trust, brand attachment, brand commitment, brand equity, and brand loyalty. Consumer brand attitude strength and brand satisfaction were the two major cognitive aspects that emerged during the relationship establishment stage. Brand trust and attachment were the major sources of affective dimensionality that augment CBRs. Brand commitment was the sole source of relationship maintenance, which is considered to be the conative aspect of the relationship. Finally, the study found support for two major outcomes of the CBR, brand equity and brand loyalty. These two outcomes are considered to be the behavioral aspect of CBRs.

The findings of the study truly advance the knowledge of the existing body of brand management literature, particularly the brand relationship in the literature. This study highlights the role of the strong relationship between all the four attitudinal and behavioral components of CBRs. In fact, the CBR is an integration of attitudinal and behavioral components, in which the relationship starts with the development of attitude strength and brand satisfaction, becomes augmented through brand trust and attachment, and is maintained through brand commitment. This brand commitment leads to two behavioral outcomes, brand equity and brand loyalty. Hence, the current study advances the knowledge through its finding that the CBR is an integration of attitudinal and behavioral components, consists of cognitive, affective and conative components, which lead to behavioral outcomes.

The study findings generate ample scope for future studies on understanding a comprehensive CBR model. First, the present study was qualitative and stopped at model conceptualization. A quantitative survey-based study would not only validate the conceptual model but

would also yield a lot of generalizability. The temporal nature of CBR is well supported in the literature and in the present conceptual model. Thus, an important extension of the present study would be to analyze the formation of the CBR with panel data to check whether the same action diagram as obtained in the study is realized. Last, culture has a moderating impact on relationships. Thus, a cross-cultural study would be very relevant to bringing out the differences in the proposed model relationships if they exist. To summarize, the present study has offered a contribution to the branding theory by bringing added clarity and direction to the CBR literature.

Appendix 8.1: In-depth Interview Protocol

Introduction

I want to thank you for taking your precious time to meet with me today. My name is – – – – conducting a study on consumer brand relationships, and I would like to talk to you about your experiences with the brand with which you are loyal. This information is mainly for assessing consumer brand relationships, particularly identifying the major themes and process of consumer brand relationships.

This interview will take around 45 minutes to 1 hour. The conversation would be recorded for study purposes, because I don't want to miss any of your valuable comments. In addition to that, I will be taking some notes during our discussion. As we are using a mobile phone to record your conversation, please make sure to speak up loudly so that we don't miss any of your comments. Your valuable comments would be kept confidential. I will assure you that the information collected from you will include in my research work as it does not identify your identity. Finally, you can finish your interview at any point, and you don't have to talk about anything if you don't want to talk.

Are there any clarifications about what I have just explained?

Can I go ahead with the interview?

Warm Up Questions (10 Min):

1. Tell me about a brand with which you have a relatively strong relationship? Explain.
2. What kind of relationship do you have with that brand? Explain.
3. What specialty does that brand possess? Explain.
4. Tell me about the magnitude of the relationship. Is it augmenting? Explain.

Section 1 Questions (10 Min)

Specific questions about relationship establishment with the particular brand and identification of starting point in this relationship establishment and maintenance, with emphasis on the specified brand.

1. When (time), in detailed manner.
2. How (from ad, or reference or from other sources), in detailed manner.
3. Who referred this brand, in detailed manner
4. From where, in detailed manner.
5. What you felt, elaborate.
6. Did you buy that brand at that time?
7. What kind of evaluation you had at that time (strong or weak). Why? Explain.
8. About importance (positive or negative). Why? Explain.
9. About the confidence (high or low). Why? Explain.
10. About the certainty of its performance (positive or negative). Why? Explain.
11. How knowledgeable did you feel about your favorite brand at that point in time (good or bad). Why? Explain.

Section 2 Questions (10 Min)

Specific questions about the affective component in relationship maintenance with the particular brand and identification of specific thoughts and feeling consumer felt about the brand.

1. Do you feel that the brand is part of you and who you are? How? Explain.
2. Do you feel emotionally bonded to (brand name)? Explain.
3. Does (brand name) say something to other people about who you are? How? Explain.
4. How often are your thoughts and feelings toward (brand name) automatic, coming to mind seemingly on their own? Elaborate.
5. How often you have many thoughts about (brand name)? Explain.
6. How often do you feel the brand is credible? Why or how? Give a detailed elaboration.
7. Do you feel the brand is trustworthy as a relationship partner? How? Explain.
8. Elaborate on the satisfaction aspect related with your brand.

Section 3 Questions (10 Min)

Specific questions about conative or intentional component in relationship establishment with the particular brand and identification of specific intentional aspects the consumer felt about the brand.

1. Did you plan this brand as your future option for catering to your future product needs? If yes, then when did you decide or intend to stay with the brand for your future purposes? Why?
2. Why did you decide that it makes sense to continue using the brand? Explain.
3. Why did you decide that staying with the brand is a very reasonable choice? Explain.
4. Does it come from your emotional connection and trustworthiness? Explain.

Section 4 Questions (20 Min)

Questions related to outcome component of relationship maintenance with the particular brand and identification of this outcome component.

Situation 1

There is another brand (say Brand B), which is equal to your favorite brand on all parameters, even on price. Then which brand will you purchase, "your Brand" or "Brand B"?
   If the answer is "favorite Brand" then

• Can you explain the reasons in detail?
• How would you see your loyalty toward your favorite brand? Explain.

If the answer is "Brand B" then

• How would you now justify your loyalty toward your favorite brand? Explain.

Situation 2

There is a "Brand B," which is equal in all aspects but is a little less costly than your favorite brand. Now will you still buy your brand?
   If the answer is the respondent's favorite brand, then

• Does the intention to stay with the brand and the trust make sense to buy the brand instead of any other brand, even if they are the same but differ in price? Elaborate.

If the answer is "Brand B," then

• How would you now justify your loyalty toward your favorite brand?

References

Aaker, D. (1991) *Managing Brand Equity: Capitalizing on the Value of a Brand Name*. New York: Free Press.

Aaker, D. A. and Keller, K. L. (1993) "Interpreting Cross-Cultural Replications of Brand Extension Research" *International Journal of Research in Marketing,* 10(1): 55–59.

Aaker, J. (1997) "Dimensions of Brand Personality" *Journal of Marketing Research,* 34: 347–356.

Aaker, J., Fournier S., and Brasel, S. A. (2004) "When Good Brands Do Bad" *Journal of Consumer Research,* 31:1–16.

Batra, Rajeev, Lehmann, D. R., and Singh, D. (1993) "The Brand Personality Component of Brand Goodwill: Some Antecedents and Consequences." In: David A. Aaker, Alexander Biel, Hillsdale (eds) *Brand Equity and Advertisin*g, NJ, Hillsdale: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, pp. 83–96.

Bengtsson, A. (2003) "Towards a Critique of Brand Relationships." In: Punam Anand Keller and Dennis W. Rook, Valdosta (eds) *Advances in Consumer Research, Valdosta*. Association for Consumer Research: 154–158.

Blackston, M. (1992) "A Brand with an Attitude: A Suitable Case for Treatment" *Journal of the Market Research Society,* 34: 231–241.

Breivik, E. and Thorbjørnsen, H. (2008) "Consumer-Brand Relationships: An Investigation of Two Alternative Models" *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science,* 36(4): 443–472.

Bryman, B. and Bell, E. (2011) *Business Research Methods*, 3rd ed., Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Busacca, B. and Castaldo, S. (2003) "Brand Knowledge, Brand Trust and Consumer Response: A Conceptual Framework" In Proceedings of 2nd Workshop on Trust within and between Organizations, Amsterdam, pp. 23–24.

Carlson, B. D., Donavan, D. T., and Cumiskey, K. J. (2009) "Consumer-Brand Relationships in Sport: Brand Personality and Identification" *International Journal of Retail and Distribution Management,* 37(4): 370–384.

Chang, P. L. and Chieng, M. H. (2006) "Building Consumer-Brand Relationships: A Cross-Cultural Experiential View" *Psychology and Marketing,* 23(11): 927–959.

Day, G., and Robin, W. (1988) "Assessing Advantage: A Framework for Diagnosing Competitive Superiority" *Journal of Marketing,* 52: 1–20.

De Chernatony, L. and Dall'Olmo R. F. (1998) "Defining a 'Brand': Beyond the Literature with Experts' Interpretations" *Journal of Marketing Management,* 14: 417–443.

Demir, M. and Weitekamp, L. A. (2007) "I Am So Happy 'Cause Today I Found My Friend: Friendship and Personality as Predictors of Happiness" *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 8(2): 181–211.

Flint, D. J., Woodruff, R. B., and Gardial, S. F. (2002) "Exploring the Phenomenon of Customers' Desired Value Change in a Business-to-Business Context" *Journal of Marketing,* 66: 102–117.

Fournier, S. (1998) "Consumers and Their Brands: Developing Relationship Theory in Consumer Research" *Journal of Consumer Research,* 24: 343–373.

Ganesan S. (1994) "Determinants of Long-Term Orientation in Buyer-Seller Relationship" *Journal of Marketing,* 58(2): 1–19.

Hayes, J. B., Alford, B. L., Silver, L., and York, R. P. (2006) "Looks Matter in Developing Consumer-Brand Relationships" *Journal of Product and Brand Management*, 15(5): 306–315.

Hess, J. and Story, J. (2005) "Trust-Based Commitment: Multidimensional Consumer-Brand Relationships" *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 22(6): 313–322.

Hibbard, J. and Iacobucci D. (1999) "Toward an Encompassing Theory of Business Marketing Relationships (BMRS) and Interpersonal Commercial Relationships (ICRS): An Empirical Generalization" *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 13(3): 13–33.

Holland, R. (2003) "On the Structures and Consequences of Attitude Strength." PhD dissertation. Radboud University Nijmegen, the Netherlands.

Huber, F., Vollhardt, K., Matthes, I., and Vogel, J. (2010) "Brand Misconduct: Consequences on Consumer-Brand Relationships" *Journal of Business Research*, 63(11): 1113–1120.

Hunt, S. D. (1997) "Competing through Relationships: Grounding Relationship Marketing in Resource-Advantage Theory" *Journal of Marketing Management*, 13(5): 431–445.

Hwang, J., and Kandampully, J. (2012) "The Role of Emotional Aspects in Younger Consumer-Brand Relationships" *Journal of Product and Brand Management*, 21(2): 98–108.

Jacoby. J., Chestnut, R. W., and Fisher. W. A. (1978) "A Behavioral Process Approach to Information Acquisition in Nondurable Purchasing" *Journal of Marketing Research*, 15(4): 532–544.

Jevons, C., Gabbott, M., and De Chernatony, L. (2005) "Customer and Brand Manager Perspectives on Brand Relationships: A Conceptual Framework" *Journal of Product and Brand Management*, 14(5): 300–309.

Ji, M. F. (2002) "Children's Relationships with Brands: 'True Love' or 'One-Night' Stand?" *Psychology and Marketing*, 19: 369–387.

Juttner, U. and Wehrli H. P. (1994) "Relationship Marketing from a Value System Perspective" *International Journal of Service Industry Management*, 5(5): 54–73.

Kaltcheva, V. and Weitz, B. (1999) "The Effects of Brand–Consumer Relationships upon Consumers' Attributions and Reactions" *Advances in Consumer Research*, 26: 455–462.

Kates, S. (2000) "Out of the Closet and Out on the Street: Gay Men and Their Brand Relationships" *Psychology and Marketing* 17(6): 493–513.

Kaynak, E., Salman, G. G., and Tatoglu, E. (2008) "An Integrative Framework Linking Brand Associations and Brand Loyalty in Professional Sports" *Journal of Brand Management*, 15(5): 336–357.

Kelley, H. H. and Thibaut, J. W. (1978*) Interpersonal Relations: A Theory of independence.* New York: John Wiley and Sons.

Keller, K. L. (1993) "Conceptualizing, Measuring and Managing Consumer-Based Brand Equity" *Journal of Marketing*, 57: 1–22.

Keller, K. L. (1998) *Strategic Brand Management: Building, Measuring and Managing Brand Equity*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Kim, H. K., Lee, M., Lee, Y. W., and Korea, T. N. S. (2005) "Developing a Scale for Measuring Brand Relationship Quality" *Asia Pacific Advances in Consumer Research*, 6(2001): 118–127.

Kim, Jo, Morris, J. D., and Swait, J. (2008) "Antecedents of True Brand Loyalty" *Journal of Advertising*, 37(2): 99–117.

Kressmann, F., Sirgy, M. J., Herrmann, A., Huber, F., Huber, S., and Lee, D. J. (2006) "Direct and Indirect Effects of Self-Image Congruence on Brand Loyalty" *Journal of Business Research*, 59: 955–964.

Krosnick, J. A. and Petty, R. E. (1995). *Attitude Strength: An Overview in Attitude Strength: Antecedents and Consequences*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Langer, J. (1997) "What Consumers Wish Brand Managers Knew" *Journal of Advertising Research*, 37(1): 60–65.

Leone, R. P., Vithala, R. R., Keller, K. L., Luo, A. M., McAlister, L., and Srivastava, R. (2006) "Linking Brand Equity to Customer Equity" *Journal of Service Research*, 9(11): 125–138.

Locke, K. (2001) *Grounded Theory in Management Research*. Sage.

McAlexander, J., Schouten, J. W., and Koenig, H. F. (2002) "Building Brand Community" *Journal of Marketing*, 66(1): 38–54.

Monga, A. (2002) "Brand as a Relationship Partner: Gender Differences in Perspectives" *Advances in Consumer Research*, 29(1): 36–41.

Moorman, C., Deshpande, R., and Zaltman, G. (1993) "Factors Affecting Trust in Market Research Relationships" *Journal of Marketing*, 57(21): 81–102.

Morgan, R. M. and Hunt, S. D. (1994) "The Commitment-Trust Theory of Relationship Marketing" *Journal of Marketing*, 58: 20–38.

Nakamoto, K., MacInnis, D. J., and Jung, H. S. (1993) "Advertising Claims and Evidence as Bases for Brand Equity and Consumer Evaluations of Brand Extensions." In: D. A. Aaker and A. Biel (eds), *Brand Equity and Advertising* Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, pp. 281–297.

Nyadzayo, M. W., Matanda, M. J., and Ewing, M. T. (2011) "Brand Relationships and Brand Equity in Franchising" *Industrial Marketing Management*, 40(7): 1103–1115.

O'Malley, L. and Tynan, A. C. (1999) "The Utility of the Relationship Metaphor in Consumer Markets: A Critical Evaluation" *Journal of Marketing Management*, 15: 587–602.

Olson, B. (1999) "Exploring Women's Brand Relationships and Enduring Themes at Mid-Life." In: E. J. Arnould, and L. M. Scott (eds), *Advances in Consumer Research* Provo, UT: Association for Consumer Research, pp. 615–620.

Papista, E. and Dimitriadis, S. (2012) "Exploring Consumer-Brand Relationship Quality and Identification: Qualitative Evidence from Cosmetics Brands" *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, 15(1): 33–56

Park, C. W., Eisingerich, A. B., and Park, J. W. (2013) "Attachment-Aversion (AA) Model of Customer-Brand Relationships" *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 23(2): 229–248.

Park, C. W., MacInnis, D. J., Priester, J., Eisingerich, A. B., and Iacobucci, D. (2010) "Brand Attachment and Brand Attitude Strength: Conceptual and Empirical Differentiation of Two Critical Brand Equity Drivers" *Journal of Marketing*, 74(6): 1–17.

Park, J. W. and Kim, K. H. (2001) "Role of Consumer Relationships with a Brand in Brand Extension: Some Exploratory Findings" *Advances in Consumer Research*, 28: 179–185.

Parvatiyar, A. and Sheth, J. N. (2001) "Customer Relationship Management: Emerging Practice, Process, and Discipline" *Journal of Economic and Social Research*, 3(2): 1–34.

Patterson, M. and O'Malley, L. (2006) "Brands, Consumers and Relationships: A Review" *Irish Marketing Review*, 18(1/2): 10–20.

Pike, S. (2007) "Consumer-Based Brand Equity for Destinations: Practical DMO Performance Measures" *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 22(1): 51–61.

Plummer, J. T. (1985) "Brand Personality: A Strategic Concept for Multinational Advertising." In: *Marketing Educators' Conference*, New York: Young and Rubicam, pp. 1–31.

Reichheld, F. F. (1996) "Learning from Customer Defections" *Harvard Business Review*, 74(3): 56–69.

Rusbult, C. E. (1983) "A Longitudinal Test of the Investment Model: The Development (and Deterioration) of Satisfaction and Commitment in Heterosexual Involvements" *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 45: 101–117.

Sahay, A., Sharma, N., and Mehta, K. (2012) "Role of Affect and Cognition in Consumer Brand Relationship: Exploring Gender Differences" *Journal of Indian Business Research*, 4(1): 36–60.

Saunders, S., and Rod, M. (2012) "Brand Network Maps: A Multidimensional Approach to Brand-Consumer Relationships in the New Zealand Pharmacy Industry" *International Journal of Pharmaceutical and Healthcare Marketing*, 6(1): 55–70.

Seaman, C.B. and Basili, V.R. (1997) "An Empirical Study of Communication in Code Inspections" *Proceedings of the 19th International Conference on Software Engineering*, Boston, MA, 17–23.

Selnes F. (1998) "Antecedents and Consequences of Trust and Satisfaction in Buyer-Seller Relationships" *European Journal of Marketing*, 32: 305–322.

Sheth, J. N. and Parvatiyar, A. (1995) "Relationship Marketing in Consumer Markets: Antecedents and Consequences" *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 23(4): 255–271.

Smit, E., Bronner, F., and Tolboom, M. (2007) "Brand Relationship Quality and Its Value for Personal Contact" *Journal of Business Research*, 60(6): 627–633.

Spiggle, S. (1994) "Analysis and Interpretation of Qualitative Data in Consumer Research" *Journal of Consumer Research*, 21 (3): 491–503.

Srivastava, R., Fahey, L., and Christensen, H.K. (2001) "The Resource-Based View and Marketing: The Role of Market-Based Assets in Gaining Competitive Advantage" *Journal of Management*, 27 (6): 777–802.

Srivastava, R. K., Shervani, T. A., and Fahey, L. (1998) "Market-Based Assets and Shareholder Value: A Framework for Analysis" *Journal of Marketing*, 62(1): 2–18.

Strauss, A., and Corbin, J. (1994) "Grounded Theory Methodology." In: N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln (eds), *Handbook of Qualitative Research,* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Swaminathan, V., Page, K. L., and Gürhan-Canli, Z. (2007) "'My' Brand or 'Your' Brand: The Effects of Brand Relationship Dimensions and Self-Construal on Brand Evaluations" *Journal of Consumer Research*, 34(2): 248–259.

Sweeney, J. C. and Chew M. (2002) "Understanding Consumer-Service Brand Relationships: A Case Study Approach" *Australian Marketing Journal,* 10(2): 26–43.

Thomson, D., MacInnis, J., and Park, W. C. (2005) "The Ties That Bind: Measuring the Strength of Consumers' Attachments to Brands" *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 15(1): 77–91.

Veloutsou, C. and Moutinho, L. (2009) "Brand Relationships through Brand Reputation and Brand Tribalism" *Journal of Business Research*, 62(3): 314–322.

Wang, G. (2002) "Attitudinal Correlates of Brand Commitment: An Empirical Study" *Journal of Relationship Marketing*, 1(2): 57–75.

Webster, F. E. J. (1992) "The Changing Role of Marketing in the Corporation" *Journal of Marketing*, 56(4): 1–17.

Wegener, D. T., Downing, J., Krosnick, J. A., and Petty, R. E. (1995) "Strength-Related Properties of Attitudes: Measures, Manipulations, and Future Directions." In: R. E. Petty and J. A. Krosnick (eds), *Attitude Strength: Antecedents and Consequences,* Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum, pp. 281–304.

Xie, D. and Heung, V. C. S. (2012) "The Effects of Brand Relationship Quality on Responses to Service Failure of Hotel Consumers" *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 31(3): 735–744.

Zayer, L. T. and Neier, S. (2011) "An Exploration of Men's Brand Relationships" *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, 14(1) 83–104.

Zhou, Z., Zhang, Q., Su, C., and Zhou, N. (2012) "How Do Brand Communities Generate Brand Relationships? Intermediate Mechanisms" *Journal of Business Research*, 65(7): 890–895.

9
Brand Relationships in the Commodity Market

Antônio Santos, Cid Gonçalves Filho, Euler Alves Brandão, and Gustavo Quiroga Souki

1 Introduction

In any city or village of the Western world, travelers may come to face innumerable cultural variations: languages, local wisdom, beliefs, values, and so on.Among these variations, perhaps one in particular significantly attracts observers: the location's architecture. The works of Antonio Gaudi, in Barcelona (Church of the Holy Family, Batlló House, among others), the Arc de Triomphe, in Paris, and the Hoover Dam, on the Colorado River, United States, are some typical examples of architectonic features that are capable of impressing any observer. In and around these great or small works, even considering all cultural diversity, an element is ostensibly present: cement. Perhaps no other material has been and continues to be consumed by such different people, and yet with such similar purposes. According to Battagin (2009), John Smeaton, in 1756, elaborated the current formula for cement, by assessing the proportion of soft and clayish limestone and obtaining a mixture similar to the one that helps support buildings, bridges, and houses today. Variations of this product were typified and standardized so as to comply with different environmental conditions and improve the durability of buildings. However, the basis of this material remains practically the same.

A product of such relevance, which is clearly indispensable for modern life, would surely have its consumption habits scrutinized by marketing professionals. Just so that we might have a notion of this product's relevance, over 354 kilos of cement were consumed for each inhabitant in Brazil in 2012, according to data from the Brazilian National Cement Industries Union (SNIC). This volume, transformed into currency, would translate to around R$ 19 billion (around US$ 8 billion) in sales (SNIC,

2012). Surprisingly, cement's consumption in bags is related to a peculiarity: even though this product has the same standards imposed by the ABNT (Brazilian Association of Technical Rules), there are consumers willing to pay a premium price over a given brand (up to 20% more), which varies from region to region (SNIC, 2012). This behavior suggests that at some level consumers perceive and compare brands attributes, which are determinants in their choice and purchase intentions. The factors leading to this behavior are this chapter's study object. Taking Aaker's (2004) proposition that delivering quality is not enough for a brand, but that a management of brand perceptions is also required, we can assume that, in this commodity market, some brands manage their image and equity among consumers better than their competitors. Thus, this study presents a model of brand equity and brand image, based on the available literature, and the application of a descriptive survey of a quantitative nature. This research was proposed, using a construction analogy, in order contribute to the development of a Brand Equity Model for commodity-type products. Most existing brand equity models were tested and proven effective regarding mass consumption goods, services, and business-to-business (B2B) relations based on differentiation. Therefore, to enlarge the empirical fundamentals of branding in commodity markets, a model was proposed aiming to explain the relations between consumption, brands, and preferences in this market. In order to verify the hypothetical model, a sample was collected in different markets, whose peculiarities became fertile ground for the test, since assorted brands and various consumption habits may be found in the chosen locations. In southeastern Brazil, where we find Belo Horizonte and Rio de Janeiro, two of the researched locations, the share of bagged cement is 64 percent, versus 36 percent sold in bulk. In the northeast, the researched location was the city of Recife, where this number (sales share in bags) reaches 79 percent (SNIC, 2012). The objective of this study is to assess purchase behavior as a consequence of brand equity and image in the commodity's market. To achieve this, a study was performed in four different steps. The first was done internally, in the financing organization, by reviewing historical data and holding discussion groups with customers and employees. This assessment served as a quantitative basis for developing the questionnaires and/or aligning the expectations regarding the study's managerial results. After the quantitative step, we started compiling the theoretical references that were the basis for the creation of the hypothetical model and enlarged the discussion on the theme. The third step was comprised of a survey, in the city of Belo Horizonte, with a sample of 200 cement consumers.

In this phase, we aimed at refining an image scale to be utilized in composing the last phase's questionnaire. In the fourth step, a second survey was performed, with 385 cement consumers, in the locations of Belo Horizonte, Recife, and Rio de Janeiro, followed by confirmatory factor analyses through structural equation modeling. In the following section, we will discuss the theoretical basis of the research.

2   Brands and consumers: creating equity and relationships

Although brands have been used since ancient times, according to Louro (2000), the application of theories on the concept of brands is a recent phenomenon, and the first in-depth study about branding was published by Gardner and Levy (1955). Carril (2007) agrees that the emergence of theoretical reflections on brands is recent, and highlights the importance of the 1960s, known as the age of the image, for the evolution of the brand concept. He also adds that only in the 1980s, due to the great number of mergers and acquisitions that occurred during this period, did brands started being acknowledged as factors with great relevance for corporate strategies.

Branding studies were more focused on the managerial side in the past, suggesting that firms must shape brand strategies to create value and equity in the market. Recently, scholars have been dedicated to establishing the parameters and fundamentals of the relationship between brands and consumers. According to Fournier, Breazeale, and Fetscherin (2012), strong relationships guarantee cash flows in the form of brand loyalty and brand extension, creating and nurturing word-of-mouth (WOM) and protecting shareholder value from crises. Brand relationships are a complex psychological and cultural phenomenon that requires organization and an internal culture aligned in terms of relationship principles. The development of the field created an important debate and sustained an empirical, managerial, and theoretical framework, which embraces the foundations of the consumer brand relationship (CBR), types and varieties of relationships, relationship quality and variability, emotional bonds (attachment, love, forgiveness), and its managerial setting and agenda (Ahuvia, 2005; Fournier *et al.*, 2012). Fournier, Breazeale and Fetscherin (2012) argued that the 'CBR equation' has two sides: the brand side (that is also the consequence of the manager's decisions and market interactions) and the consumer side, as the relationship is mutually co-created. In this scenario, image and consumer brand equity influence and co-create brand relationships, as

they are a consequence of interactions between the firms' decisions and behavior with consumer perceptions and their cognitive /emotional mental activities.

2.1 Definition of brand equity

According to Sreejesh and Mohapatra (2014), the literature considers brand equity as a relational construct, because a brand derives a significant part of its value from the relationship with groups, particularly from its consumers or partners (Morgan and Hunt, 1994; Srivastava *et al.,* 1998, 2001). This relationship nature of brand equity contributes, they propose, as an important asset for a brand. Sreesjesh and Mohapatra (2014) argue that a brand derives most of its value from brand associations, and from the image that the brand generates in the mind of consumers, which is created through experiences, interactions, communications, and all the activities and mental processes that nurture relationships.

Grannell (2014) elaborated an interesting comparison between Aaker's (1996, p. 7) and Keller's (2008, p. 45) definition of brand equity. According to Grannel (2014, p. 1), "Keller (2008, p. 45) proposes that a brand has positive customer-based brand equity when consumers react more favorably to a product and the way it is marketed when the brand is identified than when it is not. Aaker (1996) defines brand equity as the set of assets and liabilities linked to a brand's name and symbol that adds to or subtracts from the value provided by a product or service to a firm and/or that firm's customers." Grannell (2014) argues that Keller's definition, which is more recent, aligns the brand equity concept to a more relational dyadic approach between the focus firm and its consumer: "Aaker's definition includes extensional (i.e., physical) components of the brand that are more unconnected to its audience, while Keller's definition requires an audience for equity to exist, and in this perspective, has a more relational perspective" (p. 2).

In order to increase the consumer's brand equity, firms usually manage marketing strategies in order to create value. The image associated with the firm in the consumer's mind is one valuable asset that has an important impact on brand equity (Chandon, 2003; Pike, 2007; Chang *et al.*, 2008). Thus, in the next section we discuss the brand image definition and related concepts.

2.2 Role of brand image

Image has been considered an important antecedent in the purchase behavior of consumers in the literature (Donovan and Rossiter, 1982;

Lindquist, 1975; May, 1974). Some previous studies (Brandão *et al.*, 2011) lead us to believe that, when a consumer makes an internal search in his or her memory, tracing back the image he or she has of brands, which was created by previous experiences, WOM, and mass communication (among other elements), he or she establishes an objective criterion of choice, but uses subjective perceptions to decide.

The term 'image' has been used in several areas and from various scientific perspectives, such as psychoanalysis or marketing (Dowling, 1986; Grönroos, 1995; Johnson and Zinkhan, 1990; Martineau, 1958). According to Barich and Kotler (1991), a company does not have only one image, but several. These images are dependent on the object being analyzed, the target audience, and other situations. Based on the literature review by Dobni and Zinkhan (1990) on this theme, De Toni *et al.* (2004) proposed the following dimensions of the image: functional, symbolic, emotional, and cognitive. Those dimensions have been used for evaluating the image of wines and mobile phones (De Toni *et al.*, 2005), of the profession of the architect (Grasseli *et al.*, 2007), the physical therapist (Amorim, 2007), and the psychologist (Mendes, 2008). Studies relating image and brand equity propose a positive relation between the constructs, such as those of Shankar and Fuler (2008) and Broyles *et al.* (2010).

The image theory is dealt with in marketing in different ways, and there is no consensus about either the concept or the process of image formation (Dobni and Zinkhan, 1990; Poiesz, 1989; Stern *et al.*, 2001). Although they do not have the same meaning, the terms 'brand image' and 'product image' are often presented as synonymous in the marketing literature. But as clarified by Dobni and Zinkhan (1990), the brand image is generally focused on symbolic, emotional, and cognitive attributes, and the product image also emphasizes functional aspects (Dobni and Zinkhan, 1990). Studies show that the images consumers have about a brand or product influence their purchase behavior, and that many times they buy a product not for its characteristics, but for what the brand or product represents to them (Levy, 1958).

Stern *et al.* (2001) point out two characteristics in common in the definition of brand image: (1) the brand image is a gestalt construction, and (2) the brand image is a transactional process between the brand stimulus and the consumer's perception. In this process, the consumer has a holistic impression about the brand position in relation to its competitors, working as (a) a way to reduce the extension and complexity of the processing, storage, and recovery of information; (b) a precursor of a more complex elaborative process; (c) something that simplifies the

purchasing process; (d) a persuasive sign for a small and temporary attitude modification (Poiesz, 1989).

There is also a strong relation between advertising campaigns and brand image perception (Brandão, 2008), as indicated by a positive correlation between the time of advertising exposure of a brand and brand awareness, as well as the image of brand positioning, even in commodities markets.

2.3   Brand equity approaches

Keller and Machado (2006) state that the concept of brand equity appeared in the 1980s, as one of the most important marketing concepts. According to Vargas-Neto (2003), there are two separate approaches to brand equity. The first approach is directed toward the company or accounting and has its focus on measuring the brand's financial value, in currency. The second is the consumer-guided approach, which relates to a differentiation, to the affinity between the brand and consumers and their loyalty to the brand. In the consumer-guided perspective, we highlight the view of Aaker (1998, p. 32), who conceives brand equity as a "set of assets and liabilities connected to a brand, its name and its symbol, which add or subtract to the value given by a product or service for a company and/ or for its consumers." According to the author, the assets that constitute brand equity vary according to the context in which the brand is inserted, but they may be grouped into five categories: (a) loyalty to the brand; (b) name awareness; (c) perceived quality; (d) brand associations; (e) other proprietary assets (such as patents and distribution channels).

Cognitive psychology is a school of thought in psychology that deals with how people perceive, learn, structure, store, and use knowledge and information (Sternberg, 2000). In this view, images are visions, perceptions, imaginings, models, and mental representations of each subject (De Toni, 2005). Therefore, among the various areas of interest for cognitive psychologists, two are particularly relevant for studies of images: perception and the representation of awareness.

Perception is understood as the "set of psychological processes by which people recognize, organize, synthesize and provide meaning (the brain) to the sensations received from environmental stimuli," in other words, the sensory organs (Sternberg, 2000, p. 147). In order to have the formation of a concept or image of an object, it is necessary that the subject first perceives this object (Eysenck and Keane, 1994).

Keller and Machado (2006, p. 1) conceive consumer-guided brand value as "the differential effect that brand awareness has over the consumer's attitude towards that brand." The authors add that blind

tasting tests illustrate client-based brand equity well. This is because consumers' opinions, when trying products without knowing to which brands they belong, invariably diverge from their opinions on the same products when they in fact do have unawareness of the brand associated with the product, demonstrating that preference may have its origins in brand associations and not only in the product's attributes.

For Jones (2005), consumer-guided brand equity may be divided into two categories: (a) mental brand value, that is, the brand's impact on the consumer's mind; (b) behavioral brand equity, or the brand's impact on the consumer's behavior. By virtue of brand equity's importance for companies, there is, currently, a concern for measuring brand equity. Thus, studies have pointed out various measurement models. Louro (2000) points to the existence of three types of models for brand equity measurement: (a) one-dimensional models, which utilize a single measurement basis; (b) two-dimensional models, which integrate structured models based in two measurement bases; (c) tridimensional models, which include indexes encompassing all measurement bases.

A measurement model that is frequently adopted in studies on brand equity is the multidimensional brand equity scale (MBE). This scale, according to Vargas-Neto (2003) and Reis (2010), was developed by Yoo and Donthu (2001), based on the concepts of brand equity proposed by Aaker (1998) and Keller (1993). The scale encompasses three dimensions of brand equity: (a) loyalty to the brand; (b) perceived quality; (c) brand memory/associations. According to Oliveira (2006), the scale comprises ten indicators, which integrate the aforementioned three brand equity dimensions. Vargas-Neto (2003) adds that the scale is valid for several cultures, a fact that may be evidenced by its application, by its idealizers, in the United States and South Korea, simultaneously.

The MBE scale model is based on the consumer-guided brand equity approach. However, there are also brand equity models directed toward accounting, such as the model presented by Park and Srinivasan (1994), which proposes arithmetic formulas for evaluating the financial value of a brand. The measurement models for brand equity are important both in the consumer-guided and in the accounting-guided perspectives. In the consumer-guided approach, the measurement allows for refining the effectiveness of brand equity management based on the consumer's reactions regarding the brand. In the accounting approach, measurement allows for the evaluation of the financial yield generated by the investments in the brand.

We should highlight that the concept of brand equity, as well as the forms of measuring, understanding, and managing brand value, has

been studied thoroughly in the marketing literature. Brand equity may be examined in several contexts, such as B2B (e.g., Buil *et al.*, 2008, 2013; Jensen and Klastrup, 2008; Kuhn *et al.,* 2008), in a business to consumer context (B2C) (e.g., Andrew *et al.*, 2004; Anselmsson *et al.*, 2007; Biel, 1992), and in intercultural contexts (Broyles *et al.*, 2010), as well as from the consumer perspective (Aaker and Kevin, 1990) and the retailer perspective (Glynn, 2010).

There are some comprehensive brand equity models that are commonly utilized in the literature. Keller's model (1993), for instance, conceives brand equity from an individual consumer's perspective, in order to evaluate what is the consumer's knowledge of the brand. The author states that brand knowledge is defined in terms of notoriety (brand awareness) and brand image. Based on Keller's model (1993), Tolba and Hassan (2009) validated an integrative brand equity model, one that is comprised of (a) awareness value; (b) behavior value; and (c) relationship value. The authors found that attitude and loyalty were the strongest antecedents in purchasing intention. As such, the brand equity constructs are related to brand market performance.

It is interesting to notice that many of the brand equity models seek to understand the consumer's behavior toward the brand (Aaker and Keller, 1990; Andrew *et al.*, 2004; Keller, 1993; Huang and Yu, 1999; Macdonald and Sharp, 2000). Punj and Hillyer (2011), for instance, developed a structural brand value model that combines aspects of the consumer's attitude and memory, such as global attitude regarding the brand and brand heuristics, with aspects of behavioral intention and consumption, such as brand awareness and the strength of preference. Huang and Yu (1999), in contrast, analyzed the causes of repeated purchases by the consumer and the role that conscious and unconscious memory have in this type of behavior. For this reason, consumers' loyalty to the brand reflects their conscious decision of purchasing the same brand, representing their tendency to stay with one or a few brands. Consumers' inertia, on the other hand, is related to a purchase of the same brand, due to habit and with no hesitation.

Macdonald and Sharp (2000) performed a test to examine the role of brand awareness in the consumer's choosing process, showing that individuals who choose between brands with a significant awareness of differences make their choices faster and prefer high awareness brands, regardless of a difference in quality and price. According to the study, brand awareness is the dominant choosing tactic among conscious groups of individuals. Other studies also dealt with investigating the role of brand awareness as a value variable. Wang *et al.* (2008), for

example, analyzed the corporation ability association (CCA) capability, whose dimensions are of a corporation's performance, innovation, and degree of globalization, as well as brand awareness and other value variables, for example, resonance and perception of quality. The CCA to brand awareness did not have a significant impact on brand resonance. However, it did have an impact on the perception of quality, which, in its turn, affects brand resonance. The other relations are significant, except for perception of quality in purchasing intention.

In a different application, Broyles et al. (2010) sought to verify whether the models of brand value antecedents and consequences, based on the customer, would be applicable in intercultural contexts. The model's functional antecedents included components of the brand's individual perception, performance, and quality. Therefore, the brand value consequences, anticipated difficulty and risk of the purchasing decision, trust in the purchasing decision, product satisfaction and repurchasing intention of an individual were taken into account.

Premium price is also a variable that is broadly discussed in the literature associated with brand equity. According to Anselmsson *et al.* (2007), premium price is a concept that is similar to that of brand value, since each value dimension of a brand has an impact on the price that consumers would be willing to pay for the brand. If a dimension does not affect premium price, it is not a relevant indicator for brand equity. For this reason, the authors demonstrate that brand equity and premium price in the supermarket sector are related to four basic brand equity dimensions: brand awareness, perceived quality, loyalty, and associations.

Furthermore, according to Louro (2000), these four dimensions are related to each consumer's cognitive and affective memory. To evaluate how the four traditional constructs in the brand equity literature and the construct of satisfaction relate, Ha *et al.* (2010) proposed four alternative models for testing the factors that have an influence on the formation of brand equity. The model proposes that the influence of perceived quality, brand associations/awareness and loyalty on brand equity is mediated by satisfaction. Thus, the study shows that the effects of perceived quality have an indirect impact on brand equity through satisfaction. Based on the uniqueness of B2B markets and the importance of understanding brand equity in this context, Kim *et al.* (1999) presented a theoretical brand equity model, for the business market. The authors believe that the understanding of brand equity by marketing managers in a B2B market has the potential to leverage value and help companies reach a competitive corporate position.

Taking into consideration the variety of brand equity models and the uniqueness of each study cited, we highlight the importance of building a model that is adequate to each context. Therefore, the present study does not intend to adopt a single model that already exists in the literature, but to propose a model based on the extended literature review, considering the commodity scenario.

3   Building the research framework

3.1   Antecedents of brand equity

To propose the hypothetical model that composes the nomological chain, as a sequence formed by antecedents and consequents of brand equity in commodities markets, a literature review was conducted. Brand knowledge can be considered as associations that come to the client's mind when the brand is mentioned (Kotler and Keller, 2006). According to Aaker (1998), knowing a brand may also be understood as the ability of the purchaser to recognize or associate a brand with the product that belongs to a given category. The empirical studies that associate brand knowledge and awareness with brand equity or brand value are numerous, such as those of Punj and Hillyer (2011) and Wang *et al.* (2008), which are used in operationalizing this study's constructs.

A consumer's previous experiences with a product or service/brand may be positive or negative, and frequently affect expectations regarding a new consumption or the reuse of a product/service. According to Parasuraman *et al.* (1985), previous experiences, which represent the previous contact the consumer has with the respective product and service, enable the establishing of relations with past behaviors, and have an influence on the formation of consumer expectation. In some cases, previous accumulated experiences of using a product or a service are a source of satisfaction, which in turn influences brand loyalty (Louro, 2000). Considering these arguments, the following hypothesis was proposed:

> *H1:* Previous experiences significantly and positively influence brand awareness.

Communication through external media is one of the means through which the consumers form their knowledge and, afterwards, the image of a given brand. The communication mix is comprised of advertising, publicity, personal sales, sales promotion, marketing sponsoring, and point of sales communication (Shimp, 2002). Publicity, for example,

allows the brand to enter the consumer's mind so as to prove and establish its positioning, transmitting its differentiating message in terms of product-based benefits or emotional/psychological ones (Randazzo, 1997). Fournier (1998) proposes that the perceived quality of a brand relationship can emerge from previous consumption experiences, or from advertising. Taking these arguments into consideration, a second hypothesis was proposed:

> *H2:* External media significantly and positively influence brand awareness.

The perceived value of a brand by its consumers is based, according to Porter (1989), on *use criteria* (tangible aspects) and also *signaling criteria* (intangible aspects), the latter of which is built mostly from advertising. From this perspective, advertising can reinforce these signaling criteria, influencing consumers to believe some products or brands can fulfill their expectations over the use criteria. Nevertheless, according to Porter (1989), these signaling criteria are highly important in fields in which consumers have difficulties in comparing the performance of competitors' products or brands.

Last, influence groups, also called reference groups, consist of a set of individuals who may influence the consumer's thoughts, feelings, and behavior. According to Solomon (2002), consumer behavior may not be understood in a complete manner without considering the influence of third parties in their choices. How much each person is susceptible to the influence of reference groups varies according to each individual, depending on his or her identification level with others, acceptance and conformity with the expectations of others, self-image, and the information obtained from third parties (Bearden *et al.*, 1989). Considering these statements, the following hypothesis were proposed:

> *H3:* External media significantly and positively impacts influence groups.
>
> *H4:* Influence groups significantly and positively influence brand awareness.

Keller (1993) proposes that brand knowledge is composed by brand awareness and brand image as correlated constructs. Esch *et al.* (2006) developed an empirical study with 400 respondents, which revealed that brand awareness has an impact of .40 (standardized load) on brand

image. Chandon (2003) proposes that awareness is an antecedent of brand image. Observing these considerations, the following hypotheses, which correlates all the dimensions of brand image to awareness, were proposed:

> *H5:* Awareness significantly and positively influences functional image.
>
> *H6:* Awareness significantly and positively influences cognitive image.
>
> *H7:* Awareness significantly and positively influences symbolic image.
>
> *H8:* Awareness significantly and positively influences emotional image.

According to Keller (1993), brand image can contribute to increasing the consumer-based brand equity. Chang *et al.* (2008) tested a model with 456 questionnaires, which revealed a significant impact of brand image on brand equity. Chandon (2003) and Pike (2007) also propose the same relationship between brand image and brand equity. Considering these elements, the following hypotheses where proposed:

> *H9:* Functional image significantly and positively influences brand equity.
>
> *H10:* Cognitive image significantly and positively influences brand equity.
>
> *H11:* Symbolic image significantly and positively influences brand equity.
>
> *H12:* Emotional image significantly and positively influences brand equity.

3.2　Consequences of brand equity

Once the nomological chain that comprises brand equity antecedents is proposed, we expect this chain to have a sequence, leading up to the effective concretization of the acquisition of the item under study. The way in which brand equity is capable of influencing consumption habits follows a chain, as a consequence, in the form of purchase intention.

For a complete understanding of the term *intention*, it is important to know the studies on behavioral attitude, which is the closest one can come

to predicting a behavior. According to Mattar (1996), before anything else, behavior is determined by an attitude, which is not a behavior, strictly speaking, but a disposition toward a behavioral relation toward a product, organization, person, fact, or situation. The first issue with which a researcher is faced when studying attitudes, is how to determine them, that is, how to identify the components that are part of attitudes.

According to Zeithaml *et al.* (1996), the quality perceived by a consumer exerts a direct influence on its purchase or repurchase intention, even if this quality is only yet a reflection of the brand image. Nevertheless, according to the authors, the influence may be positive or negative, in agreement with the type of experience the individual encounters during the resolution of a problem and interactions with the brand, influencing directly his or her purchasing intentions favorably or unfavorably. In line with our argumentation, we propose the following hypotheses:

> *H13:* Brand equity significantly and positively influences consumer purchase intention.

In sum, the hypothetical model assumes the brand awareness level is affected by the consumer's previous experiences, by influence groups, and by external media, which also affects influence groups. In its turn, awareness level has an impact on the brand image in its four dimensions: functional, cognitive, symbolic, and emotional. Each of these dimensions has an impact on brand equity, which, at the end of the proposed chain, has an impact on purchasing intention. The overall hypothesized model is presented in Figure 9.1.

4   Method

4.1   Samples and data collection

The purpose of this study is, specifically, to explain purchase behavior as a consequence of brand equity and image in the commodity market. In order to do so, we sought, in the literature, models and scales that would enable this development. This research may be characterized as being descriptive, of a quantitative nature, which, according to Malhotra (2006), has the advantage of quantifying results. We applied a four-step procedure: in the first step, we held four discussion groups (N = 46, 37 males/9 females, average age = 32, SD age = 10) with clients and collaborators of the company financing this research, and assessed the theoretical references. In the second step, we employed a survey with 200 cement consumers (average age = 36, SD = 14) in the city of Belo Horizonte in order to validate an image scale. The main outcome of this
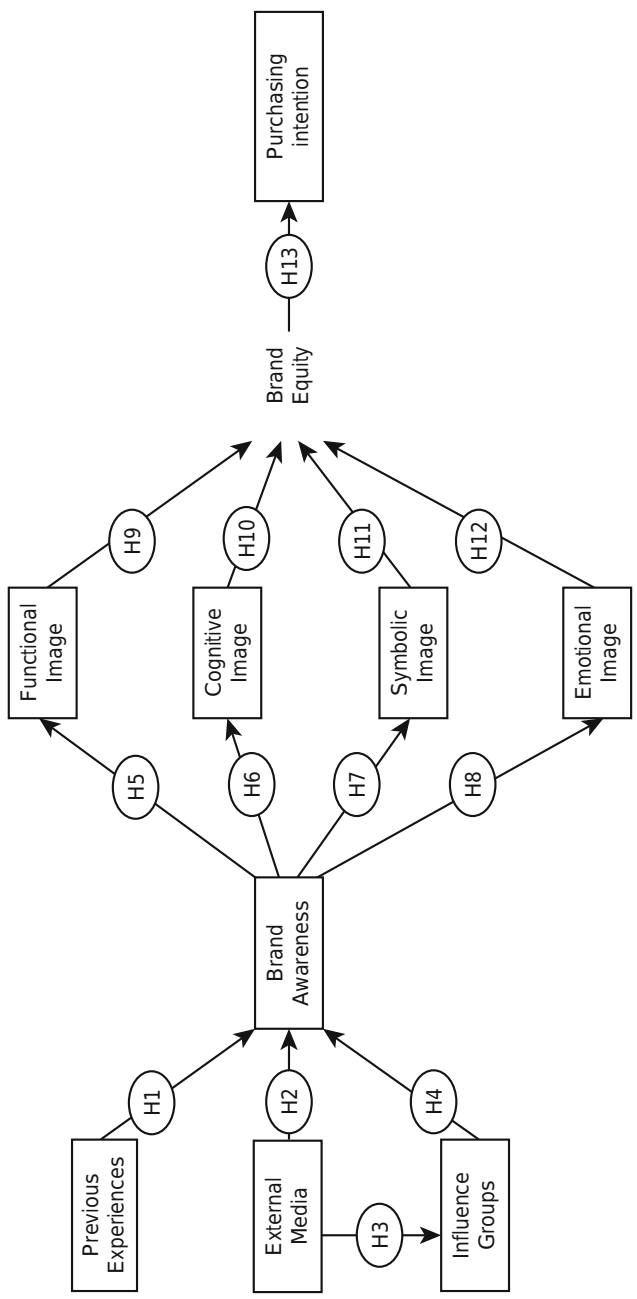
Figure 9.1   Research framework

Table 9.1   Sample characteristics

Characteristic	Sample description
Cities	33.2% Recife, 33.5% Rio de Janeiro, and 33.2% Belo Horizonte
Reference brand	Campeão 25.4%, Holcim 16.1%, Liz 8.6%, Cauê 8.3%, Mauá 8.3%, others 33.3%
No. of tasks performed by respondent per month	Between 1 and 5, 70%. Between 6 and 10, 18.7%. Above 11, 7.7%. No Answer, 3.6%
Function in the work	Construction Worker, 61.4%. Foreman, 15.3%. Cement End-user, 18.1%. Others, 5.5%
Cement purchase frequency	Weekly, 28.2%. Biweekly, 9.9%. Monthly, 18.9%. Others, 43%

phase was the refinement of the image scale with 34 items that was valid and tested in the cement market.

After reliability, convergent, discriminant, and nomological validity tests, the psychometric properties of the scale were considered adequate. In the third phase, in order to test the hypothetical model, a survey-type assessment was performed, involving 385 cement consumers (see Table 9.1) in the cities of Belo Horizonte, Rio de Janeiro, and Recife. The sample had a balanced division between the target cities and a distribution among brands compatible to the presence of separate companies in different markets. Most of the interviewees were at least involved in five construction projects in the last 12 months, and a majority of them was construction workers who purchased cement, on at least a monthly basis, in over 50 percent of the cases.

4.2   Scale development and measures

All the scales are based on five-point Likert-type scales. The operationalization of the constructs is described in Table 9.2.

Furthermore, the following segmentation variables were incorporated into the instrument, in order to characterize the sample: number of jobs performed in the last 12 months and role in the cement market (examples: construction company, foreman, construction worker).

5   Data analyses and results

5.1   Preliminary analyses

The collected data were analyzed using the software packages Microsoft Excel, SPSS, version 17.0 and AMOS, version 5.0. The criteria used for developing and validating the scales, as well as testing the model, were

Table 9.2 Measures

Construct	Source
Brand Awareness	Punj and Hillyer (2011); Wang, Wei, and Yu (2008)
Previous Experiences	Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuraman (1996)
External Media/Advertisement	Shankar and Fuller (2008); Yoo, Boonghee, and Mandhachitara (2003)
Influence Groups	Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1985)
Image	De Toni, Milan, and Schuler (2004)
Brand Equity	Yoo and Donthu (2001)
Purchasing Intention	Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuraman (1996)

based on Bagozzi *et al.* (1991), Fornell and Larcker (1981), Hair *et al.* (1998), Tabachnick and Fidell (2001), and Netemeyer *et al.* (2003). During the exploratory data analysis we found absent data in the collected sample, finding 241 cells with absent data, in a basis with 27,406 cells, representing .88 percent of the total. We opted for treating them using the method of reposition by the average (Hair *et al.,* 1998).

For checking the existence of single and multivariate outliers, we employed the results standardizing method and the D^2 measurement of Mahalanobis, respectively. No outliers to the analyses were found. Then we employed the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test in order to verify data normality, and found that they were mostly not normally distributed, as expected. Linearity was evaluated and validated through Pearson's coefficient (Malhotra, 2006).

5.2   Exploratory factor analyses

So as to check the dimensionality of the scale elaborated in this phase of the research, exploratory factorial analyses were performed. Unidimensionality implies the questionnaire items must be highly related among themselves, forming a single concept (Hair *et al.*, 1998). As an extraction method, we used the principal components method, and as rotation method, we used Varimax, as the researchers wanted to reduce the number of original variables for subsequent use in a prediction technique (Hair *et al.*, 1998). The criteria adopted for accepting the factorial solution found are presented in Table 9.3.

5.3   Internal scale validity, convergent and discriminant validity

All constructs presented a factorial solution inside these parameters and one-dimensional solutions. The image construct, which is conceptually comprised of four factors, had, as expected, a multifactorial solution.

Table 9.3   Criteria for adjusting the factorial solution found

Measurements	Threshold
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO)	> .50 (for two variables) e > .60 (for three or more variables)
Bartlett's Sphericity Test (BST)	Significant value inferior to 1%
Explained Variance (EV)	> 60%
Communality (h²)	> .50
Factorial Load (FL)	> .50
Cronbach's alpha	> .60

Note: Elaborated by the authors based on Hair *et al.* (1998); Mingoti (2005); Malhotra (2006).

The evaluation of average variance extracted (AVE) and composite reliability (CR) showed us they were all inside the parameters proposed by Tabachnick and Fidell (2001), that is, AVE higher than .50 and CR higher than .70. All the scales presented Cronbach's alpha higher than .80, which means that they have an adequate reliability, as shown in Table 9.4.

The convergent validity analysis was performed through the confirmatory factorial analysis (Bagozzi *et al.*, 1991), and all indicators presented significant weights on the constructs. Discriminant validity was analyzed through the method developed by Fornell and Larcker (1981), and results evidenced the presence of that validity for all the construct pairs. We went on, therefore, to test the proposed hypothetical model.

5.4   Structural equation modeling

For Netemeyer *et al.* (2003), nomological validity comprises the third validity component of the construct, in which we check whether the constructs relate to a network, expressed in the form of hypotheses supported by the literature and subjacent theories. We tested the theoretical model with structural equations modeling (SEM), using the AMOS 5.0 software. The goodness-of-fit measures are presented in Table 9.5.

As we verified, the chi-square/df ratio was 3.5, which is close to the threshold of 3.0. RMSEA, as well as some model fits such as CFI and TLI have acceptable levels, while GFI, for example, is below the threshold. As we observed, most of the goodness-of-fit indices were adequate, and we could conclude that the model is acceptable. The discrepancy among some goodness-of-fit measures and the recommended values in the literature, specifically regarding GFI, represent some limitations of the validity of the model, which could suggest parsimony within the interpretation of the results.

Figure 9.2 shows the results of testing the proposed model.

The results showed evidence that External Media (mass communication) had a positive impact on the respondents' awareness level regarding the brands, just as on Influence Groups. In their turn, Influence Groups also had an impact on the consumers' awareness level. Previous experiences showed a higher positive and significant impact on awareness. The antecedents of awareness were responsible for 67.0 percent of explained variance (R^2).

The brands' awareness level had a positive and significant impact on all the dimensions of image, except for Negative Emotional Image. Functional Image and Negative Emotional Image did not present a significant load in Brand Equity (probably because most of the cement brands would be able to be functional). Cognitive Image, Symbolic Image, and Positive Emotional Image, on the other hand, had a positive and significant impact on Brand Equity. Together, the

Table 9.4   Reliability of scales – Cronbach's alpha

Scale	Cronbach's alpha
Brand Awareness	.921
Previous Experiences	.949
External Media/Advertisement	.983
Influence Groups	.930
Image	Functional .811, Cognitive .981, Symbolic .931, Emotional Positive .982; Emotional Negative .992
Brand Equity	.971
Purchasing Intention	.983

Table 9.5   Model fit

Goodness-of-fit measures	Value Found	Recommended Value*
Chi-square/df	3.5	X^2 /d.f less than 3
	X^2 3014,3/ 843 d.f., *p* = .000	>.100
GFI	.768	> .90
CFI	.94	> .90
TLI	.96	>.90
PGFI	.795	>.90
AGFI	.728	>.90
RMSEA	.06	< .07

Note: *Recommended values based on Hair *et al.* (1998).
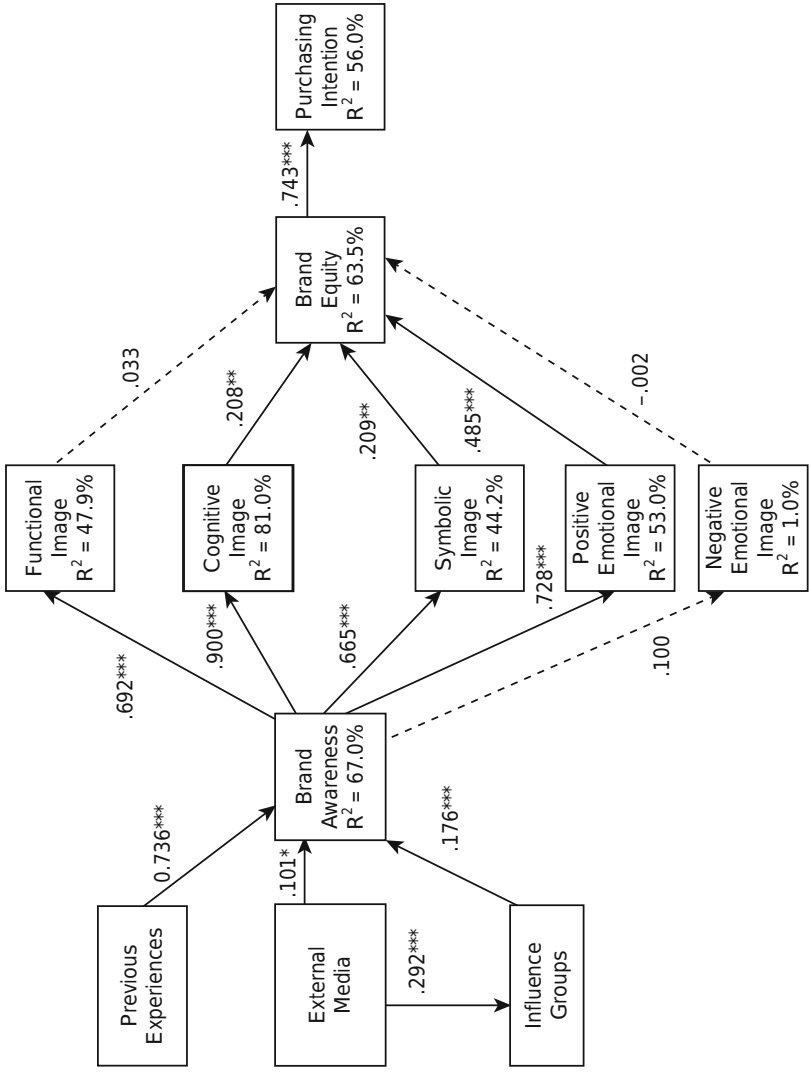
Figure 9.2 Test of the hypothetical research model

Notes: *** Indicates significant load at 0.1% levels; ** Indicates significant load at 1.0% levels; * Indicates significant load at 5.0% levels.

image dimensions were responsible for 63.5 percent of the variation (R^2) of Brand Equity. Last, Brand Equity presented a positive impact on Purchasing Intention. According to these findings, Brand Equity alone can explain 56 percent of purchase intention in this commodity market, in an emotionally driven context. Therefore, we can infer that in a commodity market, brand associations can influence significantly the purchase decision and differentiate products to consumers, who use emotional and rational (cognitive) elements to evaluate available suppliers and their offers.

6　Conclusions

This study makes relevant contributions, as it proposes and tests a model of brand equity in commodity markets, which is quite rare in the literature. The results reveal that it is possible to differentiate (through branding) standardized products and to establish emotional bonds between consumers and brands. As revealed, in the cement market, the functional aspects of the product must follow a standard, which is often normalized, which makes differentiation among the brands difficult to notice.

On the other hand, one could expect that, in a commodity market, decisions would be more rational and based on price, as manufacturers are selling very similar tangible products with the same functionalities. However, according to the research findings, the emotional image dimension presented the highest significant impact on brand equity. This impact is higher than that of cognitive image, which is of a more rational nature.

Our focus groups showed evidence of emotional connections between the target audiences and cement brands, with evidence that cement creates meanings and a sense of quality for construction workers, self-identification with brands, and normative acceptance by social groups. Park (2010, p. 2) and colleagues define brand attachment as "the strength of the bond connecting the brand with the self." Mikulincer and Shaver (2007) argue that with the passage of time and the recurrent retrieval of related memories, associative links are strengthened in a memory network and favor the formation of generalized representations of the attachment system. Park *et al.* (2010) assert that these representations can involve feelings about the brand and brand relationships. These representations and associations are also related to the creation of the image and equity of a brand, as conceptualized by Biel (1992).

The results of this study were used by a finance organization in a television campaign, shown in the northeast of Brazil, which was of a highly emotional nature and which connected the brand with the region's beauty and the values of the local population, and significant

results in sales and in the achieving of a market leadership position were obtained. This strategy enabled the brand to afford a 20 percent higher premium price in this market.

According to data obtained from sales tracking after these marketing efforts, consumers of the target brand developed more loyalty and repurchasing behavior than consumers from its competitors. These facts present similarities with the framework proposed by Fournier (1998), which suggests that a higher level of consumer brand relationship quality can promote the accommodation of consumers and the devaluation of alternatives, as observed in this case.

The results suggest that previous experiences are very important in differentiating competitors and creating value for consumers in this market. The main way of evoking these experiences is product demonstration activities, sample distribution, use of the product in professional teaching institutions, and the creation of direct communication channels with the user. These real interactions suggest that they can generate engagement and involve the consumer with the brand, promoting a higher attachment level. Once direct contact with consumers is established, they tend also to become part of the normative group, and generate even more impact on the awareness of a brand in the market through WOM. In this respect, we believe that the management impact of this research will be to contribute to the planning of strategic marketing actions, which will give priority to this form of action to the detriment of traditional mass media investments in commodities markets. The financing organization for this research has promoted a representative number of testing actions, sampling, and direct interactions with people who have influence at the point of sales, which has contributed to significant performance of the brand in the target markets.

Therefore, we believe that this work contributes to a better understanding of the process of evaluating and managing brands in commodity markets, creating the basis for further studies and generating a relevant managerial and academic understanding of the theme. The limitations of this research are associated with the sampling procedures, as respondents were restricted to three cities in Brazil. Due to cultural characteristics, one could infer that the purchase decision might be more emotional among Latin American consumers. Therefore, we recommend verifying and testing the hypothetical model with different samples.

References

Aaker, D. A. (1996) *Building Strong Brands*. New York: The Free Press.

Aaker, D. A. (1998) *Marcas: Brand Equity, Gerenciando O Valor Da Marca*. São Paulo: Negócio.

Aaker, D.A. (2004) "Leveraging the Corporate Brand" *California Management Review*, 46(3): 6–18.

Aaker, D. A. and Keller, K. (1990) "Consumer Evaluation of Brand Extensions" *Journal of Marketing*, 54(1): 27–41.

Ahuvia, A. C. (2005) "Beyond the Extended Self: Loved Objects and Consumers' Identity Narratives" *Journal of Consumer Research*, 32(1): 171–184.

Amorim, A. P. A. (2007) *Marketing De Serviços: Um Estudo Exploratório Sobre A Imagem E A Identidade Da Fisioterapia* (Belo Horizonte: Faculdade De Ciências Econômicas, Administrativas E Contábeis of Universidade), FUMEC.

Andrew, M., Uncles, M., and Goodhardt, G. (2004) "Understanding Brand Performance Measures: Using Dirichlet Benchmarks" *Journal of Business Research*, 54 (12): 1307–1325.

Anselmsson, J., Johansson, U., and Persson, N. (2007) "Understanding Price Premium for Grocery Products: A Conceptual Model of Consumer-Based Brand Equity" *Journal of Product and Brand Management*, 16(6): 401–414.

Bagozzi, R. P., Yi, Y., and Philips, L. W. (1991) "Assessing Construct Validity in Organizational Research" *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 36 (3): 421–458.

Barich, H. and Kotler, P. (1991) "A Framework for Marketing Image Management" *Sloan Management Review*, 32(2): 97–104.

Battagin, A. (2009) *Uma Breve História Do Cimento Portland*, http:// www.abcp.org. br, date accessed February 2, 2013.

Bearden, W. O., Netemeyer, R. G., and Teel, J. E. (1989) "Further Validation of the Consumer Susceptibility to Interpersonal Influence" *Journal of Consumer Research*, 15: 770–776.

Biel, A. (1992) "How Brand Image Drives Brand Equity" *Journal of Advertising Research*, 32(6): 6–12.

Brandão, E. A. (2008) "A Propaganda Na Estratégia De Diferenciação Competitiva Do Varejo De Eletrodomésticos Brasileiro" *Revista Gestão E Tecnologia*, 8(1): 1–15.

Brandão, E. A., Muniz, R. M., Gonçalves Filho, C., Rocchiccioli, G. F., Souki, G.Q., and Livramento, R. S. (2011) "Brand Relationships on Retailing: The Impact of Image on Behavioral Intentions of Consumers" *Revista De Administração Da UFSM,* 4(1): 170–186.

Broyles, A., Leingpibul, T., Rossand, R., and Foster, B. (2010) "Brand Equity's Antecedent/Consequence Relationships in Cross-Cultural Settings" *Journal of Product and Brand Management*, 19(3): 159–169.

Buil, I., Chernatony, L., and Martínez, E. (2008) "A Cross-National Validation of the Consumer-Based Brand Equity Scale" *Journal of Product and Brand Management*, 17(6): 384–392.

Buil, I., Chernatony, L., and Martínez, E. (2013) "The Influence of Brand Equity on Consumer Responses" *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 30(1): 62–74.

Carril, C. (2007) *Questões Fundamentais Da Comunicação: Qual A Importância Da Marca Na Sociedade Contemporânea?*. São Paulo: Paulus.

Chandon, P. (2003) *Note on Measuring Brand Awareness, Brand Image, Brand Equity and Brand Value*, Fontainebleau: INSEAD.

Chang, H. H., Hsu, C., and Chung, S. H. (2008) "The Antecedents and Consequences of Brand Equity in Service Markets" *Asia Pacific Management Review*, 13(3): 601–624.

De Toni, D. (2005) *Administração Da Imagem De Produtos: Desenvolvendo Um Instrumento Para A Configuração Da Imagem De Produto*. Porto Alegre: Universidade Federal Do Rio Grande Do Sul.

De Toni, D., & Schuler, M. (2007) "Gestão da imagem: desenvolvendo um instrumento para a configuração da imagem de produto" *Revista de Administração Contemporânea*, *11*(4), 131–151.

De Toni, D., Milan, G. S., and Schuler, M. (2005) "Configuração De Imagens De Serviços: Um Estudo Aplicado Aos Serviços De Fisioterapia Disponibilizados Por Um Plano De Saúde" *Encontro Da Associação Nacional De Pós-Graduação E Pesquisa Em Administração*, Rio De Janeiro: Anpad.

Dobni, D. and Zinkhan, G. M. (1990) "In Search of Brand Image: Foundation Analysis" *Advances in Consumer Research*, 17(1): 110–119.

Donovan, R. J. and Rossiter, J. R. (1982) "Store Atmosphere: An Environmental Psychology Approach" *Journal of Retailing*, 58(1): 34–57.

Dowling, G. R. (1986) "Managing Your Corporate Image" *Industrial Marketing Management*, 15: 109–150.

Esch, F. R., Langner, T., Schmitt, B. H., and Geus P. (2006) "Are Brands Forever?" *Journal of Product and Brand Management*, 15(2): 98–105.

Eysenck, M. W. and Keane, M. T. (1994) *Psicologia Cognitiva: Um Manual Introdutório*. Porto Alegre: Artes Médicas.

Fornell, A. and Larcker, D. F. (1981) "Evaluating Structural Equation Models With Unobservable Variables and Measurement Error" *Journal of Marketing Research*, 18: 39–50.

Fournier, S. (1998) "Consumers and Their Brands: Developing Relationship Theory in Consumer Research" *Journal of Consumer Research*, 24(4): 343–373.

Fournier, S., Breazeale, M., and Fetscherin M. (2012). *Consumer-Brand Relationships: Theory and Practice*. New York: Routledge.

Gardner, B. B. and Levy, S. J. (1955), "The Product and the Brand" *Harvard Business Review*, March-April: 33–39.

Glynn, M. (2010) "The Moderating Effect of Brand Strength in Manufacturer-Reseller Relationships" *Industrial Marketing Management*, 39: 1226–1233.

Grannell, C. (2014) "Untangling Brand Equity, Value, Assets and Health", date accessed February 2, 2013, http://www.brandchannel.com/papers_review. asp?sp_id=1460.

Grasseli, M. F. and Souki, G. Q. (2007) "Imagem E Posicionamento Profissional: Um Estudo Exploratório Sobre O Marketing Na Arquitetura" *Encontro Da Associação Nacional De Pós-Graduação E Pesquisa Em Administração*, Rio De Janeiro: Anpad.

Grönroos, A. (1995). *Marketing: Gerenciamento E Serviços*. Rio De Janeiro: Campus.

Ha, H. Y., Jandaand, S., and Muthaly, S. (2010) "Development of Brand Equity: Evaluation of Four Alternative Models" *The Service Industries Journal*, 30(6): 911–928.

Hair, J. F., Anderson, R. E., Tathemand, R. L., and Black, W. C. (1998) *Análise Multivariada De Dados*, Porto Alegre: Bookman.

Huang, M. H. and Yu, S. (1999) "Are Consumers Inherently or Situationally Brand Loyal?—A Set Intercorrelation Account for Conscious Brand Loyalty and Nonconscious Inertia" *Psychology and Marketing*, 16(6): 523–544.

Jensen, M. and Klastrup, K. (2008) "Towards a B2B Customer-Based Brand Equity Model" *Journal of Targeting, Measurement and Analysis for Marketing*, 16(2): 122–128.

Johnson, M. and Zinkhan, M. G. (1990) "Defining and Measuring Company Image" in *Developments in Marketing Science*, Vol. 13, B. J. Dulap, ed. Cullowhee, NC: Academy of Marketing Science, 346–350.

Jones, R. (2005) "Finding Sources of Brand Equity: Developing A Stakeholder Model of Brand Equity" *Brand Management*, 13(1): 10–32.

Keller, K. L. (1993) "Conceptualizing, Measuring, Managing Customer-Based Brand Equity" *Journal of Marketing*, 57(1): 1–22.

Keller, K. L. (2008) *Strategic Brand Management*. New York: Prentice Hall.

Keller, K. L. and Machado, M. (2006) *Gestão Estratégica De Marcas*. São Paulo: Pearson Prentice Hall.

Kim, J., Reid, D., Plankand, R., and Dahlstrom, R. (1999) "Examining The Role of Brand Equity in Business Markets: A Model, Research Propositions, and Managerial Implications" *Journal of Business-To-Business Marketing*, 5(3): 65–89.

Kotler, P. and Keller, K. L. (2006) *Administração De Marketing*. São Paulo: Pearson Prentice Hall.

Kuhn, K.A, Alpertand, F., and Pope, N. (2008) "An Application of Keller's Brand Equity Model in a B2B Context" *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, 11(1): 40–58.

Lindquist, J. (1975) "Meaning of Image: A Survey of Empirical and Hypothetical Evidence" *Journal of Retailing*, 50(4): 29–39.

Louro, M. J. S. (2000) "Modelos De Avaliação Da Marca', *Revista De Administração De Empresas*, 40(2): 26–37.

Macdonald, E. and Sharp, B. (2000) "Brand Awareness Effects on Consumer Decision Making for a Common, Repeat Purchase Product: A Replication" *Journal of Business Research*, 48(1): 5–15.

Malhotra, N. (2006). *Pesquisa De Marketing: Uma Orientação Aplicada*. Porto Alegre: Bookman.

Martineau, P. (1958) "The Personality of Retail Store" *Harvard Business Review*, 36(1): 47–55.

Mattar, F. N. (1996). *Pesquisa De Marketing*, São Paulo: Atlas.

May, E. G. (1974) "Practical Applications of Recent Retail Image Research" *Journal of Retailing*, 50(4): 15–20.

Mendes, R. L. (2008) *Marketing Na Psicologia: Um Estudo Exploratório Sobre A Imagem Professional*. Belo Horizonte: Faculdade De Ciências Econômicas Administrativas E Contábeis, Universidade FUMEC.

Mikulincer, M. and Shaver, P. R. (2003) "The Attachment Behavioral System in Adulthood: Activation, Psychodynamics, and Inter-Personal Processes" *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, 35: 53–152.

Mingoti, S. A. (2005) *Análise De Dados Através De Métodos De Estatística Multivariada: Uma Abordagem Aplicada*. Belo Horizonte: Editora UFMG.

Morgan, R. M. and Hunt, S. D. (1994) "The Commitment-Trust Theory of Relationship Marketing" *Journal of Marketing*, 58(3): 24–38.

Netemeyer, R. G., Bearden, W. O., and Sharma S. (2003) *Scaling Procedures: Issues and Applications*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Oliveira, D. F. (2006) *Mensurando O Valor Da Marca, A Reputação E A Identidade No Setor Automotivo*. Belo Horizonte: UFMG.

Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V.A., and Berry, L. L. (1985) "A Conceptual Model of Service Quality and Its Implications for Future Research" *Journal of Marketing*, 49(4): 41–50.

Park, C. W., Macinnis, D. J., Priester, J., Eisingerich, A. B., and Lacobucci, D. (2010) "Brand Attachment and Brand Attitudes Strength: Conceptual and Empirical Differentiation of Two Critical Brand Equity Drivers" *Journal of Marketing*, 74(6): 1–17.

Porter, M. E. (1989) *Competitive Advantage*. New York: Free Press.

Punj, G. and Hillyer, C. (2011) "A Cognitive Model of Costumer-Based Brand Equity for Frequently Purchased Products: Conceptual Framework and Empirical Results" *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 14(1–2): 124–131.

Randazzo, S. (1997) *Criação De Mitos Na Publicidade*. Rio De Janeiro: Rocco.

Reis, E. G., (2010) *O Valor Da Marca A Partir Do Conceito De Brand Equity Baseado No Consumidor: Mensuração Através Da Escala Multidimensional Em Ocasiões De Compra E Consumo Simultâneos E Não Simultâneos De Um Produto*. Porto Algre: PUC RS.

Shankar, V. and Fuller, P. (2008) "BRAN-EQT: A Multicategory Brand Equity Model and its Application as Allstate" *Marketing Science*, 27(4): 567–584.

Shimp, T. A. (2002) *Propaganda E Promoção: Aspectos Complementares Da Comunicação Integrada De Marketing*. Porto Alegre: Bookman.

Sindicato Nacional Da Indústria Do Cimento [SNIC] (2012). Relatório Anual 2012, http://www.snic.org.br/, date accessed February 1. 2013.

Solomon, M. R. (2002) *O Comportamento Do Consumidor: Comprando, Possuindo E Sendo*. Porto Alegre: Bookman.

Sreesjesh, S. and Mohapatra, S. (2014). *Mixed Method Research Design*. Cham: Springer International.

Park, C. S. and Srinivasan, C. (1994) "A Survey-Based Method for Measuring and Understanding Brand Equity and Its Extendibility" *Journal of Marketing Research*, 31(2): 271–288.

Srivastava, R., Fahey, L., and Christensen, H. K. (2001) "The Resource View and Marketing: The Role of Marketing Based Assets in Gaining Competitive Advantage" *Journal of Management*, 27(6): 777–802.

Stern, B., Zinkhan, G. M., and Jaju, A. (2001) "Marketing Images Construct Definition, Measurement Issues, and Theory Development" *Marketing Theory*, 1(2): 201–224.

Sternberg, R. J. (2000) *Handbook of Human Intelligence*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Tabachnick, B. G. and Fidell, L. S. (2001). *Using Multivariate Statistics*, Boston, Massachusetts: Allyn and Bacon.

Tolba, A. and Hassan, S. (2009) "Linking Costumer-Based Brand Equity with Brand Market Performance: A Management Approach" *Journal of Product and Brand Management*, 18(5): 356–366.

Vargas-Neto, A. (2003) *Mensuração De Brand Equity Baseada No Consumidor: Avaliação De Escala Multidivisional*. Porto Alegre: Universidade Federal Do Rio Grande Do Sul.

Wang, H., Wei, Y., and Yu, C. (2008) "Global Brand Equity Model: Combining Customer-Based with Product-Market Outcome Approaches" *Journal of Product and Brand Management*, 17(5): 305–316.

William, D., Madden, T., Kirmani, A., and Mukherjee, S. (2001) "Understanding What's in a Brand Rating: A Model for Assessing Brand and Attribute Effects and Their Relationships to Brand Equity" *Journal of Marketing Research*, 38: 415–429.

Yoo, B. and Donthu, N. (2001) "Developing and Validating a Multidimensional Consumer-Based Brand Equity Scale" *Journal of Business Research*, (52), 1–14.

Yoo, B. and Mandhachitara R. (2003), "Estimating Advertising Effects on Sales in a Competitive Setting" *Journal of Advertising Research*, 43 (September), 310–321

Zeithaml, V.A., Berry, L. L., and Parasuraman, A. (1996) "The Behavioral Consequences of Service Quality" *Journal of Marketing*, 60: 31–46.

10
Discovering and Sustaining the Brand Bond

Ryan Barker and Jeffrey Peacock

1 Introduction

Our propensity to form social bonds serves more than our need to increase our chances of survival. In highly practical terms, connections advance our personal interests, and they matter for the social, psychological, and economic benefits they return (Hooper, 2012). In pursuit of such benefits, our life experience reminds us that our individual connections are not equal – we know that some linkages must be more 'efficient' than others (Roloff, 1981). It would therefore stand to reason that, as we progress through life and grow our networks, we are forced to make clever choices that satisfy our evolving needs, reflect our expectations, and inspire our imaginations. It is no coincidence that this would appear to mirror our search for love. When choosing partners in business, friendship, or romance, we seek potent bonds that propel us forward; meaningful – and efficient – affinities that offer a momentum we intend to sustain.

Consumer brand relationships (CBR) are no less dynamic and complex. However, brand conversations among executives often ignore the fundamental requirements of relationship success that interpersonal engagement demands in the real world. Further, it is our opinion at BERA (Brand Equity Relationship Assessment) Brand Management that the intricate brand shorthand that has been employed in different ways and for different purposes in the marketing and finance communities has evolved away from the essential human experience that gives brands their formidable power.

In this chapter, we will demonstrate that the language of relationships – and love – is a particularly appropriate construct for brands, and that a loved brand is in fact the most valuable asset an organization

can own. Through a set of relationship-oriented key performance indicators (KPIs) that describe brand momentum, loyalty and retention, depth of connection, and pricing power, BERA's framework and data offer a perspective on how brands ought to behave in maximizing brand performance and value. At BERA Brand Management (BBM), we believe that finding and sustaining love is an essential management function and a pursuit that can unify marketing and finance; it is the *X* factor that can effectively bridge the gap that too often separates the magic of emotional connection from hard-nosed business economics.

We will share the BBM perspective on how we measure, manage, and maximize sustainable brand love, the fundamental driver of profitable differentiation and market success. Our relationship framework will also be described, outlining the stages of 'brand love' and the components that enable their effective measurement. Our ultimate goal is to demonstrate how sustained brand love drives profitable differentiation and BERA's role in delivering prescriptive advisory for all of product/service development, marketing and communications, operations, and finance that operate in concert to find and sustain brand love.

2   Brand love

For years, the authors have researched and charted the ways in which people flirt with brands, forge deeper bonds, and fall 'in love.' This research has simultaneously revealed how consumers reach the stage BBM has come to term, 'at love,' and why individuals grow bored with a brand, perceive it as a commodity, and find surprising allurements elsewhere. With clients who have millions or billions of shareholder value on the line, BBM has studied the drivers of success and love, and the documented tragic missteps that lead to the pain and cost of divorce.

As a partnership of experts in the brand, marketing, insights, and management consulting spheres, BBM and BERA are unique: an alliance of real-time, cloud-based consumer feedback technologies that never sleep, and financial, marketing, and other contextual streams that combine to describe the opportunity for sustainable and profitable differentiation. The result is a platform and a team capable of successfully bridging the functional disconnect between a brand's marketing and financial arms. Using BERA, BBM is able to understand the effect of consumer belief (and behavior) on the economics of a firm, and with this convergence of 'always-on,' instant information and broad and deep expertise, our clients have the tools they need to monitor their brands in exceptionally detailed, near-instantaneous ways, such that

the course of brand love can be traced, and deeper consumer commitment can be amplified and reinforced. Because BERA is both highly granular and widely comprehensive, it gives marketers the best chance of achieving both short-term and long-term profitable growth. And in doing so, two practical goals of brand owners and managers are satisfied: (1) an external imperative – deepen consumer connection and promote enduring brand love and (2) an internal imperative – satisfy executive focus on share value by measuring, managing, and maximizing brand health contribution to growth and profitability.

3   From brand to brandscape

Through BERA, BBM continuously measures and evaluates millions of consumer perceptions for over 4,000 brands that span 200 categories. This always-on process powers the 'State of the Brand,' highlighting relevant drivers, and in turn informing the tactics and strategies brand owners and managers can and should employ to fuel enduring consumer passion. Importantly, this requires more than the traditional focus on measurement and metrics, or any individual brand or competitor in isolation.

At the decision-driving level of emotional engagement, consumers do not merely consider a car, vodka, or a wristwatch in 'hived-off' – or discrete – comparison with other cars, vodkas, or wristwatches. Yet that is how brands are often measured – buffered from the reality that consumers are often making trade-offs between entire categories – in effect, prioritizing purchases that do not appear to be in direct competition. Such trade-offs become yet more stringent when consumers' discretionary spending is tight. For example, customers saving to purchase a smartphone may cut back on their purchases of a gourmet chocolate brand, trading off a delightful indulgence for a splurge of a different sort. Mistakenly, marketers tend not to view their brands through an agnostic lens – as consumers do – and this is a mistake: BBM believe it crucial that brand owners and managers think of a product or service not only in relation to other direct competitors but as part of a larger brandscape, or universe of brands. Understanding the brandscape beyond one's 'native' category may feel daunting – vodka is unexpectedly staring down an SUV for consumer attention – but it is critical in fostering and managing brand love. In other words, achieving brand love in your category alone is not the endgame, because brand love is relative across the many product or service relationships that the consumer has established and seeks to establish. Said another way: although dominance is often an appealing

accomplishment that reflects top-tier status within a category, brand love is universal, transcending all manner of categories (Fetscherin *et al.*, 2014). As will be explained in the following pages, BERA demonstrates that love is never about being dominant; rather, it is about balance and harmony in the context of a set of personally meaningful expectations. Such delicate connections must be carefully choreographed in stages and over time – earned, appreciated, measured, and constantly renewed.

4   The stages of brand love

BBM's founding notion relies on the belief that a consumer's relationship with a brand should be thought of in similar terms as a human relationship – a bond not unlike the romance between two individuals experiencing the same stages of flirtation, dating, and commitment, and facing the longer-term threats of boredom and estrangement, but also the possibility of revitalization and renewal. So let's take a look at each of the stages.

4.1   New

An unexpected meeting, a surprising discovery, a close friend's endorsement: these are just some of the scenarios that spark interest. Connections occur in myriad ways and, as with most things that are new, mystery and promise offer allure: in the absence of the expectations that accompany prior experience, up is the only way to go. But, while newness can be intriguing and get things moving, it is rarely enough to fuel momentum: one can try something and not like it, see something once and never think of it again, dismiss initial assumptions in pursuit of a competing 'wink.' The reality is there rarely is enough information at this stage to pass judgment; however, if conditions are right, ignition and possibility are never far behind. And herein we find the springboard for a burgeoning relationship and the accompanying rush: does a flirt inspire curiosity? Evoke emotions one did not realize they harbored? Open a channel to an unmet need?

4.2   Dating

When affection meets an advance, there is no going back to anonymity – two parties are now in it together. This is the stage where expectations are formed and hypotheses tested – will he open the door for me? Does she always have this sunny disposition? Can he dance? At 'dating,' assumptions become beliefs as the stakes move higher: trust begins to form, and communication is subject to increasing gravity, but both parties

have yet to fully invest, although they are motivated by the prospect of a particularly interesting tomorrow. In fact, this is more of a 'trial run' than anything else. Now, that is not to suggest that this connection is not genuine (or pretend), but it means that all of the boxes on the check-list have yet to be ticked and other options are not yet off the table. The message: "the short-term might be working, but I'm still waiting to see if I can trust the optimism and excitement ascribed to the long-term."

4.3   Love

In a scenario in which one has built a relationship with one's perfect match, dreams are realized, satisfaction is high, and the future is believed to shine as bright as the present – it is the absolute best of all worlds, and inputs at least equal outputs. Now, it may seem odd to describe the state of 'love' and include utility in the equation, but the key to love is the achievement of an ultimate balance – when and where hopes are reflected in observed performance and behavior: with fun and excite-ment, there also exists comfort and security, with independence and status there is also a sense of belonging, affinity, and connection. It is this harmonious state that is often believed to conquer all, and why such bonds remain so highly valued – they are delicate, rare, and reflect an exceptional level of trust and empathy. Herein lies the optimal state that fuses emotion and function and feels tailored to the individual – essentially, it feels 'made for you.'

4.4   Boredom

In our all-too-human lives, nothing maintains infinite momentum. We lose interest; our gaze wanes; our love can fade. But brand connection should also not be thought of as something that just ends abruptly – dete-rioration is almost always a gradual process. Often we don't even realize it is happening, and if we are honest with ourselves, sometimes we just know too much and the relationship fails to remain interesting – the belief is that there is nothing new. It might start to look like a lot of sameness. Nothing stands out, the spark has gone, things don't feel quite as vivid anymore…and, unfortunately, tomorrow looks a lot like today (or worse) and that unfortunate prospect represents an unattractive future. To slip out of love is to fail to tend a vital connection, but it doesn't necessarily have to die. It is a stage in which positive momentum can still be reclaimed, but there has to be a commitment to reinvest time and resources.

4.5   Divorce

Sometimes a relationship falls into disrepair, so much so that one has to question the value of pouring energy into a lost cause. There are a host

of reasons that one can find their relationship in this final resting place – extended boredom that becomes destructive, anger and the wounds of being wronged, the specter of haunting past experiences. From a brand perspective, the fundamental question remains whether there is value in resurrecting the passion and whether that is even possible: how much time and effort will it take to rekindle a flame that for all intents and purposes has been extinguished? What can be hoped to be resolved and reclaimed? Unlike boredom, in which expectations might be low but not quite eliminated, there is very little left to work with at divorce. It's important to note that, across the global brandscape that BERA studies, findings indicate that the loss of emotional brand connection occurs long before the rupture is depicted in financial reports (Devon Value Advisors, 2013). Typical tracking measures (i.e., strong awareness and high satisfaction) can mask a loss of engagement. Over time, consumers can become bored with a brand, or worse, and yet that brand might still 'behave' in the marketplace as if all is as it has always been. There is nothing worse than realizing you are helpless, running aground once it's too late to right the ship. In short, BERA results repeatedly indicate that brand cognizance (awareness) – and even brand regard (favorability) – can outlast more critical factors such as competitive uniqueness and meaningfulness. It is therefore necessary for brand owners and brand managers to remain vigilant and sensitive to early symptoms of impending disengagement and separation, and be prepared to take action to avoid further erosion. Figure 10.1 illustrates the various stages of BERA.

Knowing a brand's stage of relationship development provides concrete clues to identifying the right tactics, the right timing for those tactics, and the right resource allocation necessary to support the seeding and maintenance of brand love. In relationship terms, just as a 'first date' likely has a different itinerary from that proposed after a year of dating, 'a wandering eye' will demand more complex repair than 'romantic neglect due to a punishing work schedule.' Essential to that principle is a commitment by marketers to (a) dial into the early indicators of a brand's evolving stages; (b) create dialogue between the brand and its audience; (c) reveal the issues that might be creating dissonance in the relationship; and (d) conceive and act upon new methods for keeping love alive.

5   The components of brand love

It is important to recognize that the deep consumer connection that underlies 'brand love' is not based solely on a set of positive personal experiences (the experiences that drive awareness and favorability). Nor is it driven only by a set of strong, positive beliefs (motivating inspiration

New　　　Dating　　　Love　　　Boredom　　　Divorce

amazon

LUMBER LIQUIDATORS

Abercrombie & Fitch

Tim Hortons

CONOCO

BERA score*

100

50

0
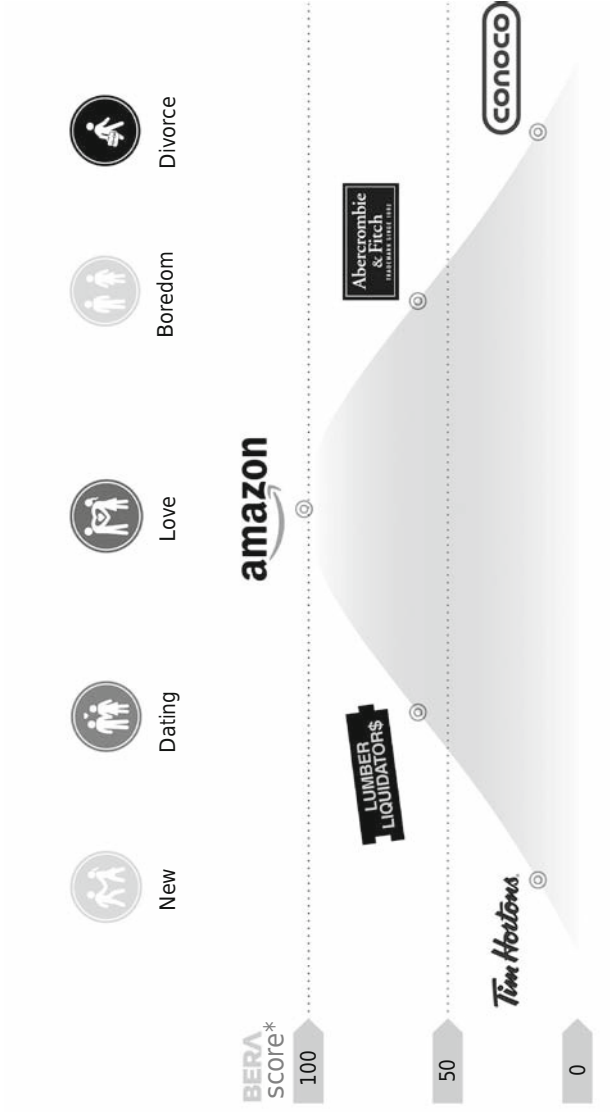
* note: percentile ranked relative to 4,000 brands across 200 categories

Figure 10.1　BERA's relationship life cycle

that fuels perceived uniqueness and personal meaning). In fact, 'brand love' is the realization of profitable differentiation that results when positive experience and positive belief combine to inspire enduring loyalty and commitment:

5.1 Brand cognizance

To know a brand, product, or service is to have been somehow made aware of its existence. Whether such exposure originates in personal experience (a usage context) or otherwise (unsolicited word-of-mouth), a knowledge 'scaffold' is raised against which new information can be stored. Such cognizance can be high – quite familiar and populated with significant content – such that the brand is always noticed and thought about further, to some extent informing regard. Or, cognizance can be low, inspiring minimal engagement, if having any impact at all.

5.2 Brand regard

Regard operates in combination with brand cognizance but, at its most basic level, reflects a consumer's level of favorability. It also implies a level of personal experience: typically, positive brand opinions are more likely to be held by product or service users who also happen to have had recent, direct interactions. It stands to reason that high brand cognizance will often accompany high brand regard – a happy user is most likely to report being familiar with and knowledgeable about a product or service. But brand regard does not have to be generated through personal experience, nor does it have to be positive. In reputation terms, a usage experience or brand interaction can also be negative and halt the learning process that drives cognizance higher.

5.3 Brand competitive uniqueness

Through a product or service, brands have the ability to offer something that cannot be found elsewhere (and satisfy a need that cannot be otherwise met). Such rarity should therefore command a higher price premium and, whereas high brand uniqueness is the leading element for emerging, successful, and strong brands, low competitive uniqueness is the leading negative indicator for troubled or declining brands.

5.4 Brand meaningfulness

A reflection of a brand's ability to address the components of life that matter to households and to demonstrate 'how' and 'why' it is better at addressing their needs and desires, and reflecting – if not channeling – their aspirations, is what makes it meaningful. If a brand adopts an alienating posture, it is less meaningful. If a brand cannot

be located or purchased, it is less meaningful. If its package cannot be identified or opened, it is less meaningful.

5.5   Today versus tomorrow

The aforementioned components of 'brand love' have largely been described in isolation. When they combine, a dynamic emerges that describes interaction and relative momentum (or inertia): with 'love' as the optimal state we seek to achieve, we can ask if a brand is moving forward and full of promise, or struggling and losing steam? BERA measures all four elements of the brand bond (cognizance, regard, uniqueness, meaningfulness) on a weekly basis for all brands. By including these four critical measures (see Figure 10.2), both leading and lagging indicators are integrated. The *lagging* indicators – brand cognizance and brand regard – make up a consumer's short-term relationship with a brand, which we call 'today,' the brand's situation in its present relationship

BRAND
REGARD

COMPETITIVE
UNIQUENESS

TODAY
everything I know

TOMORROW
everything I hope

BRAND
COGNIZANCE

BRAND
MEANINGFULNESS

Figure 10.2   The short term of TODAY versus the long term of TOMORROW

with consumers. The *leading* indicators – brand competitive uniqueness and brand meaningfulness – combine to create what we call 'tomorrow,' because they define the brand's future growth value and potential.

These two constructs power an understanding of the brand balance at any point in time: how well your brand bond is taking care of short-term expectations and fostering future expectations. It is a healthy sign if the brand's future expectations are greater than its current position or short-term expectations, being both unique and meaningful. Such a condition fuels volume growth, market share, margin expansion, and a more productive or efficient marketing spend. When BERA indicates that 'tomorrow' lags 'today,' we see volume growth deceleration, market share, price, and margin pressure, and inefficient marketing spend. Measuring these indicators on a continuous basis, and determining the balance between them, allows us to assess the brand's stage of development. We can determine from our data whether a consumer is newly enamored by your brand, dating it, in a long-term relationship with it, getting bored, or even considering divorce. In order for brand love to take hold, the relationship must be balanced for both 'today' and 'tomorrow' – the most well-loved brands are invested in both.

5.6 Communicating versus listening

There also exists a communication balance – the seesaw between talking and listening. Brands must constantly monitor consumers' receptivity to their marketing in order to maintain the right balance of action and reaction. There's a marked difference between brand cognizance (knowledge and awareness) and brand curiosity (genuine interest and a desire to explore further): just because you happen to meet someone does not mean you want to get know him or her better.

To that end, marketers must acknowledge that there's a time to talk and a time to listen. Certainly, everyone has landed next to someone at a gathering who talks endlessly – and painfully – about him- or herself. BERA data indicates that many brand owners and managers simply don't recognize when they are talking too much. Just as it is with a nonstop talker at a cocktail party, the conversation is off-balance and, as a result, the other party gets frustrated and turns off. Great brand-bond conversation is like a dance that both parties enjoy. If brand and consumer are to cultivate long-term relationship success, aspects of that dance – that combination of speaking and listening – must be choreographed. Do consumers still enjoy getting to know your product or service? Do they still want to learn more about you? And if so, what about? It's counterproductive to simply talk, as brands not only need to be talking to the right people but also about the right 'stuff' and in the right moments.

6 The economics of brand love

Brand love can also be represented by 'tangible' demand curves. As indicated in Figure 10.3, if a product or service demonstrates a strong connection with the consumer, it can either command a premium price for it, selling fewer goods at greater margins (see Figure 10.3, indicator A), or engage in discount pricing, selling more goods at less profit (see Figure 10.3, indicator B). A brand's premium price (see Figure 10.3, y-axis) is driven by its competitive uniqueness relative to others in the brandscape – and its category. Sales volume (see Figure 10.3, x-axis) or household penetration depends on the degree to which a relationship is meaningful to a large number of consumers.

Every leading, highly profitable global brand has a well-established emotional connection with customers, a connection that secures its profitability. Such brands possess much higher shareholder value (see Figure 10.4) and outperform the average, making them ten times more valuable to shareholders than brands with equivalent sales – and possibly more tenuous customer relationships (Devon Value Advisors, 2013).
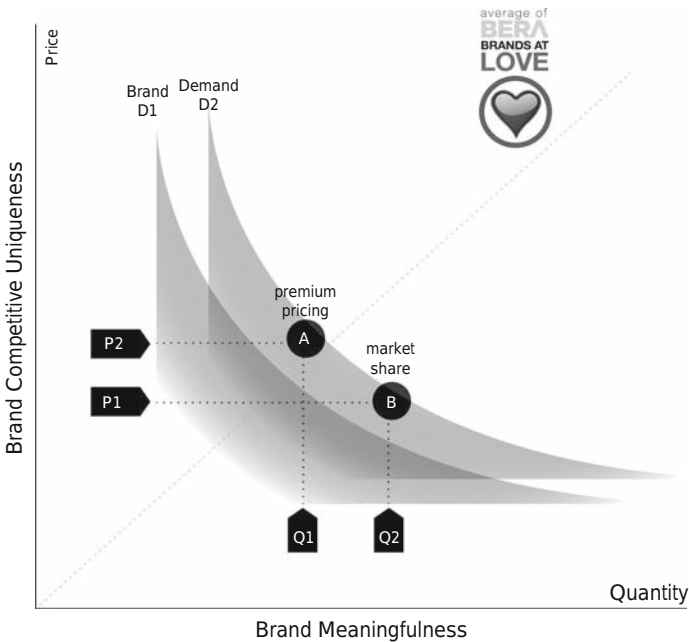
Figure 10.3 Economics of brand love
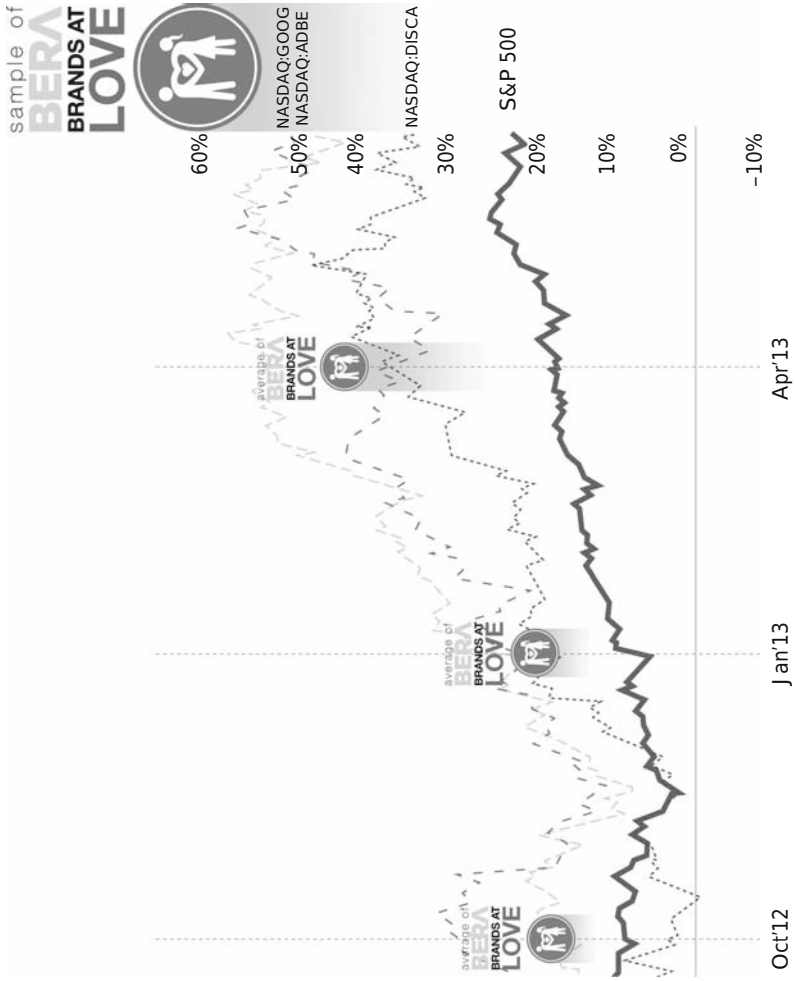
Figure 10.4 BERA predicts economic performance

This emotional connection is the most powerful protector of brand profitability over the longer term. And, across 70 industries that include 800 companies (of which 100 are mono-brands), the relationship between profitability relative to competition and a company's share price and market valuation has been calculated to have an R-Square of .86. This finding, so informative for brand strategy, has been documented by Devon Value Advisors (2013) over multiple business cycles.

7 Managing the marketing mix to build and sustain brand love

To optimize the continuing relationship between brand and consumer, and to manage the profitability of a brand both 'today' and 'tomorrow,' marketers have to tune the marketing mix to sustain and advance brand love, pulling the right levers and allocating investment as appropriate. And, whereas most brand advisers will focus on sales as a function of the 5 P's (product, promotion, pricing, place, people), at BERA, we focus on brand as a function of the 5 P's. In short, tactics that drive sales can come at the expense of brand, and brand is a more powerful driver of both
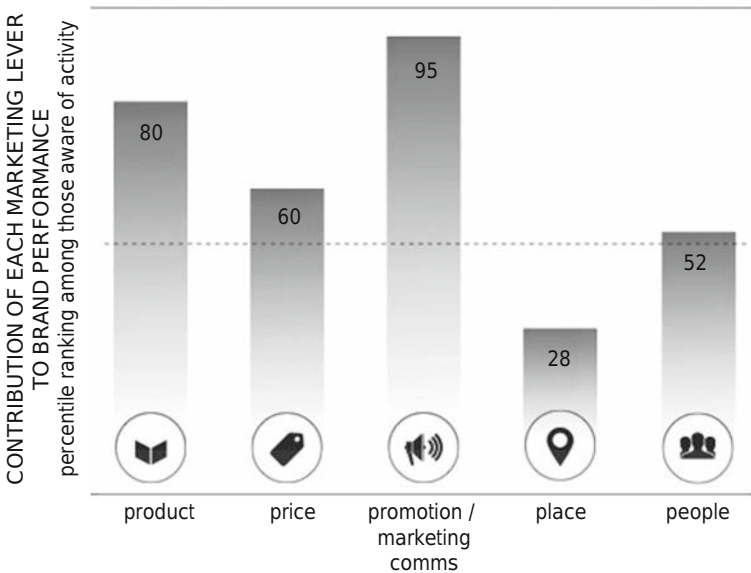
Figure 10.5 Interrelationship and relative contribution of the 5 p's to brand love

short-term sales and long-term profitability. Armed with BERA, brand owners and brand managers enjoy a more sophisticated and descriptive understanding of sales and profitability, one that can determine the emotional impact of brand-building efforts and within which activities it specifically resides. This process begins by measuring both the inter-relationships and relative contributions of each lever of the marketing mix to the current and future health of the brand (see Figure 10.5). With this kind of assessment we can, for example, reveal the degree to which damaging tactics like excessive discounting undermine the investment that has already been made. By placing the brand – and not sales – at the center of our focus, we ensure that a brand's emotional connection receives the attention it deserves. It becomes the filter through which the 5 P's are evaluated.

How do we define the 5 P's of product, promotion, pricing, place, and people?

(1) By product, we mean the very tangible goods or service placed in the market for sale – the object of affection being made available, including its attributes, utility, and corresponding interactions and experience. (2) Price has to do with how the consumer's perceived willingness to pay is assessed for the product, service, or collection of attributes tendered for sale. (3) Promotion is quite literally the perception associated with how, where, and the extent to which a brand or firm talks about itself to others. (4) Place may not seem so intuitive. In the marketing mix it relates to distribution – point of purchase, the degree of friction in the process and, figuratively speaking, the ease with which a consumer can 'pick you up' and take you home. (5) And finally people references service delivery and the human face of the interaction with the consumer.

As the 5 P's are integrated into the overall strategy, it is important to analyze which P, or which combination of P's, sustains, maintains, or resurrects brand love for the consumer. From a measurement perspective, each respondent rates each of the 5 P's relative to the dependent variables that ultimately drive the brand's BERA score. Consumers describe their brand relationship through different platforms (that can change depending on the specifics of a brand's challenge), thereby directing brand owner attention to the experiential points at which positive and negative interactions occur, at which attention and investment could be efficiently deployed. Analytically speaking, each P – and/ or its constituent parts – is evaluated for its influence on brand connection and the corresponding impression it leaves. For example, if only 3 P's are discovered to drive brand and profitability, it is senseless to keep all 5 marketing levers on high (see Figure 10.6).
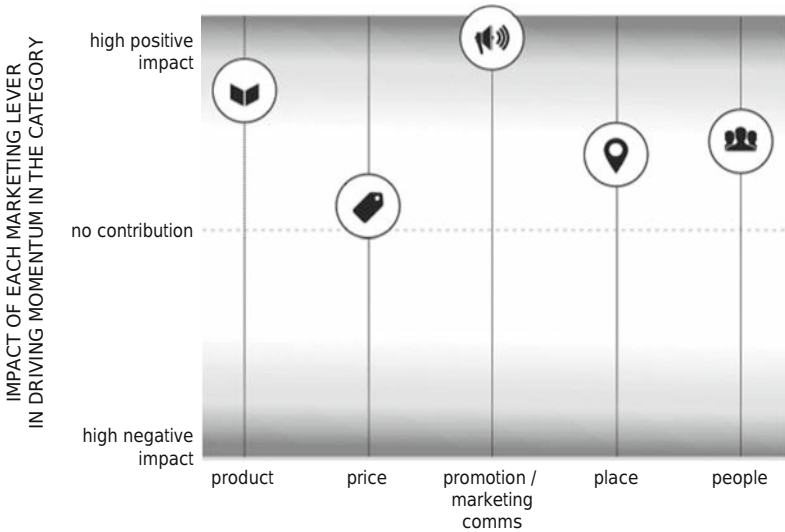
Figure 10.6 Impact of each of the 5 p's in driving category momentum

Keeping in mind that the 5 P's do not operate in isolation and often inspire engagement ideas that relate to multiple levels and can be experienced in a variety of ways. Table 10.1 outlines some of the questions that BERA answers for marketers and financial officers.

Such questions are just a sampling of the types of questions BBM answers for its clients. And while these questions reflect a 5 P's orientation, they should continue to be viewed as a structure that organizes the tactical elements a brand can wield in order to energize and animate target consumers – but how to define that target? It is crucial to note that targeting is not precarious because it requires a brand owner and manager to know whom it is chasing; rather, it is about knowing how to engage a chosen target, and have the level of focus – and commitment – required to deploy smart decisions that fuel both short and long returns. In relationship terms, dating success ('getting the guy or girl') isn't just about pointing to someone in the crowd; instead, it is about knowing him or her well enough to do the right things that ignite the shared journey.

In essence, the challenge lies in prioritization: who makes up a brand's customer segments? How many segments are there? How much are they individually worth? What are their personal priorities for engagement with said brand? What targeting decisions can a brand owner make to achieve maximum love and profit? Brands that achieve love have a significant percentage of loyal customers in their base – usually about

Table 10.1 A sampling of the types of marketing lever-oriented questions for which BERA provides a response

Dimension	Examples	Key questions
Product	Functionality, Quality, Packaging, Appearance	Do I have features in the marketplace today that are not only unique but are meaningful to my target? When should we talk about our benefits versus 'go emotional'?
Price	List price, discounts, financing, leasing options, allowances	Do I have permission to command a premium price? What can I do to command a premium price?
Promotion	Advertising, PR, direct sales, sales, media budget	Is my messaging just selling product or is it strengthening my consumer relationship? Can it do both? Do my marketing materials clearly communicate my company's brand and points of competitive differentiation?
Place	Locations, channel members, market coverage, Internet, mobile	Can consumers develop a relationship with my brand any time, any place despite not necessarily buying? Are we building relationship consistently at every point of engagement in the purchase process?
People	Employees, knowledge workers, management, brand ambassadors	Are customers' interactions with our employees positive, unique, and memorable? Do my endorsement deals address my brand's perceptual weaknesses while reinforcing its strengths?

two-thirds. What makes those loyalists loyal, why do switchers switch, why do rejecters reject, and why do prospects engage or not? If the size and impact of each profile is known, it is much easier to migrate one segment to another and, with that, grow share and margin.

BERA communicates its targeting perspective through the lens of six consumer segments – two that describe customers and four that describe noncustomers:

1. *Loyals*: They have the highest level of engagement with a product or service, favoring this brand above other competing alternatives: brand monogamy.
2. *Switchers*: They engage with a branded product or service, yet consider it and other brands similarly depending on their changing circum-

stances and what catches their attention: they are uncommitted and continue 'playing the field.'

3. *Winbacks*: These are former product or service users whose purchase behavior may have changed despite remaining passively open to re-engagement or re-trial: for a host of possible reasons. They require the other party to make the first move – they will not necessarily be proactive in this context.

4. *Prospects*: They are nonusers who are available to be brought into a franchise for the first time – whether they will consider a brand because they have positive brand associations or simply no reason to reject it, they represent true 'new recruits'.

5. *Lapsed*: These are former product or service users who express no intention to try a brand again in the future.

6. *Rejectors*: Either due to some form of past experience (not as a customer) or negative associations and expectations, these are individuals who are aware of a brand, but will not consider it.

Knowing the individual size and profile of each of the aforementioned broad consumer segments of a company's consumer base is critical for marketing professionals and corporate financial officers. Marketers arrive at better decisions when they understand what keeps a customer loyal and engaged and what causes a once-loyal customer to grow promiscuous. Further, businesses generate greater revenue (and individuals, corresponding bonuses) by capitalizing on that loyalty. When BERA's engagement profile data is matched with a brand's financial profile, it is possible to calculate the marketing elasticity required to drive profitability, growth, and value. BBM's segment-level understanding of a brand's consumer profile and their individual emotional engagement profiles (in the context of each of the 5 P's) delivers unparalleled levels of precision and sensitivity. At BERA, we believe our ability to combine segment-level data with the 5 P's and our four key metrics (cognizance, regard, uniqueness, meaningfulness) is a unique and vital context for managing and maximizing profitability through brand love. And, with a database spanning 200 brand categories, BERA provides successful case studies of customer acquisition or revitalization that are happening in real time and in categories brand owners may not follow, but from which vital engagement lessons can be learned.

8   Getting back to love

As a marketing or financial officer is entrusted with the life of a product or service, growth and profitability are among the highest imperatives – if

not atop all others. In pursuit of such ends, only so many levers can be pulled. At times, it can feel like the right plan is in motion because the market has healthy momentum...but that can change in ways that traditional, 'face value' metrics like awareness fail to recognize.

It is a problem when brand owners and managers discuss a brand's contribution to the business in ambiguous, 'soft' terms: brand is not a mere secondary consideration to be massaged only after contributors such as 'hard facts' like budgets and financial plans are locked. Under such conditions, a crucial truth is ignored: that brands – a fusion of emotional and functional attributes and expectations – are in themselves objects of value and significant influence. They are the social currency of daily life, 'traded' by individuals seeking to satisfy their various needs. This cultural importance is what should ultimately ground the argument for brand investment: funding directed to drive up something that some may see as intangible. In reality, brand is a performance multiplier for firms that understand how to leverage culture and connection, fostering and sustaining deep consumer engagement – or love. And as BERA data shows, marketer ability to measure the strength of connection between social currency and asset value has grown more comprehensive. In short, brand culture exerts tremendous influence over individuals and how they direct their limited resources, spending in accordance with their willingness to buy into relationships that offer greater personal meaning and uniqueness, while of course satisfying expected, functional needs.

The BERA brandscape is composed of 4,000 brands across 200 categories, which demonstrates that brand relationships should be viewed through an agnostic lens, one in which brands are in a competition for the mind, heart, and wallet among a broader set of possible choices, choices that transcend any one category. It is not enough to look only at direct competitors, as they are not the only players setting the tone for the broader ecosystem in which a brand lives and breathes. Just being better than those in a brand's native category who suffer margin pressure, or lesser share, or even awareness is not enough: if a brand hasn't achieved optimal loyalty – or love – it must uncover where, how, and why it has fallen short if it hopes to regain its footing as the market naturally refreshes and consumer interest moves on.

When we begin a person-to-person relationship like a romance, we do not often stop when things are 'good enough.' The bond we build is new to us at that point, awakening our attention, interest, and excitement, and we hope in that moment that our feelings are mutual and both parties continue to contribute. The same is true in a brand bond with a consumer. But then, just as in a long-term relationship, one party or

another can get lazy, or sleepy. Once we start taking things for granted with our partner, we face the kiss of death. We stop being thoughtful and stop doing the little things that seeded intrigue, and fostered excitement and connection at the outset of our time together.

BBM suggests that listening and observing is time well spent doing that which we all constantly do in our social lives – cultivating and nurturing healthy relationships. BERA enables category-agnostic measurement and monitoring on a weekly basis in order to learn not just from your and your competitors' relationships with your target consumers but also by considering hundreds, if not thousands of other brand relationships. By orienting the universe of brands such that it reflects the natural way in which people establish strong connection with others, BERA's inclusive approach returns the consumer to the center of the management conversation and places a measurable focus on finding, sustaining and reigniting brand love.

References

Devon Value Advisors (2013) "Longitudinal Analysis of Shareholder Value and Profitability Metrics," Internal Document.

Fetscherin, M., Boulanger, M., Gonçalves Filho, C., and Souki, G. Q. (2014) "The Effect of Product Category on Consumer Brand Relationships" *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 23(2): 78–89.

Hooper, P. L. (2012) Socioecology of Networks (Commentary on Dunbar). Retrieved from http://socialevolutionforum.com/2012/05/10/paul-hooper-socioecology-of-networks-commentary-on-dunbar/.

Roloff, M. E. (1981) *Interpersonal Communication: The Social Exchange Approach*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.

11
Measuring and Managing Brand Love: The BERA Platform

Ryan Barker and Jeffrey Peacock

1 Introduction

Philosophically, Brand Equity Relationship Assessment (BERA) is designed to direct attention and sensitivity to relationship-crucial signals between consumers and brands. It connects many indicators that address a fundamental question asked by many marketing and brand managers with whom we have variously worked: "How can we ensure people love or come to love our brand(s)?" And, intriguingly, while brand owners seek deep connection – consumer love – it is often rare for us to find organizations sensitive enough to continually redirect their 'radar' in the directions that generate the idyllic state they hope to achieve.

As we saw in Chapter 10 of this book, brand love is about relationships and experiences that transcend product or service category; it is about context and relative positioning along a continuum that includes brands that do not technically compete on feature sets or value proposition. Yet, too often, brands are managed within the confines of a restricted set of category competitors, limiting visibility and making it difficult to unlock maximum potential.

We also saw that brand love is a function of finely tuned, interconnected actions and behaviors that combine to ignite the ideal relationship state of a brand. Whereas Chapter 10 focused on describing the continuum of brand love and its drivers, this chapter reveals the mechanics of our measurement and the process that BERA Brand Management (BBM) has undergone to arrive at and validate the indicators we use to help our clients drive sustainable and profitable brand differentiation.

2   Background

As we began to develop the methodology that would become the BERA tool, we were working with over 650 global brand management teams annually. It grew increasingly clear that there was significant frustration, waning confidence, and increasing utility concerns with existing brand management tools and related equity measurement. The development of an alternative system was not only justified, it was unavoidable, common sense. Work began on a framework that placed measurement within the context of normative brand opportunity, something to which all brands should be entitled – the frictionless, idyllic, and profitable relationship state of love.

Our client partners wanted and needed an assessment platform that could measure both *leading* and *lagging* performance indicators and link overall brand resonance levels to key performance indicators. In ongoing stakeholder conversations, they also shared their need for a brand performance and brand connection assessment tool that would be affordable and allow for course correction in near-real time. Our ultimate goal was to work with clients to better understand and quantify the intangible portion of their brand's value, bridging the gap between marketing and finance, and arming those in charge of brands with the ammunition to be the most integrated, informed, and responsive teams possible.

Based on our research and experience, four components emerged to power the brand bond; variables that variables that brand owners and managers may already be measuring, although not through BERA's lens of profitable differentiation. Further, it comes as no surprise that typical brand equity measurement often operates independent of any prescriptive norm, framework, or specific, measurable performance targets – everyone wants to see their numbers lift, but stakeholders often ask, "What does it mean if my equity metric creeps up or down a couple of points? What can I do with that?"

To recap, the first of our four 'brand love' dimensions (Figure 11.1) is *brand cognizance*, or more commonly referenced as brand awareness. The second measure is *brand regard*, or the level of favorability that consumers have for a brand. For users, this is often referenced as 'satisfaction,' and for nonusers (or the uninitiated), this is satisfaction through the lens of 'belief and expectation.' The third measure is *brand meaningfulness*, or how much a target audience cares about a brand, how it addresses their needs and desires and how important it is to them and their sense of identity as people, and not just as consumers. At times, this might also be referenced as 'relevance.' Finally, the fourth measure is *brand competitive uniqueness*, or the distinctiveness of a brand

Figure 11.1 BERA's four dimensions of brand love and the 5 p marketing levers

within its category and within the larger 'brandscape' of products and services that also interest consumers of the brand.

As per Chapter 10 in this book, for each of these variables, we are also measuring the 5 P's of product, price, promotion, place, and people (cf. Figure 11.1). For example, BERA asks consumers about the 'competitive uniqueness' of a specific brand and queries their perceptions of uniqueness by product; price; brand-specific promotions (the brand's voice and posture in marketing communications); place, or point of interaction between consumer and brand; and the experiences and interactions they have with the people who represent the 'face' of the brand. By making such deep inquiries of a brand's potential audience or user base, marketing and financial officer clients are in a position to know exactly how various marketing levers are positively or negatively affecting the competitive uniqueness of their brand(s) and corresponding earnings trajectories. These deep variables are measured for all four elements of the brand bond.

Keep in mind that, when we look at the four critical brand measures of cognizance, regard, meaningfulness, or competitive uniqueness, we are incorporating both *lagging* and *leading* indicators as part of our assessment. The *lagging* indicators (brand cognizance and brand regard) make up the short-term brand relationship expectation, which we call 'today' – the brand's situation in its present relationship with consumers. The *leading* indicators (brand competitive uniqueness and

brand meaningfulness) combine to create what we call 'tomorrow,' because they define the brand's future growth value and potential. Measuring these indicators on a continuous basis, and determining the balance between them, allows us to assess the brand's stage of development. We can determine from our data whether a consumer is newly enamored by a brand, 'dating' it, in a long-term relationship, getting bored, or considering 'divorce.'

3   Overview of the BERA platform

3.1   Procedure, frequency, and respondents

Every week we conduct an online survey in the United States that respondents access via mobile device, tablet, or browser. Each respondent rates specific brands in multiple categories (representing a total of 200 categories). The data is collected using proprietary technology. A representative sample of 20,000 respondents a week is employed, and they are subject to quotas that conform to census data for the country in which the data is being gathered. For example, in the United States, the quotas are based on age, gender, household income, region, and ethnicity, ensuring a well-balanced and representative sample.

Through BERA, we have a systematic approach for selecting brands that comprise a fully representative brandscape irrespective of the country or region in which we might be measuring. BERA's brandscape includes the 200 categories that spend the most on marketing and communications. For example, in the United States the top marketing communications spending categories are sourced from the American Marketing Association (AMA). Each category is then populated with a mix of both high- and low-performing brands, representing 75 percent of the category's total market share. If a client's brand (or a key competitor) is not among the top 75 percent in its category (and thus not one for which we would regularly capture data), we simply add that brand to our brandscape. The same is true when new brands are launched – where appropriate, we expand the brandscape to include them.

It would have been easier for us to select the top 400 brands in each country, but then the ongoing study would not be representative of all categories and brands across every stage of development, from flirtation to dating to love to divorce. We thought it was critical that BERA reflect not just a list of the most requested, popular, or dominant brands but also be a proxy for the very dynamics that govern how those brands interact. This can only happen if you have majority market representation. It is

for this reason that BERA focuses on individual brand value relative to the universe of all brands. Our work supports our belief that brand is a zero-sum game and that share of mind, share of heart, and share of wallet are category agnostic.

The BERA platform's large sample size also ensures a greater level of accuracy (and a much lower margin of error) than other marketing assessment tools. To put things in perspective, most public opinion polls attempt to achieve a margin of error of +/– 3.1 percent at the 95 percent confidence level, which is often achieved with a sample size of only 1,000 respondents. With BERA, in the United States, we are surveying 20,000 respondents each week, 52 weeks a year. The size of BERA's sample was an important part of the effort to differentiate the platform and not only address gaps in the current equity-monitoring space, but highlight the scale required to advise on crucial management issues, many of which require local market visibility and context.

3.2 Measures

BERA surveys measure three key informational buckets: (i) brand experience, engagement, and preference; (ii) awareness and performance of the 5 P marketing mix; (iii) the brand bond – or love – calculation. The first bucket captures consumer behavior and preferences in the context of the brands that we measure. By asking a series of short, behavior-based questions that describe current and past brand experience – and future intention – we are able to derive the percentages of current loyal consumers, switchers, potential win backs, prospects, lapsed users, rejecters, and those who remain unaware of the brand. Using this methodology, BERA determines the size of the market per brand on a continuous basis, essentially capturing and measuring consumer commitment and loyalty to brands over time. BERA also captures essential demographic profile data, but, armed with engagement data, we are in a position to begin a loyalty conversation at the ZIP (or postal) code level. National chains and brand managers find this data to be invaluable when they look to measure the impact of granular changes on local marketing levers and the related size of the prize in play.

The second bucket relates to the 5 P's overall: BERA measures consumers' continuing engagement with the product or service; their willingness to pay a premium price for that product or service; and their receptivity and interest levels in promotions and other forms of marketing communications. We assess the placement and ubiquity of the brand and its ease of access for consumers; we measure the people factor – that is, consumers' contentment with their points of human contact or the front-line 'face' of the brand, notably customer service.

The last bucket is the brand bond – the depth and resonance of the engagement between consumer and brand as revealed through our four dimensions of brand love (cognizance, regard, meaningfulness, and competitive uniqueness). Here we specifically measure and quantify brand love.

In the following, we will briefly present the development and the results of the BERA measures, in a series of four subsequent qualitative and quantitative studies.

4   Development of the BERA platform

4.1   Steps 1 and 2: generating items

Items were developed with the help of experts (expert interviews) in the field of psychometrics, econometrics, value-based management consulting, and brand management. A pilot test (online survey) was conducted in January 2013, and the analyses of the data it provided were used to make any necessary adjustments to the data collection methodology as well as questionnaire wording and flow.

The four items that define and generate the BERA love score and its components (Today's BERA and Tomorrow's BERA) are collected through four different sets of questions that each respondent will answer. The first one is brand awareness and, based on their response, the respondent will answer the other three BERA measures and the usage and preference questions. In essence, no one can decide whether a brand holds any meaning for a brand of which he or she is unaware. Incidentally, to ensure we are not simply relying on conscious recall, we also employ implicit measurement (indirect, psychophysical response techniques) applied to both text and logo exposures.

4.2   Step 3: purifying the measurement

In January 2013, the BERA survey was conducted among 19,260 respondents and 3,690 brands from 116 categories in which each respondent was asked to evaluate a selection of brands sourced from a variety of categories and representing various stages of development from the full brandscape using the market share values of each of these brands. We first tested for sample adequacy by using KMO and Bartlett's test, and the results for both are acceptable with KMO at .691 and Bartlett's test of sphericity being significant. We also tested for 'normality' by conducting the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilki tests, and the results were both significant at .000 level. Therefore, principle component method was chosen as the suitable extraction method.

Table 11.1 Exploratory factor analysis

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	3.136	78.389	78.389	2.081	52.022	52.022
2	.613	15.315	93.704	1.667	41.682	93.704
3	.228	5.711	99.415			
4	.023	.585	100.000			

An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted to determine the dimensionality of the BERA measure by using the Principal Component (PC) extraction method with orthogonal rotation (varimax with Kaiser Normalization). As Table 11.1 shows, two factors were extracted that explain 93.7 percent of the variance. Whereas the first factor (with a loading of 2.081) was composed of Cognizance and Regard, explaining 52.02 percent of the variance, the second factor (with a loading of 1.667) explained 41.68 percent of the variance and was composed of Meaningfulness and Competitive Uniqueness.

4.3   Step 4: validating the scale

By March 2013, the BERA survey was conducted among a new set of 19,260 respondents, including brands spanning 195 categories. As per Table 11.2 below, Today's BERA (Cognizance and Regard) and Tomorrow's BERA (Meaning and Competitive Uniqueness) explained 93.20 percent of the variance observed in these four variables. As per Table 11.3, Cognizance and Regard comprise factor 1, while Meaning and Uniqueness comprise factor 2.

In addition, the 'today' and 'tomorrow' factors were confirmed (as per Tables 11.4 and 11.5), illustrating that nomological validity and internal scale reliability (Cronbach Alpha) were tested for each dimension, respectively. The confirmatory factor analysis had acceptable model fits with a RMSEA of .047, NFI .999, RFI .997, TLI .998. Note, as the correlation between the items was significant, we run against the original dataset the EFA and CFA by using promax rotation method. We achieved similar results in terms of variance explained as well as pattern and structure matrices. We therefore kept to reporting the original results with varimax rotation.

It is also important to note that the six relationship stages that underlie the BERA model are themselves prescriptive – they are a short form for

Table 11.2 Confirmatory factor analysis – variance explained

	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
Component	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	3.100	77.500	77.500	2.048	51.211	51.211
2	.628	15.696	93.197	1.679	41.986	93.197
3	.247	6.186	99.383			
4	.025	.617	100.000			

Table 11.3 Confirmatory factor analysis – factor loadings

	Component	
	1	2
Cognizance	**.947**	.291
Regard	**.919**	.373
Meaningfulness	.531	**.754**
Uniqueness	.242	.935

Note: Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization
a. Rotation converged in 3 iterations.

Table 11.4 Correlation matrix of key dimensions

	Cognizance	Regard	Meaningfulness	Uniqueness
Cognizance		.968**	.658**	.507**
Regard	.968**		.734**	.589**
Meaningfulness	.658**	.734**		.720**
Uniqueness	.507**	.589**	.720**	

Note: n = 1480 and **$p < .05$.

Table 11.5 Internal scale reliability

	Cronbach Alpha
Today	.984
Tomorrow	.825

Table 11.6 Discriminant analysis confirmed mutual exclusivity of BERA's six relationship stages

Classification Results[a]

BERA Segment			1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
Original	Count	1	146	4	0	0	0	2	152
		2	19	339	24	10	11	1	404
		3	0	3	92	43	0	0	138
		4	0	0	10	198	1	0	209
		5	1	0	4	33	399	20	457
		6	8	1	0	0	2	109	120
	%	1	**96.1**	2.6	.0	.0	.0	1.3	100
		2	4.7	**83.9**	5.9	2.5	2.7	.2	100
		3	.0	2.2	**66.7**	31.2	.0	.0	100
		4	.0	.0	4.8	**94.7**	.5	.0	100
		5	.2	.0	.9	7.2	**87.3**	4.4	100
		6	6.7	.8	.0	.0	1.7	**90.8**	100

Note: a. 86.7% of original grouped cases correctly classified.

differing 'sets' of consumer experiences, corresponding expectations, and a need to address brand action in a targeted fashion. In short, one size does not fit all. Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was run to establish that significant differences on the four measures of brand love (cognizance, regard, meaningfulness, uniqueness) exist across the six relationship stages (for the 1,480 brands in the brandscape at the time of the analysis). As per Table 11.6, discriminant analysis (canonical discriminant function) then confirmed the mutual exclusivity of the six relationship stages with 86.7 percent of original grouped cases correctly classified.

4.4 Interpreting the core BERA scale

For high-contrast, illustrative purposes, consider the following Table 11.7, which shows two brands in quite different positions with respect to their 'today-tomorrow' balance: in the case of noted vanguard Tesla (which consumers considered 'new' for quite a while and are now actively 'dating'), it is seeding curiosity as it grows ('today' ranking of 26 versus 'tomorrow' ranking of 65). Tesla's significant momentum both in terms of the product it offers, albeit in limited locales, the imagery it has earned among those who are aware, and the posture its visionary leader, Elon Musk, adopts, which is no doubt a valuable contribution to the Tesla mythos, represents a revealing counterpoint to a brand that saw better days in the 1980s-era United States – Suzuki (a brand that sits

solidly in boredom). Despite declaring Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection in 2012, many Suzuki automobiles remain on the road and occupy space in the minds of those who recall their 1980s "Never A Dull Moment" campaign for the ruggedly fun Samurai…and likely many who have had their mid-2000 model year vehicles recalled in 2014. A year after departing US shores, Suzuki's 'tomorrow' ranking sits 47 points below their 'today' rank.

If we zoom in further, the distinction between meaningfulness and uniqueness rankings for these same brands can also be seen in Table 11.8. Keep in mind that Tesla still has a long way to go to achieve the power of a brand like Google (as identified by its Meaningfulness ranking of 24), but it has certainly inspired imagination (Competitive Uniqueness ranked above 95 percent of all brands BERA measures in the United States) and is doing many of the things necessary to set itself up for a powerful future.

As can be seen, BBM has developed a valid and reliable method for both benchmarking brands and discriminating between six observed stages of a consumer brand relationship life cycle, which is a set of metrics we have found to be crucial for ensuring that long-term growth and brand success is not hampered by the pursuit of short-term lift. The platform difference lies in its framework and approach to the measurement of personal brand relationships: directing attention to competitive uniqueness and/or gaps that can be empirically validated in the marketplace. Relying on about 20,000 respondents a week and covering brands across 200 sectors, BERA directly corresponds to market performance and financial results, reflects a category-agnostic universe of brands,

Table 11.7 Tesla Motors versus Suzuki as of Q2 2014

	BERA	**'Today'**	**'Tomorrow'**
Tesla Motors	49 DATING	26	65
Suzuki	43 BOREDOM	59	12

Note: numbers represent percentile ranked on 4,000 brands of total sample.

Table 11.8 Tesla Motors versus Suzuki as of Q2 2014

	Cognizance	**Regard**	**Meaningfulness**	**Uniqueness**
Tesla Motors	23	43	24	95
Suzuki	61	33	12	16

Note: numbers represent percentile ranked on 4,000 brands of total sample.

and measures the individual contributions of the components of the marketing mix to profitable differentiation.

5 BERA ratios

Just as Wall St. and the office of the CFO invoke ratios daily to determine and explain the overall financial health of a company, marketers need their own comparison and benchmarking tools.

5.1 Brand balance ratio

With BERA we have four key brand ratios that synthesize all of the foundation measures the system captures: first, we use the Brand Balance Ratio (BBR) to understand consumer perception of a brand's momentum – is a brand on its front- or back foot. BBR denotes consumer expectation of a brand's power 'today' compared to its expected performance 'tomorrow.' Brand Balance Ratio: If tomorrow>=today, (tomorrow/today); otherwise, –1*(today/tomorrow), using percentile ranks. We know how important it is to be able to quantify both consumer engagement with a brand today, and corresponding future commitment.

5.2 Talk and listen ratio

The second ratio that marketers receive from BERA is the Talk and Listen Ratio (TLR), the current ratio between 'Talk' (Marketing Communications) and 'Listening' (to uncover the next surprise that delights consumers and builds uniqueness and meaning). TLR is the ratio of consumers' cognizance of your brand to their level of curiosity: it reflects favorability (regard) in the context of awareness (cognizance). For example, just as consumers can be aware of a brand yet not regard it favorably, they can also have high regard for a brand with which they have had little experience. TLR = Talk/Listen Ratio: If regard>=cognizance, (regard/cognizance); otherwise, –1*(cognizance/regard), using percentile ranks. If the former is the case – if a product or service is familiar to consumers, but bores them or leaves them impatient or estranged – then it is likely that a more active listening posture is more appropriate for fostering engagement, something every brand should already be doing, but some should be doing more urgently and to a greater degree.

Irrespective of relationship stage – whether consumers are just becoming aware of a brand, are dating it, are in love, are feeling disaffected, or are alienated, brand owners can commit to listening in an informed and attentive way. It is especially important to listen to consumers who have soured: this is a delicate moment that might

suggest a need to recalibrate a campaign or radically change a brand's message – whatever it takes to increase brand regard. But even for brands that have fostered consumer love and occupy the peak 'at love' relationship position, consumers want to hear more, not less, and to receive a fresh and engaging message. Naturally, they are open to further brand engagement because the brand continues to be both consistent and interesting to them. And that's exactly how we behave in human relationships: we engage most intently with those individuals to whom we are attracted precisely because they are predictable, reliable, and also a source of inspiration, surprise and delight.

5.3 Price power ratio

The third ratio that marketers receive from BERA is the Pricing Power Ratio (PPR). This is the ratio that describes the relationship between the perceived uniqueness of a brand and consumers' willingness to pay a premium for its promise – a ratio that reveals how relevant and meaningful your brand is, or is not. PPR = Pricing Power Ratio: If Uniqueness>=Meaningfulness, (Uniqueness/Meaningfulness); otherwise, $-1*$(Meaningfulness/Uniqueness), using percentile ranks. A high meaningfulness but low uniqueness ratio indicates that your brand has become something of a commodity. Many banks, fuel brands, and airlines fall on the high relevance/low uniqueness side of the PPR. On the other hand, a high uniqueness but low relevance PPR ratio could indicate that you have pricing power with a distinct group of consumers but that it will not achieve scale or volume of sales because, as referenced, sales volume is driven by the degree to which you offer something that has meaning, or what BERA calls meaningfulness.

5.4 Customer Quality Composition

The fourth BERA ratio is Customer Quality Composition (CQC), which measures the loyalty of your customer base – or, said more simply, the percentage of loyal customers your brand enjoys versus switchers. CQC= Customer Quality Composition: if loyals>=Switchers, (Loyals/Switchers); otherwise, $-1*$(Switchers/Loyals), where loyals is percent of loyals among total, and switchers is the percent of switchers among total. We know from BERA data that brands at love, on average, enjoy twice as many 'loyals' as they do switchers. As a marketer or financial officer, knowing where to make your investment – with what segments, based on how that segment feels about you at any given time – is a critical capability that allows marketing management to maximize expenditure and return on marketing investment (ROMI).

Again, BBM has developed a valid and reliable scale, framework, and tool that not only enable brand owners and managers to measure, manage, and maximize brand love but invokes metrics and ratios that harmonize short-term tactics and long-term success.

6 Discussion and implications

6.1 Most-loved brands

There is no shortage of top 10, 14, 25, 50, and 200 brand lists. And, there is no question that they fuel conversations around both challenge and opportunity. However, they can often be misleading and ignore a number of principles BERA was designed to prioritize:

Dollars cannot be directed at an imaginary average – in a 'long-tail' world, the so-called 'average consumer' is rare, if not mythical. Instead, it is key to describe people (and behavior) in ways that not only reflect demographics in the context of real-world consumption patterns but also deeper needs, emotions, and motivations that fuel much of usage and decision-making. The traits that unite leading brands transcend category – any list of leaders is a veritable 'winners circle' that crosses product and service borders. Note that no industry competitors share space in Table 11.10 below. It is also worth noting that, while Apple, Google, and Microsoft share space on the list, they are operating in highly elastic categories, satisfying different needs, and, as a result, are arguably not direct competitors, unless we are focusing solely on the zero-sum game for love and attention.

Love is multidimensional and complex. For example, the Hispanic market only shares a little over 20 percent of the brands loved by the 'general market' (Table 11.10). By that logic, brand love is contextual, comprised of a collection of discontinuous averages that need to be

Table 11.9 A select list of category leaders in the United States, through the 2013 BERA lens

Category	Leader
Airlines	US Airways
Banks	Capital One
Casual Dining	Olive Garden
Celebrities	Oprah Winfrey
Consumer Electronics	Sony
Fragrances	L'Oréal
Hotels	Marriott
Specialty Retail	Best Buy
Toys	Mattel

Table 11.10 A list of most-loved brands within the Hispanic ethnicity compared to the general market in the United States through the 2013 BERA lens

Rank	Brand (US Hispanic)	Brand (General Market)
1	Fanta	Google
2	Oprah Winfrey	Amazon.com
3	American Red Cross	Microsoft
4	Twix	NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC
5	Tylenol	American Red Cross
6	Amazon.com	Reese's
7	bestbuy.com	Betty Crocker
8	Walmart.com	Discovery Channel
9	Subway	Jell-O
10	Kikkoman	Philadelphia Cream Cheese
11	Disney Channel	Vicks
12	Spike TV	Dawn
13	Nintendo	Apple
14	Microsoft (games)	Lego

further parsed – everyone is not moved by the same brands equally, in the same ways, or for identical reasons. Touchpoints, engagement funnels, and all other manner of framework must recognize the myriad layers operating therein!

6.2   Poised for LOVE: success stories of bond building

There is a path to love, and it is the result of specific actions that seed a brand's rise. Again invoking the intriguing rise of the Tesla Motors brand, we can see how carefully laid plans and tactics translate into significant jumps in key metrics and an indication that short-term decisions are being made in line with long-term growth and the preservation of equity.

Over the course of approximately one year in BERA data (Figure 11.2 – Q4 2012 to Q3 2013), we can observe how Tesla Motors' first launch propelled the brand – their Model S began customer delivery in June 2012, won *Motor Trend*'s prestigious Car of the Year award that November (ref. November 12, 2013 – "Tesla Model S Wins One of Automotive Industry's Highest Honors," Marketwire), took a modest price increase relative to the rest of the industry soon after (ref. November 29, 2012 – "Tesla Motors Sets New Pricing for Award-Winning Model S," Marketwire), and ultimately saw sales exceed their targets (ref. April 1, 2013 – "Tesla Model S Sales Exceed Target," Marketwire). Their BERA score, descriptive metrics, and Brand Balance Ratio (BBR > 2) suggest positive momentum as they continue to fulfill their promise.
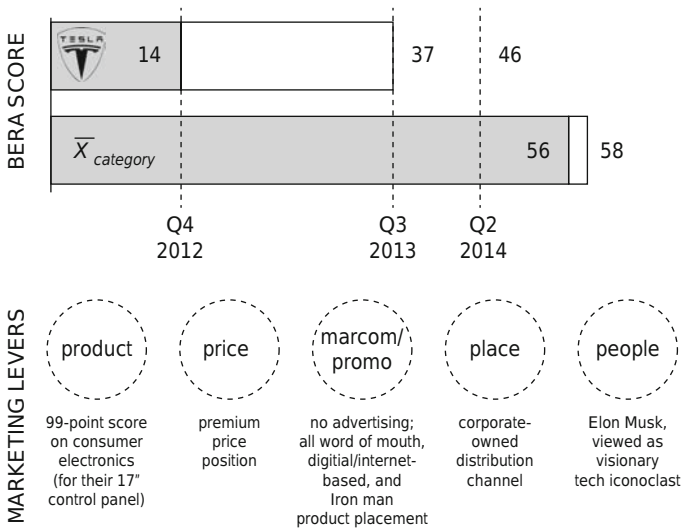
Figure 11.2 Tesla motors versus the automotive category (as at q3 2013)

Through the BERA Brandscape lens, Tesla Motors rankings relative to other slow-moving category players (white portion of the bars in Figure 11.2) are most noteworthy. This reinforces our belief that brands with momentum tend to adopt the best practices of the best brands in the marketplace and not just those in a category leadership position. Tesla sits in similar stead to another vanguard, Google Fiber. No other automotive brand is in a position to claim similar territory in their pursuit of sustained love and profitable differentiation. However, Tesla will have to carefully monitor its meaningfulness to ensure it does not lose touch with target consumer needs, assuming its competitive uniqueness continues to rise as our current data indicates.

6.3 Falling in love AGAIN: success stories of brand-bond renewal

There have been numerous success stories over the past decade. In some ways, such revitalizations are the most exciting case studies of all, because there exists a product or service that was losing traction and came to identify and repair a broken bond, realizing a level of renewed success that may have been unthinkable just a short time prior. The absolutely crucial element that unites these brands is their rediscovery of that which makes them unique, unlocking the gate to a new – or forgotten – path to consumer love.

Take Old Spice as one example. A brilliant, witty, and, ultimately, viral marketing campaign took a dated and dusty product from an aging dad's cabinet and revitalized it, infusing it with fresh cachet and energy for a new generation. BERA's before and after scores for Old Spice illustrate this transformation. The product's awareness scores increase from 60 to 85, its meaningfulness scores rise from a 54 to 80, and its competitive uniqueness scores shoot up from 25 to 74. Some might say this brand was a 'commodity,' but Old Spice embraced their points of difference, proving the old dog to be anything but a commodity and clearly able to show off some new tricks.

So, where do you begin at winning back love for your brand? Clearly it is not just by investing blindly in an aggressive communications campaign. While that may in fact be the correct approach, it is impossible to know without first deploying an 'active listening' campaign – taking the time to ensure that a target consumer's fundamental needs are being addressed in the most relevant way. Far too many troubled brands talk too much, without knowing what their disaffected consumers want – or need – to hear. Through BERA, we find many brands that are indeed talking too much and not listening enough – that talk/listen imbalance is critical. One of the advantages of social media is its ability to raise early warning signals around your consumer interactions, operating as a rough barometer for the brand – a signal that BERA can augment, mine, and refine in a robust fashion. Beyond listening, the key to revitalization lies in viewing a brand in as holistic, and complete, a fashion as possible. There are countless cases in which clients are executing superb communications yet delivering inconsistent, dissonant, and weak consumer buying interactions: J. C. Penney enjoyed significant, positive chatter for its *Ellen DeGeneres Show* television spots right up until such time that its newest chief executive suffered an ouster owing in large part to insurmountable underperformance. Not only was their failure driven by an inability to recognize the core needs and expectations of the J. C. Penney customer but it confused the value of sound product and pricing strategy fundamentals with the wild, 'mass media' popularity of an endearing public personality. In short, they triggered the wrong P, and for the wrong reasons.

6.4   Winning at love

Through BERA, BBM reveal the degree to which your brand is loved: we measure, manage, and maximize that delicate, monetizable bond (Figure 11.3).

MEASURE	MANAGE	MAXIMIZE
Current brand positioning/opportunities and vulnerabilities	Portfolio strategy	Consumer love
Brand equity both within category and category agnostically across national brandscape - 200 categories	Resource allocation across marketing mix	Brand equity
Stage of development across the relationship life cycle	Strategic partnership alignment	Total Shareholder Value (TSR)
Portfolio and relationship between sub-brand and parent	Adjacency expansion	Pricing power
Size and profile of engagement segments	Targeting Strategy	Loyalty
Brand Balance Ratio (BBR)	Customer acquisition/retention	Volume potential
Talk/Listen Ratio (TLR)		Enterprise value
Pricing Power Ratio (PPR)		ROMI Brand valuation
Customer Quality Composition (CQC)		

Figure 11.3   The bera brand management process

We measure and identify existing strengths and points of differentiation for further leverage, as we define where a brand is winning and losing. All of this is done while generating visibility over zones of connection, resonance, and regrettable omission. For a brand in need of revitalization, we look at the latent equities that might well have powered the brand in the first place. How do you reignite that original affection? Is the old bond still relevant? If not, how can we make it relevant? Is it time to recast the brand?

We then manage the brand bond, analyzing strategy and corresponding tactics in order to strengthen consumer connection, looking at the various levers that can be pulled, testing possible scenarios, valuing resultant impact, and ultimately recommending the most profitable strategy to adopt and tactics to deploy. This process enforces discipline for ongoing evolution and innovation around product (re-)design and continuous improvement – whether that improvement involves communications, the service experience, affinity or

strategic partnerships, packaging innovation, or other imaginative and adventurous opportunities.

Finally, BBM maximizes what BERA provides when all learning is streamed into strategic marketing efforts: efficient deployment that targets profitable consumer segments and appropriate allocation of resources. Such a process must be ongoing – securing bonds and renewing vows – and it never ends. Such practice demands focus and discipline, but finding and sustaining the love of consumers delivers rewards at scale.

Brands Index

General Index

5 P's, 236–40, 245, 247

affective loyalty, 21
agreeableness, 7, 87–9, 92–4, 96, 98, 101, 111–13, 116–17
altruism, 18, 19, 24, 26, 86, 89
American Marketing Association (AMA), 246
anchors
  external, 63, 71, 76
  internal, 63, 76, 77
anthropomorphism, 110, 112
anxiety separation distress (ASD), 86, 95–9, 109
appropriation, 56–7, 65
attachment aversion (AA) model, 168
attitude strength (AS), 86, 95–9, 109, 178, 181, 186, 187
attitudinal loyalty, 21, 22, 27
axial coding process, 179

Bain and Company, 65
behavioral loyalty, 27, 185–8
  see also brand loyalty
Belo Horizonte, 199–200, 210, 212
BERA Brand Management (BBM), 225–7, 238, 240, 242, 243, 252, 255, 258–60
  see also Brand Equity Relationship Assessment (BERA)
Big Five personality traits model/ Five-Factor Model (FFM), 84, 87, 92–3, 110–14, 116–18
brand adoration, 70
brand advocacy, 32, 35, 37, 40, 49, 58
  see also word of mouth (WOM)
brand affect, 20
brand attachment, 31, 35, 56, 58–9, 167, 178, 181, 186, 188
brand attributes, 28, 133, 186, 199
  see also brand characteristics
brand avoidance, 4, 154–5, 158–9

brand awareness, 62, 203, 205–11, 213, 215, 216, 229, 244, 248
  see also brand cognizance
brand balance, 232–3, 253, 256, 259
brand bond, 11, 56, 61, 232–3, 241, 244, 245, 247–8, 257, 259
  see also brand love
brand characteristics, 15, 26, 125, 132
  see also brand attributes
brand cognizance, 229, 231–3, 244–5
brand commitment, 15, 178, 184–5, 187, 188
  antecedents of, 24
  and brand love, 18–22, 24–7
  components of, 18–19
brand communication, 27, 75, 76, 77–8, 159
brand community/communities, 17, 20, 26, 27, 60, 110, 156–9
brand connection, 2–4, 228–9, 237, 244
  see also brand connection matrix; self-brand connection
brand connection matrix, 2
  emotionally invested brand connections, 3–4
  fully invested brand connections, 3
  functionally invested brand connections, 2
  uninvested brand connections, 3
brand defense, 32, 35, 37, 40–4, 48–50
  see also word of mouth (WOM)
brand DNA, 70, 72, 75, 76, 78
brand equity, 62–4, 165, 166, 178, 182, 185, 187–8, 199
  accounting-guided, 203–4
  antecedents of, 207–9
  approaches to, 203–4
  consequences of, 209–10
  consumer-guided, 203–4
  definition of, 201
  dimensions of, 204
  impact of brand image on, 214–18

263

Names Index